

CHAPTER 6

PERCEPTION OF MANAGERS TOWARDS SOCIO -POLITICAL AND ECONOMIC CONDITIONS OF ASSAM

Stephen P. Robinson (1954) defines perception as “a process by which individuals organize and interpret their sensory impressions in order to give meaning to their environment”. It can also be defined as a process, which involves seeing, receiving selecting, organizing, interpreting and giving meaning to the environment. The individuals perceiving process and the environment in which perception occurs influence the functioning of the whole process.

Our objective reality is our personal reality, whether we take an optimistic or pessimistic view of the future and our surrounding etc is conditioned by our experience, value, and belief systems. All these factors constitute our cognitive process, which has significant influence on our perception. Even when so much diverse information is available in the environment, we tend to select, evaluate and classify it and anything, which does not bear subjective inspection, is not admitted to the opinion formation process (Dass, 2007).

The behavior of companies corresponds to the social and economic systems in which they are embedded and the cultural norms of the local society. It has been found that several practices of philanthropy and corporate social responsibility of corporations in India are largely influenced by the context in which the companies operate, i.e. the wider socio-economic environment and the relationship between business, society and others (Mohan, 2001). Managerial perception of reality plays a role in successful formulation and implementation of CSR programme and to gear up motivational systems amongst all. It has been seen that social cooperation, motivation and support from top management help in organizing effective social welfare programmes. Isolated and individual approach has not any bearing on effective performance, positive perception; only coordinated effort help to build polices to gain social capital (Krishna, 1979).

In the current chapter an exercise has been made to understand how the corporations' managers operating in Assam perceive the socio-cultural, politico-legal and economic-industrial issues of Assam. The primary data in this connection have been collected from six corporations, where in each corporation four managers are selected and a total of twenty-four managers are actual respondents. Since the methodology chapter has given the details of data collection procedure, we shall not repeat the same here. Moreover, for better presentation the present chapter has been divided into two parts. Part-I portrays the profile of the managers under study and Part-II gives the details of the perception of managers.

Part-I

PROFILE OF MANAGERS UNDER THE STUDY

In this part, different attributes of managers viz, age, sex, marital status, hierarchy, qualification, and total years of experiences have been presented in tabular form to enable us to get a clear idea about respondent managers.

6.1. Age of the managers

The table 1. depicts the age range of the managers of six corporations, and none of the respondent managers are below thirty years. It has been noticed that 29.17, 45.83 and 25 percent are in the age range of 31-40, 41-50 and 51-60 years respectively.

Table:6 1. Age of Managers

Sl No	Corporation	Age range of Managers			Total
		31-40 years	41-50years	51-60 years	
1	OIL	1	2	1	4
2	NRL	2	2	-	4
3	ONGC	1	2	1	4
4	TTL	2	1	1	4
5	BVCL	1	2	1	4
6	HPCL	-	2	2	4
	Total	7(29.17%)	11(45.83%)	6(25%)	24(100%)

6.2. Sex of Managers

The table 6.2 indicates that there is male majority amongst the respondent managers i.e. 87.5 percent and only 12.5% are female. This also indicates that our female counter part has not yet attained equal shares in managerial positions.

Table: 6.2: Number of Males and Females Respondents of Corporations

Sl No	Corporation	Sex of Managers		Total
		Male	Female	
1	OIL	3	1	4
2	NRL	4	-	4
3	ONGC	4	-	4
4	TTL	3	1	4
5	BVCL	4	-	4
6	HPCL	3	1	4
	Total	21(87.5%)	3 (12.5%)	24 (100%)

6.3. Marital status

The table 6.3 gives an account of marital status of the managers of corporations and it has been observed that 79.17 percent are married. Respectively 12.7 & 8.33 percent are unmarried and widower.

Table: 6. 3 Marital Status of Respondent Managers

Sl No	Corporation	Marital Status of Managers			Total
		Unmarried	Married	Widower	
1	OIL	-	4	-	4
2	NRL	1	3	-	4
3	ONGC	-	3	1	4
4	TTL	-	4	-	4
5	BVCL	1	3	-	4
6	HPCL	1	2	1	4
	Total	3(12.5%)	19(79.17%)	2 (8.33%)	24(100%)

6.4. Hierarchy of Managers

The table 6.4 illustrates that 37.5% managers middle level 45.83% are at Sr level and 16.67% are at upper level.

Table 6.4: Level of Managers

Sl No	Corporation	Hierarchical levels of managers			Total
		Manager (Lower)	Sr.Manager (Middle)	Dy GM/GM (Upper)	
1	OIL	1	2	1	4
2	NRL	2	1	1	4
3	ONGC	1	3	-	4
4	TTL	1	2	1	4
5	BVCL	3	1	-	4
6	HPCL	1	2	1	4
	Total	9(37.5%)	11(45.83%)	4(16.67%)	24(100%)

6.5. Qualification of Managers

The table 6.5 indicates that 50% of the managers have graduate degree in engineering , 25% have master degree in engineering and remaining 25% are having non-engineering degree.

Table: 6.5 Qualifications of Managers

Sl No	Corporation	Qualification			Total
		Non Engg Degree	Graduate degree in Engineering	Master degree in Engineering	
1	OIL	-	2	2	4
2	NRL	-	3	1	4
3	ONGC	1	3	-	4
4	TTL	1	2	1	4
5	BVCL	3	1	-	4
6	HPCL	1	2	1	4
	Total	6(25%)	12(50%)	6(25%)	24(100%)

6.6. Total Working Experiences

The table 6.6 gives an account of total working experience of managers in the field of corporate. The table shows that 4.17percent respondent managers have below six years of experience. Respectively 25 & 37.5 percent managers have experience of 6-10 years and 11-15 years. Again 25 percent managers have experience between sixteen to twenty years. Only 8.33 percent managers have experience between twenty one to twenty five years.

Table 6.6: Total Working Experience of Managers in the Field

Sl No	Name of Corporation	Working experience in the field including present corporation (in years)					Total No of Managers
		1-5	6-10	11-15	16-20	21-25	
1	OIL	-	1	1	1	1	4
2	NRL	-	2	2	-	-	4
3	ONGC	-		2	2	-	4
4	TTL	-	1	1	2	-	4
5	BVCL	1	1	2	-	-	4
6	HPCL		1	1	1	1	4
	Total	1(4.17%)	6(25%)	9(37.5%)	6(25%)	2(8.33%)	24(100%)

Part-II

In this part of study, perceptions of managers are discussed in three areas i.e. the socio-cultural, politico-legal, and economic-industrial issues.

6.7. Perception towards Socio-Cultural issues

i) **Population:** The majority of managers i.e., 62.5 percent are of opinion that heterogeneity of population in Assam is due to the following reasons (a) it was a meeting ground of diverse ethnic streams;(b) immigration had taken place from various corner of the country(c) fertility of land and climatic condition suitable for living and a 37.5 percent managers have agreed with either of the statement above.

ii) **Language:** A 54.16 percent of manager are cited the ethnic diversity as the cause of diversity in languages, a 4.17 percent managers quoted that diversity in language family as the cause, further 41.7 percent of managers cited both the attribute as the cause of language diversity in Assam.

iii) **Food, Festival and Dress:** All the managers have perceived that rice is the staple food in both tribal and non-tribal people. Each tribal group has its own festival and there is variety of dresses and attire according to ethnic division.

iv) **Religion:** It has been witnessed that tribal populations in Assam, were pagans and certain groups still follow their pagan faith. It has been found that, sanskritisation and exposure to mainland India helped to adopt Hinduism, as well as Islam, Christianity, are spread.

v) **Casteism:** The managers perceived differently in the non-rigidity of casteism in Assam like other parts of main land India. The table 6.7.(a) shows the variation of percentage of opinion to statement related to casteism. A 33.33 percent have opinion that casteism is less dominant due to liberal ethos of Assamese society and 37.5% managers

Table: 6.7. (a) Statement related to Casteism

Sl No	Statement related to the issues	Respondent	Percent age
1	Casteism is less dominant in Assam due to liberal ethos of Assamese society	-	-
2	Aryan culture arrived late and sanskritisation delayed	08	33.33%
3	Vaishnavite vhakti movement paved the way for building wider society	03	12.50%
4	All of the above	04	16.67%
5	Aryan culture and sanskritisation arrived late and Vaishnavite vhakti movement paved the way for building wider society	09	37.50%
Total		24	100%

Subscribed that Aryan culture and sanskritisation arrived late and vaishnavite bhakti movement propounded by Sankardeva paved the way for building wider society. There are 16.67% manager subscribes all of the above facts.

vi) **Customs:** The table .6.7. (b) Indicates the nature of response to enable us to understand the perception of managers towards customs, and customary laws.

Table: 6.7. (b). Customs

Sl No	Statement related to the issue	Nature of response			Total
		Yes/Agree	No/Disagree	Don't know	
1	Breaking of customary laws in tribal society in Assam still viewed seriously	14 (58.33%)	7 (29.17%)	3 (12.50%)	24
2	Exposure to outside world and media eroding the customs etc in society	11	12	1	24
3	No ploughing practices after Magh Bihu is a peculiarity in Assam	16	--	8	24

In the above, it has seen that, there is plurality in the, population, languages, custom, and religious faith. The managers have shown their understanding towards such issues; they take care and value such issues in their relation building process with stakeholders. The above discussion has shown that the managers have a fair perception towards the socio- political issues and facts in Assam.

6. 8. Perception towards Politico-Legal dimensions

6. 8.1. Politics and Government

a) **Minority vote bank:** Due to diverse ethnicity, language groups and religious minority vote bank play role in Assam politics, managerial response in this issue depicted in the table 8.1 (a). Where in 20.83 percent managers are of opinion that religious minority takes voting decision united, 37.5 percent religious minority being united can change vote equation and 41.67 percent subscribed both the issues.

Table: 6. 8.1 (a) Minority vote bank

Sl No	Statement related to the issues/facts	Respo ndent	Percent age
1	Religious minority takes voting decisions united	5	20.83%
2	Religious minority being united can change vote equation	9	37.83%
3	Religious minority takes voting decisions united and Religious minority being united can change vote equation	10	41.67%
Total		24	100%

b) Illegal migrants: Assam has a problem of illegal migrants, which have politico-legal dimension and become pre pre-election bogey. The reasons for the same are many, and politician and parties use it differently. The table 5.10 shows that 41.67 percent manager are of perception that, politician have intension to divide voters and remain in power, that is why they create threat and attract voters. The nature of perception towards related issues is also illustrated in the table 6. 8.1. (b).

Table: 6. 8.1. (b) Illegal migrants

Sl No	Statement of issues/facts	Respondent	Percentage
1	The politician raise illegal migrants issue during election to threat voters		
2	Attract voters		
3	Divide voters	2	8.33%
4	Threat, attract and divide voters	10	41.67%
5	Threat & Attract	5	20.83%
6	Threat & divide	1	4.17%
7	Attract & divide	3	12.50%
8	Any other	3	12.50%
Total		24	100%

In Assam, for more than three decades illegal migrants, issue has been taken center stage for discussion during every election, but there is a general believe that government and political parties running the government are not sincere to the actual problem.

6. 8.2. Insurgency & Terrorism

The table 8.2 illustrates the perception of managers towards insurgency and terrorism in this part of land. A majority percentage (75%) believes that lack of choice and scope amongst youth helps them to become prey of terrorist group.

Table: 6.8.2. Insurgency & terrorism

Sl N o	Statement related to the issue	Nature of response			Total
		Yes/Agree	No/Disagree	Don't know	
1	Lack of scope and choice for helps terrorist group to attract such youth to their fold.	18(75%)	59(20.83%)	1(4.17%)	24
2	It has been reported that there exist unholy nexus between insurgent groups and some politicians	21(87.5%)	2(8.33%)	1(4.67%)	24

Majority (87.5%) of the managers are of opinion that, the reported unholy nexus between some politician and terrorist group is true.

6.8.3. Ethnic rise

The rise of ethnic consciousness in Assam has given birth to issues like demand for own rule; separate state, new political party and militant groups. All the managers perceive such issues as hindrance to the peace and tranquility of society.

6.8.4. Corruption and consciousness

The table 8.4 shows that corruption in political and governance system has been found high, about 80% manager perceived the situation. The rest of the managers perceive the rise of the situation due to lack of consciousness and mass movement. Vision less dishonest leadership remains in power for long without contributing to state for its development.

Table: 6.8.4. Corruption and consciousness

SI No	Statement of issues/facts	Respondent	Percentage
1	There is huge unabated corruption in our political and governance system	15	62.5%
2	There is lack of consciousness towards rights and peoples movement.	5	20.8%
3	There is lack of visionary and honest leader in politics that is why public administration is corrupt.	4	16.7
	Total	24	100

The discussion at above indicates that there is diversity in problems in politics and governance. The wide spread corruption and lack of consciousness aggravated the situation. The managers have clear perception in those issues.

6.9. Perception towards Economic-Industrial issues

- a. **Agriculture:** Managers are of opinion that secondary and tertiary sector has not developed here, as such people are dependent on agriculture and agro-allied income.
- b. **Economic planning:** Majority (87.5%) of the managers are of view that when, social, economic and environmental factors have taken together for planning and development, growth will accelerate.
- c. **Infrastructure and Resource:** Managers are opined that inadequate infrastructure like communication and transport have disrupted the establishment of heavy industries. They have opined that whatever reasonable infrastructures available need to be used judiciously, and government and private partnership need to become more realistic for industrial growths.

The table 9(a) indicates the managerial perception towards various infrastructure and resource related issues.

Table: 6. 9. (a) Infrastructure, resource and policies

Sl No	Statement related to the issue	Nature of response			Total
		Yes/Agree	No/Disagree	Don't know	
1	Inadequate transport and communication bottleneck create development problem in Assam	12(50%)	12(50%)	-	24
2	Assam has adequate human resource required for large scale industries	18(75%)	6(25%)	-	24
3	Community sensitive economic development is the solution of economic underdevelopment	12(50%)	12(50%)	-	24
4	Transparent Govt policies only encourage private investment and movement of outside capital	21(87.5%)	3(12.5%)	-	24

In connection with transportation and communication there is 50:50 differences exist amongst managers. Managers (75%)of opinion that the state has adequate resources. So far Govt policies are concerned 87.5% of managers are of perception that only transparent policies encourage private investment and attraction of outside capital. The table 6.9 (a) and 6.9. (b) reveals that 87.5 percent of managers have perceived that the state is suitable for resource-based industries, 50 per cent are opined that small-scale industries can be a possible solution of unemployment. Also it has been found that 50 percent of managers cited the lack of initiatives as one of the cause behind underutilization of natural resources in the table6. 9. (c).

Table: 6.9. (b) Resource & unemployment

SI No	Statement related to the issue	Nature of response		Total
		Yes/Agree	No/Disagree	
1	The natural resources are available here like minerals, crude oil, forest, water, as such setting up of resourced based industries need to be considered	21(87.5%)	3(12.5%)	24
2	Small scale industries can be a viable solution for unemployment in Assam	12(50%)	12(50%)	24

Table: 6.9. (c). Issues responsible for industrial backwardness

SI No	Statement of issues/facts	Respondent	Percentage
1	There is lack of availability of capital for industrial growth	6	25%
2	There is lack of initiatives for industrial growth	12	50%
3	There is lack of aptitudes for industrial growth	6	25%
		Total 24	100%

It has seen from above, managers of the corporation have concern to the issues pertaining to agriculture, economic planning, resource and infrastructure, industrial development. In framing and considering policy measures such issues have very relevance, they told. The foregoing exercise clarify the better managerial perception towards the socio-cultural, politico-legal and economic-industrial dimension of the present Assam, which can be summarized as follows.

Assam has a composite culture of numerous tribes, races each portraying peculiar ethnic identity. This is a society that has emerged out of intermingling of diverse races and tribes, yet living peacefully cultivating a feeling of brotherhood and oneness. Assamese, a peace

loving community, historically speaking, has always embraced everybody who has come to this land forgetting all religious and communal differences. It is heartening to note that Assam, though infested with violent outfits today, can proudly acclaim its communal unity and peaceful coexistence of Hindu, Muslim and Buddhist. *Bihu*, the festival of Assam portraying social solidarity, other predominant features of the Assamese society includes practice of *Shakti puja*, presence of *naamghars* (the prayer halls one finds in every locality), and *Vaishnavism* (the religion taught by the *Saint Shankardeva*, the great religious and social reformer of the region.). The issue of illegal immigration from neighboring Bangladesh mostly dominates political history of Assam since the early 1970's. The unabated influx of illegal migrants from Bangladesh has rendered severe demographic changes to the region, after partition of India. The agitation of AASU and subsequent political changes and Assam accord could not make substantial changes in the infrastructure and resource utilization process. In the absence of political will, huge unabated corruptions and lack of scope for meaningful employment frustrated the youths of the state. The process of ethnic rise and upsurge of militant group derailed capital movement. Some ineligible leadership remains in power for long without contributing to causes of mass people.

Since Assam is a major producer of crude oil and natural gas in India, several oilfields are found in northern region. But such resources are not unlimited. There are environmental threats for unrestricted exploration. The high revenue would now come from tourism, Information technology, engineering industry. Community sensitive economic & industrial policy, optimal use of industrial infrastructure, transparency in governance, rise of consciousness and strive for peace and harmony can bring prosperity and growth of the state in all fronts. An appropriate development strategy and political will for removing hindrances of growth and social synergy is the need of the time.