



# A STUDY ON THE EDUCATIONAL STATUS OF THE SONOWAL KACHARI COMMUNITY OF MAITHONG GAON PANCHAYAT, KAKOPATHER, TINSUKIA

**Dr. Dipen Basumatary**

*Assistant Professor, Department of Sociology, PNGB Govt. Model College, Kakopather, Tinsukia*

## ABSTRACT

The Sonowal Kachari are one of the indigenous tribal groups of Assam. They are a sub-group of the Bodo community and are considered the third-largest tribe in Assam in terms of population. The settlements of the Sonowal Kachari people are scattered across the districts of Dibrugarh, Tinsukia, Sivasagar, Jorhat, Lakhimpur, Dhemaji, and parts of the state of Arunachal Pradesh in Northeast India. They are of Mongoloid origin, and linguistically, the Sonowal Kachari people belong to the Tibetan language family. They have their own distinct culture, customs, and traditions, which set them apart from other communities. This article focuses on the educational status of the Sonowal Kachari people living under the jurisdiction of the Maithong Gaon Panchayat. The Maithong Gaon Panchayat falls under the Kakopather Development Block, under the administrative sub-division of Doomdooma, Tinsukia.

**KEY WORDS:** Sonowal Kachari, inhabitant area, educational status of the community.

## INTRODUCTION

The Sonowal Kachari are an indigenous people of the state of Assam in northeastern India. They are one of the aboriginal tribes of Assam and are considered the third-largest tribal community in the state in terms of population. The Sonowal Kachari belong to the Mongoloid racial group, and linguistically, their language is part of the Tibetan-Burmese language family, specifically a sub-branch of the Bodo community of Assam. Currently, the settlement of this tribal community is primarily found in the districts of Tinsukia, Dibrugarh, Sivasagar, Jorhat, Golaghat, and Lakhimpur in Upper Assam, as well as in some parts of Arunachal Pradesh. The Sonowal Kachari have their own distinct identity, culture, customs, traditions, religion, and way of life. A significant religious practice among them is the Baithow Puja, which they worship.

### Coverage of the study

To study the educational development of the Sonowal Kachari community, two villages, namely Saru Maithong and Bor Maithong, under the jurisdiction of the Dirak Gaon Panchayat, have been selected. These two villages—Saru Maithong and Bor Maithong—form the boundary for this study. Field data and relevant information will be collected exclusively from these two villages within the mentioned Gaon Panchayat. Maithong Gaon Panchayat is a rural local body and part of the Tinsukia Zila Parishad. It is situated 55 kilometers from the district headquarters of Tinsukia. The area falls under the jurisdiction of the Doomdooma sub-division and is also part of the Kakopather block's development region.

National Highway 15, which connects Tinsukia to Namsai in the state of Arunachal Pradesh, passes through the Dirak Gaon Panchayat. The main communities inhabiting this area include the Sonowal Kachari, Moran, Matak, Ahom, Adibashi, and Nepali. Assamese is the local language spoken here. The people are primarily engaged in agricultural activities, with tea cultivation also being a significant part of their livelihood.

There are a total of 17 villages under the jurisdiction of Maithong Gaon Panchayat, which are as follows:

SI No	Name of the Villages
1	Chuta Dirak No. 2
2	Chuta Dirak No. 1
3	Doania Maithong No. 2
4	Doania Maithong No. 5
5	Doania Maithong No. 6
6	Doania Maithong No. 1
7	Doania Maithong No. 3
8	Doania Maithong No. 4



9	Hakhati Gaon
10	Hakhati N.C.
11	Hakhati Pathar
12	Kachari Maithong No. 2
13	Kachari Maithong No. 3
14	Kachari Maithong No. 4
15	Kachari Maithong No. 1
16	Saru Dirak No. 2
17	Saru Dirak No. 1

## OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The following points are taken as objectives to study the socio-economic status of Sonowal Kachari under the jurisdiction of Maithong Gaon Panchayat village.

- (i) To evaluate the educational attainment of the village.
- (ii) To study the area of inhabitation (environment) of the village.

## RESEARCH QUESTION

- (i) The development of education in the village is still very slow.

## METHODOLOGY

This study is primarily descriptive in nature. Primary data were collected from the people of the targeted village using a semi-structured questionnaire. Secondary data were gathered from various sources, including journals, books, periodicals, census data, and other official documents. The participant observation method was also used for data collection whenever necessary.

## LITERATURE REVIEW

**Barooah(1998)** in his study focuses on the origin of the Sonowal Kachari community in Northeast India. He highlights that the Sonowal Kachari are one of the Scheduled Tribes of Assam, with a significant presence in the districts of Dibrugarh, Tinsukia, Sivasagar, Jorhat, Golaghat, and parts of Arunachal Pradesh. The study also examines their customs, traditions, agricultural practices, and social life, addressing various issues faced by the community. **Borah (2013)** provides a detailed description of the originality, customs, traditions, and religion of the Sonowal Kachari. It also focuses on the folk culture of the community, making it a vital resource for understanding the socio-cultural dynamics of the Sonowal Kachari in Northeast India. **Daimary (2019)** primarily deals with the language of the Sonowal Kachari and offers insights into their origin and present settlement in Northeast India. It also provides valuable information regarding the community's customs, traditions, and occupations, which are important for understanding their socio-economic structure. **Dutta (2020)** research delves into the origin and settlement patterns of the Sonowal Kachari across various parts of Northeast India. The study provides information that helps in understanding the folk life of the Sonowal Kachari community, further enriching the knowledge about their cultural and social dynamics. **Baruah (2024)** study focuses on the socio-political status of Kachari women, exploring their socio-economic and political activities. This research indicates that while tribal women, including Kachari women, have lower job participation rates than the general population, Kachari women have played a crucial role in contributing to the betterment of society. The article addresses the various challenges faced by Kachari women and their involvement in activities essential to meeting their basic needs in rural society.

## SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

The education is considered as the key for the utmost development of the society. It helps the individual to identify what is right or wrong and thereby help to take the final decision in life. It is not only bringing the transformation in individual life but also bring change in the society. The main significance of the study is to focus the level of educational development at present among of the Sonowal Kachari under the Jurisdiction of Maithong Gaon Panchayat, Kaopather. It also studies the problems which are emerged as obstacle to the development of education among the communities in the area.

## DATA ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

To study the educational status of the Sonowal Kachari under jurisdiction of the Maithong Gaon Panchayat of Kakopather block the total 140 families are randomly selected as a sample for the study. In order to analyses the



exact position education of the village the home-to-home visit certain families at random are done. For the purpose the collection of data, certain families are considered and the data are collected through the standard schedules. The collected data and information of village is analyzed with the help of statistical methods in the following heads:

**Table No: 1**

The Sex pattern of the head of the respondent's family of the Saru Maithong and Bor Maithong village:

Sl. No	Name of the village	Total no. of respondents	Male	Female
1	Saru Maithong	70	37	34
2	Bor Maithong	70	50	20
	Total	140	87 (62%)	53 (38%)

(Source: Primary Data)

The above shows that out of 140 respondents 62% (87) of male respondents are taken to fulfill sample for the study of the village. On the other 38% of female head i.e. (54) are taken to fulfill the sample for the study of the village. Overall, it shows that the numbers of respondents of male are more than the number of respondents of the female.

**Table No.2**

The distribution of the age structure of the respondent family head of the village:

Sl. No	Name of the village	Total number of respondents	20-35 Age	36-50 Age	50-65Age	Above 65
1	Saru Maithong	70	20	26	16	08
2	Bor Maithong	70	14	15	32	09
	Total	140	34	41	48	17
	Percentage		25%	29%	34%	12%

(Source: Primary Data)

The above table data has reflected the age structure of the head of the respondent family of the Saru Maithong and Bor Maithong village. So, it is cleared that out of 140 respondents 25 % (i.e.,34) head of the respondent family are from 20-35 years. Again, 29% i.e. 41 head of the respondent family are from 36-50 years, 34% (i.e., 48) respondents family head are from 50-65. And 12% (i.e.,17) head of the respondent family are above 65 years.

**Table No. 3**

The distribution of the educational status of the head of the respondent family of the Saru Maithong and Bor Maithong village.

Sl. No	Name of the village	Total No. of Respondents	Illiterate	Class I-X	HSLC	HS	BA	MA
1	Saru Maithong	70	06	46	08	03	06	01
2	Bor Maithong	70	06	39	16	05	04	
	Total		12	85	24	8	10	01
	Percentage	140	9%	61%	17%	6%	7%	0.7%

(Source: Primary Data)

The above table illustrates that the educational status of the head of the respondent family. So, from the above data it is depicted that 9% (i.e.,12) head of the respondent family are illiterate. Again, 61 % (i.e., 85) head of the family studied from I to X classes, 17% (i.e., 24) head of the respondent family are passed HSLC examination, 6% (i.e.,8) head are passed their HSLC examination, 7% (i.e.,10) head of the family have completed their graduation and only 0.7 % (i.e.,1) head of the respondent family completed MA.

**Table No.4**

The status of education of the female head of the respondent families of the Saru Maithong and Bor Maithong village:

Sl. No	Name of the village	Total Number of Female Respondent's	Illiterate	Class I-X	HSLC Passed	HS Passed	BA	MA
1	Saru Maithong	34	05	24	02	01	01	01
2	Bor Maithong	20	03	11	04	01	01	00
	Total	54	08	35	06	02	02	01
	Percentage		15%	64%	11%	4%	4%	2%

(Source: Primary Data)



The above table no.5 illustrates the educational status of the female head of the respondent family. The data shows that out of 140 families, 15 % (i.e. 8) female head of the respondent families are illiterate, 64% (i.e.35) female head are studied from class I to X, only 11% (i.e.6) female head of the response family had passed the HSLC examination, 4% i.e. 2 female head of the response female had passed the HS examination, and 4% (2 )female head had completed BA Passed and it is find out that 2% i.e. (1) female can completed their MA.

**Table No: 5**

The distribution of educational status of the children of the response families of the Saru Maithong and Bor Maithong village:

Sl. No.	Name of the village	Total No of children	Illiterate	Class I-X	HSLC Passed	HS Passed	BA	MA
1	Saru Maithong	192	12	105	26	36	11	02
2	Bor Maithong	193	14	114	24	26	11	04
	Total	385	26	219	50	62	22	06
	Percentage		6.5%	57%	13%	16%	6%	1.5%

(Source: Primary Data)

Table above table reflected the educational status of the children of the response families of the Sonowal Kachari's of the Maithong Gaon Panchayat. The collected data reveals that 6.5% i.e., 26 children are still illiterate, 57% (219) children of the village respondents' families had studying from class I to X. 13% i.e., 50 children had completed their HSLC examination. 16 % . i.e., 62 children had completed their HS examination, 6% i.e., 22 children had completed their graduation and only 1.5 % i.e., 6 Child had completed MA. So, overall, the data shows that educational status of the children of the village are developing at a very slow rate.

## FINDINGS

In order to study the educational status of the Sonowal Kachari of the Saru Maithong and the Bor Maithong village under the jurisdiction of the Maithong Gaon Panchayat has been studied. The data's have been collected through observation as well as the home-to-home visit in the study area. In this regards the collected field data have been analyzed adopting standard statistical methods and most of the findings on parameter confirm the hypothesis adopted for the study of the educational l status of the village.

(i) In case of educational status of the head of the respondent family, it is found that 9% (i.e.,12) head of the response family are illiterate. Again, 61 % (i.e., 85) head of the family studied from I to x classes, 17% (i.e., 24) head of the response family are passed HSLC examination, 6% (i.e.,8) head are passed their HSLC examination, 7% (i.e.,10) head of the family have completed their graduation and only 0.7 % (i.e.,1) head of the response family completed MA.

(ii) The educational status of the female head of the response family has been observed with help collected data from the field. It is observed that out 54 response female head of the concerned village, 15 % (i.e. 8) female head of the respondent families are illiterate, 64% (i.e.35) female head are studied from class I to X, only 11% (i.e.6) female head of the response family had passed the HSLC examination, 4% i.e. 2 female head of the response female had passed the HS examination, and 4% (2 )female head had completed BA Passed and it is find out that 2% i.e. (1) female can completed their MA. So, it is cleared achievement of higher education among the female member of the village yet very slow.

(iii) In the grounds of educational status of the children of the response families of the Sonowal Kacharis of the Maithong Gaon Panchayat, it is found that 6.5% i.e., 26 children are still illiterate, 57% (219) children of the village respondents' families had studying from class I to X. 13% i.e., 50 children had completed their HSLC examination. 16 % . i.e., 62 children had completed their HS examination, 6% i.e., 22 children had completed their graduation and only 1.5 % i.e., 6 Child had completed MA. So, overall, the data shows that educational status of the children of the village are developing at a very slow rate.

## Problems of the Village

The following problems have been observed among the Sonowal Kachari in the Saru Maithong and Bor Maithong village under the Jurisdiction of the Maithong Gaon Panchayat.

(i) The development of economic conditions of the Community is very slow. The most of the family's economic condition of this areas is not sufficient. Their economy is basically based on agriculture and also the main source



of income. So, due to the poor economic condition of this area, the parents could not provide proper facility for the better development of the career of their children.

(ii) The lack of good educational environment is also considered as one of the vital problems for the community. In this regard, it is observed that governmental and non-government organizations have been working for the upliftment of the educational environment in the area.

## SUGGESTIONS

The following suggestions have been put forward for the upliftment of the Sonowal Kachari's under the jurisdiction of Maithong Gaon Panchayat.

Education is considered as the key for the development of the Society. It has the power to change the mindset of individual and the society. It plays a vital role to Changing status of individual from one position to another and thereby shape the society.

(i) It is necessary to adopt new kinds of ways and means to promote education to villagers. In this respect Government should provide priority to each and every people of the new generation of the village to provide quality education. So, that they can lead better life in future.

(ii) The Government, non-Governmental organization should initiate a step to organize meeting and seminars in order to bring good environment in the area. So, that the people of the area realized the value of the education.

(iii) The Government should initiate a step to increase the number of school and college in the rural area.

(iv) In this regard, the villagers as well as the new generation should understand the importance of education and thereby initiate a step itself for the development of education in the area.

## CONCLUSION

The Sonowal Kachari tribe is an indigenous community of Assam. They are a sub-group of the Bodo community in Assam. Like other tribes in the region, they have a distinct culture, customs, and traditions that set them apart from other communities. Although the Sonowal Kachari have their own language, they primarily use Assamese as their mother tongue and the medium of instruction.

In conclusion, it can be summarized that the educational development of the Sonowal Kachari community under the jurisdiction of the Maithong Gaon Panchayat is progressing at a very slow rate. The study shows that the attainment of higher education among the parents and children of the surveyed families remains limited. Several socio-economic issues serve as significant barriers to achieving higher education within the community. Education is regarded as a key instrument for the development of both the individual and society. It plays a vital role in shaping the career of individuals and in advancing society from one stage to another. Therefore, both the government and civil society should take initiatives to address these challenges for the upliftment of the educational status of the community.

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