

Socio-Economic Status of Old Age Women Pensioners: A Study in the Borboruah Block of Dibrugarh District, Assam

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ABSTRACT

Old age is that point of time in one's life when we are physically weak and need support of someone. Working people retire at a certain age and after that they are left without any financial support. So, to help such people Government has taken initiatives to provide a certain amount of financial assistance for their old age medical treatments, etc. Though the amount paid is very less, yet that little money is snatched away from them by the middle-men or the members of their own family. This research paper had been taken forward to study the condition of those Old Women pensioners, who entirely depend on the pensions paid by the government of India to fulfill their daily needs. The amount which should be paid in the accounts every month is paid only twice or once a year. In this paper, we will scrutinize the answers critically received by the respondents to get an appropriate idea of the situation of the Old women.

1. Introduction

The research is carried on to know about the old age pensions provided by the Government of India to the people who are above sixty years (60) of age and unable to earn their livelihood by themselves. The research is done on the basis of old age pension scheme i.e. **Indira Gandhi National Old Age Pension Scheme (1995)**. It provides financial help to the old people above 60years. The research was done in the Borboruah Block on three villages under Dibrugarh District. The key issue of taking the topic is to study the Socio-Economic status of old age beneficiaries, especially women who can often be seen as the worst sufferers due to financial crises.

The main aim of the research is to measure the discrimination or the Socio-Economic Status (SES) which is often measured as a combination of education, income and occupation. It is conceptualised as the social standing or class of an individual or group.

Therefore to find out the exact and ground level condition of some specific area, data about the issue of old age economic disaster or sufferings have been collected, because of which this is a worth investigating topic. Two main objectives of this research paper are: i) to study the Socio-Economic status of old age women beneficiaries receiving the IGNOAPS, and (ii) to study the impact on women beneficiaries of IGNOAPS. The research paper further deals with three important questions like: Why is the Old Age Pension Scheme necessary for women? What is the impact of IGNOAP Scheme on the women? And how does the scheme help women in their Socio-Economic development of their status?

Sarmah Chandana and Choudhary Bapukon(2011), department of Anthropology, Gauhati University, Guwahati, Assam, India, in their study on *Problems of Elderly and Their Care* found that due to globalization and small family norms the old people are not getting that much attention and care which they probably seek from their spouses, as the new generations are busy with their works. Thus the problems of loneliness and

having nothing to do may have emerged because of their deteriorating health condition. And hence, the elderly are not found to be completely satisfied with their children.

Age Well foundation, (2015), during their research on *Gender Discrimination among Older Women in India*, found that due to social and traditional family structure old women are forced to live with many limitations. And as women live longer than men, a larger number of older women have to live a life of widowhood in their silver years, and so they are always dependent on male members of the family for their basic needs, which further leads to social marginalization, loneliness, isolation and even negligence in old age.

The study is based on socio economic status of old age women pensioners. It is prepared on both primary and secondary source of data. The primary data has been collected from three villages, i.e. Duwarachuk, Chiring Tekela and Jopora gaon of Borboruah Block, Dibrugarh district (Assam). Moreover the primary data have been collected through personal interview from the members of the study area with the help of questionnaires.

The secondary data have been collected through books of PhD and M.Phil dissertation works on relevant topics, various research paper theses, from internet, etc.

The research topic is a descriptive research containing both qualitative and quantitative methods of data collection.

1. Qualitative methods with open ended questions are used.
2. Quantitative methods with close ended questions are used.

Simple random sampling method is used for the area of study to collect the samples. The research obtained the beneficiary list of old age pensioners from the Panchayat Office of Borboruah Block of Dibrugarh District, in which hundred (100) women beneficiaries were identified, which were divided among the ten(10) students of the class. Each student got ten (10) samples each but during the survey we found that some women have died and hence for equal division of the

samples among the students, seventy (70) women beneficiaries were selected, which were divided among the students and thus each student in the class got seven (7) samples each.

Content analysis is used to analyse the content-qualitative and quantitative- of documents, books, newspapers, magazines and other forms of written materials. It is also used to analyse the data collected during the study and look for the similarities and dissimilarities of the data.

The selected survey areas were three villages namely Duwarachuk, Chiring Tekela and Jopora gaon of Borboruah Block, Dibrugarh district (Assam).

The IGNOAP Scheme is an old age none-contributory pension schemes which covers those Indians who are above sixty (60) years of age and also who are under the poverty line. This pension scheme is a National Social Assistance Programme's (NSAP) part that Ministry of rural development launched in August, 1995.

All the individuals are eligible who are above 59 years of age and below poverty line to apply for the IGNOAP Scheme. All the beneficiaries of IGNOAPS of 60-79 years of age receive Rs.300 per month (Rs. 200 by central government and Rs. 100 by state government) as pension. And those who are above the age of 80years receive Rs.500 per month as pension.

Hon'ble Finance minister on the launching occasion of IGNOAPS indicated in his speech that all the efforts should be done in order to include every beneficiary's detail in computerised database. There should be a system device to credit the pension amount payable to every beneficiary directly to his account in a scheduled commercial bank or post office.

NSAP has introduced social audit and annual verification. By 30th June, all the states should complete their annual verification and by 30th September they should complete their social audit each year. Under NSAP, a checklist is provided for the Scheme to National Level Monitors (NLMs) at the time of their visits. It is advised to each NLM to visit the Village, Block and District level offices and meet beneficiaries, public representatives and the government functionalists to get the feedback on the Schemes implementation under NSAP. Monthly meetings are organised in Delhi of the Division Head Office with each UT/States Nodal Officers. A quarterly performance review committee meetings are held as well.

The National Social Assistance Program Scheme (NSAP) came into effect in 15th August, 1995. The main objective behind the Scheme was to fulfil the spirit of Article 41 which comes under Directive Principle of States Policy.

"Right to work, to education and to public assistance in certain cases, the State shall, within the limits of its economic capacity and development, make effective provision for securing the right to work, to education and to public assistance in cases of unemployment, old age, sickness and disablement, and in other cases to undeserved want".

The programme formulated a National Policy for Social Assistance for the poor and aims at ensuring minimum national standard for social assistance. These new assistance are addition to the benefits that states are currently providing or might provide in future. NSAP scheme is 100% centrally sponsored scheme and administered by Ministry of Rural Development but beneficiaries can be from both, rural and urban areas. The scheme is implemented in the state/UTs through Panchayats and Municipalities. There are five

components of Scheme. Among them Indira Gandhi National Old Age Pension Scheme is the topic of this research paper.

IGNOAPS- the scheme is meant for the old age people above sixty (60) years of age (revised later 65 years) and who live below poverty line. Through this scheme monthly cash is provided to these old age people which are currently Rs.200 per month for person aged in 60-79 range. For applicant's above 80 years, the amount of Rs.500 per month, that is revised in 2011. State government can also add their part in it, which they usually do.

The NSAP scheme is implemented in the state/UTs in accordance with the general conditions applicable to all components of the NSAP as well as specific condition applicable to each component. The NSAP schemes are mainly implemented by the Social Welfare Department in the States. But NSAP is implemented by Rural Development Department of Andhra Pradesh, Assam, Goa, Meghalaya and West Bengal; by the Department of Women and Child Development in Orissa, Puducherry; by Revenue Department in Karnataka and Tamil Nadu and by the Department of Labour Employment & Training in Jharkhand. The NSAP extends in both the rural as well as urban areas. Though the implementation of various schemes under NSAP is not uniform across the country, issues of implementation are regularly bring discussed with the State Government Officials in the Nodal Officer's meetings and quarterly PRC meetings.

The present study was conducted in three villages namely Duwarachuk, Chiring Tekela and Jopora gaon of Borboruah Block, Dibrugarh district (Assam) in which seven households were selected in the above three villages.

Among all the seven respondents of the three villages, two respondents were from Duwarachuk, three from Chiring Tekela and two from Jopora gaon. The respondents were of different ages, two of them were above sixty (60) years, and two were above seventy (70) years one around eighty (80) years and two of them were around 85-90years. All of them were female and widows.

Among all of the seven respondents none of them were literate. Some of them went to schools but had only primary education i.e. till class four or five.

All of the respondents were Hindu and belonged to different castes and groups; SC-1, OBC-5, Others-1. Three of the respondents belonged to Below Poverty Line (BPL) and four were APL.

All the respondents were the receivers of the Old Age Pensions from banks and other offices. But some of them did not receive the pensions regularly, few got pension within six (6) months, some within 1 year. One of the respondent said that she hadn't received any pension since 2 years.

2. Field and Data Analysis

The questionnaires were both qualitative and quantitative (open ended and close ended questions respectively). The quantitative questions included 15 questions. The quantitative questions involved the questions like the background information of the respondent, such as-Age, Sex, Marital Status, Education, Occupation, Religion, Caste, Financial status of the family, etc and also questions like-

- i) How this scheme helps you to develop your Socio-Economic Status?

- ii) Is the scheme enough to solve the problems of elderly persons?
- iii) What are your suggestions?

The amounts received by the pensioners are: -

- i) Two of them received Rs100-500,
- ii) Three of them received Rs.500-1000,
- iii) Two of them received Rs1500-2000.

All the respondents said that they all had earning persons at home and none of the family members dependent on their pension. The respondents had complete control over their pension and the pension was used for their own medical purposes. All the respondents received their pensions without facing any problem or corruption but there was delay of time according to the respondents. The answers to the qualitative questions by the respondents were almost the same.

On asking the first qualitative question i.e. 'How this scheme helps you, to develop your Socio-Economic Status?' the respondents replied that it doesn't help in any way or the other. Rather it just has a wrong view upon the people that they are receiving pensions and so they are rich and economically self dependent.

The answers to the second question i.e. 'Is this scheme enough to solve the problems of elderly people?' Two of the respondents replied that since they belong to BPL category, their earnings is low and so somehow the scheme helps them to deal with some requirements of the family such as for medical fees which is the main problem during the old ages. Five (5) of the respondents said that the pension is too less to fulfil the needs of the people during this modern age of high price rise.

On asking the question 'what are you suggestion?' 100% respondents answered the same. They replied that they get Rs. 500- Rs.1000 or Rs.1000- Rs.1500 within six or one months and year respectively and so the government must increase the pension amount, so that atleast the needs of old people could be fulfilled without any difficulties.

3. Areas of descriptions

The Capital of Assam is Dispur and the languages spoken here are Assamese, Bengali, Hindi, etc. Assam is the biggest state among the 'Seven Sisters' in the Northeast India. The only male river of India, the Brahmaputra flows through the heart of the state. It is also the state of Goddess Kamakhya.

The state of Assam is spread over an area of approximately 78,523Kms. The topography of the state is mainly composed of plains and river valleys.

Geographically the state can be divided into three major regions; in the north is the Brahmaputra Valley, The Barak Valley in the South and Cachar Hills which divide both the valleys and exiting into Bangladesh. The state is on the foothills of the Eastern Himalayas or the Purbanchal. On the north lies the country of Bhutan while to the east the state is covered by the states of Arunachal, Nagaland and Manipur. To the west of Assam, lay Meghalaya and Mizoram and to the west is Tripura and Bangladesh. The state is surrounded by a ring of Blue Hills.

4. Profile of Dibrugarh District

Dibrugarh is the seventeenth administrative district of Assam. It is situated on the upper valley of the river

Brahmaputra which runs for about 95 km in the District of Patkai foothills on the south. Burhi Dihing is the main tributary of the river Brahmaputra and has many sub-tributaries which flow through the area. The district headquarter is located at the Dibrugarh town itself.

5. Origin of the name

The name of Dibrugarh is said to be derived from Dibarumukh which means the mukh (i.e. mouth) of the river Dibraru or from the word 'Dibru' meaning a blister in the Bodo language. Dibarumukh was a well known encampment of the Ahom Kingdom during the Ahom-Chutia War where Suhungmung, Pharsengmung Borgohain, Chao Siulung and Kilong fought against the Chutia king. The latter was defeated in the battle who surrendered before the Ahom King. The British East India Company had captured this place in 1839 by defeating the Muttack king to avail its business potentiality and easy water transport facility. To protect this place from local inhabitants and invaders they had built a huge 'Garh' or rampart in south corner of Dibru river which was six kilometer away from it. According to historians, due to this 'Garh' or rampart established at the bank of the river Dibru, the British had renamed this place as Dibrugarh¹. After independence, Dibrugarh became a part of Lakhimpur district.

However, in 1971 Dibrugarh was converted into a full-fledged district with Tinsukia initially as sub-division and later a separate district. In 1950, there was a massive earthquake that resulted in the change of the river Brahmaputra's course and it engulfed the old city and the tributary Dibraru into it. Later on a new city was constructed beside the bank of the river with the same name.

6. Geographical features

The Dibrugarh district extends from 27° 5' 38" North to 27° 42' 30" North latitude and 94° 33' 46" East to 95° 29' 8" East longitude. It is bounded by Dhemaji district and a part of Lakhimpur district on the north, part of Sivasagar district and Arunachal Pradesh State on the south, Tinsukia district on the east and Sivasagar district on the west, Tirap district of Arunachal Pradesh on the south-east. The area extends from the north bank of the mighty Brahmaputra, which flows for a length of 95 km through the northern margin of the district, to the Patkai foothills on the south. The Burhi Dihing, a major tributary of the Brahmaputra with its network of tributaries and wetlands flows through the district from east to west.

So far as the geographical area of Dibrugarh district is concerned, the table below shows the total area subdivided into rural, urban and forest land along with its percentage:-

Table-1 Distribution of Geographical Area of Dibrugarh District

Geographical area	In sq. km	Area in Percentage
A. Total Geographical area		
i) Rural	3381 sq. km	4.31% in all Assam
ii) Urban	3357 sq. km	99.29% in Dibrugarh district
	24 sq. km	0.71% in Dibrugarh district
B. Forest Land	217941.648 hectare	

Source: Dibrugarh District at a Glance, District Statistical Office, Ref. year, 2006, Dibrugarh

The table reveals that the Dibrugarh district covers an area of about 3381 sq. km which is 4.31 per cent of the total land of Assam. Out of this area, the district is sub-divided into 3357 sq. km, 24 sq. km and 217941.648 Hectors into rural, urban and forest land respectively. Altogether, 99.29 per cent covered by rural area and only 0.71 per cent are covered by urban and semi-urban sector.

However, it shows that almost all areas belong to rural in nature and a very small portion of area is covered by urban sector which is insignificant in nature.

Communication

Dibrugarh is well linked by Roads, Railway, Airway and Waterway with other parts of the State as well as the Country as a whole. There are four airfields, which were used by the British against the Japanese forces in Burma (now Myanmar) during World War-II. Roads: The National Highway 37 is the major road running through the district. There are regular bus services between Dibrugarh and the rest part of the state. The road communication of the district is shown in the table below.

Table-2 Distribution of Total Roads in Dibrugarh District

Roads Length	(in km)
Total PWD roads	1664
i) Surfaced roads	459
ii) Un-surfaced road	1205

Source: Dibrugarh District at a Glance, District Statistical Office, Ref. year, 2006, Dibrugarh.

From the above table, it is clear that out of the total 1664 km length of PWD roads 1205 km is un-surfaced and only 459 km of roads is surfaced. It reveals that in road communication the Dibrugarh district is quite backward because maximum length of roads is un-surfaced which becomes inconvenient during rainy seasons. So, to develop an area and its people, a special attention is a must with regard to improving communication in between each and every area with well surfaced and all weather roads. Rail: Dibrugarh town is located on the southern bank of the mighty river Brahmaputra. It is connected by broad gauge railway line of N F Railway to the rest of the State and the Country through Tinsukia.

Air: Mohanbari Airport, located at a distance of about 16 km from Dibrugarh town, serves the upper Assam districts of Dibrugarh, Tinsukia and Sivasagar and the state of Arunachal Pradesh and is linked with Guwahati, Kolkata and Delhi.

Business and Economy

Dibrugarh is extraordinarily famous for tea gardens and tea productions. The entire district is surrounded by tea plantations and has a good number of tea factories. There are altogether 118 tea gardens in the entire district while more than 85 Tea Factories are producing the Orthodox and quality tea and major portion of tea is exported to Western and South-Asian countries. The Chabua, Jalan, Sialkuti, Balijan North, Longhurjan, Moran and Lepetkata Tea Estates are some of the tea gardens which were planted by the British East India Company in between 1885-19102. These tea gardens are more than 100 years old.

Another important determinant of business and economy of the district is oil. The world's oldest running oil refinery is situated at Digboi established in 1901. There are many oil and

natural gas rigs owned by the Oil India Limited and Oil and Natural Gas Corporation Limited. Tea and oil are the major revenue earners for the district. The head quarter of the Oil India Limited is located at Duliajan, at a distance of about 50 km from Dibrugarh town. Dibrugarh is also known for two large industries—Fertilizer Corporation of India and Assam Petro Chemicals Limited. Another large industry, i.e. Brahmaputra Cracker and Polymer Limited (Assam Gas Cracker Project) is under construction at Lepetkata which is 12 km away from the district headquarter.

The primary occupations of the majority populations of this district are the farming of rice, sugar-cane, pulses and pisciculture. Besides, many rice and oil seed mills are at work. There are also some coal mining and petroleum production industries in the district.

Administrative units

The administrative units of Dibrugarh district could be divided into various sub-units which are shown in the table below.

Table-3 Distribution of Administrative Units of Dibrugarh District

Administrative unit	Numbers
Sub-division	1
Revenue circle	7
Police station	14
Police outpost	17
Fire station	1
C. D. Block	7
Municipal Board	1
Town committee	2
Gaon Panchayat	93
Mouza	21
Revenue village	1327
Census village	1348
Inhabited village	1348
Uninhabited village	35

Source: Dibrugarh District at a Glance, District Statistical Office, Ref. year, 2006, Dibrugarh.

The table indicates that the administrative unit of Dibrugarh District is bifurcated into one Sub-division, seven Revenue Circles, fourteen Police Stations, seventeen Police Outposts, one Fire Station, one Zilla Parishad, seven Community Development Blocks, one Municipal Board, two Town Committees, ninety three Gaon Panchayats, twenty one Mouzas, 1327 Revenue villages, 1348 census villages, 1348 inhabited villages and only 35 uninhabited villages. There are six towns in all over the district which are Dibrugarh, Chabua, Naharkatia, Duliajan, Digboi and Namrup. There are seven revenue circles in all over the district. They are Dibrugarh East, Dibrugarh West, Chabua, Tengakhat, Naharkatia, Tingkhong and Moran. The police stations of the district are Dibrugarh, Lahowal, Chabua, Tengakhat, Duliajan, Naharkatia, Jaipur, Tingkhong, Rajgarh, Moran, Khowang, Borboruah, Rohmaria, Ghoramora. Besides these, almost all branches of government department, civil as well as police are placed in the district. To carry out the administrative functions of the district, the Deputy

Commissioner (DC) is the head of all departments and units. In order to maintain the law and order of the district, the Superintendent of Police (SP) is assisting the D. C.

Education

The district is the pivot of higher education in the entire North East India. Right from the British India period the district has been a centre for learning. The Assam Medical College was established by Dr. John Berry White after he took over the charge of civil surgeon of Lakhimpur district. In the year 1898, he decided to set up a medical school at Dibrugarh, and thus this premier institute started its history, and marked a new era in education and medicine. Assam Medical College has the pride of having the first Radiology department in India, as in 1910 two X-Ray machines (One 10MA and another 15MA) were bought from England, only 25 years after the monumental discovery of X-Ray by Prof. Wilhelm Conrad Roentgen 1885-86. These two were the first X-Ray Machines in India. Apart from Medical, the other higher institutes of learning in the district are Pharmacology, Geology and Applied Geology and Petroleum Technology. All these courses are offered by Dibrugarh University which was established in the year 1965. Besides the University, other centres for learning are-

1. Dibrugarh Poly-Technique which is offering various diploma courses in Electrical, Civil and Mechanical fields.
2. Regional Medical Research Centre (RMRC) is the only institution in Assam which undertakes scientific research in Bio-medical sciences where major health problems and its causes are studied and taught.

As regard the literacy, the table below shows the distribution of literacy rate of the Dibrugarh district.

Table-4 Distribution of Literacy Rate of Dibrugarh District

Category	Total population	%
A. Total literate population	6,98,148	58.91%
i. Male	4,06,265	77.30%
ii. Female	2,91,883	22.70%
B. Rural literate population	53,571	56.00%
i. Male	34,821	65.00%
ii. Female	18,749	35.00%
C. Urban literate population	1,62,188	71.00%
i. Male	1,02,178	63.00%
ii. Female	60,010	37.00%

Source: Census report, 2001, Govt. of India.

Thus it can be observed from the above table that out of the total population of Dibrugarh district, 58.91 per cent is literate and out of which 77.30 per cent is male and 22.70 per cent is female. So far as the rural and urban literate population is concerned, the rural literates are less than the urban. The male and female literacy rate both in rural and urban sector, displays that male literacy rate is higher than the female. With regard to female literacy whether in rural and urban, the urban women are more literate than the rural. The languages commonly used in the district are Assamese, English, Hindi and Bengali.

Population

The population of the district is shown in the table below in different categories such as male, female, density, sex ratio, SC and ST etc.

Table-5 Distribution of Population of Dibrugarh District

Category	Total population	%
A. Assam	2,66,55,528	----
B. Total population of Dibrugarh	11,85,072	4.45% in Assam
i. Male	6,13,555	51.77%
ii. Female	5,71,517	48.23%
C. Rural Population	9,56,634	80.72%
i. Male	4,90,118	51.23%
ii. Female	4,66,516	48.77%
D. Urban	2,28,434	19.28%
i. Male	1,23,437	54.04%
ii. Female	1,05,001	45.96%

Source: Census report, 2001, Govt. of India

The population of the entire district is 11,85,072, out of which male constitute 51.77 per cent and females 48.23 per cent. Out of the total population 80.72 per cent population of this district lives in rural area whereas 19.28 per cent in urban areas. So far as SC and ST population is concerned, out of the total population only 4.05 per cent and 7.45 per cent are SC and ST respectively. Total households of this district are 2, 28,574 with five members size of per household. Moreover, sex ratio (females per 1000 males) is 931.

As regards religion, the table below shows the distribution of population into various religious groups.

Table-6 Religion-Wise Distribution of Population of Dibrugarh District

Religion	District Total	%
Hindu	1075878	90.79%
Islam	53306	4.50%
Christianity	45040	3.80%
Others *	10794	0.91%

*Others include: Jains, Buddhists, Sikhs and Religion not stated.

Source: Dibrugarh District at a Glance, District Statistical Office, Ref. year, 2006, Dibrugarh.

The table reveals that in the Dibrugarh district, out of the total population 90.79 per cent are Hindus, 4.50 per cent are Islam and 3.80 per cent are Christian, while only 0.91 per cent is from other groups which includes Jain, Buddhist, Sikh and religion not stated.

As a part of extraordinary attraction of the Dibrugarh district, it needs a mention that the Dinjoy Satra, a famous monastery belonging to Vaishnava sect, was built by an ardent devotee Aniruddha Dev and is located about 5 km north of Chabua. Many Vaisnavite devotees crowd the area during the festival times. Other than this, there are other Satras also in the district, i.e. Dehing Satra, Dehing Namti Satra, Moderkhat Satra, Garpara Satra and Koli Aai Than.

7. Profile of Borboruah Block (BB)

Location

Out of the seven development Blocks of Dibrugarh district, the BB is the nearest Block of the district headquarter. The BDB was established in 1957 to implement the National Extension Service (NES) schemes of the Central Government. Later on it became a leading Block in the district to execute the rural development schemes of the government, both Central and States. The BB is surrounded by Industrial Training Institute, District Education Officer office and Lahon Gaon on the north, Durgapur Tea Estate on the south, National Highway-37 on the east and Burahazar village on the west.

The BDB is covering a total area of about 39,541 hectares covering one Anchalik Panchayat, 13 Gaon Panchayats, 176 revenue villages, 3 Mouzas, 12 Forest Villages, 9 Eroded Villages and 63 Flood Prone villages. It is situated at a distance of approximately 12 km from the head quarter of the Dibrugarh district.

Population of the Block

As regards the population of the Block, the total population is 1, 41,991 of which male consists of 51.34 per cent and female 48.66 per cent. Density of population is 360 per sq. km as per 2001 census.

Caste and Community

In BDB the majority of population belongs to the Ahom community which is officially branded as the OBC caste. Out of the total population, the Ahom community constitutes 49.59 per cent, S.C. 7.40 per cent, S.T. 17.14 per cent and others 25.87 per cent respectively.

Literacy

The literacy rate of the BDB is quite satisfactory. Out of the total population 98,421 are literate and the literacy rate is 69.32 per cent only. Among the total literate, male constitute 51.02 per cent and female 48.98 per cent respectively.

Educational Institutions

The educational institutions in BDB are quite sufficient. The distribution of educational institutions in the Block area is placed in the following table:-

Table-7 Distribution of Number of Educational Institutions in BDB

Sl. No.	Name of the institution	Nos.
1	Anganbadi Kendra	165
2	Primary Schools	207
3	Middle Schools	34
4	High Schools	13
5	H. S. Schools	2
6	College	1
7	Music Schools	2
8	English Medium Schools	4

Source: Department of Education, Govt. of Assam, Dibrugarh district.

The table reflects that there are 165 Anganbadi Kendras in the entire Block. The Anganbadi Kendras are running under the Integrated Child Development Scheme (ICDS) of the Central Government. These Kendras are constituted to provide basic education to those children who are unable to go to primary school for variety of reasons. These schools are also a

kind of preparatory institutions. There are 207 primary schools in the jurisdiction of the BDB which provide the primary level basic education to the pupils. Within the Block area, there are 34 middle schools and 13 high schools which provide upper primary and high school level of education to the students. Some middle schools are separately constructed and some of them are found amalgamated into the high schools. There are also two Higher Secondary schools which are situated in Borboruah and Lezai-Kalakhua. The Borboruah Jamira Junior College is situated near the Block office. In this College only Higher Secondary courses are taught. There are also two music schools running under private ownership and four English Medium Schools in the Block area.

The area of major crops

The crops produced in the countryside are mainly season based. According to the climate of the season, the crops of various qualities are produced in different times of the year. However, the irrigation facilities are quite insufficient or unavailable in many parts of the country. The cultivators are mostly dependent on natural weather and monsoon rain. In winter season the rainfall is basically used as irrigation water for harvesting the crops. In the same way, some crops varieties need less water and during this Autumnal season such crops are suitable. So, in a bid to understand the area of major crops in BDB, the indicators like Autumnal Paddy, Winter Paddy, Summer Paddy, Wheat Paddy, Potato, Ginger and other category of crops are examined on the basis of hectares of land used in a particular season. The table below shows the distribution of area of major crops in the BB.

Table-8 Distribution of Area of Major Crops in BB

Sl. No.	Name of the crops	Area(in Hect)
1	Autumnal paddy	5
2	Winter paddy	101412
3	Summer Paddy	10
4	Wheat paddy	7
5	Potato	140
6	Ginger	12
7	Others*	7041

*Others includes: Rape and Mustard-120, Sugar Cane-8, Tea-6913
Source: Department of Agriculture, Government of Assam, Dibrugarh district.

From the table above it is evident that major part of land under BDB is utilized for cultivation in the winter season. Out of the total cultivated area, i.e. 17627 hectares, almost 10412 hectares of land is used for winter paddy. There are only 5 hectares of land that is used for autumnal paddy while for summer paddy 10 hectares of land is used. For the production of wheat only 7 hectares of land is used because the staple food habits of the people of Assam is dependent on rice.

So far as the potato production is concerned, 140 hectares of land of the BDB is used for potato production. Here, the other categories include the Rape and Mustard, Sugar Cane and Tea. For Rape and Mustard 120 hectares while for sugar cane 8 hectares of land are used. There are 19 big tea gardens and innumerable small tea growers in the entire Block which occupies 6913 hectares of land in the Block area.

Land utilization pattern of the Block

Land is the only resource which can be used for different purposes like cultivation, forest land, grazing land, inhabitation of people and industrialization. But due to increase in population, the utilization of land for production is getting reduced and land for inhabitation is fast increasing. As a result, people are forced to encroach forest areas which have caused the problems like global warming, flood and have also spurred increased increase of respiratory and other diseases. So to understand the land utilization pattern of the BDB, the indicators like cultivated area, uncultivated area, forest area, barren and uncultivated land, grazing land, net area sown, area sown more than once and area under irrigation are applied to collect relevant information in the study area. The data available of land utilization pattern in the Block area is placed in the following table.

Table-9 Distribution of Land Utilization in the Block Area

Sl. No.	Nature of land utilization	Area in hectares (%)
1	Cultivated area	17,627 (44.58)
2	Uncultivated area	636 (1.61)
3	Forest area	8,630 (21.83)
4	Barren and uncultivated land	1,840 (4.65)
5	Grazing land	2,344 (5.93)
6	Net area sown	16,392 (93.00)
7	Area sown more than once	1,235 (7.00)
8	Area under irrigation	Nil

Source: Department of Agriculture, Land Records, Dibrugarh district.

Thus it has been observed that out of the 39,541 hectares of total land of the BDB, 17627 hectares of land is cultivated area where varieties of crops like rice, wheat, maize, potato, ginger and vegetables are produced. Of the total land 44.58 per cent of land is used for cultivation. Furthermore, 636 hectares of land is uncultivated area which constitutes 1.61 per cent of the total land. The land reserved for forest is 8630 hectares which constitutes 21.83 per cent. There are two reserve forests in Kutuha and Jokai as part of conservation of environment. The barren and uncultivated lands constitute 4.65 per cent which is not suitable for any cultivation. There are 2,344 hectares of grazing land within the Block. This grazing land is used particularly to feed the domestic animals and is also used as playground. The net area sown in the Block is 16,392 hectares which constitutes 93 per cent of the total cultivable land. The area sown more than once is 1,235 hectares which is 7 per cent of the total area. There is no irrigation facility in the Block area.

It is observed from the analysis of the data mentioned above that less than 50 percent of land is used for cultivation and therefore, is unable to produce sufficient amount of food grains. However, traditional means of production is generally applied by the farmers to produce the food grains. Moreover, in comparison with the population, the production is quite less than the demand required. As a result import of food grains has been a mandatory phenomenon.

Occupational pattern of the Block

Agriculture is the chief occupation of livelihood of the people in BDB and 75 per cent of people are found engaged in

agriculture. There are 19 tea estates of big private sector companies within the Block area. In these tea estates almost 8 per cent (14199) of its total population are engaged in for their livelihood. Besides, there are also certain small tea growers which occupy three per cent of the total population.

The ongoing construction of the Gas Cracker Project viz. Brahmaputra Cracker and Polymer Limited (BCPL) in Lepetkata and Brahmaputra Bridge in Bogibil, has provided an employment opportunity to the workers of the Block. Basically they are engaged in the unskilled works in these projects. Nonetheless, the occupation of the population of the Block may be divided into different pattern which is shown in table below.

Table-10 Break Up of Occupational Pattern in the Block

Sl.No.	Occupation pattern	Nos. %
1	Agriculture	73,838 (52)
2	Household industry	17,038 (12)
3	Livestock, Forestry	9,939 (7)
4	Manufacturing	5,680 (4)
5	Construction	11,360 (8)
6	Trade and commerce	7,100 (5)
7	Transport	8,520 (6)
8	Other services	8,519 (6)
	Total	1,41,994 (100)

Source: Department of Labour Commissioner, District Office, Dibrugarh.

The table has given a picture that majority population of BDB i.e. 52 per cent is involved in agriculture followed by 12 per cent involved in household industry which includes tea cultivation, pisciculture and steel fabrication. In the construction works, 8 per cent are involved in this sector as skilled and unskilled labourer. In live stock and forestry, only 7 per cent are engaged in dairy farming, goater, broiler chicken, duckery, fishery and piggery. Similarly in transport sector, only 6 per cent, trade and commerce only 5 per cent, manufacturing sector only 4 per cent and other services only 6 per cent population have managed their livelihood.

Medical facilities

So far as the medical facilities in the BDB are concerned, only primary healthcare facilities are available. The distribution of health care facilities available in the Block is given in the table below:-

Table-11 Break Up of Health-Care Facilities In The Block

Sl.No.	Name of the institution.	Nos
1	Civil Hospital	Nil
2	Dispensary	3
3	Primary Health Centre	1
4	Family Planning and Child welfare Centre(ICDS)	165
5	Medical Sub-centre	52
6	.Doctors	6
7	Nurses	56
8	Private practitioner	10
9	Private Hospital (including	9

	T.E.)	
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Source: Department of Health and Family Welfare, District Office, Dibrugarh.

The table shows that, there is no civil hospital in BDB. There are three dispensaries, one primary health centre, 165 ICDS centre, 52 medical sub centres, 9 private hospitals (including Tea Estates) with six doctors, 56 GNM/ANM nurses and 10 private practitioner doctors in entire Block. Although, the healthcare medical facilities are not sufficient in comparison with the total population, but owing to closer distance to the Assam Medical College Hospital at Dibrugarh, the patients can easily make access to the same for medical treatment.

Veterinary and Animal Husbandry

The veterinary and animal husbandry sector of the BDB is playing a vital role in uplifting the rural economy of the area. The veterinary and animal husbandry department is under the control of a Superintendent. There are only two veterinary dispensaries which renders their services to the public at large. There are two veterinary surgeons and 15 other staff in the department.

As per 2007-08 census report of the livestock population, the Block has 98,308 total livestock population and their classification is shown in the table below:-

Table-12 Distribution of Livestock Population Pattern In The Block

Sl. No	Name of the livestock	Nos. (%)
1.	Cattle	12,220 (12.43)
2.	Buffalo	11,480 (11.68)
3.	Goat and Sheep	25,442 (25.88)
4.	Pig	18,018 (18.33)
5.	Poultry	31,148 (31.68)
6.	Total	98,308 (100)

Source: Live stock population census, 2007-08, Dibrugarh District

It reveals that out of the total livestock population, poultry constitute 31.68 per cent in the entire Block. Poultry population is more because almost in every household hen and duck are domesticated. There are five big poultry firms in the BDB where poultries are kept for commercial purpose. So far as the goat and sheep is concerned, about 25.88 per cent of live stocks are there and they are also fragmented into households. There are only 5 goat and sheep firms under Self Help Groups (SHGs) and around 20 to 50 goats are kept for commercial purpose. The pig population constitutes 18.33 per cent of the total live stocks. The meat of the pig has got high demand in the market and therefore, besides household keeping of pig, there are 7 pigs firms within the Block area. The cattle population of this Block constitutes 12.43 per cent and particularly cows and oxen are the main occupant. The oxen are generally used by the farmers for tilling the field of cultivation. In BDB, the buffaloes constitute only 11.68 per cent which are also used for milk and means of cultivation.

From the above discussion of livestock population of BDB, it is witnessed that these animals are kept by the people for their own benefit. There are sufficient numbers of livestock in the Block area and the people are rich in this sector. These animals are considered important because from these animals

people can earn their livelihood and obviously improve their economic condition. Thus the people can become self dependent by accelerating their economic condition as well as the standard of living.

Fishery

So far as the fishery is concerned, there are no such large fisheries which are commercially viable. There are 150 small ponds and 25 Beels where fishes are kept and reproduced. The productions of the Beels are purely temporary and therefore, they cannot fulfil the consumers' demand of fish within the Block.

So, the people are left with no option but to purchase fish from the main market of the district that are imported from outside the State of Assam.

Roads and Transport communication

It is well known that roads and transport communication plays a momentous role in bringing about development in the undeveloped areas of the village. Large scale migration from village to urban areas for better job opportunities is a burning problem of India and it is due to lack of proper roads and transport communication from rural areas to the urban centres. Looking from such perspective, it may be said that the road and transport communication facilities in BDB are not up to the mark. The total length of roads in BDB is 280.34 km, of which 72.01 km constitutes metal roads; 96.07 km gravel roads and 112.26 km are earthen roads. There are 35 metal roads, 36 gravel roads and 86 earthen roads. Majority of roads are earthen roads which can be used only in the time of fair weather. There is only 72.01 km of roads which can be used in all types of weather. Almost all places of the BDB are covered by transport communication. Private and government bus services, trucks, fare taxi, cabs are available in BDB for transportation of goods and people to other parts of district.

Post and Telegraph communication

There are 16 sub-post offices in the entire BDB. Generally, postal communication has been made by these post offices. Besides delivery of courier services, these post offices are also used as small savings. The villagers generally deposit their savings in these post offices as savings or recurring. These post offices have provided the savings habits to the rural people. In BDB, more than 60,000 customers are there and approximately their deposit crossed seven lakh rupees from 1991-200911

As regards the telephone connectivity, more than 57 per cent of people have accessed the telephone connection. But landline connection is very less than mobile phone.

Electricity

So far as the electricity in BDB is concerned, out of the total 176 villages, 170 villages are electrified and remaining 16 villages are yet to be electrified. Electricity is provided by the Assam State Electricity Board (ASEB), Dibrugarh Zone

Profile of the Villages

All the three villages were surrounded with paddy fields and was located at the southern most side of Dibrugarh district.

Among all the three villages Duwarachuk had only one educational institution, i.e. Roopnagar Jatiya Vidyalaya.

The people of Jopora Gaon and Chiring Tekela villages were mostly dependent on agriculture and the people in the areas mostly belonged to scheduled caste category.

The road of Duwarachuk was good enough than Jopora gaon and Chiring Tekela; in this two villages the roads were not well maintained and was in a bad condition. But the environment of the three villages was full of cool and fresh air. The villages were well connected with the highway leading to Guwahati, Tinsukia and many other places or states. The villages were well connected with the main town of Dibrugarh and transport facilities were easily available.

Thus, among all the three villages I found Duwarachuk to be most developed than the other two villages, i.e. Jopora Gaon and Chiring Tekela.

8. Conclusion and Suggestions

This chapter summarises the major findings presented and discussed in the preceding chapter. The chapter also makes few recommendations on the basis of findings of the study that might be helpful in drawing an appropriate development strategy that would eventually help in creation of better socio-economic condition of the old age women pensioners.

It has been found that most of the beneficiaries of the BPL category are not getting the average amount which they must get according to the IGNOAP Scheme. And those who are from the APL category are receiving adequate amount which is not applicable for those people who are from the APL category. Also it has been found that those beneficiaries belonging to the BPL category were quite satisfied with the amount but those from the APL category were demanding for more money.

Thus, we here find that there is corruption among the government employees and among the people paying and receiving the pensions and in every sector corruption is seen to a great extent.

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In changed socio-economic and demographic set up of India, elderly women face increased incidences of age discrimination, ageism, elder abuse and mistreatment of older community, which are strictly against any civilised society.

To improve the socio-economic status of older women in the society and to make them aware of their right few steps should and there is a pressing need to: -

1. Inculcate a sense of awareness towards the older women through curriculum of meetings and workshops regarding the IGNOAPS in the areas
2. Appropriate actions should be taken against the corrupted government employees by the government.
3. Proper monitoring and evaluation should be done by the government regarding the schemes time to time.
4. Public awareness should be boosted and socio-legal structures should be changed. The perceptions and experiences of old age women pensioners should be included in research and in planning and managing services.

9. Limitations of the study

1. All the data has been collected on the information provided by the respondents.
2. Mostly the respondents shared all their problems with us in the hope that government will give them more facilities thinking the investigators as government's agents.
3. Due to shortage of time the study was conducted only in three villages.
4. Equal distribution was done among the students, 7-respondents each among 10 students.