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## COMPARATIVE STUDY ON THE SOCIO-ECONOMIC CONDITIONS OF TRIBAL COMMUNITIES IN NAHORONI AND MODHUPUR DEORI FOREST VILLAGES, DIBRUGARH, ASSAM

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### Abstract:

Forest village is a settlement situated in or near forested regions, commonly inhabited by indigenous or tribal communities. These communities traditionally depend on the forest for their livelihood and cultural practices. Such villages are defined by their close connection to the natural environment, with the forest being central to their daily lives and economic activities. The socio-economic status of a forest village refers to the economic and social position of its residents within society. This particular study examines the socio-economic conditions concerning their housing condition, education, income levels, occupations and government schemes of tribal communities or scheduled tribe community living in forest villages in Dibrugarh district, Assam. The work is mainly based on primary data resources which are collected from with the help of qualitative and quantitative methods. The respondents should be selected randomly by using sequential list method. The head of the households were the respondents in the present paper.

**Keywords:** Scheduled tribe, Socio-economic condition, Forest village, Education, Occupation, Income

### 1.0 INTRODUCTION:

India is a hierarchical society. Society is a group of people who live together in community, following shared rules and traditions. It encompasses various aspect of human interaction, including family, education, economy and governance. Society changes over time with new ideas and technologies, shaping how people live and work together. Society and economic status are closely connected. Economic status affects access to education, healthcare, housing and jobs, shaping people quality of life and social opportunities. Socio-economic status (SES) refers to the social and economic rank of a person or group, based on factors like income, education, occupation, health. It reflects both financial access and social prestige, impacting access to resources and overall quality of life. Those with higher SES typically have better access to health-care, education and housing while those with lower SES may face limited resources, poorer health and fewer opportunities. The socio-economic conditions of Scheduled Tribe communities living in forest villages are deeply intertwined with their environment and traditional practices. In the Dibrugarh district of Assam, the forest villages of Nahoroni and Modhupur Deori exemplify this connection. These villages are inhabited by indigenous tribal communities that have long relied on the forest for their livelihood and cultural identity. The forest significantly shapes their daily lives, economic activities, and social structures.

Tribal community is a group of group of people who live together in a shared geographical area with a common culture, dialect and religion. India has the second largest tribal population in the world. Tribal communities live in about 15% of the country's areas in various ecological and geo-climatic conditions ranging from plains to forests, hills and inaccessible areas.

The term 'Scheduled Tribes' first appeared in the Constitution of India. Article 366 (25) defined scheduled tribes as "such tribes or tribal communities or parts of or groups within such tribes or tribal communities as are deemed under Article 342 to be Scheduled Tribes for the purposes of this constitution"<sup>1</sup>. According to 2011 Census, the ST population of Assam stands at 3.9 million. Fourteen communities currently enjoy ST status in the plains districts; 15 in the autonomous hill districts.<sup>2</sup>The tribes of Assam include a number of tribes namely; Chakma, Dimasa, Garo, Hajong, Jaintia, Khamti tribes, some Kuki tribes, Lakher, Barmans in Cachar, Deori, Hojai, Kachari, Sonwal, Lalung, Mech, Rabha who form the core of Tribal community of Assam<sup>3</sup>.

This study focuses on examining and comparing the socio-economic conditions of Scheduled Tribe communities in Nahoroni and Modhupur Deori. By investigating various factors such as housing, education, income levels, occupations,



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and the impact of government schemes, this research aims to provide a comprehensive understanding of the socio-economic status of these communities. This study will employ both qualitative and quantitative research methods, gathering primary data from the community members. The respondents will be selected randomly using a sequential list method to ensure a representative sample. The findings of this study will not only highlight the current socio-economic conditions but also provide insights into potential areas for development and policy intervention to improve the living standards of these tribal communities.

## 2.0 STUDY AREA:

The villages selected for study are Modhupur Deori FV, Modhupur Nahoroni FV are located in Dibrugarh district, Assam. Nahoroni forest village is located in Dibrugarh west subdivision of Dibrugarh district in Assam. It is situated 26km away from Dibrugarh district. The total geographical area of village is 144 hectares. There are 35 households in this village. Modhupur Deori forest village is situated 27km away from Dibrugarh district. The total geographical area of village is 147 hectares. Garudhoria is the gram panchayat of both these forest villages. Both villages are in remote area. The majority of caste in this area are schedule tribe mainly sonowal-kochari and deori community people.

Deori Tribes: Deori tribe is a major part of tribal community of Assam. They are settled in the districts of Dibrugarh, Tinsukia, Sibsagar and Lakhimpur.

Kachari Tribe: They are considered to have reached the Brahmaputra valley via Tibet or southern China and settled in the foothills of the eastern Himalayan range which includes the whole of Assam, Tripura, North Bengal and parts of Bangladesh.

## 3.0 OBJECTIVES:

- 3.1. To find out the educational attainment of both sampled forest villages.
- 3.2. To examine income level of Nahoroni and Modhupur Deori forest village.
- 3.3. To find out present occupational pattern of the sampled forest villages.
- 3.4. To study the family pattern of sampled Forest villages.
- 3.5. To investigate housing conditions of sample villages.
- 3.6. To examine the Government schemes implementations.

## 4.0 HYPOTHESIS

- H1.1. Agriculture is a significant determinant of economic prosperity in these villages.”
- H1.2. Various Government schemes are implementing properly.
- H1.3. Housing conditions are poor in both villages.
- H1.4. Villagers have a high interest in entrepreneurships.
- H1.5 Villages are accessible of high school and higher secondary school education.

## 5.0 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The study involves survey and case-study method of research mainly based on primary data. Primary data collected from the respondents with the help of interview, interview scheduled and observation. Purposive sampling will be conducted to



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select a representative sample of 100 households from the 149 households in Nahoroni and Modhupur Deori Forest Village, Dibrugarh, Assam. To conduct this research, we will utilize a multi-method approach, incorporating self-constructed interview, door-to-door survey method, personal interview and structured questionnaire. For the collection of qualitative data collection personal interviews of elderly villagers are conducted.

6.0 FINDINGS:

Social and economic status of a particular community represents its socio-economic well-being and various factors such as standards of living, income levels, housing conditions, family size, educational attainment and health situation. These characteristics are helpful to find out the socio-economic status of the villages.

6.1.1 Educational attainment:

Education plays a crucial role in defining human –elephant conflict. Communities with higher levels of education tend to have a better understanding of elephant behaviour and conservation practices. They are more likely to adopt strategies to mitigate conflicts, such as building barriers or implementing early warning system. Conversely, areas with lower levels of education may struggle to implement effective solutions, leading to increased incidents of conflict due to misunderstanding and inadequate preventive measures.

Table:1: Parent’s educational level of the sampled Forest villages

LEVEL OF EDUCATION	NAHORONI (%)	MODHUPUR DEORI (%)
1. Illiterate	42.85%	10.76%
2. Primary level(Class 1-8)	21.42%	22.3%
3. Secondary level (Class 9-10)	23.81	38.41%
4. Up to HS level (10+2)	10.5%	21.53%
5. Graduate	1.42%	6.24%
6.Post graduate	0%	0%
7.Vocational Education	0%	0%
8.Technical Education	0%	0.76%
Total	100%	100%

[Source: Field survey]

The above table 1 reveals that in the Nahoroni Forest village 42.85% of parents have attained an illiterate level of education, which 21.42%parents are up to primary level, 23.81% are up to secondary level, 10.5% are HS passed. A small proportion, 1.42% parent are completed graduation. In this FV no individuals have reached post- graduation, vocational education and technical education.

In Modhupur Deori Forest village, 10.76% of parents are illiterate, 22.3% are up to primary level, 38.41% are up to secondary level, 21.53% are HS passed, 6.24% are completed graduation and a small proportion, 0.76% completed technical education such as junior engineering. No parent are in this village have reached post-graduate, vocational education and technical education.



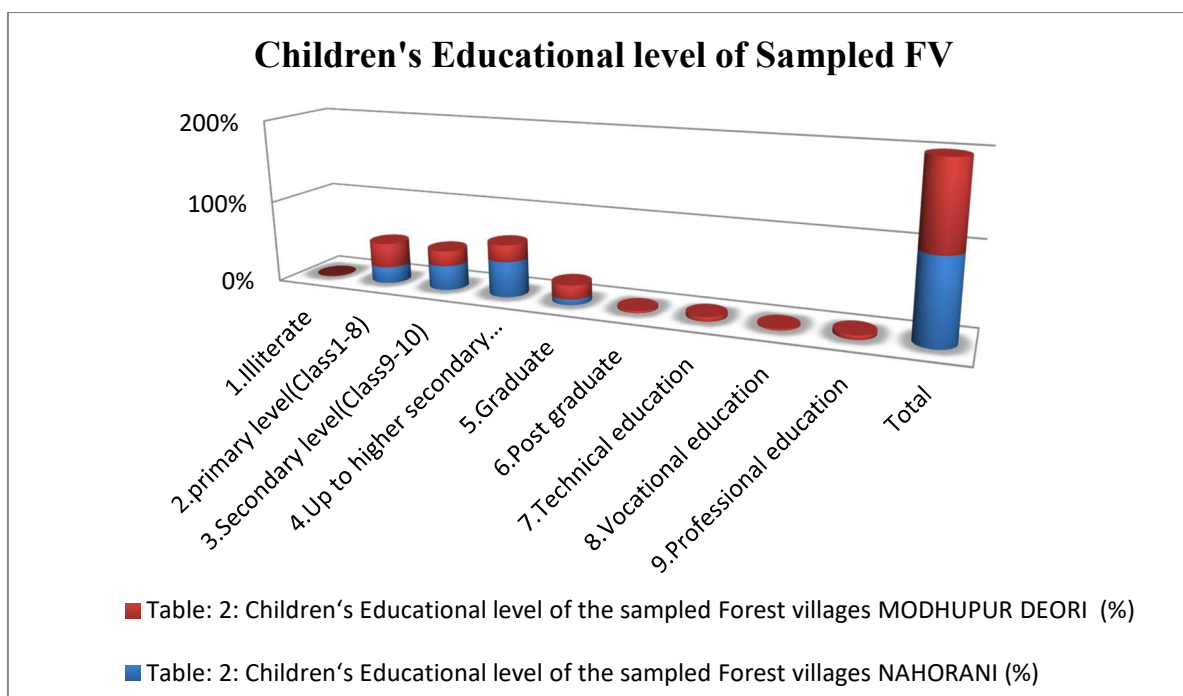
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**Table: 2: Children’s Educational level of the sampled Forest villages**

LEVEL OF EDUCATION	NAHORANI (%)	MODHUPUR DEORI (%)
1.Illiterate	0%	0%
2.primary level(Class1-8)	20.1%	29.74%
3.Secondary level(Class9-10)	30%	18.44%
4.Up to higher secondary level(Class10+2)	43.3%	20.5%
5.Graduate	6.6%	16.9%
6.Post graduate	0%	2.5%
7.Technical education	0%	5.12%
8.Vocational education	0%	1.7%
9.Professional education	0%	5.12%
Total	100%	100%

[Source: Field survey]



*Fig.no.2. Children’s Educational levels of both sampled forest villages*



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In above table2, in terms of educational level in Nahoroni FV 43.3% children have reached the higher secondary level, 30% are up to matriculation , 20.1% have completed primary education, A minority, 6.6 have attained graduate level education. There are no children have reached postgraduate, technical, vocational and professional education within the survey group.

In Deori FV 20.5% children have reached the higher secondary level, 18.44%% are up to matriculation, 29.74% have completed primary education, 16.9% have attained graduate level education. A small portion of children have reached postgraduate i. e 2.5%, 5.12% are completed technical education like polymer engineering, junior engineering etc. 1.5% are vocational courses like embroidery, weaving etc. and 5.12% are completed professional education such as MBBS, Nursing, etc. within the survey group.

During field study it is observed that there are only one primary school in both villages. There have no high school or higher secondary school in the village. But it is also seen that the level of education among them is gradually increasing, which is positive sign for development.

6.1.2 Annual Income level of the villagers (%)

Annual income can influence human-elephant conflict in several ways. Higher income levels can lead better infrastructure such as sturdy fencing or barriers, to protect crops or settlements from elephant incursions. Additionally, increased income may enable communities to invest in alternative livelihoods or technologies that reduce reliance on activities that bring humans into conflict with elephants such as agriculture in elephant habitants. But when they have less money, they might have to keep farming in those areas, which leads to more clashes with elephants and bigger money problems.

Table:3: Income of the Sampled households

PARTICULARS	NAHORONI (%)	MODHUPUR DEORI (%)
Less than 50,000	8.6%	3.1%
50,000-1,00,000	28.6%	4.7%
1,00,000-1,50,000	34.2%	10.7%
1,50,000-2,00,000	28.6%	23.1%
2,00,000-3,00,000	0%	23.1%
Above -3,00,000	0%	35.3%
Total	100%	100%

[Source: Field Survey]

In the table3, the income distribution among affected households in Nahoroni FV shows that 8.6% of households earn less than 50,000 rupees, while 28.6% earn between 50,000 to 1lakh rupees. Additionally, 34.2% fall within the income of 1lakh to 2lakh rupees. Another 28.6% earning between 1.5 lakh to 2 lakh rupees. There are no households reporting between 2lakh to 3 lakh and above 3lakh rupees. Overall, the varied income levels of Nahoroni FV within the lower to middle income range.

In Modhupur deori FV, the data reflects that 3.1% households earn less than 50,000 rupees. While 4.7% earn between 50,000 to 1lakh rupees, 10.7% fall within the income of 1lakh to 1.5lakh rupees, 23.1% earn between 1.5 lakh to 2lakh rupees. Equally 23.1 % are 2lakh to 3lakh. Notably a significant proportion, 35.3% of households earn above 3lakh rupees.

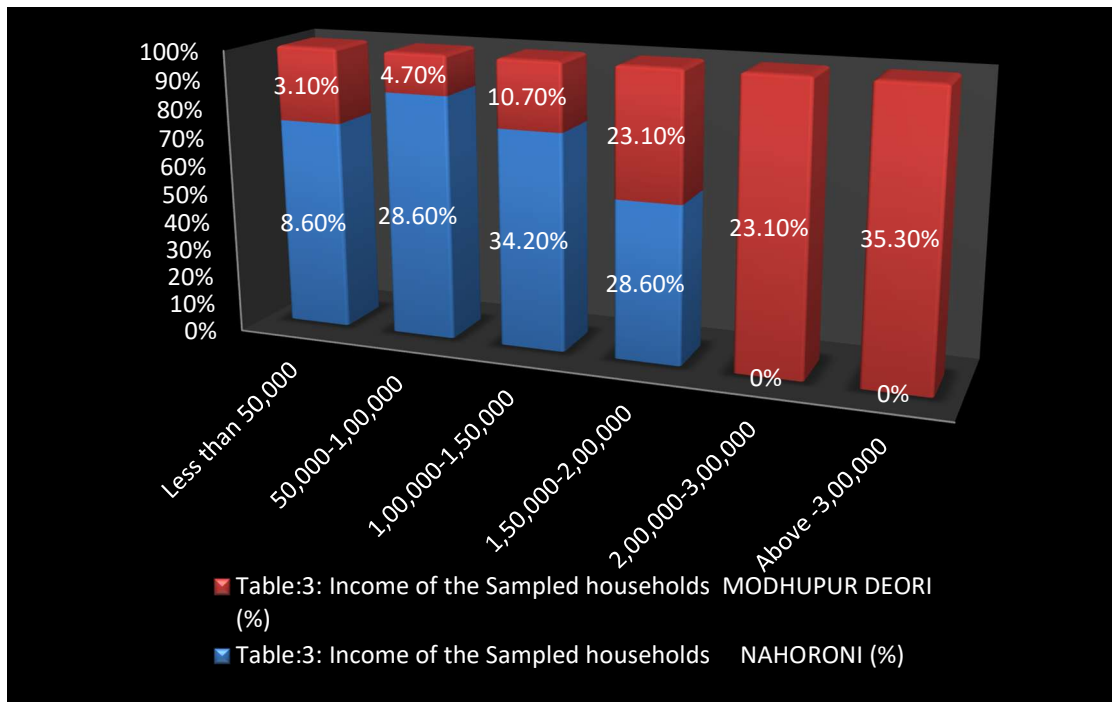


Fig.no.3. Income levels of sampled villages

### 6.1.3 Occupation pattern:

Occupation in elephant-affected area plays a significant role in shaping how communities interact with and manage the impacts of human-elephant conflict. The primary occupation in the sampled villages mainly agriculture, fishing, dairy farming, business, both private and public sector, self-employed etc.

Table:4: Occupational pattern of households of the sampled villages

NATURE OF OCCUPATION	NAHORONI (%)	MODHUPUR DEORI (%)
Cultivation	39.6%	20%
Fishing	12.0%	9%
Business	5.1%	14.4%
Dairy farm	0%	7.9%
Private Job	10.3%	6.6%
Govt. Job	26%	31.1%
Unemployment	7%	5.5%
Self-employed	0%	2.2%
Entrepreneur	0%	3.3%
Total	100%	100%

[Source: Field survey]

The above table 4 reveals that, in the both sampled forest villages the occupation pattern are as follows-

**Cultivation:** Agriculture is primary source of livelihood for the people in Nahoroni forest village, 39.6% of peoples are engaged in cultivation of Nahoroni village and 20% people are Deori village. In this village, it is observed that paddy is



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the main agricultural product and they are doing two times seasonable crops in a year. Two seasons like winter and summer cultivation. Winter cultivation crops are mainly mustard, potatoes, spinach, cabbage, cauliflower, banana, lemon, mangoes, tomato, lady finger, carrot, Sali paddy etc. Summer cultivation crops mainly paddy, vegetables (cucumber, bottle gourd, corn, brinjals, chilli, green leafy vegetables), fruits (papaya, mango, litchi, watermelon) etc. There are mainly different types of paddy namely lahi, hali and baw varieties, on a medium scale cultivation.

**Fishing:** 12% are engaged in fishing of Naharoni forest village and 9% of Modhupur Deori Forest Village. In both sampled villages, fish is not only a means of livelihoods but also integral part of culture and social fabric of the community. Fish are collected from Dehingmukh reserved forest .Forest’s river, lake, ponds and flood teeming are fish source making it an important source for local fisherman. Local fisherman commonly use methods like cast net fishing (jhaki jal), where they throw a circular net with weights into the water and pull it back to catch fish. They also use gill nets (Phansi jal), which are set in the water to trap fishing (dori), where bamboo or reed traps are placed in water bodies to catch fish passively. Fishing activities peak during monsoon season where river and ponds swells making fish more active to catch. This region mainly rich in rohu, catla, mrigal etc. After fishing, the fresh fish usually brought in local market. Sometime they sell fishes in door-to-door and street-sides. About the price of this fish are mainly depends on size, quality, and rare fish costing more. Market price can change based on demand, quantity, the season how much fish is available.

**Business:** Small proportion of population i.e 5.1% are engaged in business in Naharoni forest village and 14.4% are engaged in Modhupur Deori forest village such as vegetable selling, fish selling, grocery shop etc.

**Dairy farming:** Dairy farming in Deori Forest Village is a vital part of the local economy and provides essential nutrition to the community. 7.5% of population are engaged in dairy farming in this village. Most dairy farms are small and family-owned, with farmers keeping a few cows or buffaloes. They typically raise local breeds that are easier to manage and resistant to diseases. Farmers feed their animals with locally available fodder and crop by products, supplementing with dry feed during certain seasons. Farmers sell the milk directly to consumer, local vendors or through cooperatives, which helps ensures fair price.

**Private Service:** In Naharoni Forest village, 10.3% are engaged in private job such as works private school teacher, drivers, nurse etc. And 6.6% are engaged in Modhupur Deori Forest village. Private services like as teacher, private nurse, gas cracker etc.

**Government Service:** 20% of population are engaged in govt. service in Naharoni forest village. Lots of population, 31.1% are engaged in government service in Modhupur deori village like doctor, police, teacher, ranger, nurse, engineer, army etc.

**Unemployment:** In Naharoni village, there still 7% unemployment, indicating challenges in finding work and 5.5% unemployment are in Deori FV.

**Self employed:** 2.2% of people are self employed in Modhupur deori forest villages.

**Entrepreneur:** 3.3% of people are entrepreneur of their own business in Modhupur Deori forest village.

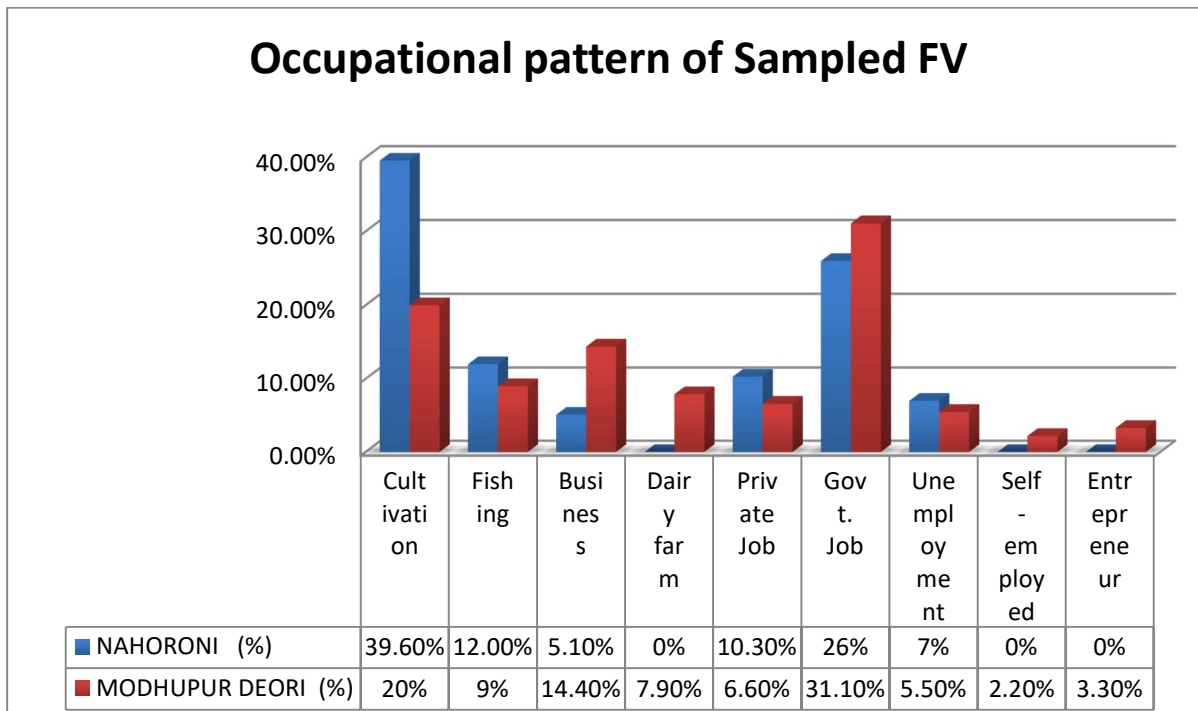


Fig.no.4. Occupational pattern of sampled FV

#### 6.1.4 Family pattern

Family size can affect elephant habitats. Larger families need more land, encroaching on elephant territory while smaller families have less environmental impact. Family dynamics influence views on conservation and conflict resolution. Strong family ties can foster cooperation for sustainable coexistence, whereas internal conflicts can obstruct conservation efforts.

Table: 5: Types of family of sampled villages

TYPES OF FAMILY	NAHORANI (%)	MODHUPUR DEORI (%)
Nuclear family	51.44%	36.9%
Joint family	34.28%	40%
Extended family	14.28%	23.1%

[Source: Field survey]

In the table 5 we observed that, in Nahoroni FV 51.44% households are belongs to nuclear family, 34.28% are belongs to joint family and 14.28% are belongs to extended family. In Deori FV 36.9% households are belongs to nuclear family, 40% are belongs to joint family and 23.1% are belongs to extended family.

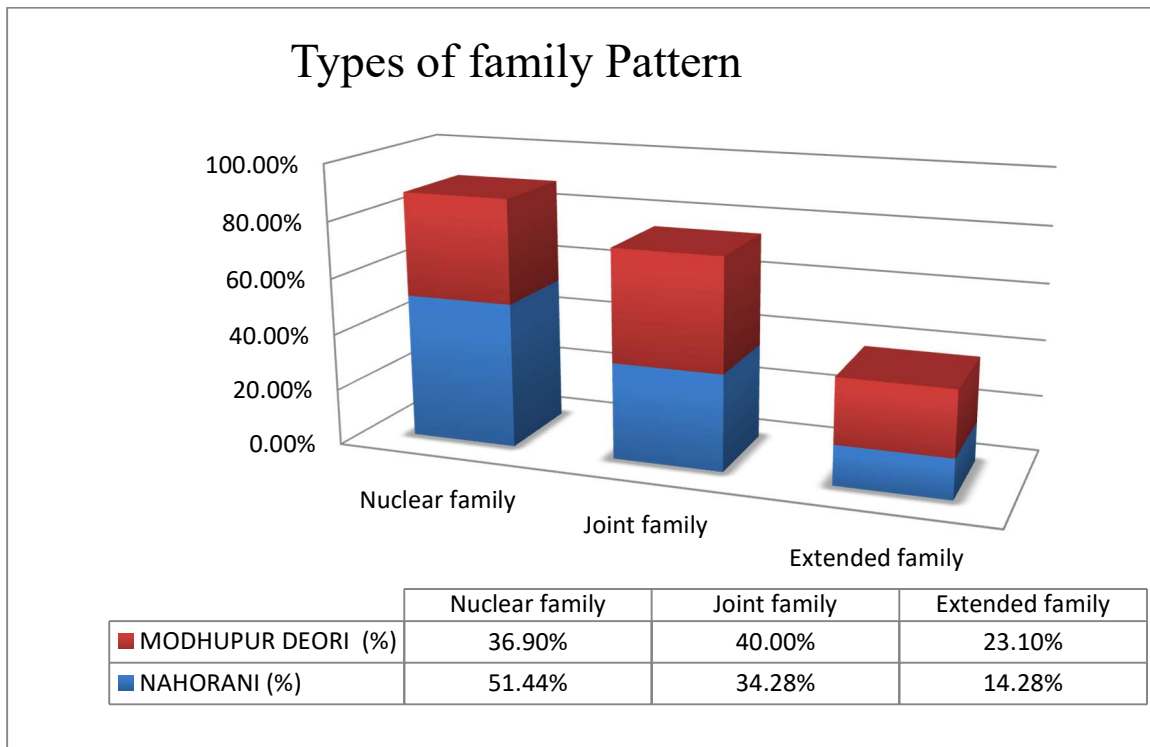


Fig.no.5 Family pattern of sampled forest villages

### 6.1.5 Housing condition

Housing conditions in areas with elephants affect both people and elephants. Weak houses are easily damaged by elephant. Better housing can reduce damage from elephants and help with better land use, lowering conflict.

Table:6: House types of sampled villages

HOUSE TYPES	NAHORANI (%)	MODHUPUR DEORI(%)
Kaccha	85.8%	15.3%
Pacca	14.2%	84.7%

[Source: Field survey]

In the table 6, we observed that, in Nahorani Village, the majority of houses are kaccha, which means they are constructed from mud, bamboo and other local materials. Specifically, 85.8% of the houses in Nahorani are kaccha, while only 14.2% are pacca, which are made from more durable materials like bricks, concrete, steel, tiles and cement. In contrast, Modhupur Deori Village has a higher percentage of pacca houses. Here, 84.7% of the houses are pacca, like – RCC, Assam type, indicating better construction quality and durability. Only 15.3% of the houses in Modhupur Deori are kaccha.



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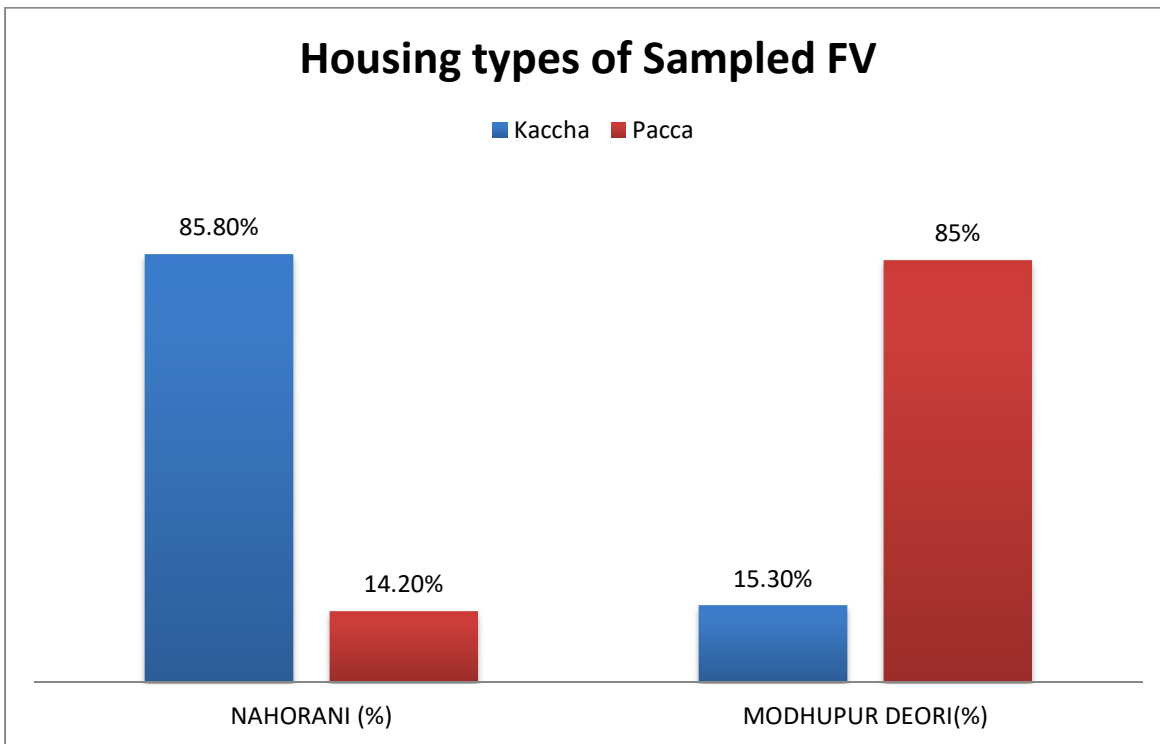


Fig.no.6. Housing types of Sampled forest villages

### 6.1.6 Government Schemes

Table: 7: Government schemes available in sampled villages

NAME OF SCHEME	NAHORONI (%)	MODHUPUR DEORI (%)
Ayushman card	31.42%	32.30%
Ujjala(PMUUY)	37.14%	27.69%
Jal Jeevan Mission	0%	0%
PM Kishan	65.71%	20%
Antyodaya Anna Yojana(AAY)	57.14%	56.92%
RAY scheme	14.2%	6.15%
Arunodoi Scheme	22.85%	20%
Old age Pension Scheme	2.85%	0%

[Sources: Field Survey]

**NOTE:** All above percentage of Nahoroni forest village are calculated by out of 35 households and 65 households are Modhupur Deori forest village.

Based on a field survey, the availability of various government schemes in two sampled villages, Nahoroni and Modhupur Deori, has been analysed. In Nahoroni, 31.42% of households have access to the Ayushman Card, while in Modhupur Deori, the figure is 32.30%. For the Ujjala(PMUUY) scheme, 37.14% of households in Nahoroni benefit from it compared to 27.69% in Modhupur Deori. Both villages report no access to the Jal Jeevan Mission. However, the PM Kishan scheme reaches 65.71% of households in Nahoroni but only 20% in Modhupur Deori. The Antyodaya Anna Yojana(AAY) covers 57.14% of households in Nahoroni and 56.92% in Modhupur Deori. The RAY scheme is accessed by 14.2% of



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households in Nahoroni and 6.15% in Modhupur Deori forest village. The Arunodoi Scheme benefits 22.85% of households in Nahoroni and 20% in Modhupur Deori. Lastly, the old age Pension Scheme is available to 2.85% of households in Nahoroni, while it is not accessed by any households in Modhupur Deori village. The percentages for Nahoroni are calculated based on a sample of 35 households, whereas for Madhupur Deori, that sample includes 65 households.

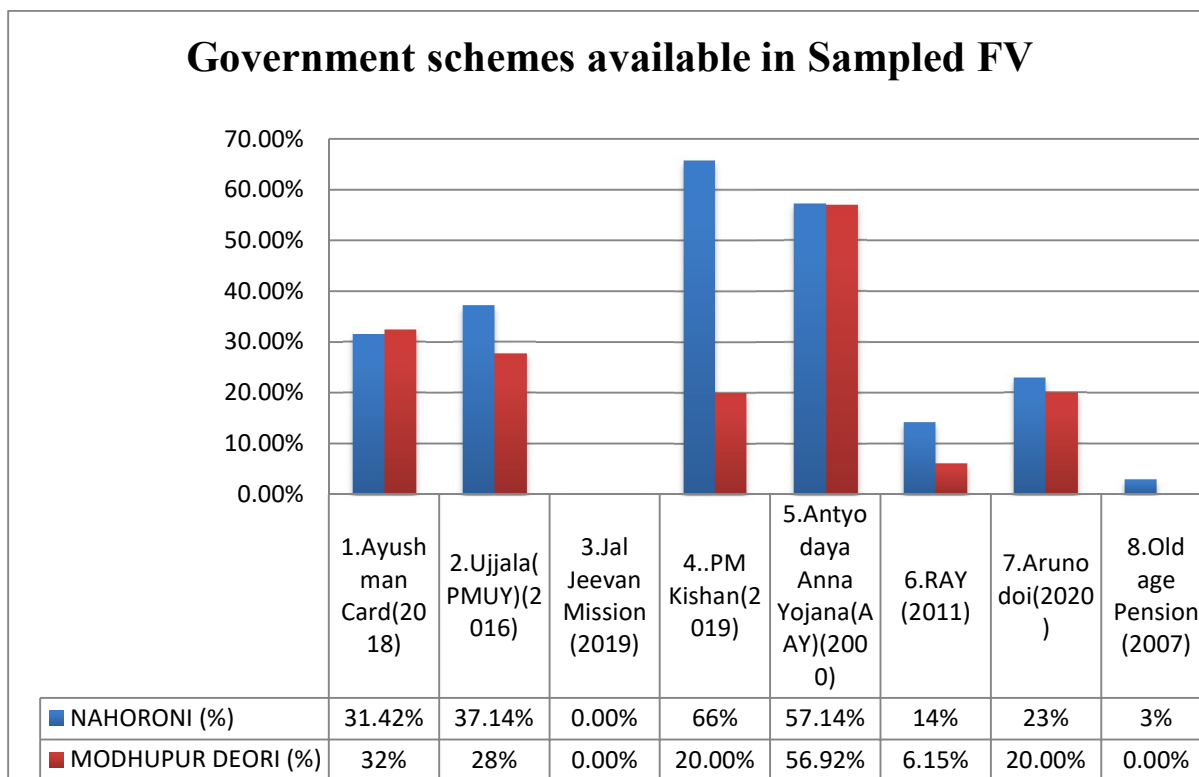


Fig.no.7. Government Schemes available in Sampled Forest villages

## 7.0 TESTING HYPOTHESIS

1. The hypothesis ‘‘ Agriculture is a significant determinant of economic prosperity in these villages’’ stands proved. We can see that, agriculture sector significantly influences the economic well-being of these villages. Most of the people serve as their livelihoods depend heavily on agriculture.

2. The hypothesis’’ Various Government schemes are implementing properly’’ stands proved. We can see that, most of the government schemes like Ayushman card, Ujjala (PMUY), PM Kishan, Antyodaya Anna Yojana(AAY), RAY scheme, Arunodoi Scheme are implementing properly in these villages. Only Old age Pension Scheme and Jal jeevan mission are not implementing properly.

3. The hypothesis’’ Housing conditions are poor in both villages’’ stands disproved. We see that, the housing condition in Nahoroni FV is notably poor. This observation highlights a critical area of concern where inadequate housing infrastructure negatively impacts the quality of life and overall well-being of the community members. Conversely, Modhupur Deori FV has better housing conditions.



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4. The hypothesis ‘‘ Villagers have a high interest in entrepreneurs’’ stands disproved. We can see that, only a small percentage (3.3) have expressed such interest. This indicates that the interest in entrepreneurship among villagers is quite limited.

5. The hypothesis ‘‘Villages are accessible of high school and higher secondary school education’’ stands disproved. We can that, no high school and higher secondary school in these villages.

### 8.0 PROBLEM FACED BY VILLAGERS:

Some of the major problems and issues faced by the forest villagers are-

1. There is lack of higher education institutions in both villages.
2. Primary health care centers are not available in these villages.
3. Flooding is identified as the main cause of issues in the village.
4. Lack of proper vocational guidance.
5. Poor road connectivity and availability of transportation.
6. Poor network connectivity. No network tower in these villages.
7. Lack of awareness about use of technology, health care, environment conservation.

### 9.0 SUGGESTIONS:

There are suggestions to improve the socio-economic status of these villages.

- Government should promote online learning options to facilitate remote education opportunities.
- Arrange health camps weekly or monthly for providing basic healthcare services.
- Educate villagers on flood responses.
- Conduct career counselling sessions and workshops to guide villagers on vocational opportunities.
- Improved road connectivity and availability of transportations.
- Government should provide proper network connectivity.
- Some agricultural pattern and skill development training are needed in this area.
- Villagers have to get knowledge about using technology, aware about health care facilities.

### 10.0 CONCLUSION:

According to this study, socio-economic status of tribal communities in Nahoroni and Modhupur Deori forest villages, Dibrugarh district, Assam provides valuable insights into the conditions and challenges faced by these communities. The study reveals significant disparities in access to education, healthcare, occupation, income, family size, house pattern between both villages. In this study we see that, the villagers comprehend many problems like health condition, transportation, network connectivity, lack of proper guidance and also faced the problem of natural calamity like flood. Modhupur Deori FV exhibits higher level of infrastructure development and educational attainment compared to Nahoroni FV. Moreover, governmental policies aimed at tribal welfare need to be more effectively implemented in both villages to ensure sustainable socio-economic development.



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