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Socio-Economic and Demographic status of Assam: A comparative analysis of Assam with India

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Abstract

The status of various indicators like, Socio-economic height, representation of demographic, human development ranking etc. can give us a rough picture about our economy. Assam is one of among the eight Sister States of North East India. It is the land of hills, valleys, mighty river Brahmaputra. The paper is based on the secondary data. The broad objective of the paper is to highlight the various facts & figures of Assam and compare these with facts & figures of all India averages. The analysis of the data shows that, though in some cases the performance of state Assam is satisfactorily than the all India average. But in major other areas, the position and performance of Assam is not satisfactorily compared to the all India average. In case of various socio-economic, demographic, human development indicators Assam is far behind from India.

Key Wards: Socio-economic condition, Demographic status, Human development rank, Gender development, Nutrition status etc.

Socio-economic condition and representation of demographic, human development status etc. are some important indicators which help to measure the development level of any community or state. According to Afzal (1995) and Bose (2006) development of medical science has improved the longevity of human population at the same time there are strong and well documented associations between health and socio-economic and other factors. There are number of Socio-economic and demographic factors which individually or collectively contribute to long life and well being for the people. Improved sanitation, increased attention to maternal health and better child care facilities greatly reduced infant mortality. Demographic increase in the population of the aged and increase in life expectancy is an indication of development of a society and as the nations trying to improve their socio-economic condition (United Nations 1999). According to Deka & Nath (2011), among the various factors responsible for the human longevity and high growth of population, a few socio-demographic factors namely sex, place of residence, education, personal income, health rate, marital status, occupation status, caste and leisure time activity have been identified. Jyoti kumar and Lalhunthara (2012), found in their study on socio-economic background like Education, experience, age and family play an important role in shaping the ambition of the aspirant of the people.

The state Assam is situated in the North-East India, which is the land of hills, valleys, mighty river Brahmaputra and land of Mother Goddess Kamakhya. The name "Assam" is derived from the Sanskrit term "Asom" meaning unequal or unrivalled. Assam is the largest state considering its population & geographical area among the eight Sister States of North East India. The state Assam is sharing her border with 7 states like Arunachal Pradesh, Manipur, Meghalaya, Mizoram, Nagaland and West Bengal. Assam with her geographical area of 78,438 sq. kms. i.e. about 2.4 percent of the country's total geographical area, provides shelter to 2,58 percent of the population of the country. The population of Assam is about 31,169,272 as in 2011 census, of which 15,954,927 are males and 15,214,345 are females. The sex ratio (females per 1000 males) is 954 and the female literacy ratio is 73.18 percent.

In Assam, most of the population lives in the fertile and verdant valleys of its two major river systems in the twenty four districts of the Brahmaputra valley and the three districts of the Barak valley. The two hill districts namely- Karbi-Anglong and Dima Hasao, separated the two valleys and are comparatively less densely populated. Presently, the State has 27 districts including Kamrup (Metro) district and four districts under the Bodoland Territorial Council (BTC) areas viz. Kokrajhar, Baska, Chirang and Udalguri. This paper is based on the secondary data. The main objective of the study is to explore the socio-economic condition, demographic features and representation of human development status of people of Assam and its comparison analysis with all India figures.

Assam is predominantly a rural based state, almost 86 per cent of its population still living in rural areas. The socio-economic position among the people in rural areas is very pathetic compare to urban area & all India figures. Rural poverty is more than twice that of urban poverty. The population growth in Assam also implied that there has hardly been any reduction in the absolute number of the poor over the years.

Demographically, the state Assam is characterized by with her population, which is 31 million compare to all India total 1210 million as per 2011 census. Population density of Assam is calculated as 397 per sq. km which is little high compare to national figure 382 per sq. km.

Table-1

The Demographic Indicators of Assam & India			
Sl No.	Category	Assam	India
		2011	2011
1	Population (crore)	31169272	121.02
2	Percentage contribution to national population	2.58	100
3	Population Density (per sq. km.)	397	382.
4	Sex Ratio (females per 1000 males)	954	940
5	Under 6 sex ratio (females per 1000 males)	957	914

Source: Census of India 2011, Provisional Tables, Registrar General of India, & RBI Handbook of Statistics on Indian Economy and Economic Survey of India 2010-11

The above Table -1 also reveals that sex ratio which shows slight better picture of state Assam than national figure. In category of sex ratio among children, below 6 years, performance of Assam is better compare to all India figure.

The population growth is an important demographic indicator reflects the direction of socio-economic forces. Inter decadal growth rate in population is the best way to study about the population growth of any state.

Table-2

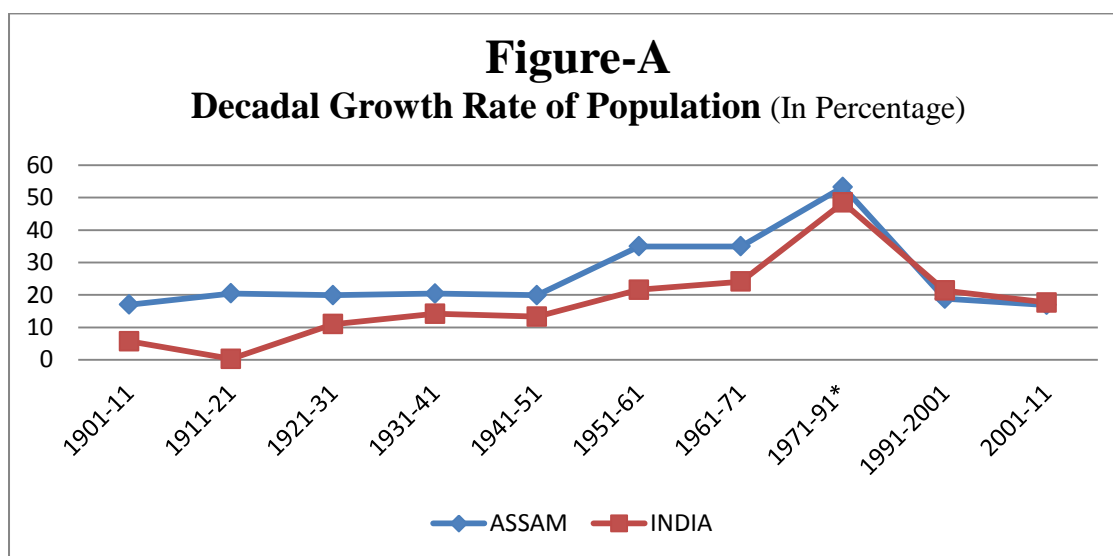
Decadal Growth Rate of Population (in percentage)			
Sl. No.	Year	Assam	India
1	1901-11	16.99	5.7
2	1911-21	20.48	0.3
3	1921-31	19.91	11.0
4	1931-41	20.40	14.2
5	1941-51	19.93	13.3

6	1951-61	34.98	21.6
7	1961-71	34.95	24.1
8	1971-91*	53.26	48.5
9	1991-2001	18.85	21.34
10	2001-11	16.93	17.64

Source: Census Report, Govt. of India in various years.

*No census held in Assam in 1981. As such instead of 1971-81, the period 1971-91 is computed.

In the above table, Assam has shown high rate of growth of population, which is higher than the country's average growth



Source: Census Report, Govt. of India in various years.

*No census held in Assam in 1981. As such instead of 1971-81, the period 1971-91 is computed.

Both the Table-2 and Figure- A shows the comparative decadal variation in population growth in Assam and the country as a whole. Table-2 also shows that, both in the pre and post independence period, Assam is having a higher rate of growth of population than India as a whole. However, for the years in the 2001 & 2011 census it was found that the same were lower compared to the all India percentage.

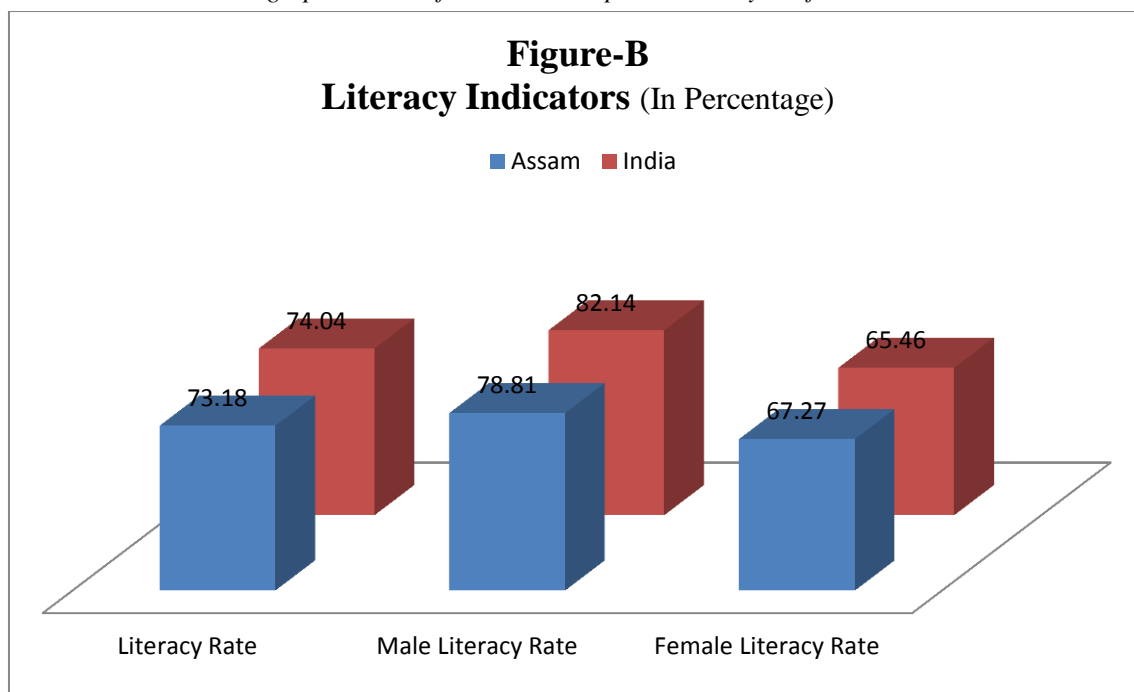
Table-3 and figure-B shows the scenario of literacy rate of both total and male-female category for Assam and India as a whole.

Table-3

Literacy Status of Assam & India			
Sl. No.	Literacy Indicators	Assam	India
		2011	2011
1	Literacy Rate (%)	73.18	74.04
2	Male Literacy Rate (%)	78.81	82.14
3	Female Literacy Rate (%)	67.27	65.46

Source: Census of India 2011, Provisional Tables, Registrar General of India, & RBI Handbook of Statistics on Indian Economy and Economic Survey of India 2010-11

Educational status is very important in the assessment of human development in a country or in a region. The census of 2011 revealed large interstate variations in literacy rates within the country. The literacy rate in Assam is 73.18 percent (male 78.81, female 67.27) and for India 74.04 percent (male 82.14, female 65.46).



Source: Census of India 2011, Provisional Tables, Registrar General of India, & RBI Handbook of Statistics on Indian Economy and Economic Survey of India 2010-11

Total Literacy rate and Male Literacy rate of the Assam indicates a little poor performance compare to all India figure. But in case female literacy rate, Assam showing better performance compare to the all India level.

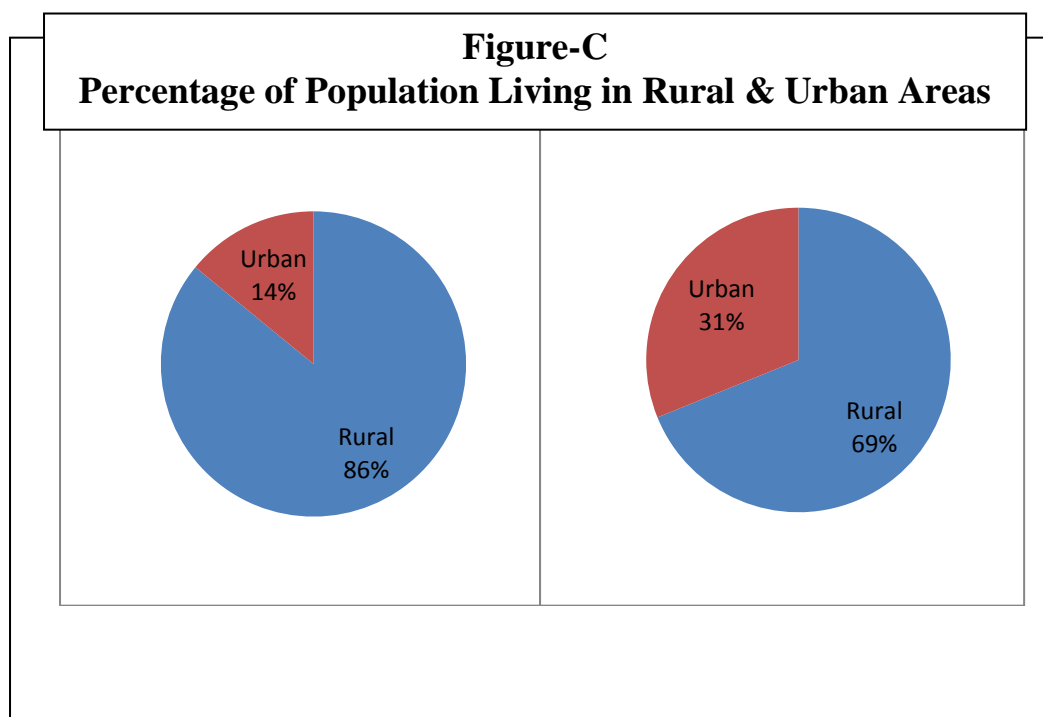
The following Table-4 & figure-C highlights the facts of Rural-Urban Composition of Population both in Assam and India.

Table-4

Rural-Urban Composition of Population			
Sl. No.	Category	Assam	India
		2011	2011
1	Rural	85.92	68.84
2	Urban	14.08	31.16
3	Total	100	100

Source: Provisional Population Totals Paper 2 of 2011 India Series 1

Similar to the country as a whole, the Assam also represents a predominantly rural based population composition. The Census Report of 2011 reveals that the rural population in India is 68.84 percent of the total population. For Assam it is 85.92 percent. Thus the urban population of Assam is only 14.08 percent. On the other hand, all India figure indicate almost 31.16 percent of the population residing in urban centers.



Source: Provisional Population Totals Paper 2 of 2011 India Series 1

The data of the table clearly indicates that Assam is a subsistence agricultural economy and the process of urbanization is very slow in the state. Percentage share of rural population in the state is higher than the national average share.

The per capita income provides an idea of economic condition mainly about the standard of living of the people. A comparative depiction of per capita income as well as the contribution of different sectors of Assam and India is given in the table- 5.

Table-5

Economic Indicators of Assam & India			
Sl. No.	Category	Assam	India
		2009-10	2009-10
1	Gross state domestic Product for Assam & Gross domestic product of India (at factor cost) (Rs crores)	69923.65	4493743
2	Contribution of Agriculture to NSDP/GDP (%)	24.44	14.62
3	Contribution of Industry to NSDP/GDP (%)	13.68	20.16
4	Contribution of Services to NSDP/GDP (%)	61.89	65.22
5	Per Capita Net State Domestic Product (factor cost) (Rs) (for State) & Per Capita Net Domestic Product (factor cost) (Rs) (For India)	20279	33708
6	NDP Growth rate (%) (for State) & GDP Growth Rate (%) (for India)	7.73	8

Source: RBI Handbook of Statistics on Indian Economy and Economic Survey of India 2010-11

The economy of Assam at present is remarkably sustained by the service sector. The Per Capita Net Domestic Product of Assam is only Rs.20279, which is much less than the National average (Rs. 33708). Though a large portion of population of Assam are engaged in primary sector (including agriculture), it contributed only 24.44 percent of Gross Domestic Product (GDP), more than India's average. The service sector of Assam contributed about 61.89 percent of Gross Domestic Product

(GDP). The contribution of Industry comprising of manufacturing, construction, electricity and water supply is only 13.68 percent for the state. Percentage share of Industry of the state is less than all Indian level. However, the sectoral composition of the economy shows strong agricultural bias.

Table- 6 gives the HDI values achieved by Assam as well as India and HDI rank for the state Assam.

Table-6

Human Development Status of Assam & India			
Sl. No.	Category	Assam	India
		2007-08	2007-08
1	Human Development Index Value (HDI)	0.444	0.467
2	HDI Rank (out of 23)	16	

Source: India Human Development Report 2011, IAMR and Planning Commission

During 2007-08, HDI score for Assam was 0.444, which was marginally lower than national average score of 0.467. Out of 23, Assam was ranked 16th in the HDI due to substantial lag in the development process of the state. Gender Empowerment measure (GEM) and Gender Development Index (GDI) are indices for measuring gender inequality. Gender Development Index (GDI) scores are measured to account for inequalities between men and women. GEM proposed to assess women's and men's ability to participate actively in economic and political life and their command over economic resources. Following table- 7 shows the GEM and GDI scores of Assam and India.

Table-7

Gender Development Status of Assam & India			
Sl. No.	Category	Assam	India
		2006	2006
1	Gender Related Development Index (GDI)	0.585	0.590
2	GDI Rank (out of 35)	26	122
3	Gender Empowerment Measure (GEM)	0.417	0.497
4	GEM Rank (out of 35)	28	

Source: Gendering Human Development Indices: Gendering Human Development Indices: Recasting the Gender Development Index and Gender Empowerment Measure for India, Ministry of Women and Child Development, GOI

The GDI score for India was 0.590 and that for Assam was 0.585 in 2006. State Assam was placed 26th in GDI score. The aggregate score for GEM for India was 0.497 in 2006 and for Assam it was 0.417. It reflects the existence of sharp disparities in gender empowerment in Assam. However, Assam was ranked 28th in GEM score.

Table-8

Poverty and Hunger Indicators			
Sl. No.	Category	Assam	India
		2009-10	2009-10
1	Poverty Headcount Ratio (%)	37.9	29.8
2	Total number of poor (in millions)	11.64	354.68
		2007	2007
3	Global Hunger Index (GHI)	19.83	23.3
4	GHI Rank (out of 17)	4	

Source: Tendulkar Committee Report 2009, Planning Commission, India State Hunger Index 2009, IFPRI,

The following table 9 represents the nutritional status of Assam and India as a whole.

Table-9

Nutritional Status of Assam & India (In Percent)			
Sl. No.	Category	Assam	India
		2005-06	2005-06
1	Prevalence of calorie undernourishment	14.6	20
2	Prevalence of Underweight Children under 5 years of age	36.4	42.5
3	Under Weight Children at birth	40	46
4	Children (6-35 months) who are Anaemic	76.7	79.2
5	Anaemia among Ever Married Women (15-49 years)	69.0	56.2

Source: NFHS-II, (1998-99) & NFHS-III, (2005-06).

Nutritional problems are generous in every state in India. In India percentage of children under 5 years of age is 42.5 percent. But about 36.4 percent of children under five years of age are underweight in the state. Here Assam witnessed better position. The proportion of underweight children at birth is also notable in India (46 percent). In Assam it is less, about 40 percent. Thus, the prevalence of underweight in children is higher in India compare to the state Assam. Though Assam is relatively better off to the national level, but more than one third of children are underweight.

Anaemia is noticeably higher among children and women in Assam. The percentage of children with anaemia among children aged 6-35 is reported as 76.7 percent in Assam and 79.2 percent in India. The above data represents that the percentage of anaemic children in state is little bit less than the national average level. However in case of women Assam witnessed higher percentage of Anaemic women than national average level. Almost 69 percent of ever married women are anaemic in the state as against 56.2 percent of India. Improper healthcare and lack of nutrition are causing large number of anaemic children in the age group of 6-35 months.

Table-10 represents demographic and mortality situation of Assam and India. Maternal health status is not satisfactory in our state as well as in the country.

Table-10

Demographic and Mortality scenario of Assam & India			
Sl. No.	Category	Assam	India
		2010-12	2010-12
1	MMR (Maternal Mortality Ratio) Per 1,00,000 live birth	328	178
2	IMR (Infant Mortality Rate) Per 1000 live birth	55	42
3	TFR (Total Fertility Rate)	2.4	2.4
4	Crude Birth Rate (Birth Rate) per 1000	22.5	21.6
5	Crude Death Rate (Death Rate) per 1000	7.9	7.0

Source: SRS, 2001-03, Annual Health Survey 2012-13 & RGI 2010-12.

Table-10 shows that the Maternal Mortality Ratio (MMR) in Assam (2010-12) of 328 per 100000 live births, whereas the corresponding national figure is 178. Thus MMR of Assam is much higher than national average level. Assam is one of the maternal death prone states of India. The Infant Mortality Rate (IMR) in Assam (2010-12) is 55 per 1000 live births against 42 for the country as a whole. Thus both infant and maternal health status is very poor in Assam compared to All India.

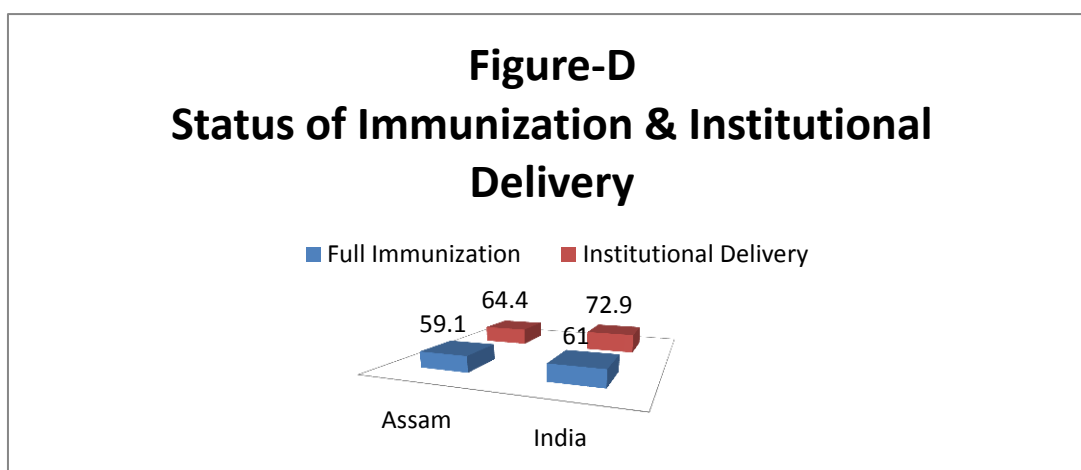
Total fertility rate of Assam and India are equal. Crude Birth Rate per 1000 population is 22.5 in Assam and 21.6 in India. Crude death rate per 1000 population is 7.9 of Assam and 7 of India. Thus both Crude Birth Rate and Crude death rate of the state Assam is higher compared to India.

Table-11 and Figure-D represents Immunization & Institutional Delivery Status of Assam & India as a whole. In both cases state Assam is showing worse condition compare to all India average.

Table-11

Immunization & Institutional Delivery Status of Assam & India (In Percent)			
Sl. No.	Category	Assam	India
		2009	2009
1	Full Immunization	59.1	61
2	Institutional Delivery	64.4	72.9

Source: NFHS-III, (1998-99), Coverage Evaluation Survey, RRC-NE, 2012-13 & Coverage Evaluation Survey UNICEF, 2009



Source: NFHS-III, (1998-99), Coverage Evaluation Survey, RRC-NE, 2012-13 & Coverage Evaluation Survey UNICEF, 2009

The coverage of full immunization is 59.1 percent in Assam, which is marginally lower than all India’s level of 61 percent. In 2009, the percentage of institutional delivery was 64.4 percent. In case of institutional delivery, India witnessed better situation than Assam with 72.9 percent of institutional delivery.

Conclusion:

The socio-economic and demographic indicators are the some important reflectors of any community. A better socio-economic and demographic status simply indicates the better position and advancement of any society. Present study mainly seeks to show the socio-economic and demographic position of state Assam and its comparative analysis with all India figures. The demographic indicators highlights though in case of population density position of Assam is worse compare to all India figure but in case of sex ratio etc. Assam witnessed better position than India. Regarding population growth rate Assam has shown high growth rate than the country’s average growth. Regarding population growth, Assam is having a higher rate of growth of population than India as a whole. In case of literacy rate, Assam indicates a little poor performance compare to all India figure. Process of urbanization in Assam is also slow and showing less percentage of people living urban areas compare to India as a whole. The analysis of the data also shows that, in major areas, the position and performance of Assam is not satisfactorily compared to the all India average.

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