

CHAPTER FOUR

PROFILE OF THE SAMPLE HOUSEHOLDS

4.1 Introduction:

This chapter incorporates the profile of the sample households in the study area. As mentioned in Chapter 3, we have selected Digarugaon from Kamrup district and Irongmara from Cachar district as our sample study locations to analyse the status of household food security in rural Assam. Digarugaon is a village under Kamrup district whose population is 3207 out of which 1639 are males (Census, 2011). This means that sex ratio in Digarugaon is 957. Total literacy rate of Digarugaon is 78.47 percent, while its male and female literacy rates are 84.53 percent and 72.06 percent respectively (Census, 2011). Irongmara, on the other hand, is a village under Cachar district whose population is 7685 out of which 3964 are males (Census, 2011). This means that sex ratio in Irongmara is 940. Total literacy rate of Irongmara is 76.91 percent, while its male and female literacy rates are 82.68 percent and 70.74 percent respectively (Census, 2011).

It is to be noted that the field survey was conducted in the month of May and June, 2015. The head or knowledgeable person of each household was interviewed with regard to their demographic profile, asset profile, education level, occupation and food security related issues. Based on this information collected we have prepared the profile of the sample households in the study area.

4.2 Profile of Sample Households:

This section depicts the profile of sample households in Digarugaon and Irongmara. It is to be noted that the size of sample households in Digarugaon and in Irongmara are 91 and 93 respectively. The total number of members in 91 sample households of Digarugaon is 525 while it is 523 in case of 93 sample households of Irongmara. This means that average household size in Digarugaon and in Irongmara are 5.8 and 5.6 respectively i.e approximately 6.

4.2.1 Demographic Profile of the Sample Households:

This section provides information on various demographic aspects of the sample households like religion, caste and sex ratio.

Table 4.1 Demographic Profile of the Sample Households

Place	Religion (percentage)		Caste (percentage)				Sex Ratio
	Hindu	Muslim	Gen	OBC	SC	ST	
Digarugaon	87.91	12.09	45.05	13.21	20.87	20.87	980
Irongmara	100	0	47.31	22.58	24.73	5.38	960

Source: Field Survey

Table 4.1 shows that people in Digarugaon Muslim population constituted majority while in Irongmara it is Hindu religion. Irongmara does not have any household other than Hindu (Census, 2011). So far as caste is concerned, the General, OBC and ST population account for higher percentage in Irongmara as compared to that of

Digarugaon. However the percentage of ST population is higher in Digarugaon. Both the places account for a higher sex ratio as evident from the Table 4.1.

4.2.2 Occupational Profile of the Sample Households:

Sample households in the study area are divided into three categories based on their type of occupations viz. (i) agricultural household, where the members of the household are associated with agricultural and allied activities, (ii) non-agricultural household, where the household members are engaged with activities other than agriculture like service and enterprise, (iii) both agricultural and non-agricultural household, where some members are connected with agricultural and allied activities and others are associated with non-agricultural activities. The occupational profile of the sample households is depicted in Table 4.2.2.

Table 4.2 Occupational Distribution of the Sample Households (in percentage)

Type of Households based on Occupation	Digarugaon	Irongmara
Agricultural household	44.08	27.95
Non-agricultural household	24.17	43.02
Both Agricultural and non-agricultural household	30.76	29.03

Source: Field Survey

Table 4.2.2 shows that agricultural households constitute the highest percentage of households in Digarugaon (44.08) while non-agricultural households constitute the highest percentage of households in Irongmara (43.02) in terms of occupation. So far as the extent of both agricultural and non-agricultural household is concerned, the margin between Digarugaon and Irongmara is negligible as depicted from the Table 4.2.

4.2.3 Education Level of the Sample Household Members:

This sub-section shows the education level of the sample household members in Digarugaon and Irongmara. In the present study we have divided the levels of education into seven categories viz. illiterate, primary, upper primary, secondary, higher secondary, graduate and post graduate. Besides these categories, the information on the drop out students and that of the children not started the school yet are also incorporated.

Table 4.3 Level of Education of the Sample Household Members (in percentage)

Level of Education	Digarugaon	Irongmara
Illiterate	17.71	15.29
Primary	27.80	30.49
Upper primary	23.43	20.45
Secondary	14.87	13.38
Higher secondary	8	6.69
Graduate	0.95	3.28
Postgraduate	0.39	0.57
Drop outs	2.09	4.58
Not started school	4.76	5.37

Source: Field Survey

Table 4.3 represents different levels of education of the sample household members in Digarugaon and Irongmara. It does not show a good picture of education as revealed by the data. The percentages of graduates as well as post-graduates are quite low in both the places. However conditions are marginally better so far as the completion of the secondary and higher secondary level of education are concerned. Illiteracy is also a matter of concern as revealed by the data as in Table 4.3, although the figure for

illiterate is less than 20 per cent in Digarugaon and Irongmara. However one encouraging thing is that the percentage of drop outs is very less as depicted from the Table 4.3. It is also seen that nearly 5 percent household members in Digarugaon and approximately 5 percent household members in Irongmara are yet to be enrolled in the school, meaning this segment of the population belong to the group of children. The percentage of the household members with completed primary education is relatively higher in Irongmara, while Digarugaon is found to have relatively higher percentage of members with completed upper primary education. Table 4.3 shows that the percentages of primary completed and upper primary qualified people are relatively higher in comparison to other levels of education.

4.2.4 Asset Profile of the Sample Households:

This sub-section deals with the representations and discussions on the asset holdings of the households in the study area. In the present study, the asset holdings of the households are divided into six categories viz. land ownership, housing, consumer durables, live stock, vehicles and financial assets. The information on these assets of the sample households are depicted in the Tables 4.4 to 4.9.

Table 4.4 Distribution of Sample Households in terms of Land Ownership (in %)

Ownership of Land Holdings	Digarugaon	Irongmara
More than one hectare	12.08	8.60
Less than one hectare	87.91	91.40

Source: Field Survey

It is observed from Table 4.4 that so far as ownership of land is concerned, only a small percentage of the households in both Digarugaon and in Irongmara accounted

for a size of land holdings more than one hectare. Thus most of the households in the study area are having the ownership of land holdings below one hectare. From the comparative standpoint, it is seen from Table 4.4 that the households of Digarugaon has slightly higher share of lands with size more than one hectare in relation to that of Irongmara. Thus Digarugaon has a slight edge over Irongmara so far as ownership of land holdings is concerned.

Table 4.5 Distribution of Households in terms of Type of House (in %)

Type of House	Digarugaon	Irongmara
Pucca	18.69	26.88
Semi pucca	40.65	31.18
Kutchha	26.37	33.34
Very kutchha	14.29	8.60

Source: Field Survey

Table 4.5 shows that approximately 60 percent of the households in Digarugaon as well as in Irongmara are having pucca and semi pucca houses. The percentage of pucca houses is slightly higher in Irongmara, while that of semi pucca houses are higher in Digarugaon. However the combined percentage of kutchha and very kutchha houses as visible from Table 4.5 in both the places do not show a bright picture of housing facilities in the study area.

Table 4.6 Distribution of Households in terms of Consumer Durables (in %)

Consumer Durables	Digarugaon	Irongmara
Radio/music system, TV and mobile	38.46	41.93
Any two out of radio/music system, TV, mobile	24.18	37.65
Any one out of radio/music system, TV, mobile	25.28	17.20
No consumer durables	12.08	3.22

Source: Field Survey

Table 4.6 shows that the households belonging to Irongmara are relatively on the higher side in terms of holding of the consumer durables. This is apparent from the fact that 41.93 percent of the households in Irongmara are equipped with all three consumer durables considered in the present study, while the same is 38.46 percent for Digarugaon. So far as the possession of any two consumer durables are concerned, the households in Irongmara are again having better position than that of Digarugaon as revealed from the Table 4.6. The percentage of households without any consumer durables is also relatively higher in Digarugaon.

Table 4.7 Distribution of Households in terms of Live Stock (in %)

Live Stocks	Digarugaon	Irongmara
Cow/Buffalo	30.76	21.52
Goat/Pig	32.97	17.20
Hen/Dove	24.17	38.70
Nothing	12.08	22.58

Source: Field Survey

Table 4.7 represents that households of Digarugaon are having higher livestock than that of Irongmara. This is because only a mere 12.08 percent of the households in Digarugaon do not have any livestock, while that figure is slightly higher in case of Irongmara. The live stocks generally possessing higher values like cow or buffalo and goat or pig are found more in Digarugaon. This is apparent from the Table 4.7 as the combined percentage of the households having cow or buffalo and goat or pig is approximately 64 percent while the figure is only 39 percent approximately for Irongmara. The main reason for this difference could be the nature of occupation in two places. A close look at Table 4.2 of this chapter indicates that 44.08 percent of the

households in Digarugaon are associated with agricultural activities and hence livestock like cow or buffalo and goat or pig are required by them for cultivation purpose.

Table 4.8 Distribution of Households in terms of Possessing Vehicles (in %)

Vehicles	Digarugaon	Irongmara
Bus/Car/Truck	3.29	3.22
Auto Rickshaw/Power tiller	5.49	6.45
Motorcycle	16.49	17.20
Rickshaw/Thela	10.99	5.37
Bicycle	30.77	38.70
No vehicle	32.97	29.06

Source: Field Survey

Table 4.8 shows that the households of both Digarugaon and Irongmara are not that rich in terms of possessing vehicles as 32.97 percent of the households in Digarugaon and 29.06 percent households in Irongmara do not possess any vehicle. Besides this, the majority of the households in both the places are mainly having a low valued vehicle called Bicycle. Higher valued vehicles like Bus or Car or Truck, Auto Rickshaw or Power tiller and Motorcycle are found very less in the study area. This is quite evident from the Table 4.8. So far as the relative position is concerned, data revealed that the households belonging to Irongmara are enjoying little edge in terms of ownership of the vehicles.

Table 4.9 Distribution of Households in terms of Financial Assets (in %)

Financial Assets	Digarugaon	Irongmara
Bank/Post office savings account plus other financial products like recurring deposits, LIC etc	30.10	32.87
Only bank/post office savings account	32.61	33.10
SHG membership	34	31.20
No financial asset	3.29	2.83

Source: Field Survey

It is evident from the data in Table 4.9 that the households of both Digarugaon and Irongmara are more or less well off in terms of financial assets. This is because more than 30 percent of the households of Digarugaon and Irongmara are having Bank or Post office savings account along with other financial products like recurring deposits, LIC etc. This is a good sign of financial development in the rural area as a significant percentage of the households are not only having savings account but are also possessing other financial products, some of which are even insurance products. A good percentage of the households in Digarugaon and in Irongmara i.e. 32.61 percent and 33.10 percent respectively are found to have savings account but are not equipped with any other financial products. A total of 34 percent of the households in Digarugaon are associated with any SHG membership while the figure in this respect is 31.20 percent for Irongmara. These figures show the possession of the financial assets of the households in the study area only from the standpoint of micro finance. That is to say, these percentages of the households do not possess any bank account and have no other financial products either. They are only having SHG membership, a micro finance based financial asset in their possession. It is also visible from Table 4.9 that the percentage of the households without any financial assets is very negligible in the study area.

4.3 Status of Ration Cards holders of Sample Households:

This section provides information on the holdings of various types of ration cards on the part of the households. Ration cards are authorized documents issued by the Government authority for obtaining benefits under Public Distribution system (PDS). Before implementation of National Food Security Act (NFSA), 2013 in the state of

Assam there were three types of Ration Cards, termed as Family Identity Cards (FIC). These three types of ration cards were meant for

- I) APL (Above Poverty Line),
- II) BPL (Below Poverty Line) and
- III) AAY (Antodaya Anna Yojana) beneficiaries under PDS/TPDS.

Besides, there was another type of Ration Card issued by the State Government which was called MMASY (Mukhya Mantrir Anna Suraksha Yojana) card. However with the implementation of NFSA in 2013 in the State broadly there were only two types of ration cards viz. 1) AAY Card under NFSA'13 and 2) Priority Household Card under NFSA'13 (Directorate of Food, Civil Supplies and Consumer Affairs, Assam, 2015).

It is to be noted that after the implementation of NFSA in 2013, APL, BPL and MMASY ration cards are incorporated under the category of Priority Household Card. Thus in Assam, four types of ration cards were available out of which three falls in Priority Household Card. In case of AAY Card, every household is entitled to have 35 kg rice per ration card while in case of Priority Household Card, an amount of 5 kg rice is entitled per member of a household. In both the cases, the price of rice is Rs 2 per kg. Both these ration cards are of multicoloured cover pages (Directorate of Food, Civil Supplies and Consumer Affairs, Assam, 2015).

From the field survey, it is found that household with all the four types of ration cards exist in the study area. The distribution of the sample households in terms of the possession of their ration cards is depicted in Table 4.10 as follows.

Table 4.10 Distribution of Sample Households in terms of Ration Cards (in %)

Type of Ration Card	Digarugaon	Irongmara
APL	43.95	45.16
BPL	32.98	39.78
Antodaya	8.79	4.30
MMASY	12.09	3.23
No ration card	2.19	7.53

Source: Field Survey

Table 4.10 shows that majority of the households of Digarugaon and Irongmara are having APL and BPL cards. The poorest of the poor constitute a negligible share of the sample households as revealed by the figure of Antodaya given in Table 4.10. The percentage of MMASY cards is relatively higher in case of Digarugaon. The percentage of the households without access to ration card is also very negligible.

Table 4.11 Distribution of Sample Households in terms of purchasing of PDS items (in %)

Items	Digarugaon			Irongmara		
	Full purchasing	Partial purchasing	No purchasing	Full purchasing	Partial purchasing	No purchasing
Rice	20.73	70.10	9.17	21.50	67.74	10.76
Wheat	29.20	60.35	10.45	4.30	15.05	80.65
Sugar	60.96	30.64	8.40	89.25	8.60	2.15
Kerosine	28.75	64.60	6.65	23.66	67.74	8.60

Source: Field Survey

Table 4.11 shows that the items mainly purchased by the rural households in the study area are rice, wheat, sugar and kerosene. This is because only these four items are

generally sold under PDS in Assam. From the Table 4.11 it is revealed that the nature of PDS purchasing in the study area were of three types viz. full purchasing, partial purchasing and no purchasing. Full purchasing means a situation where the households purchase the entire allotted PDS items regularly, while partial purchasing means a situation where the households are not purchasing the PDS items regularly.

So far as the purchasing of PDS rice is concerned, Table 4.11 depicts that the nature of purchasing PDS rice is mostly partial in both Digarugaon and Irongmara. About 70 percent of the respondents in Digarugaon and 67.74 percent of the respondents in Irongmara have purchased rice occasionally. Average quality of rice is mainly responsible for such purchase as opined by most of the respondents. Approximately 21 percent of the respondents in the study area have reported about full purchasing of rice as revealed by the Table 4.11. The percentage of the households with no purchasing of PDS rice is very less. The households reported no purchasing of PDS rice mostly belongs to APL category. These households viewed that they did not go for purchasing rice from PDS as they could afford better quality rice in the open market as compared to one supplied through PDS.

The purchasing of PDS wheat is very low in Digarugaon and Irongmara as depicted from the Table 4.11. The reason for low wheat purchasing is that the households in these places are mostly rice consuming ones and not favouring wheat that much. However the purchasing of PDS sugar and kerosene are mostly of the combination of full and partial purchasing as relatively smaller percentage of the households in the study area have reported about no purchasing of PDS sugar and kerosene.

Table 4.12 Quality of PDS items as perceived by the sample households (in %)

Items	Digarugaon					Irongmara				
	Very poor	Poor	Average	Good	Very good	Very poor	Poor	Average	Good	Very good
Rice	10.05	18.23	60.40	11.32	-	6.02	15.67	43.37	34.94	-
Wheat	26.80	44.20	29	-	-	38.88	45.56	15.56	-	-
Sugar	-	-	65.25	35.75	-	-	-	80	20	-
Kerosine	-	2.5	24.7	72.95	-	-	-	8.24	91.76	-

Source: Field Survey,

Note : '-' represents no response of the households

Table 4.12 represents that the quality of PDS rice is more or less a satisfactory one as 60.40 percent households in Digarugaon and 43.37 percent households in Irongmara have reported quality of PDS rice as average while 11.32 percent households in Digarugaon and 34.94 households in Irongmara have reported good quality. However the quality of PDS wheat is very dismal as revealed by Table 4.12 where it is clearly visible that a significant percentage of the households rated the quality of PDS wheat as poor and very poor. Again the quality of PDS sugar and PDS kerosene is up to the mark as perceived by the sample households in both Digarugaon and in Irongmara.

Table 4.13 Perception of the Sample Households on Cash Transfer vs Kind Transfer Debate (in %)

Place	Cash transfer	Kind transfer
Digarugaon	57.89	42.11
Irongmara	62.37	37.63

Source: Field Survey

It is evident from Table 4.13 that more than 50 percent of the households in Digarugaon as well as in Irongmara are in favour of cash transfer. So far as the relative comparison

is concerned, it is visible from Table 4.13 that the percentage of the households favouring cash transfer over kind transfer is slightly higher in case of Irongmara.

From the interview with the head/ knowledgeable member of the households, we have come to know that households favouring cash transfer over kind transfer in the study area believed that this will give them the opportunity to purchase the allotted quota of food grain every month as well as it will give them the freedom to purchase required quantity of food grains. On the other hand, households who have not supported cash transfer programme makes the opinion that it is associated with transfer of price of food grains to the card holders but there is a uncertainty on the part of card holders that the price of food grains doesn't remain constant in the market and in that case whether the price of food grains allotted to the card holders will be raised or not. This is one of prime reasons responsible for rejecting cash transfer programme and supporting kind transfer by the 42.11 percent and 37.63 percent of sample households in Digarugaon and Irongmara respectively.

References

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