

# A Study of Socio-Economic Condition of Forest Area People of Alipurduar District, W.B.

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**Abstract:** Forests play a major part in a variety of livelihoods and welfare, from urban inhabitants taking a leisurely stroll into the local forest to isolated hunter-gatherers who live in the forest and off the woods. Relations between forests as an independent resource and communities at the fringes of forests as resource dependents. In forestry management policy before and soon following independence, forest communities' traditional rights and interests and their livelihoods and core stakeholder concerns are not widely addressed. Their living standards, their health, their hygiene and other living methods have been under serious threat. They are very tough to create jobs. This study showed the lifestyle pattern and (existing and proposed) paradigm of the districts. In the districts, the socio-economic status of the people in the forest border is poor. Women also observed and discussed the role of women in economic activity in addition to domestic chores. The women's engagement in the production of Sal leaf, animal husbandry, the collection of firewood, sericulture and picnic management has been noted. The focus must be on land tenure, family type, planning orientation, agricultural power, asset ownership, market direction, etc. These are the most important and crucial contributors to the livelihood generation in the forest fringes.

**Keywords:** Livelihood, Sustainability, Forest area, Social-economic condition, Alipurduar.

## Introduction:

Rural households and communities depending on the forest engage closely with the forest and derive their economic life, often culturally and spiritually [3]. The World Bank has claimed that 25% of the world's poor rely directly or indirectly on forests to improve their lives. India has a population of more than 100 million people in forests and 550 communities of 227 ethnic groups, 60% of whom live in forests. In view of its importance to social, cultural and economic life, forests play a crucial part in the viability and survival of Indian tribality.

The links between plants and humans are commonly employed in Asian countries to document traditional knowledge on plant utilisation and inventing the Phyto-related content of local flora. There is a great contribution to folklore from different civilisations, traditions and beliefs of the many tribes. Flora's diversity. The several tribes in the region that have a strong forest link have extensive traditional indigenous knowledge systems on the use of the natural resources available to support them every day, such as food, food, shelter and health [1]. Traditional knowledge of the different uses of plant species, e.g., food, medicine, etc., are retained from generation to generation and is primarily dependent on forest resources to sustain them. Traditional societies are a perfect illustration of an ancestral system of traditional knowledge. The adaptive and resilient traditional knowledge may be possible. Today in India, medical practice among tribals and villages follows the same pattern that it was 2000 years ago, and few changes are taking place [4].

It is estimated that 60 million indigenous populations are fully dependent on forests, 350 million on forests and 1.2 billion on agro-forests. There is no essential necessity to maintain a good level of living, such as nutritious food, safe water and a healthy environment for the forest reliant poor. Much of the livelihood is earned by primary stakeholders in and around the forest fringe. The stakeholders have a marginal position, which leads to poor socio-economic conditions due to farm operations (poor holdings, low fertility levels) [2]. Forests have been intensively successful in providing the rising population of South Bengal with a sustainable supply of wood and firewood. The Indian Buxa Tiger Reserve and the present confrontation with the Rabhas are living near the reservation region. While individuals are formally recognised as participants in conserving wildlife, the project has led to fewer jobs and reduced access to the forest. The concept of popular involvement remains merely a concept. Divine Odame Appiah, 2009, examined the notion of sustainable rural life among Ghana's forest communities. Ambivalent has been handled with the rhetoric of using forestry to maintain communities. In this regard, the focus is on perceived connections between forests as an independent resource and communities on the forest margins as resource dependents. The population's livelihoods are mostly based on subsistence agriculture inside forested regions like any other local or agri-environmental of Ghana.

**Objectives:**

The objectives are -

- 1 to investigate the respondents' socio-economic characteristics.
2. Identify different patterns of livelihood.
3. Selects and evaluates the factors in the form of a historical variable (personal and socio-economic) (distinct livelihood pattern).
4. Build an economically feasible and sustainable pattern of existence.

**The study area:**

Located at 26,489°N 89,527°E, Alipurduar is located. Two maps cover the Alipurduar district. It is a large area in West Bengal towards the east end of the Dooars. It is a lovely, mostly wooded country with many rivers coming from Bhutan's outer reaches of the Himalayas. It is mainly a rural area with 79.38% of the countryside's inhabitants. The district has 1 city and 20 census cities, meaning that 20.62% of the population lives in the city. In all the six community blocks in the district, the planned castes and scheduled tribes form collectively over half the population. In the three northern blocks of the district, there is a considerable concentration of tribals (planned tribes).

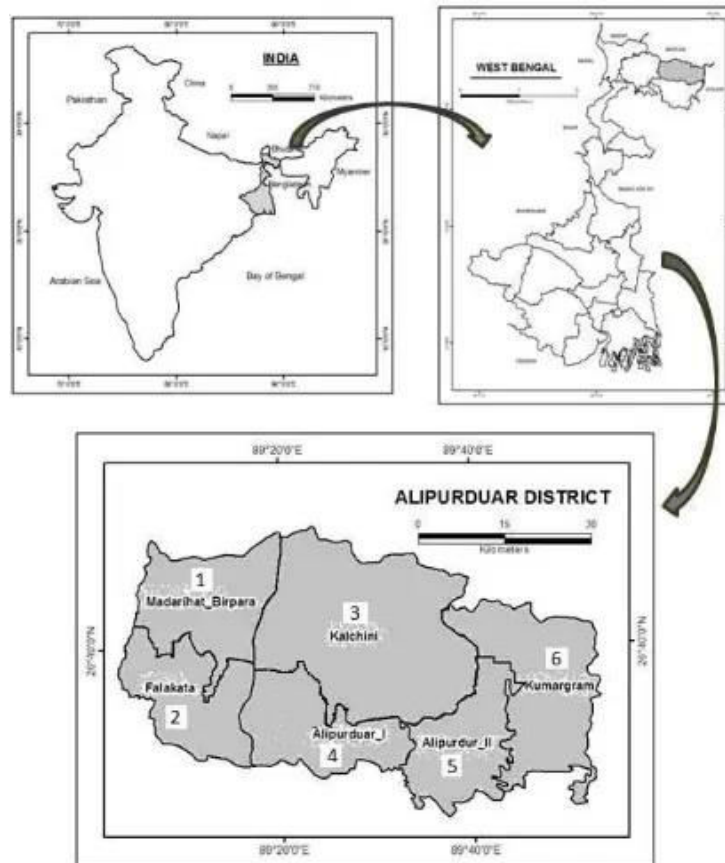


Figure 1: Location of Alipurduar district

**Materials and methods:**

The study is based mostly on primary data, but secondary data are also important wherever required. Tribal households collect primary data. The main data from the questionnaires created for this purpose shall be collected. The questionnaire includes age, gender, size, religious, education, food, custom, health, lifestyle, residence, occupation, etc.

There have been two villages of Alipurduar, Pampubasti and Porobasti. Testing includes purposeful and simple random methods of sampling. Data were obtained in accordance with the structured interview programme. One hundred respondents attended the study. Correlation of coefficients, multiple regression analytics, pair t-test, factor analysis were the statistical instruments employed in the study. There were 14 independent variables such as: Age,

Caste, Occupation. There were Education, Family type. Family size, Landholding, Land type, Farm power, Asset holding. Livelihood was the only dependent variable [5].

Items	Category	F	%
Age	Young (18-29)	26	26
	Middle age (30-49)	64	64
	Old age (above 50)	10	10
Occupation	Labor	23	23
	Caste Occupation	19	19
	Business	28	28
	Independent profession	2	2
	Cultivation	15	15
	Service	10	10
	Illiterate	19	19
Education	Read Only	6	6
	Read & write	2	2
	Primary	29	29
	Secondary	24	24
	Higher secondary	13	13
	Graduate & above	7	7
	Sanitation	Available	34
Unavailable		66	66
Caste	Schedule Caste	27	27
	Lower Caste	32	32
	General Caste	18	18
	Agricultural Caste	11	11
	Brahmin Caste	12	12
	Dominant Caste	0	0

Table 1: The respondents' socio-economic characteristics (n=100)

**Results and discussion:**

In Table 1, the respondents' socio-economic status indicated in a certain geographical place with multiple indicators is the general condition of the respondents. The study shows that 27% (18-29 years of age) were young and the majority were medium (65%); the remainder 8% were over 50 years of age. The calendar caste included 27% of respondents, 33% were from a lower case, 20% were from an overall case, farm caste was 10% and brahmin caste was also determined to be 10%. The work pattern shows that 24 percent were workers, 20 percent were caste employees, and 26 percent worked. The service involved 10% of respondents. Their participation in cultivation is 16 percent. In the independent business, only 1% of respondents participated. The education level shows that 20% are illiterate, that 5% can read-only, that 1% can read and write. 30% of respondents receive primary education, 25% receive secondary education, 11% have higher education, and 8% have graduated from secondary education. The nuclear family was a majority of responders (77 percent). Rest The united family accounted for 23 percent. The table shows that 57 per cent of respondents (up to 5 members) belong to small families and the remaining 43 per cent to large families (above 5 members). The distribution of land, a major phenomenon in rural society, showed that 21% of respondents were landless, while the other 79% were landowners [9]. Of the category of landowners 54% had less than 1 bigha; 20% had 1 to 5 bigha and only 5% had between 5 and 10 bighas of land respectively. Only 1% of those who responded had no residence but the house that used to be rented (hut). 27% had household (hut), 23% lived in kutchha home and 26% lived in pucca. The remaining 23 percent had a mixed home type. There were no drought animals in 25 percent of respondents. 6% of respondents had 1 to 2 drought animals, 42% had 3 to 4 drought and 25% had 5 to 6 drought animals. There was a tractor of only one percent. 35% of those surveyed in the research region had sanitation facilities and 65% of those surveyed were left without sanitation facilities. The livelihood distribution pattern and the fact that the vast majority of Alipurduar inhabitants were local workers in the area (49 percent as agri-labour, mason, construction labour etc.) In Mahatma Gandhi, the National Rural Employment Grant Act (MGNRIGA) (23.07 percent), 47 percent of the population gathers wood and sold in the nearby market, 15.51 percent in the animal husbandry (cow, pig, goat and breed). Alipurduar has one of its essential

qualities: they have built a picnic spot to promote rural tourism, in which women actively participate, 10.20% of people are involved in picnic management. In government services, only 3.26% of respondents were involved [8].

Types of livelihood	No. of people involved	%
Farming	11	4.48
Picnic spot	37	15.1
Service	9	3.6
Animal husbandry	24	9.79
MGNREGA	30	12.24
Labour in other state	50	20.4
Labour in local area	38	15.51
Other (collection of fire wood from forest)	46	18.77
Total	245	100

Table 2: Alipurduar District’s livelihood pattern (n=60)

Type of activities	% of women involves
Animal rearing	67
Firewood collection	55
Picnic spot maintain	42
Sericulture	30
Making plates from Sal leaf	52

Table 3: Women’s participation in economic activities

Work in a local area has evidently reached first place as a livelihood (Table 2). Only 6.70 percent of interviewees go elsewhere to employment. Most individuals have an employment card in MGNREGA in this village (13.40 percent). One of the main livelihoods in the district of Sal Leaf made by the peasants and sold at the market. In Bankura, 13,91 percent of respondents harvest Sal leaf from the forest, make plate, tie it, and sell it in the market. In different sectors, 5,67 percent of respondents do service. Two of the leading companies in the district under examination, like plate production from Sal leaf in Banura and management of picnic spots in the district of Alipurduar, recorded the involvement of women folk [7]. On the other hand, due to a terrible agrarian scenario, the inhabitants in the districts of Alipurduar have very little opportunity to diversify their livelihoods due to a comparatively better agricultural situation (Table 4).

Variables	Correlation coefficient (r)
Age	197*
Caste	0.041
Occupation	0.182
Education	0.31
Family type	0.247*
Family size	0.201
Land Holding	0.037
House Type	0.192
Farm Power	-0.025
Asset Possession	0.172
Outside communication	0.52
Planning orientation	0.326**
Production orientation	-0.014
Market orientation	0.313**

\*\*Significant at level of 0.01%; \*Significant at level of 0.05%

Table 4: Coefficient of correlation between the livelihood (human days) of all respondents and independent factors

In addition to family tasks, women have also observed and examined their participation in economic operations (Table 3). The engagement of women in the production of Sal leaf, animal breeding, and the collecting of firewood, silkworm production, and the management of picnic areas were recorded [6]. After their home activity they were

used to deep forests to collect wood (55%) for domestic use and sold on their market to raise their family's income (42% of females involved in the management of picnic sites, amongst the respondents most women involved in animal husbandry (67%). A major achievement in women's work is that 52 per cent of women collect salt leaf and produce plates from the leaves. Thirty percent Women have also been involved in many sericulture operations. Women have also participated in other economic activities, in addition to their household activities.

**Existing livelihood:**

- Rain-fed livelihood farming
- Failure to irrigate
- Pre-domination of livelihood agriculture and Practices of traditional farming
- Scientific management for animal husbandry is not followed.
- \* Non-described cattle dominance
- Lack of agricultural and allied sector training facilities
- Picnic sites are built and are traditionally operated
- Women's role in economic activities does not encourage their livelihood development
- Private money lenders are obstacles to people's progress

**Proposed livelihood:**

- Focus on water shifting
- Introduction of well dug with soundless pumping system
- Ecological farm creation of livelihood, e.g. turmeric cultivation to reduce elephant depredation by substituting maize and wheat
- The introduction of forest industry such as the oil extractor plant, chronicle mill and other timber processing plants
  - Forest industries
- Objectives Develop existing picnic places with a guard tower, drinking water amenities, jungle rides.
- Government's arrangement of the farmers' training programme
- Development of ecotourism cottage enterprise / resort
- Cultivation awareness for crops not favourite to wild animals such as drumstick, chilli, sesame etc.
- Creating women's job opportunities

**Conclusions:**

The above research is based on the socio-economic status of the forests in the district of Alipurduar. There are many problems for the people of the hamlet, such as lack of education, hygiene, poor health, a poor lifestyle and poverty. Marketing should be established instead of subsistence farming practices. For its total economic development, the tourism industry can be developed. Continuous and comprehensive literacy monitoring can be used as a tool to solve the current problem. Few governmental steps should also be implemented as soon as possible for installations such as energy, sanitation, communication, health, etc. Sustainable development and inclusive growth is therefore conceivable for the rural tribe.

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