



An Analysis of Consumption Expenditure Pattern among the Bodo Tribe: A Case Study

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Abstract

The consumption expenditure pattern in an important indicator of economic status and living standards of households. The various food and non-food consumption options depend on the availability of income, market, time, information, social barriers, and on household's decision as well as on the availability of goods and services. This paper analysis the consumption expenditure pattern on food, education, health, fuel and lighting, intoxicants and cell phone expenditures of the Bodo tribe living under the Jalah Development Block. The study found that consumption expenditure in the tribal area basically depends on the amount of income they can derive by selling their labour in agricultural sector and many households' expenditures were more than their income.

Key Words: *Consumption expenditure, food and non-food, Bodo tribe.*

Introduction: Consumption is an integral part of all living human beings to sustain life. However, dynamic nature of human wants gives consumption a dynamic character. Variations in consumption are visible in different societies, as there exist a difference in environmental, social, economic and cultural contexts.

There has been a rapid change in the ladder of economic status of different social groups or community. The determinants of the economic status of a society are its per capita income, the standard of living, the level of consumption etc. While the increase in per capita income and per capita consumption expenditure are some of the macro level indicators of development, the distribution of household expenditure is a micro level indicator. Household is a distinctly identified unit of consumption of goods and services and the measure of household consumption expenditure is the single most significant indicator of access of households to the basket of goods and services, their level of living and economic well-being, as well as disparities thereof. Household consumption expenditure (HCE) is most easily understood as expenditure incurred by households on consumption goods and services that is, on goods and services used for the direct satisfaction of individual needs and wants or the collective needs of members of the community and not for further transformation in production.

There is a significant increase in the level of consumption of both food and non food commodities in Assam. But the consumption pattern among the different social groups is quite uneven within the state and between states of the countries. The growth in consumption has been slow or stagnant among the scheduled tribes in India in general and in Assam in particular among the Bodo tribe.

The level of consumption expenditure of the tribal people in the rural areas basically depends directly or indirectly on the amount of output they can produce from their farm lands or by selling their labour in the agriculture sector. As such, their level of consumption is generally determined by the subsistent agricultural production. But, with the penetration of the effects of globalisation even in the rural areas, their consumption baskets have now changed which has forced them to produce for markets.

Significance of the study: The present study is an attempt to analyze the changing consumption pattern in rural areas of Assam. Of course through the present study a special inquiry will be made to find the consumption expenditure pattern of Scheduled Tribes population on different food and non –food items at micro level. In contemporary world the consumption habits and pattern are determined by a complex set of socio-economic, cultural, religious, psychological, ethical and environmental factors. Therefore, the consumption pattern of a community distinctly reveals its financial position as well as its standard of living, poverty level and human development.

Moreover, the present study assumes importance because most of the earlier studies were concentrated on the socio-economic and occupational structure of the scheduled tribe. The present study on ‘Pattern in Consumption Expenditure Among Bodo Tribe,’ is an effort to study on their present conditions.

Objectives of the study: The main objective of our study is to investigate the pattern of consumption expenditures among the Bodo Tribe of Jalah Development Block of Baksa District of Assam. To achieve this objective the following exercises will be carried out:

- a) To assess the income and expenditure of the sample households in general.
- b) To analyse the consumption expenditure patterns of the Bodo tribe on various items.

Methodology of data collection and analysis: To fulfil the objectives of present study data has been collected from three revenue villages (Koklabari, Odalguri and Kamardwicha) which are the Bodo inhabited village under Jalah development Block in the district of Baksa, BTAD Assam. After selection of these revenue villages an interview scheduled was conducted in each selected village. Using the multistage stratified random sampling a total of 300 samples were collected from the three revenue villages comprising 100 from each selected village.

The study is based on primary data. Through intensive interviews various information were collected on households regarding nature of family, annual incomes, annual expenditures and on pattern of expenditures on various food and non-food items.

Data analysis and interpretations:

Table No-1, Family size of the sample households:

Family Size	Koklabari		Odalguri		Kamardwicha	
	No. of households	Percentage	No. of households	Percentage	No. of households	Percentage
Upto 3 persons	23	23	21	21	19	19
3 to 5 persons	64	64	68	68	72	72
Above 5 persons	13	13	11	11	9	9
Total	100	100	100	100	100	100

Table No. 1, shows the size of the sample households of the study area. The size of the households has very close relation with the income and expenditure of the households. The more the number of persons in a family the more will be the income and responsibility of the households. However, it depends on the nature of activities of the household’s members. The table indicates that 21% of the households had 2 to 3 persons and 68% of the households had a family size of 3 to 5 persons. This is a clear indication of nuclear family with husband, wife and 2 – 3 children. Only 11% of the households had a family member of above five persons which indicates the existence of a typical joint family in the study area.

Table No - 2, Annual incomes of the households:

Level of income	No. of households	Percentage	Cumulative percentage
10000 - 20000	24	8%	8%
20000 – 30000	42	14%	24%
30000 - 40000	64	21.33%	45.33%
40000 - 50000	87	29%	74.33%
50000 - 60000	39	13%	87.33%
60000 - 70000	17	5.67%	93%
>70000	27	9%	100
Total	300	100	

Source: Field Survey

Table -2, shows the total households income from various sources of the family. Income gives an individuals and households, the way of widening the rage of consumption expenditure pattern. It gives people the ability to buy different commodities instead of consuming limited varieties of commodity. It enables the people to pay for different food and non-food items. It is seen in the table that out of 300 households 8% of the respondents stated their income in between Rs, 10000 to 20000 annually.14% of the household’s respondents stated their income in between Rs, 20000 to 30000. 21.33% of the households responded their income in between Rs, 30000 to 40000. 29% of the household respondents stated income in between Rs, 40000 to 50000. 13% of the households stated income in between 50000 – 60000. 5.67% of the households have stated income in between Rs, 60000 – 70000. 9% of the households stated their income above Rs, 70000.

Table – 3, Annual family expenditure:

Level of expenditure	No. of households	Percentage	Cumulative percentage
5000 - 10000	4	1.33	1.33
10000 - 20000	13	4.33	5.66
20000 - 30000	57	19	24.66
30000 - 40000	90	30	54.66
40000 - 50000	74	24.67	79.33
50000 - 60000	27	9	88.33
60000 - 70000	16	5.34	93.67
>80000	19	6.33	100
Total	300	100	

Source: Field Survey

The annual family expenditure of a household is an important barometer of economic status and material well-being of a family. The process of globalization has provided the people to an opportunity to buy a wide variety of pattern to choose from. Table No. 3, shows the different level

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of expenditure of the sample households. Out of 300 households 1.33% spent Rs, 5000 – 1000 per year. 4.33% of the households spent between Rs, 10000 – 20000, 19% of the households spent Rs, 20000 – 30000, 30% of the sample households spent Rs, 30000 – 40000, 24.67% of the households spent Rs, 40000 – 50000, 9% of the households spent Rs, 50000 – 60000, 5.34% of the households spent Rs, 60000 – 70000 and 6.33 percent of the household spent more than Rs, 70000 in a year.

Table No- 4, Food expenditure:

Monthly expenditure in Rupees	No. of households	Percentage	Cumulative percentage
500 - 2000	195	65	65
2000 - 4000	100	33.33	98.33
>5000	5	1.67	100
Total	300	100	

Source: Field Survey

Table No. 4, shows the monthly expenditure made by the households for the consumption of different food items like cereals, meat, fish, egg, milk, potato, edible oils, fruits, vegetables and nuts etc. Every household spends their earning on purchasing different food items as per their needs and desires. The ability to buy diverse nutritious food is very important for enlarging the capability of household's members. The table shows that out of total 300 households 65% of them spent between Rs, 500 - 2000 per month, 33.33% of the households spent Rs, 2000 – 4000 and 1.67% of the households spent more than Rs, 5000 in a month.

Table – 5, Educational expenditure:

Level of expenditure (Rs.)	No. of households	Percentage	Cumulative percentage
<500	62	20.66	20.67
500 - 2000	120	40	60.67
2000 - 3500	45	15	75.67
3500 - 5000	60	20	95.67
>5000	13	4.33	100
Total	300	100	

Source: Field Survey

Table No. 5, shows the expenditure incurred by the households on education of the children. The households spending on education is based on the income earned by them and partially on the realization of the household's regarding the need of providing education to their children. It is found that out of 300 households 20.66% of the total households spent more than Rs, 500 in a month.40% of the sample households spent in between Rs, 500 – 2000, 15% of the households spent Rs, 2000 – 3500, 20% of the households spent Rs, 3500 – 5000 and remaining 13% of the households spent more than Rs, 5000 in a month. It is observed form the table that household's expenditure is on increasing trend because most of the guardians of the households have come to know that spending on education is a kind of asset.

Table no-6, Fuel and lighting expenditure:

Level of expenditure (Rs)	No. of households	Percentage	Cumulative percentage
<400	34	11.34	11.34
400 - 800	98	32.66	44
800 - 1200	66	22	66
1200 - 1600	73	24.33	90.33
>1600	29	9.67	100

Total	300	100	
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Source: Field Survey

How much a household can pay for fuel for motorized transport instead of walking, how much a household can pay for lighting is an indicator of economic status of a household. Table No-6, shows the monthly expenditure on fuel and lighting of the households. Out of 300 households 11.34% of the households spend their income for fuel and lighting purpose Rs, 400 per month. 32.66% of the households spend Rs, 400 – 800, 22% of the households spend Rs, 800 – 1200, and 24.33% of the households spend Rs, 1200 – 1600 and 9.67 % of the households have stated their expenditure more than Rs, 1600.

Table No- 7, Pan, Tobacco and Intoxicants expenditure:

Level of expenditure (Rs)	No. of households	Percentage	Cumulative percentage
<200	27	9	9
200 - 400	110	36.66	45.66
400 - 600	98	32.67	78.34
600 - 800	26	8.67	87
800 - 1000	18	6	93
>1000	21	7	100
Total	300	100	

Source: Field Survey

Table No. 7, shows the expenditure incurred by the sample households on pan, tobacco and intoxicants like drinking alcohol and smoking of bidi and cigarette etc. The table shows that out of 300 sample households not a single household were found free from the intoxicants expenditure. Out of 300 households, 9% of the households have spent their income more than Rs, 200, 36.66% of the households have spent in between Rs, 200 – 400. 32.67% households spent between spent their income between Rs, 400 – 600, 8.67% of the households spent Rs, 600 – 800, 6% of the households spent in between Rs, 800 – 1000 and 7% of the sample households spent more than Rs, 1000 of their income monthly.

Table No-8, Health expenditure:

Level of expenditure (Rs)	No. of households	Percentage	Cumulative percentage
<500	152	50.67	50.67
1000 – 2000	85	28.33	79
2000 – 3000	23	7.66	86.66
3000 – 4000	21	7	93.66
4000 - 5000	15	5	98.66
>5000	4	1.34	100
Total	300	100	

Source: Field Survey

The ability of the household to spend on health care facilities is an indicator of enlarging the capability of household’s members. Table No. 8, shows the monthly health expenditure of the households. The study observed that every household spends different level of expenditure on health facilities. Table shows that out of 300 households 50.67% of the households spent an amount more than Rs, 500 every month. 28.33% of the households spent their income between Rs, 1000 – 2000, 7.66% households spent ranging from Rs, 2000 – 3000, 7% of the households spent in between Rs,

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 3000 – 4000, 5% of the households spent their income in between Rs, 4000 – 5000 and 1.34% of households spent above Rs, 5000 in a month.

Table No-9, Cell phone expenditure:

Level of expenditure (Rs)	No. of households	Percentage	Cumulative percentage
<200	122	40.66	40.66
200 - 300	110	36.67	77.33
300 - 400	40	13.33	90.66
>600	20	6.67	97.33
No	8	2.67	100
Total	300	100	

Source: Field Survey

Table No-9, shows the household's expenditure on cell phone. Out of the 300 households 40.66% of the households spend Rs, 200 on maintenance of cell phone. 36.67% of the households spent Rs, 200 – 300 per month. 13.33% of the households spent Rs, 300 – 400 in every month including whole members of the family. 5% of the household spent more than Rs, 600 and 2.67% of the households do not use cell phone. It reveals that most of the household had cell phones ranging from 1 to 2 and is important for everyone to communicate with each other.

Suggestions:

On the basis of the information collected on consumption expenditure pattern of Bodo from the sample household's one can draw the following remedial measures:

1. The level of expenditure of the tribal households basically derived from the output they can produce from their farm lands. Therefore the government should announce remunerative prices for agricultural output especially for paddy.
2. Educational expenditure has a considerable higher share in the expenditures of all the rural households. To minimize its expenditure share sufficient number of skill development training centers must be inaugurated in the rural areas.
3. The expenditure on health has a considerable higher share in the expenditures of all the families. Therefore, suitable health insurance programmes should be implemented to scheduled tribe section of people.
4. Among the Bodo tribe expenditure level on alcoholic drinks and narcotics like tobacco, cigarette etc. share a considerable amount. They should be counseled against alcoholic drinks and narcotics.
5. Most of the households among the Bodo tribe make expenditure more than their income. They should be informed regarding the good habit of savings.
6. The government should take initiatives for proper implementations of the various employment guarantees programmes to increase the income of the rural households.

Conclusions: From survey of the sample households it is found that their agriculture is the main source of livelihood of the sample households and the issue of improvements in income, living standards, nutrition, and health of individuals should be aimed through raising agricultural productivity. The extension of rural economic infrastructure, like roads, irrigation facilities, markets and rural financial facilities are the need of the hour for all categories of rural households to bring improvements in their consumption expenditure pattern.

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