



ECONOMIC ISSUES OF THE MISING TRIBE OF BRAHMAPUTRA VALLEY

History

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ABSTRACT

The aims of this paper is to make an investigation into the economic problems of the Mising tribe. The Mising are the industrious people, they start their work from the early in the morning to evening. Further, all the members of the family irrespective of sex participated in the agricultural work. Inspite of working from morning to till evening the Mising are economically very backward. The government established different department to implement various schemes for the development of economically backward class. The Mising as a dweller of riverine area are facing different types of problems. Economic problem is one of the major problems of the Mising. Due to many causes the Mising are economically backward. Neither government nor social scientist or social institution is investigating to find out the causes responsible for the economic backwardness. The government also has not taken appropriate measures to solve their problems. This paper has been designed to highlight the problems responsible for backwardness of the Mising tribe. The methodology adopted for the work is subaltern approach to understand the economic problems as the Mising are facing from earlier times. It will present how does the economic problems affected the Mising in their daily life. An attempt has been made to suggest some remedies since the problems could be solved by taking appropriate measures.

KEYWORDS

Economic problems, affects, role of ethnic organization, measures of government, remedies.

Economy is the main sources of the development of a nation. An economically poor nation can not enjoy a peace life. Troubles arise in a poor family; various types of troubles also arise in an economically backward nation. If we open the history of great revolution of world we found that economy is the main problem of these revolutions. For instance, the French Revolution (1789). An economically poor nation cannot climb the ladder of human civilization. Only economically sound nation could do it. For example, the United state of America, China, Japan etc. There are large number of economically backward countries in the world. Large number of people died daily in these countries due to shortage of food and lack of medical treatment.

India is an economically poor country. Presently, 27 crore people lives in below poverty line in India. In India more than crore of people have no home; they take shelter in footpath. Daily more than thousands of people died without food and medical facilities in India. Among the economically backward states of India Assam is prominent one. At present 101.27 thousand people live in below poverty line. The tribes of Assam such as Bodos, Misings, Karbis, Tiwas, Deoris, Rabhas etc are more economically backward in comparison to the upper people of Assam. In this present study an attempt has been made to study the economic issues of the Mising Tribe of Brahmaputra valley.

The Mising tribe of Brahmaputra valley belongs to schedule tribe. According to 2011 census, the total number of Mising population is 6,80,424. Their main inhabitant areas are nine districts of upper Assam namely Dhemaji, Tinsukia, Dibrugarh, Jorhat, Lakhimpur, Sonitpur, Golaghat, Sibsagar and Biswanath. Dhemaji is the highest Mising populated district of Assam. About 90 per cent of the population belongs to Mising tribe. The Mising are unique in their culture. They have own language, food habits, traditional dresses, religious beliefs and practices and folk literature. The Mising, as dweller of the bank of rivers had been suffering from different types of problems from earliest time.

Objective of the study:

The main objectives of the study are-

1. To study the economic problems of the Mising tribe.
2. To study the measures of government in their economic development.
3. To study the role of ethnic organization played in their economic development.
4. To give suggestions for economic development.

Methodology of the study:

Methodology is one of the important aspects of social research. The research work is done by using the behavioural and empirical research method to understand the economic and social situation of Mising tribe

in micro-level areas. Not much information is available from secondary sources to find out the economic issues of Mising tribe. The study is built on primary sources although the secondary sources are used whenever it is required. The primary data is collected from the structural questionnaire administrated at the household level. For primary sources of information field survey occupies important place. Field survey is conducted in the Mising villages scattered in the Brahmaputra valley. For the first phase of field study, ten villages from each sub-division are selected purposively for study. These villages were randomly selected by using lottery system. Ten villages from each sub-division-viz Sadiya Sub-division under Tinsukia district, Jonai sub-division under Dhemaji district, Dhakuakhana Sub-division under Lakhimpur District, Gohpur sub-division under Sonitpur district, Doyang -Merapani sub-division under Golaghat district and five villages from Guwahati city. The structural questionnaires were distributed among the inhabitant of surveyed areas. Adult group age between 45 to 60 were interviewed. Further, the project director being a Mising, personal observation method is used in the study. For the secondary sources of information, the relevant books, magazine, newspapers and research journals are reviewed. In order to review secondary sources, the district record room of Dhemaji, Lakhimpur, Sonitpur, Golaghat and Tinsukia were visited. Further, for relevant sources of information the Directorate of Schedule tribes and schedule caste, Dispur, Guwahati, State Archive, Dispur, Guwahati, Rajiv Gandhi central university library, Itanagar, Arunachal Pradesh, K.K. handique Library, Gauhati University, Dibrugarh University library, Dibrugarh, North Eastern Hill University, Shillong, Meghalaya.

Finding of the study:

It is found from field study that the agriculture is main occupation of the Mising tribe. Ninety percent people involved in the agriculture. They cultivated different type of crops like rice (Ahu, Sali and Bao) mustard seeds, pulses, ginger, turmeric, Green chilly, different type of vegetable, jute and sugarcane. It is also found that the Mising inhabited low land areas are suitable for cultivate these crops. For cultivate these crops they used the old method of cultivation system. The development of science has not affected them. Field study revealed that except mustard seed and different types of pulses, all other crops are cultivated for own consumption. Since these areas are suitable for cultivating mustard seeds and pulses large amount is cultivated. They earn huge profit from these crops. It is found that few number of peasant cultivate papad in Sadiya Subdivision. Moreover, it is found during the time of field study that two number of peasants began to plant Orange in business purpose in Jonai Sub-division. It is noticed that a section of Mising begin tea plantation in Sonitpur, Lakhimpur, Jorhat and Golaghat district. Large number of families benefitted from tea plantation because it provides large number of employment and economic benefit. It is also found from

field survey that a large number of Mising families live in the Sand Bar which very suitable for cultivating mustard seeds, pulses and rearing cattle and buffalo. Very few numbers of families engage in rearing cattle and buffalo. It is also found that the youth irrespective of boys and girls engage separate cultivation of crops for their pocket expenditure. Moreover, Mising women including girls earn extra income by rearing animals like pigs, fowls, goats and selling traditional dresses. It is noticed that very few number of Mising women earn income by selling country liquor.

The Mising are very industrious people. From childhood to old age they involves in different types of works irrespective of sex. They starts their work from early morning to evening. In spite of involving in different type of profession the more than seventy percent Mising are still remaining economically backward. The field study traced out the problems and constraints faced by the Mising. The field study pointed out the following agriculture related problems:

Frequent occurrence of flood

The environmental disaster adversely affected the Mising tribe. The devastating flood of every year caused damage of agriculture and property. The frequent flood wash away large hectares lands. Further, the flood turned cultivable into desert every year. As a result, the quantity of crops field considerably reduced. Large number families became landless.

Soil erosion

The soil erosion is one of the great problem of the Mising. Due to flood and other causes the mighty Brahmaputra and its tributary rivers eroded hectares of lands every year. The Mising as a dwellers of river bank adversely affected from it. The erosion of a house building, a village, property and other institution is a common incident in the river bank area. As a result of the soil erosion, a large number of Mising families lost their houses, cultivable land and other properties. A large number of Mising families become landless and homeless. They had to take shelter in dyke of rivers and numbers of families migrated to other places. Their profession become daily wager within a night.

Water stagnation after flood:

After the heavy flood, the water of low land area remains stagnant. There is no system of canalize the water to the river. It keeps coverage the cultivable land and cause the damage of crops. Further, the stagnant water polluted the environment. It also blocked the road communication. It affected the agricultural process.

Heavy pest and disease infestation after flood:

It is common occurrence that after flood, the paddy of Assam severely attacked by the pest. It caused the large scale damage of crops. It has resulted in huge economic damage of the farmers and the exchequer. After flood the human being are affected by the different type of diseases. Generally, the people are affected by the water born diseases like diarrhea, dysentery, fever and skin diseases. As the Misings lives in the riverine area and used the impure water of the river adversely affected by these diseases. Due to affect of these disease number of people died in every year. Further, the medical facility is not so convenient in these areas they have to walk many kilometers for medical treatments and spent huge amount on it.

Inadequate supply of seeds and fertilizer:

For better crops or production, now a days, it is necessary hybrid seeds and fertilizer. The use of scientific method also necessary for the better production of crops. Adequate seeds and fertilizer is not supplied in the appropriate time due to backward communication. The Mising follows the old system of cultivation in the crops. So, the Mising farmer are depriving from the heavy production. As a result, the Mising is suffering from economic loss.

Lack of irrigation facilities:

The cultivated field of the Mising inhabited areas are not cover with the irrigation system of the government. For the irrigation, the Mising completely dependent on nature. Whenever the rain is failed they have not able to get good crops. Due to lack of irrigation facilities, the tribe cannot cultivate multiple crops. So, they could not produce sufficient crops.

Poverty of farmer

Poverty is great problem of the Mising tribe. Majority of the Mising farmer lives in below poverty line. Due to their poverty they could not use scientific method in the cultivation.

Lack of proper banking system

The Mising farmer are lived in below poverty line they needed economic help. Banking system is one of the source which can help the poor farmer. Proper banking system is not available in the Mising area. So, they could not borrow loan from the bank. Under these circumstances, the Mising farmer borrows loan from the village money lender in high rate of interest. The village Mohajan taking the advantage they exploited the farmers.

Lack of new technology

The new technology or scientific method is highly necessary for better production of the crops. The Mising farmer have no training on new technology. So, they could not use it in agriculture.

Inadequate market facilities

Although the Mising are agrarian people and produced different types of crops. But these areas are not connected with market of other place of India. Further, markets are not sufficient to sell their produce crops in appropriate price.

Poor transformation

Transportation system in Mising dominated areas are very poor. It is very difficult to transport the agricultural tools to the cultivated field and produced goods from one place to another place. Developed communication is highly necessary for run business. The remaining twenty percent of people engage other occupations like government and private services, business, daily wager, tailoring, furniture, piggery and fishery. It is notice from the field survey that ninety percent Mising woman folk rearing fowls and piggery at home. The main aim of the rearing these animals is for own consumption and entertains guest and the surplus are sold in local market for extra income.

In addition to the agriculture related problems there are some others economic problems among the Mising tribe which found in the field study. The following are the major economic problems of Mising community.

Poor communication system

The development of communication is essential for the economic development of a nation. In Assam the riverine areas are generally affected by frequent flood and erosion. So, the communication system in river bank area is very backward. The Mising as a dweller of the river bank area is adversely affected from backward communication. Riverine area is not convenient for the any kind of business. Due to lack of communication essential goods are not supplied in appropriate time. Moreover, the people failed to send their goods to the markets situated in the different places of the state. So the Mising deprive off their profit and sold it in cheap price to the local business man.

Fail to establish small scale industry

The Mising inhabited areas are suitable for establish some industries like weaving industry, dairy farm, bamboo and cane industry, piggery and fishery, banana plantation etc. The Mising woman folk are particularly very expert weaving. Presently, the Mising's traditional dress earned national and international reputation. There is a great scope of establish weaving industry in Mising inhabited area. But they failed to establish weaving industry. Very few number of Mising women produce traditional dresses in business purpose.

Lack of technical education.

The Mising are educationally backward. Only 68% Mising are literate. Literacy does not mean educated. They have no knowledge on scientific farming. In spite of having scope of establish small scale industries they failed due to lack of knowledge technical education. It is noteworthy to mention that the low land area of the Dhemaji district probe to be suitable for cultivate Red Rice. Recently, it is came to know that the Red Rice become very popular in the Texas province of USA. Dhemaji district authority exported huge quantity of such rice to USA. Due to lack of technical education they failed to take this advantage.

Lack of multiple agriculture system:

In present situation multiple system of cultivation is highly necessary for the development of a nation. Due to flood and erosion agricultural field are considerably decreased in Mising dominated area. So, multiple agriculture is highly needed in these areas. They cultivate only one crop in a plot of land in a year. It remains unproductive in the other time of year. So, the Mising could not earn profit from the land.

Lack of business knowledge:

Business played very important role in economic development of a nation. It is noticed that the Mising are industrious. They cultivate various types of crops but no idea about business of these products. The Mising youth could not avail the business training. Due to lack of knowledge they fail take different type business as their profession. So, the number of businessman is very less in the Mising society.

Land problems:

The land alienation problem is one of the impare of the economic development of the Mising. The majority Mising inhabited areas are not come under the revenue settlement. So, Land patta is not given them. Banking and other facilities they could not avail. Further, land right is not given to them. So, they could applied modern method in the cultivation.

Rural indebtness:

Rural indebtness is one of the major economic problem of Mising. It is noticed from the field study that the Mising inhabited land have no patta. The Mising people are economically very poor. To purchase the require agricultural tools the Mising farmer have to borrow loan from the local Mahajan (money lender). The Mahajan gives their loans in high rate. They purchase the produce goods from the Mising farmer in cheap rate. Hence, the money lender class exploited the Mising.

Fail to grow dairy farm:

The river bank area is very suitable for rearing cattle and buffalo. Few number of Mising families are engaging in rearing cattle and buffalo in the Chaporis (sand bar). There is a scope of grow dairy farm. But, they failed to do it. They sold their produce milk to local milk man. The Mising are not interest in this business. Even, the young generation of Mising also not interest in this industry. Particularly, the Bengali, Nepali and Bihari communities are benefited from their rearing cattle and buffalo.

Failure of the government policy:

It is revealed from the study that since independence the central and state government had been taking different schemes for the development economically backward class. For the security of the tribal from the encroacher the Indian constitution made a provision of Tribal Belt and Block. The government seldom violated this provisions. The government allowed the foreigner or non tribal people to occupy the tribal belt and block area. In many time, the government herself settled the foreigner in the tribal belt and block areas. Under such situation the Mising people have to migrate from one place to another place. Their temporary settlement is one of the major cause of economic backwardness.

Apart from these, both the government have some department for the development of the tribal people. These are Ministry of tribal affairs, Assam Plain tribal Development corporation Limited, Tribal Development Authority, Tribal sub-plane area etc. In addition to these department, there is a development council for each ethnic group of Assam. For the Mising there is a Mising Autonomous Council. With the aids of central government the Council maintained 28 departments. The different schemes of central and state government and autonomous council are not fully implemented. It is notice from the field study that there is a large scale corruption in implementing these schemes. Particularly, In Mising Autonomous Council only 30 percent of the scheme amount is spent in implementing the schemes. The remaining 70 percent is divided among the member of the autonomous council and contractor.

Ethnic organization failed to work for the tribe:

The ethnic organization of the Mising is working untiredly for the development of the Misings. The Mising Ba:ne Kebang parent organization of the Mising, formed in 1924 had been working for the economic and social reformation. The other organization like Takam Mising Porin Kebang (All Misings Students Unoin), Mising Mimak Kebang (Mising Revolutionary Organisation), Mising Agom Kebang (Mising Literary Organisation), Takam Mising Mime Kebang (Mising Woman Organisation) Mising People Justice Forum are also working for the development of the tribe. It is revealed from the field survey that except Mising Agom Kebang other all the organizations emphasized on the solution of problems of Mising tribe politically. They have not taken any strong economic programme to economically revolutionalize the tribe. They are only shouting for Sixth Schedule and Autonomous state.

Lack of investment and saving:

The financial institution like banks, post office etc are played very

important role in the economic development. These institutions are not available in the Mising inhabited areas. There is no scope of invest and saving their earnings. Moreover, the Mising are educationally backward. So, majority of them have not conscious of saving and investment for the future security.

Conclusion:

The Misings are very industrious people. In spite of industrious they fail to improve their economy. Their economy was self sufficient and self dependence. They start their works from the early in the morning and end it in the evening. All the member of the family irrespective of sex engages in the agricultural works. The devastating earthquake of 1950 had adversely affected the economy of the Misings tribe. The depth of the mighty Brahmaputra considerably reduced after the earth quake. The depth of river could not carry the water. So, it began to happen frequent flood and erosion. Erosion of land washed away the fertile land and villages of the tribe. Sand carried by the flood eaten up the cultivable land. So, large number Mising become landless, homeless. Thousand of them have lost their profession. Subsequently, they lost their work culture. Large number of them began to spend valuable time in idle. The Mising youth have not try to coup with the change of time. Very few numbers of youth come out from village in search employment. Numbers of them engage in security, sellman, casual labour etc. in Chennai, Bangalore, Mumbai, kolkotta Guwahati, Delhi, Haryana, Itanagar Meghalaya etc. It is noticed that after the devastating flood of 1997-98 few number of Mising families began to settled in the hilly areas of Guwahati like Japorighoh, Khanapara, Six Mile, Amchang reserve forest etc. The member of the family are involving in daily wagger, salesman, mechanic, security guard, waiter and nurse in hospital.

In the present situation the economic problem is the burning problem of the Mising Tribe. In order to come out from the burning problems the Mising tribe must be change their mind set. It is high time to changing their economic activities. The tribe must be produce cash crops instead of own consumption. The central or state government must be implemented the schemes allotted for the tribe. The corruption in implementing government schemes must be stopped. The flood and erosion must be controlled. The communication in the riverine areas must be improved. Awareness about the investment and saving must be spread among the Mising tribe. New technology should be used to increase the production of crops. Since, the business man is very less among the Mising tribe; the new generation should take business as their profession. Land alienation problems should be solved so that Mising farmer could borrow loan from the financial institutions. Irrigation system in the Mising areas should be ensured so that they could cultivate multiple crops. It is sure to say that if these suggestions could be implemented the tribe could be come out from the economic backwardness.

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