



# Role of Sonowal Kachari Women in Socio-Economic Development

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## ABSTRACT

Socio-economy is the total measure of a person work experience and of an individual or families social and economic position in relation to others, based on income, education and occupation.

In the modern society, women plays a vital role in enhance the living status of their families and has a major contribution in rising the per capita income and economic development. The present paper is trying to find out the role of Sonowal Kachari women in the economic development of their society. The present paper is also trying to highlight how far women of this community are free to participate in any activities with other members of the families. This paper is based on the data collected through personal interview and schedule method. For the study 200 women from Kadam Kachari and Gagaldubi Goan of Lakhimpur district, Assam has been selected as sample for collecting data.

Key Words: Tribal Women, Socio-Economy, Educational Level, Occupation, Sonowal Kachari.

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**INTRODUCTION**

Level of socio-economic development which is mainly based on the combine performance of a number of related individual attributes provides all overall picture of socio-economic status of population in an area or population group.

The development of a society requires full participation by all section of the society including women. From centuries women are to be weighed up as equal partners in the process of development which constitute 50% of the total population. Social and economic status of a family has a direct relationship with the women's participation in different activities of the household and thus holding a significant relationship with the society.

Women can play very effective role for better home, society and economy. Though they play a crucial role in reproduction, child rearing and household activities, they also performs various activities for enhance economic condition of their families.

The tribal population of India constitutes 8.08% of the total population. The tribal women constitutes about half of the total tribal population. The tribal women also play a vital role for the socio-economic development of a society. The participation of the tribal women in workforce brings in two positive effects in their society- it raises the living status and exerts an effective control on family size (Kar,2002). Several tribal communities all over India have been facing various problems. Among them, the tribal women are a majority. Especially the tribal women are not kept away from the impact of socio-economic changes affecting the society. In this process of change the tribal women is forced to adhere to certain norms which may even take away her freedom.



But in order to empower them, there is a great need of opportunities so as to enable them to assume leadership qualities for socio-economic transformation. However, in order to develop their level of aspiration, adequate occupational opportunities are to be provided so that they participate, support and also ultimately learn to initiate their own programmes of development.

Like other tribal communities Sonowal Kachari women also performs various activities for the economic development of their household and as well as the society. The Sonowal Kacharies are the indigenous ethnic group of Assam. Though they scattered over several districts of upper Assam like Dhemaji, Lakhimpur, Dibrugarh, Tinsukia, at present the major bulk of population is concentrated in the district of Lakhimpur. The Sonowal Kacharies belongs to the mongoloid race. Agriculture is their main occupation. They are mostly cultivators. So their economy is mainly based on agriculture. Rice is their staple food. The Sonowals are mainly Hindus. They are the followers of Mahapurushia Vaisnav Dharma. They also observe Bathow Puja.

The Sonowal Kacharies have a total population of 2.35 lakhs (1.19 lakh males and 1.16 lakh females) in the state.

#### **OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY**

1. To know the economic condition of Sonowal women.
2. To investigate the problems that the women are facing.
3. To examine the occupational level of Sonowal women.

#### **METHODOLOGY**

For the purpose of the present study, both the primary and secondary data have been



used. For the primary data, a standard schedule has been prepared. The data were collected through direct interview. The secondary data were collected from books, journals and internet.

### **AREA OF STUDY**

The fieldwork for the present study was carried out in two Sonawal Kachari villages of Lakhimpur District, under Boginadi Development Block i.e. Kadam Kachari and Gagaldubi. Both the villages are located about 8 km and 10 km respectively from Lakhimpur town.

### **RESULTS AND ANALYSIS**

Table-1 : Age wise distribution of Sonawal Kachari married women

Age group	Frequency	Percentage
16-20	7	3.5 %
21-25	27	13.5 %
26-30	25	12.5 %
31-35	30	15 %
36-40	24	12 %
41-45	17	8.5 %
46-50	21	10.5 %
51-55	15	7.5 %
56-60	13	6.5 %
61-65	12	6 %
66-70	9	4.5 %
Total	200	100%

Table-1 Shows the age wise distribution of total women of the two villages. The age of the total women is divided into 11 groups with an interval of 5 years. From the table it is



seen that among the 11 age groups highest women are in the age group 31-35 that is 30(15%) followed by 13.5% and 12.5% are in the age group 21-25 and 26-30 respectively. Least of the women that is 3.5% are in the age group 16-20.

Table-2 : Distribution of women according to Educational status

Educational status	Frequency	Percentage
Up to class iv	21	10.5 %
Class v-vii	41	20.5 %
Class —viii-x	66	33 %
H.S	47	23.5 %
BA/BCom/BSc	19	9.5 %
Higher education	6	3 %
Total	200	100 %

Table-2 shows the educational status of the Sonowal women. From the table it is seen that educational level of women is higher in the category of class viii-X which is 33% followed by HS category which is 23.5%. The graduate women constitute 9.5% and least no of educated women is in the category of higher education that is only 3% of the total women.

Table-3(i) : Distribution of women according to occupation

Occupation	Frequency	Percentage
House Wife	37	18.5 %
WCJ	21	10.5 %
BCJ	142	71.5%
Total	200	100 %



Table-3(i) shows the distribution of Sonowal women according to their occupation. It is seen that the women who are engaged in BCJ (Blue collar Job), the frequency is the highest, that is 142(71.5%). Among total no of women 37 are House wife that is 18.5%. The lowest no of women are in the category of WBC (white collar job) that is 21 (10.5%).

Table-3(ii) : Distribution of women according to occupation-BCJ

Occupation	Frequency	Percentage
Agriculture	66	46.47 %
Farming (poultry, Cattle, pig, Fishery)	41	28.9 %
Weaving	26	18.3 %
business	9	6.33 %
Total	142	100 %

Table-3(ii) shows the distribution of Sonowal women according to Blue collar Job. It is seen that the highest no of women who are engaged in agriculture that is 66 (46.47%), followed by Farming that is 41 (28.9%). 26 (18.3%) women of the total 142, are weaver and 9 (6.33%) have small business.

### **SUGGESTIONS**

1. To improve the socio-economic condition of S. K population, government as well as their Autonomous Council should monitor their problems and take necessary step.
2. Other members of the family should give their support to the women member.

**CONCLUSION**

Sonowal Kachari women are in recent time very much interested to enhance their economic condition. It is seen from the study that most of the Sonowal are very poor. They have to face with the great obstacles in their day to day life. They have to do very hard labour to improve their economic condition.

The women of Sonowal Kachari are very active agriculturist. Agriculture is their main occupation. The kitchen gardening is also popular among them. They are also expert in weaving. They rear eri-worm and cocoons for silk and muga yarn. They also woven mekhela--chador (assamese costume of females), gamusa, chelleng chador etc. and sell those product. Some of them S. K women prepare their local wine 'rice bear' to sell and thereby earn money.

From the study it is seen that among the total women, some of the women are the member of Self Help Group (SHG). They perform all the activities equally to improve the economic condition of the family. Education and occupation has close relationship of any population. The female literacy and educational attainment contribute positively towards increase of female participation in workforce and non-agricultural activities and thereby improve the socio-economic condition of the society.

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