

CHAPTER V

CHAPTER -V

THE ECONOMIC SYSTEM

The present chapter deals with the economic system of the Barman villages in terms of the patterns of cultivation, land ownership, land use patterns, sources of irrigation, use of seeds and fertilizers, consumption pattern and occupation.

1. LAND OWNERSHIP

In the study villages most of the families possess cultivable land. However, the size of the land varies from household to household.

In order to analyse the patterns of land ownership in the three study villages the villagers were classified into three categories : (i) Land less - agricultural labourers (ii) Marginal Farmers - those who have owned up to one hectare land and (iii) Small farmers - those who have owned more than one hectare land but not more than two hectares. The distribution of households in the three study villages into these categories is shown in table 5.1

TABLE - 5.1

PATTERNS OF LAND OWNERSHIP

S.N.	Size of Land	Kumacharra		Dormikhal		Nikama		All Villages	
		No of H.hold	Percentage	No of H.hold	Percentage	No of H.hold	Percentage	No of H.hold	Percentage
1	Landless	1	0.90	2	3.26	1	1.72	4	1.74
2	Marginal Farmers (up to 1 hector)	91	81.98	48	77.39	46	79.31	185	80.09
3	Small Farmer (up to 2 hector)	19	17.12	12	19.35	11	18.97	42	18.18
		111	100.00	62	100.00	58	100.00	231	100.00

Source : Data collected by self

The data presented in the table shows that in case of village Kumacherrarra only one household did not possess land and engaged as agricultural labourer in the field of others (0.90 percent of). In case of Dormikhal cases of landless were upto 3.26 percent and in Nikama 1.72 percent households were of landless agricultural labourers. The percentage of marginal farmer is high in case of village Kumacherra with 81.98 percent while in case of Dormikhal and Nikama it is 77.39 percent and 79.31 percent respectively. Which reveal that in all the three villages percentage of marginal was very high. But a remarkable trend can be seen in the table in case small farmer that it is more or less same in the three villages which indicate that the early settlers possess more land in comparison to new comers, so it shows the equal ratios in the three villages.

The data indicate that most of the villagers are in the category of marginal farmers as 8 out of every 10 households are in this category, except one or two households in each village. The remaining households belong to the category of small farmers. Thus, there is a similarity in the patterns of land ownership in all the three study villages are observed. The incidents of landlessness is rare in villages.

2. PATTERNS OF CULTIVATION

There are two major patterns of cultivation among the Barmans of Barak valley (i) Shifting cultivation and (ii) Settled cultivation.

(i) *SHIFTING CULTIVATION*

The shifting cultivation is a conventional method of cultivation which can be observed among all the tribes of North East India. It is popularly known as 'Jhum Cultivation' and the families who are engaged in this type of cultivation are known as 'Jhumias'. Traditionally this method was popular among the Hills dominated tribal population.

It is a slash and burn technique of cultivation. For this purpose, a plot on the slopes of the hill is selected and before the commencement of monsoon season entire plot is cleared by cutting the trees and shrubs. These trees and shrubs are burnt, the ash covered burnt soil is thoroughly mixed and prepare the plot for cultivation. The selection of seed depends on the growth of crop and different types of seeds are sown in the same plot. Both manfolk and womenfolk work together. Generally males dig the holes and the women drop the seed in to the holes

and covered it with soil.

Among the three study villages Jhum cultivation was observed only in one village i.e.. in Kumacherra which is located in the foot hills of Barail range. In this village, only five families are engaged in the pursuit of Jhum cultivation. But they are also having land in plain area where they practice settled cultivation. In other two villages there is no scope for Jhum cultivation as these villages are located in plain areas.

(ii) ***SETTLED CULTIVATION :***

Among the Barmans of Barak Valley Paddy is the main production of settled cultivation. The two different varieties of paddy is Ahu and Sali. Sali is more common amongst all the villagers while Ahu is not cultivated by all the villagers. For Ahu cultivation proper irrigation facilities is required so due to that a minimal percentage of village people practice the Ahu cultivation. These two main crops i.e. Ahu and Sali cultivation started in the month of June/July and in case of ahu it is started in April.

Among all the three study villages the rice fields are prepared twice a years i.e. in June/July and April. The ploughing is done by cattle but sometime power trillera are also used. In case of Kumacherra village I.T.D.P. provided power triller while in case of Nikama and Dormikhal either they hired power triller from private owners by baying on payment of rent or from Agriculture Department through Gaon Panchyat.

In addition to Ahu and Sali, the Barmans also cultivate different varieties of Cash Crop such as banana battlenut, arceanut etc. Few households of all the three villages also cultivate Ravi crops.

3. SOURCES OF IRRIGATION

The main economic stay of the Barman families is cultivation. For cultivation purpose irrigation facilities are required. Otherwise cultivation on mordern line is not possible. In case of Kumacherra it was observed that there is no irrigation facility. The villagers use pond water and sometime use water from nearest rivulet or stream but water from well is used very rarely. Few years back, an irrigation scheme was launched by the Integrated Tribal Development Project Silchar under the guidance of Mr. S. Barman where stream water was used, but unfortunately it had been failed and after that the only source of irrigation is either pond or rivulet in Kumacherra village.

In case of Dormikhal and Nikama villages, located in the plain areas, the source of irrigation is only rivulet and local ponds. These villages are also facing problem of proper irrigation facilities. In both the villages a temporary cannel was formed for the purpose of irrigation and after cultivation season the cannel become useless. So due to lack of proper irrigation facility, the production rate is not increasing.

4. USE OF SEEDS AND FERTILIZERS

The use of seeds and fertilizers in the study villages by the farmers indicate

the level of advancement in the field of agriculture. The Barman society is an agriculturist society, where economy is directly related to agriculture. Without using the advance technology the farmer cannot improve their economic condition.

Among the Barman of study villages both the local variety seeds and high yield variety seeds are used. The local seeds are preserved by using traditional techniques while high yield variety is purchase from the market. In case of use of fertilizer, cowdung is most common while few households use fertilizers and pesticides such as urea, super phosphate, melatheaon etc. in their agricultural fields.

The distribution of household in all the three study villages on the basis of use of seeds and fertilizers and pesticides is shown in the table 5.2.

TABLE - 5.2

PATTERN OF SEED AND FERTILIZER USED :

Pattern	Kumacherra		Dormikhal		Nikama		All villages	
	Frequency	Percentage	Frequency	Percentage	Frequency	Percentage	Frequency	Percentage
Chemical Fertilizers and Pesticides	24	21.62	28	45.16	39	67.24	91	39.39
Local	87	78.38	34	54.84	9	32.76	140	60.61
Local Seeds	104	93.69	48	77.42	2	72.41	194	83.98
HYV	7	6.31	14	22.58	6	27.59	37	16.02

The data reveal that in case of village Kumacherra 21.62 percent farmers use chemicals in their fields, while it is 45.16 percent in case of Dormikhal and 67.24 percent in case of Nikama. It suggests that a clear difference among three villages in case of use of chemicals in the fields. In Kumacherra 6.31 percent use of high yield variety seeds and it is 22.58 percent in case of Dormikhal and 27.59 percent in case of Nikama village where as in Nikama 67.24 percent use fertilizer in comparison to high yielding variety seeds. So it indicate that in case of seed use they still practicing traditional method and in all the three study villages the practice of more or less

same trend is observed. i.e. they like to use their own seeds.

Thus as far as the modernisation of technology in the field of agriculture is concerned the significant differences between the three study villages are observed. It is lowest in case of Kumacherra and highest in case of Nikama village.

5. OTHER ECONOMIC ACTIVITY

Along with agriculture, the other worth mentioning economic activity of the Barman are gathering, fish catching, weaving, brewing etc. Gathering is very common in Kumacherra while in case of Dormikhal and Nikama it is very rare. Due to geographical reasons, Kumacherra is surrounded by deep forest where gathering is easiest practices. By gathering both manfolk and women folk collect fire wood from the forest. Some times they collect honey and thremba root for the purposes of brewing. Different types of vegetable and fruits are also collected from the forest.

In rainy seasons the villagers of all the three study villages in rainy catch fish from the local river and stream. They also catch fishes from their own pond when it is required. For fishing purpose, they use different types of fishing nets, fishing stick, fishing trap etc. The surplus fishes are sold in the local market. Among all the three study villages large scale fish farming is emerging as one of the economic activity among the few Barman families. The making of rice beer is another important economic activity of the Barman families. Among the Barmans, rice beer or *Zu* has great importance at the time of birth, marriage and death ceremonies and in performance of various rituals. The preparation of rice beer is also typical in nature.

THE TECHNIQUE OF MAKING RICEBEER

Rice beer is part and parcel of the Barman social life. At every religious, cultural and recreational activity the use of rice beer is must. In Barman language the rice beer is called as *Zu* or *Zudima*. The brewing of rice beer is common household practices, both male and female can do this job. The technique of brewing is transmitted from generation to generation. No advanced technology is used at the time of making it, the technique is purely traditional. It provides vigour and vitality and fun in life.

Zu is manufactured from a wild type of root, locally called *Thembra* which is not abundantly found in this area. This root is cut into small pieces and dried in sunrays. Then it is grinded by using local technique and preserved. By this time they make some powder of rice and again mixed it with *Thembra* powder by using water. The mixture is pasted properly and from this mound they make cakes of typical shapes, that is round oval shape. They believe that at the time of making, rice beer they should wear clean clothes and they should not take any polluted foods, otherwise the cake will not take proper shape. The another important feature of making is that at the time of making they consider few cakes as male and few as females on the basis of its size. And atleast one male cake should be prepared, otherwise the female cakes would not function properly. Generally they make more female cakes. The reason is that they compare female cakes with *Zu*. The female cakes are known as *Hamao* and male is *Hamaojala*.

The cakes can be preserved for a long time. Whenever it is required they can



Gathering is an important economic activity in Kumacherra village.



Piggery is an important economic activity of the Barman.

make rice beer out of this cakes. For brewing of rice beer a typical type of vessels with holes in its whole body are required along with two normal vessels. This typical vessel is placed in between the normal two vessels. The lower vessels contain the water and this *Hamao* rapped in a cloth is put inside it. The last one receives the materials after boiling the water containing in the vessels. This raw *Zu* is called *Jugap*. After mixing the *Jugap* with water in a typical way the *Zu* is prepared.

Few families of all the three study villages are engaged in brewing activity. It is treated as additional economic activity or a subsidiary occupation. Among the study villages, in Kumacherra village both men folk and womenfolk do this job and for them it is very easy to collect *Thembra* root from the nearest jungle. In Kumacherra few families sold rice beer while in case of other two villages collection of roots is very difficult job, due to lack of forest in the area so *Zu* is used only purposively and very few families are engaged in this activity. At the time of requirement the villagers purchase *Zu* from that particular family.

6. OCCUPATION

The major occupation of the Barman is agriculture. Although they believe that they were shifting cultivator, but their history suggests that they were not shifting cultivators as they were not the original inhabitants of hills. Their earlier settlement were at different places in the plains of Brahmaputra valley where they were practicing the settled cultivation. They switched over to 'Jhum' cultivation only when they settled down first at Dimapur area and later in the hills of Barail range. In traditional Barman society, there was no occupational diversification as all of them were en-

gaged in agriculture to fulfill their basic needs. But the contemporary Barman society is passing through a process of change and the occupational structure is under the process of transformation. Broadly, there are three types of occupation in Barman society, these are agriculture, business and service.

For analytical purpose, the occupations are classified into three categories (i) agriculture, (ii) Business and (iii) Government service. Business category includes the activities like grossery shop, Tailoring shop, stationary shop, Tea stall, Pan shop, Furniture shop etc. The service occupation includes teaching Army service, clerical job and fourth grade jobs in Government Departments. Salesmanship in private shops etc. Therefore, the distribution of household into these three occupational categories may reveal the trend of occupational mobility.

The distribution of households in Kamacherra village is shown in the table 5.3.

TABLE - 5.3

**OCCUPATION WISE DISTRIBUTION OF HOUSEHOLDS IN
KUMACHERRA VILLAGE**

S.No.	Occupation	Main	Percentage	Subsidiary	Percentage	Total	Percentage
1	Agriculture	106	95.49	4	3.60	110	99.89
2.	Business	1	0.90	26	23.42	27	24.32
3.	Service	4	3.60	1	0.90	5	4.49
		111		31	27.92		

The data indicate that most of the families (95.49 percent) still have agriculture as their main occupation while only one family (0.90 percent) has adopted business as its main occupation. Some of the families (3.60 percent) have adopted service as their main occupation. Along with these a little more than one-fourth (27.92 percent) families have subsidiary occupations. A number of families (23.42 percent) have adopted business as their subsidiary occupation. Only 4 households have agriculture as their subsidiary occupation and service as subsidiary occupation in case of only one family.

It suggests that the occupational structure is changing at a slower rate in Kumacherra village. However, a significant amount of mobility can be observed in business occupations as a little less than one-fourth (23.42 percent) households have adopted business activities as their subsidiary occupation. But mobility to service occupations is very limited in Kumacharra village.

In Dormikhal village, the occupation wise distribution of households is shown in table 5.4.

TABLE - 5.4

**OCCUPATION WISE DISTRIBUTIONS OF HOUSEHOLDS IN
DORMIKHAL VILLAGE**

S.No.	Occupations	Main	Percentage	Subsidiary	Percentage	Total	Percentage
1	Agriculture	54	7.10	6	9.68	60	(96.77)
2.	Business	3	4.84	18	29.03	21	(33.87)
3.	Service	5	0.06	—	—	5	(8.06)
		62	100.00	24			

The data reveal that in Dormikhal village most of the families (87.10 per cent) have agriculture as their main occupation. However, few households (4.84 percent) have adopted business activities as their main occupation. A little less than one-tenth (8.06 percent) of the households have entered into service occupations as main activity of their livelihood.

As far as the phenomenon of subsidiary occupations is concerned, in Dormikhal village about one-tenth (9.68 percent) households have agriculture as their subsidiary occupation. A significant number of households (29.03 percent) have adopted business activities as their subsidiary occupation. Thus, directions of occupational mobility is mainly towards business activities in Dormikhal village.

In Nikama village the occupationwise distribution of households is shown in table 5.5.

TABLE - 5.5

OCCUPATIONWISE DISTRIBUTION OF HOUSEHOLDS IN NIKAMA VILLAGE

S.No.	Occupations	Main	Percentage	Subsidiary	Percentage	Total	Percentage
1	Agriculture	50	86.21	7	12.07	57	(98.28)
2.	Business	2	3.45	21	36.21	23	(39.66)
3.	Service	6	10.34	–	–	6	(10.34)
		58	100.00	28	48.28		

The data indicate that in Nikama village most of the households (86.21) still have agriculture as their main occupation. However, few households (3.45 percent) have adopted business activities as their main occupation. About one-tenth (10.34 percent) of the households have service as their main occupation. In case of 12.07 percent household, agriculture has been converted into a subsidiary occupation. A little more than one-third (36.21 percent) of the households have adopted business as their subsidiary occupation.

It indicates that although agriculture is still their main economic activity, but a significant amount of mobility into business occupations can be observed in Nikama village. However, occupational mobility into service occupations is very limited.

Now, a comparative analysis of the occupational activities of the Barman in the three study villages can be made. The distributions of the households in terms of their main and subsidiary occupations in the study villages is shown in table 5.6.

TABLE - 5.6

OCCUPATION WISE DISTRIBUTION OF HOUSEHOLDS IN THREE STUDY VILLAGES

Name of the village	Nature of Occupation	Agriculture Frequency	Percentage	Business Frequency	Percentage	Service Frequency	Percentage
Kumacherra	Main	106	95.49	1	0.90	4	3.60
	Subsidiary	5	4.50	26	23.42	1	0.90
Dormikhal	Main	54	87.09	3	4.84	5	8.06
	Subsidiary	8	12.90	18	29.03	-	-
Nikama	Main	50	86.21	2	3.44	6	10.34
	Subsidiary	8	13.79	21	36.21	-	-

The data reveal that in Kumacherra village as far as the mobility into business occupation is concerned, only one household has adopted business as its main occupation. In case of Nikama and Dormikhal the number is increased up to 2 and 3 respectively. In Kumacherra village 23.42 percent households have adopted business as their subsidiary occupation. In case of Dormikhal and Nikama it is 29.03 percent and 36.21 percent respectively. Thus, business has emerged as one of the major activity which attracted the villagers of all the study villages in a significant manner.

The amount of occupational mobility into service occupation is limited in all the three villages. However, it is highest in case of Nikama village as 10.34 percent of the households have adopted service as their main occupation. It is followed by Dormikhal with 8.06 percent but in case of village Kumacherra mobility into service occupations is lowest with only 4.5 percent. Most of the household who have been occupationally mobile into service occupations do not have any subsidiary occupation except one in Kumacherra village.

It suggests that *occupational diversification increases with the level of development* as it was relatively high in those villages which are more developed.

Thus, it is clear from the above analysis that as a result of occupational diversification a number of households in all the three villages have adopted more than one occupation for their livelihood.

The dependency of households on one or more than one occupations in Kumacherra is shown in the table 5.7.

TABLE - 5.7

DEPENDENCY OF HOUSEHOLDS ON ONE OR MORE OCCUPATIONS IN KUMACHERRA VILLAGE

Sl. No.	Occupation	Number of Household	Percentage
1	Agriculture	79	71.17
2	Service	3	3.60
3	Business	1	0.90
4	Agriculture + Service	1	0.90

The data indicate that in Kumacherra village 71.17 percent of the households depend exclusively on agriculture while 3.60 percent of the households depend on service and 0.90 percent in case of business. It suggest that maximum numbers of households have their main occupation as agriculture. The percentage of households who have engaged both agriculture and service at a time is only 0.9 percent but the percentage is highest (23.42 percent) in case of those who have been engaged in agriculture and business simultaneously. In Kumacherra there is nobody who is doing business and service at a time. The dependency of households on one or more than one occupation in Dormikhal village is shown in table 5.8.

TABLE - 5.8**THE DISTRIBUTION OF HOUSEHOLD ON THE BASIS OF OCCUPATION IN DORMIKHAL**

SL. No.	Patterns of Occupation	Number of Household	Percentage
1	Agriculture	37	59.68
2	Business	3	4.84
3	Service	3	4.84
4	Agriculture + Service	1	1.61
5	Agriculture + Business	17	27.42
6	Agri + Business + Service	1	1.61
Total		62	100.00

The data indicate that in Dormikhal village 59.68 percent households depend on agriculture while only 4.84 percent depend on both business and service category. The percentage of those households who have been engaged both in agriculture and service at a time is 1.61 percent and it is 1.61 percent in case of those who have a combination of business, service and agriculture. But in case of the combination of agriculture and business percentage is high with 27.42 percent which is second highest among all the three villages. It indicates that the combination of agriculture and business is most suitable for the villagers as scope of service is very limited within the village.

The distribution of households in terms of their dependency on one or more occupation in Nikama village is shown in the table 5.9.

TABLE - 5.9

THE PATTERNS OF OCCUPATION IN NIKAMA

SL. No.	Patterns of Occupation	No. of Households	Percentage
1	Agriculture *	30	51.72
2	Business	2	3.45
3	Service	3	5.17
4	Agriculture + Service	2	3.45
5	Agriculture + Business	20	34.48
6	Agri + Business + Service	1	1.72
Total		58	100.00

The data indicate that in Nikama village 51.72 percent households depend on agriculture while only 3.45 percent depend on business and it is only 5.17 percent in case of service category. The percentage of those household, who have been engaged both in agriculture and service at a time is 3.45 percent and it is 1.72 percent in case of those who have a combination of business and service. But in case of the combination of agriculture and business percentage is high with 34.48 percent which is highest among all the three study villages. It indicates that the combination of agriculture and business is most suitable for the villagers as scope of service is

very limited within the village.

A comparative analysis of occupational diversification in the study villages is shown in the table 5.10.

TABLE - 5.10.

OCCUPATIONAL DIVERSIFICATION IN THE STUDY VILLAGES

S.No.	Occupation (s)	Percentage of Households		
		Kumachara	Dormikhal	Nikama
1	Agriculture	71.17	59.68	51.73
2.	Service	3.60	4.84	5.17
3.	Business	0.90	4.84	5.17
4.	Agriculture + Service	0.90	1.61	3.45
5	Agriculture + Business	23.42	27.42	34.48
6.	Business + Service	0.90	1.61	1.72
	Total	100.00	100.00	100.00

The comparison of occupational diversification in table 5.9 indicates that in Kumacherra village which is located in a remote area and is less developed the dependency of agriculture is very high (71.17 percent). In village Dormikhal which is relatively more developed than Kumacharra and is located in the plain area, the dependency on agriculture reduced to great extent. While in case of Nikama village which is a develop village the dependency on agriculture is reduced as only about half of the population of this village depends exclusively on agriculture. There is a gradual shift towards business and service sectors of economy in all the three villages. It suggests that *as one moves from less developed village towards more developed village the degree of occupational diversification also increases*. It can be noted here that in all the three villages the sector of business activities is more developed in comparison to service sector. It may be due to the factor that employment opportunities for the villagers are very limited within the village or in neighbouring localities. Thus mobilities to service occupations in all the three villages is limited.

Thus it can be said that economy of Barman villages is under process of transformation but the pace of change economic sphere is, however, slow. But direction of change in all the three study villages is almost similar.

7. CONSUMPTION PATTERN

The consumption pattern is one of the important parameter to determine the status of a person in the society. It is also related to the style of life of the members of the family. It can be analysed in terms of the items and facilities available in the household. In order to analyse the different level of consumption in the three study

villages an attempt is made to find out the type of facilities they have in their kitchen and different items of household consumption.

(i) COOKING PRACTICE :

The technology used for cooking purpose is one of the important criteria. On the basis of it three types of cooking practices are identified in the study villages viz (i) Earthen chullah, (ii) Kerosine stove and (iii) L.P.G. Stove. The distribution of families in terms of cooking technology is shown in the table 5.11.

TABLE - 5.11

DISTRIBUTION OF HOUSEHOLDS ON THE BASIS OF THE USE OF COOKING TECHNOLOGY

S.N. Cooking Practice	Kumacherra		Dormikha		Nikam		All villages	
	Frequency	Percentage	Frequency	Percentage	Frequency	Percentage	Frequency	Percentage
1 Fire wood in earthen chulah	111	100.00	62	100.00	58	100.00	231	100.00
2. K. stove	3	2.70	6	9.68	8	13.79	17	7.35
3 L.P.G.	-	-	1	1.61	2	3.45	3	1.29

The data show that in Kumacherra village all most all the households use fire wood for cooking purpose, only 2.70 percent households have kerosine stove for

cooking purposes, no body in the village use L.P.G. Stove as it is not available. It is also important to mention here that those families who use kerosine stove, they use it as an additional source of cooking. It is generally used at the time of crisis otherwise it is treated as luxurious.

In Dormikhal and Nikama, villages all the families use traditional technology and kerosine stove only the difference is that the L.P.G. connection is also found in these villages. It suggests that the effect of modernisation is more rapid in the advanced villages. The use of Kerosine oil in the village Dormikhal and Nikama 9.68 percent and 13.79 percent respectively where as the use of L.P.G. is 1.61 percent and 3.45 percent in Dormikhal and Nikama respectively. But interestingly like Kumacherra in Dormikhal and Nikama, the villagers use Kerosine oil and L.P.G. along with firewood. Those who practice K. Oil and L.P.G. belong to economically prosperous group in all the three villages.

(ii) HOUSEHOLD ITEMS

As far as economy is concerned the household items are catagorised into two different classes, one is essential items such as bed, table, chair, cooking utensils etc. and second one is luxurious items namely T.V., Radio, Sofas, Electric fan, Steel Almirah, Scooter etc. which are considered as status symbol items of household consumption and determine the status of a family in the society. The variation in the consumption of household items among the Barman families of study villages is shown in the table 5.12.

TABLE - 5.12

CONSUMPTION OF HOUSE HOLD ITEMS

S.N.	Household items	Kumacherra Percentage		Dormikhal Percentage		Nikama Percentage		Total Percentage	
1	T.V.	17	15.32	21	33.87	23	39.66	6	26.41
2	Radio	35	31.53	27	43.55	19	32.76	81	35.06
3	Sofaset	--	--	2	3.23	2	3.45	4	1.73
4	Fan	21	18.92	47	75.81	42	72.41	110	47.62
5	Scooter	--	--	--	--	1	1.72	1	0.43
6	Steel	--	--	1	1.61	1	1.72	2	0.86
7	Gas	--	--	1	1.61	2	3.45	3	1.29
8	Other	5	13.51	9	14.52	13	22.41	37	16.02

The data reveal that in case of television 15.32 percent households have TV sets in Kumacherra village with gone upto 33.87 percent and 39.66 percent in case of Dormikhal and Nikama respectively. The ownership of radio set in Kumacherra village is 31.53 percent while it is 43.55 in case of Dormikhal and 32.76 percent in case of Nikama village. In case of sofa sets nobody has sofa set in Kumacherra village, while it is 3.23 percent and 3.45 percent in case of Dormikhal and Nikama village. In case of electric fan there is a striking differences between

Kumacherra with Dormikhal and Nikama. The percentage is 18.92 in case of Kumacherra while it is 75.81 percent and 72.41 percent in case of Dormikhal and Nikama. In case of scooter, steel almirah and L.P.G. only few villagers of Nikama and Dormikhal avail the facility while the percentage is nil in case of Kumacherra. The data suggests that except in case of use of fan and T.V. sets a similar trend is observed in case of all the three villages in consumption pattern.

8. WOMEN AND ECONOMY

Tribal women occupies an important position in the socio-economic structure of their society. The Barman women are equal counterparts of their male partners in economic life. It is already stated the Barman society is agriculturist society where womenfolk participate in cultivation, so outdoor activities are very common among the Barman women. They perform the duties like collection of firewood, cooking, weaving, making of rice beer and so on. In addition to this womenfolk engaged themselves in animal husbandry where animals are marketed also. But in case of trade and commerce the manfolk do this job on behalf of womenfolk.

The Barman womens are very expert in agricultural work, with manfolk they equally participate in the work along with household duties, where they clean the field even they do the work of hoeing in the field. The plantation and collection of food grains are most suitable activities for Barman women.

The Barman women are born weavers and they bear a great heritage of traditional skills in weaving. Among the Barmans weaving has now become a household

industry, not a single household is found without a loom. Most of the daily used cloths are produced by themselves in their own family loom. Rearing of *Eri* and *Endi* silk is another economic activity of Barman women.

It is clear that cotton, *Eri* and *Endi* thread are the main raw material of the weaving industry. But *Eri* and *Endi* are not used abundantly. They themselves dye the yarns are because generally they use natural colours. But now they also use coloured yarns available the market. The colouring of the thread is very difficult task while ready made yarn is also cheap.

Poultry farming is very popular economic activity of the Barman women and they earn good amount of money from the animal husbandry. The common animals are pig, goat, duck, chicken and pegeion.

In all the three study villages it was observed that the women are equal partner in economic activity of the every household where as in case of Nikama village it is also observed that the women are coming forward and along with menfolk they have joined in government services. In other two villages, exceptionally one or two women are found in government jobs but percentage of such women is still very low in all the three villages.

So it is clear that in case of females the weaving is most worthmenting economic activity because after own use they also sale clothes and earn money. It is noticed at the same time that the women of Kumacherra make clothes by their own loom, where as in case of Dormikhal and mainly in Nikama it is found that the women have been more attracted towards the new vocation such as i.e., tailoring ,

making of woolen cloth etc. and looms are only confined to personal use. In Kumacherra about 30 years ago the traditional looms were replaced by modern loom. The latest advancement is not found but the designs of the clothes are modernised by new fashion, where border of the *Mekhela* (lower portion) and *Chadar* (upper portion) designed in a very nice way.

The occupational structure is changing at a slower rate in Kumacherra village. However, a significant amount of mobility can be observed in to business occupations. But mobility to service occupations is very limited in Kumacherra village. In Dormikhal village most of the families (87.10 percent) have agriculture as their main occupation. However few households (4.84 percent) have adopted business activities as their main occupation. A less than one-tenth (8.06 percent) of the households have entered into service occupations as main activity of their livelihood. Thus direction of occupational mobility is mainly towards business activities in Dormikhal village. In case of Nikama village although agriculture is still their main economic activity but a significant amount of mobility into business occupations can be observed in Nikama village with 3.45 percent. However occupational mobility into service occupation is very limited. There is a gradual shift towards business and service sectors of economy in all the three villages. It suggests that *as one moves form less developed village towards more developed village the degree of occupational diversification also increases*. It can be noted here that, in all the three villages sector of business activity is more developed in comparison to service sector. The mobility to service occupations in all the three villages is limited. So it can be said that the economy of the Barman under process of transformation but pace of change is slow.