

Status of Socio-Economic Conditions of People in Morigaon District, Assam: A Geographical Analysis

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Abstract

Morigaon district is one of the less developed districts of Assam located in the central part of the State. Though the district is very close to state's capital Guwahati but the overall development of the district is lagging behind in terms of other districts of the state. Poor communication, lack of industrialization is some of the reason behind the poor economic development. Demographic characteristics, education, urbanization, occupational pattern, income, health facilities fairs and festivals etc. are some of the socio-economic indicators which show the socio-economic status of a place. This paper therefore, attempts to study the socio-economic conditions of Morigaon district from a geographical view point. However, the data collected for the study are mainly based on secondary sources.

Keywords: Socio-economic conditions, demography, Education, Occupational pattern,

Introduction

Socio-economic conditions, demographic characteristics, human development status, etc. are some important indicators which help to measure the level of development of any community or state (Dhar, 2014). There are a number of socio-economic and demographic factors which individually or collectively contribute to the socio-economic well-being of the people. Morigaon is predominantly an agro-based district and almost 92 percent of its population is still living in rural areas. The socio-economic conditions among the people in rural areas is very pathetic compared to urban area. The slow developmental activities of the district seriously impact on the

socio economic conditions of the people in the district. Hence, it is essential to study about the socio-economic condition because it shows the present socio-economic status of the people.

Study area

The present study encompasses the district of Morigaon, having latitudinal extension 26°9'0" and 26°30'0" North and longitudinal extension is 92°0'0" and 95°30'0" East. The district is divided into five revenue circle and occupied a total area of 1551 sq. km. representing about 1.98 % of the total geographical area of Assam.

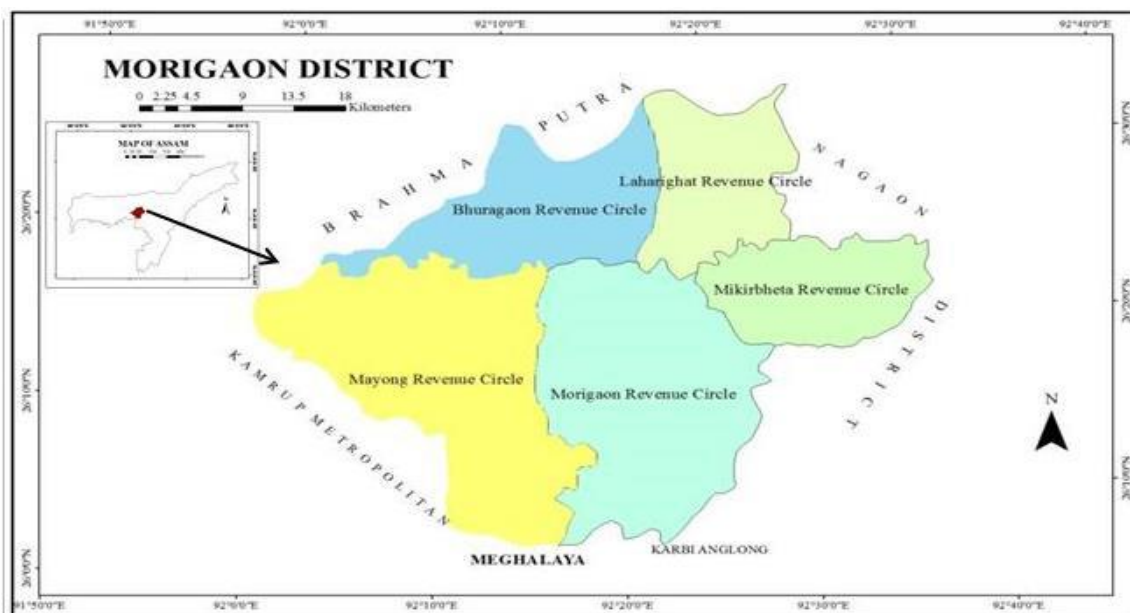


Fig 1: Location map of Morigaon

Methodology

The study has been carried out on the basis of information collected through secondary sources. These sources were derived from different government records, published book, journal, magazines etc. The data and information so acquired has been systematically organized and in order to analyze them judiciously various cartographic techniques were used. Apart from this ARC GIS 10.3 and Google Earth Pro were used for mapping purposes.

Result and Discussion

The study of any region cannot be meaningful without taking into consideration of the demographic characteristics of that region. The typical social and economic conditions prevalent in an area are essentially linked up with the demographic characteristics. Population is an important component in the whole process of socio-economic scenario of a region. It is more so because of its dual role as a producer and consumer. Thus, a proper study of its size, growth, composition and quality is considered prerequisite for an effective planning for balanced and sustainable socio-economic development of a region (Kar, 2001).

Table 1: Presents some demographic feature of Morigaon

Demographic features	2001	2011
Population	776256	957423
Male	51.39%	50.83%
Female	48.61%	49.17%
Decadal growth	21.35	23.34
Density	501 (Person/Sq. Km.)	617 (Person/Sq. Km.)
Sex ratio	946	967
Literacy	58.53%	68.03%
Male literacy	65.15%	71.90%
Female literacy	51.51%	64.04%
Urban population	4.90%	7.66%
Rural population	95.10%	92.34%
SC population	100346	117841
ST population	120730	136777

Source: Census of India, 2001, Statistical Handbook of Assam, 2018

Education

Education is the mirror which reflects the social and economic status of a State. Education is the most fundamental requirement for the overall development and all round development of a society (Neog, 2018). As a matter of fact, the quality of human population of any society can be judged through its educational attainment (Kar, 2001). But unfortunately, the district is lagging behind in respect of literacy and educational attainment than many other

districts of Assam. According to 2011 census, the literacy rate of Morigaon is 68.03 percent as against state's 72.19 percent. Though the literacy rate is found to be higher than many other districts like Dhubri, Darrang, Sonitpur, Kokrajhar, etc. it is notably lower than Kamrup metropolitan, Jorhat, Sivsagar, Golaghat, Dibrugarh, Dima Hasao, Karimganj, Cachar etc. Again there is also spatial variation in terms of literacy within the district. Highest literacy rate is found in Morigaon revenue circle (78.55%) and Mikirbheta (75.28%), whereas lowest literacy is recorded in Laharighat (59.15%) followed by Bhuragaon (63.44%). In rural, the total literacy rate is 66.6 percent with 70.46 percent males and 62.63 percent females. In urban, it is 84.17 percent, with 88.07 percent males and 80.09 percent females according to census 2011.

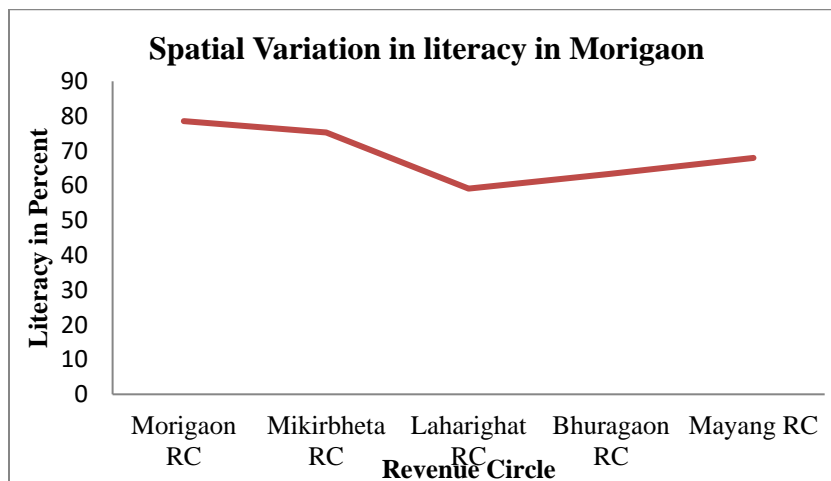


Fig 2: Spatial variation in literacy

Urban development

The urban centres play an important role in socio-economic development in any area as centres of dissemination of administration, trade and commerce, industry, culture, education etc (Bhuyan, 2001). It is, however, said that Morigaon is lagging much behind in respect of urban development compared to other districts like Kamrup Metropolitan, Nagaon, Jorhat, Sonitpur, Sivsagar, Dibrugarh etc.

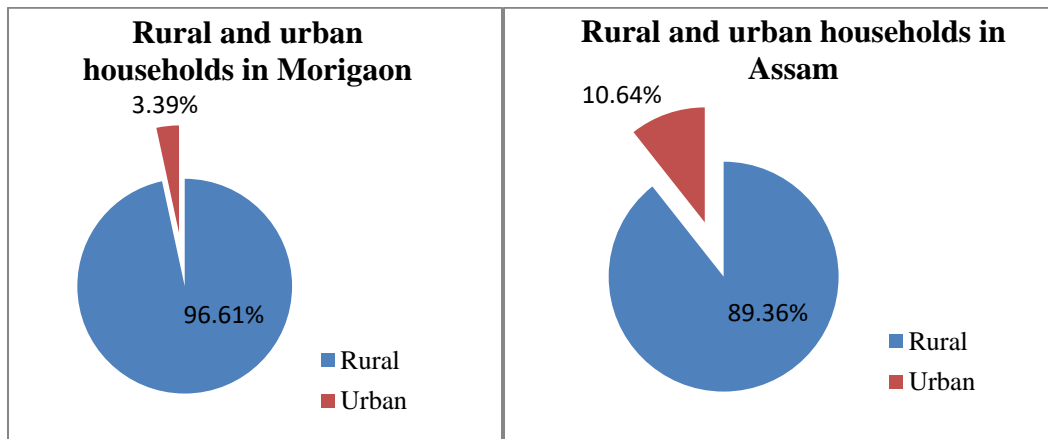


Fig 3: Percentage of households in rural and urban in Morigaon and Assam, 2011

Occupational pattern

Main occupation of people of the district is agriculture. It has been observed that about more than 77 percent of the households of the district have agricultural land including irrigated and non-irrigated and they engaged in agricultural activities either directly or indirectly. Among the five revenue circles in the district highest agricultural population is found in Bhuragaon and Laharighat revenue circle. Again it is also seen some households, who have lived on alms. According to Socio-Economic Caste Census, 2011, about 0.80% households with destitute or living on alms are recorded in the district.

Table 2: Different occupational pattern

Households with occupational pattern	Percentage of Household
Households with salaried job in government	6.19%
Households with salaried job in Public	0.37%
Households with salaried job in Private	0.92%
Households with Destitute/living on alms	0.80%
Landless households deriving major part of their income from manual casual labour	34.56%

Source: Socio-Economic Caste Census, 2011

Table 3: Income level of people of Morigaon

Revenue Circle	Monthly income of highest earning household member is < 5000	Monthly income of highest earning household member is 5000 - 10000	Monthly income of highest earning household member is > 10000	Household with government job and reporting monthly highest income > 5000
Mayang RC	78.14%	12.70%	9.16%	7.11%
Bhurbandha RC	85.06%	11.27%	3.67%	2.97%
Laharighat RC	84.53%	11.57%	3.90%	2.61%
Marigaon RC	79.60%	11.95%	8.45%	8.22%
Mikirbheta RC	78.35%	12.78%	8.86%	8.63%
District	81.02%	12.09%	6.89%	5.85%

Source: Socio-Economic Caste Census, 2011

From the above table 3 it can be concluded that the income level of the people of Morigaon is very low. The number of households with income below Rs.5000 is very high, which is 81.02% against the number of households with monthly income above Rs.10000 (6.89%).

Health

Good health not only increases productivity and earnings of an individual but also improve overall quality of life and socio-economic development of the general population. Health care performance in Morigaon has been improved over the years. These improvements are the outcomes of concentrated and continued effort of the government of Assam. The state government has taken initiatives to reduce regional disparities and gap in the access to safe drinking water, public and private health care facilities, sanitation facilities etc.

Table 4: Medical facilities available in Morigaon district

Name of CD block	VH	MHC	FWC	MPBD	MPD	MS	Others	NMF
Mayang	13	3	10	4	2	134	12	84
Laharighat	3	0	17	1	1	90	14	62

Mairabari (Part)	1	0	10	1	5	37	10	6
Bhurbandha	6	0	6	1	0	57	6	46
Kapili (Part)	1	0	1	1	1	17	1	4
Batadraba (Part)	0	0	1	0	1	2	1	0
Dulongghat (Part)	1	1	1	3	4	21	1	3

Source: District Census Handbook Marigaon, Census of India, 2011

NB: VH=Veterinary Hospital, MHC= Mobile health clinic, FWC= Family welfare centre, MPBD= Medical practioner (with MBBS Degree), MPD= Medical practioner (with other degree), MS= Medicine Shop, NMF- No medical facility

If we look at the drinking water facilities, then we find that people of the district collect water from different sources such as Tap water (treated/untreated), Well water (covered/ Uncovered well), Hand pump, Tubewell/ borewell, Spring, River/ canal, Tank/pond/ lake etc. From the table 5 it is cleared that still most of the people of the district deprived of safe drinking water facilities. According to District census handbook, 2011, 164 and 149 villages in the district have to rely on river/canal and tank/pond/ lake for drinking water respectively.

Table 5: Sources of drinking water availability in Morigaon

Source of drinking water	Number of villages
Tap water (treated/untreated)	302
Well water (covered/ Uncovered well)	407
Hand pump	574
Tubewell/ borewell	356
Spring	30
River/ canal	164
Tank/pond/ lake	149
Others	5

Source: District Census Handbook Marigaon, Census of India, 2011

Fairs and festivals

Morigaon is a land of fairs and festivals. Most of the festivals are celebrated in the district with full gaiety and mirth by the people of the district. Apart from *bihu*, the people of the district is also celebrated *Gosain Uliwa Mela* (God bringing out festival). This is held within Bohag Maah (from 14th April) to 2nd week of *Jeth Mah* (May) in different places at different dates within the above period. Another important festival is *Junbeel Mela* is a festival of communal harmony and integrity. It is held for three days just a week after Makar Sankranti in month of January. This festival is centered on ancient barter system

Conclusion

The level of socio-economic well-being is, in fact, the result of the cumulative performance of a number of related population attributes (Kar, 2001). But from the above discussion it is seen that socio-economic features of the district is not satisfactory. The rate of literacy is lower than the state's average, therefore the importance of female education is crucial because in all the revenue circle of Morigaon female literacy rate is very low as compared to male literacy. Apart from this, it is also seen than that the level of urbanization is also very low as compared to the other districts of Assam. Therefore, government should focus on the infrastructural development of the district. Though the people of the district heavily depend on agricultural but the annual recurrent of flood creates problem for which people of the district have to bear heavy loss be it personal properties of agricultural product. Thus, state government and other NGO should focus on potential measures to minimize the vulnerability of flood.

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