International Journal of Recent Development in Engineering and Technology
Website: www.ijrdet.com (ISSN 2347-6435 (Online) Volume 15, Issue 10, October 2026)

A Study on Socio-Economic Condition of Small and Marginal Farmers, with Special Referece to Ruposi Developmet Block under Barpeta District, Assam

Muzammel Hussain

Ph.D., Research Scholar, Ksishnaguru Adhyatmik Visyavidylaya, Nasatra, Barpeta. India

***Abstract*-- Agriculture and allied activities plays an important role in the socio-economic development of Assam. It is the backbone of state economy and holds the key to the overall development of the State. At present in Assam agriculture contributes about 23.02 percent revenue to the Gross State Domestic product (GSDP).According to agricultural census 2015-16 reveals that the total land under cultivation was 29.77 lakh hectares i.e 37.95 percent of total geographical area of the State.**

Small and Marginal farmers in India are farmers who own or cultivate less than two hectares of land. Marginal farmers own or cultivate less than one hectare of land .

In Assam also Small and Marginal farmers make up a large portion of agricultural economy .According to the 2010-11 agricultural census, 63.31 percent farmers in Assam were marginal and 18.25 percent were small farmers. So the marginal and small farmer constitutes more than 85 percent of farmers community in Assam

Marketing of agricultural produce in the state is a serious for the farming community. Lack of organized marketing facility, Lack of storage infrastructure near the field , poverty and need of money after harvest for repayment of agricultural debt and other contingencies force for the farmers to dispose off of their hard earned produce at the earliest and at very low price or throughway price.

I. INTRODUCTION

Agriculture and its allied activities played an important role in the socio economic development of Assam. It is the backbone of States economy and holds the key to the overall development of the state. Agriculture significantly contributes to the state's economy and provides as a main source of occupation and livelihood support to 70 percent rural population. At present in Assam agriculture contributes about 23.02 percent revenue to the Gross State Domestic product (GSDP) The total number of farmers family in Assam is 2741722 as per agriculture census 2015-16. The size of operational holding on an average is 1.10 hectare and more than 85 percent farmers are either small or marginal with average land holding of just about 0.36 hectares. Agriculture census data 2015-16 reveals that the total land under cultivation was 29.77 lakhs hectare i.e 37.95 percent of total geographical land area of the State.

The data thus reveal that preponderance of small and fragmented land holding along with insecure tenancy are the major reasons for under development of agriculture sector in the state.

Small and marginal farmers in India are farmers who own or cultivate less than two hectare of land. Marginal farmers own or cultivate less than one hectare of land. They may own tenant or share crop land. On the other hand, small farmers own or cultivate more than one hectare but less than two hectare of land. Small and marginal farmers make up about 86 percent of all farmers in India, but they only own around 47 percent of the country's crop area.

In Assam also small and marginal farmers make up a large portion of the agricultural community. According to the 2010-11 Agricultural census, 63.31 percent of farmers in Assam were marginal and 18.25 percent were small farmers. So marginal and small farmers constitute more than 85 percent of farmer's community in Assam.

Total number of farmers family in Assam is 27, 41,722 as per agricultural census 2015-16. The size of average holding on an average is 1.10 hectare and more than 85 percent farmers are either small or marginal with average land holding of just about 0.36 hectares.

In Assam number of marginal farmers family is about 1669000.3(62 percent) and 561000 (21 percent) and large farmers family was 45200o.7 (statistical Hand Book, 2005-06, Directorate of agriculture) so be it can said that in Assam peasant and small and marginal farmers go together.

Therefore, it is mentionable that small and marginal farmers have to feed huge number of population in our country. In terms of production, small and marginal farmers make larger contribution to the production of high value crops. They contribute about 70 percent to the total production of vegetable, 55 percent to fruits against their share of about 44 percent in land area.

Small and marginal farmers are important for India as well as Assam agriculture and rural economy. The agricultural sector contributes around 20 percent to Assam GDP and major portion of which comes from small and marginal farmer's community.

International Journal of Recent Development in Engineering and Technology
Website: www.ijrdet.com (ISSN 2347-6435 (Online) Volume 15, Issue 10, October 2026)

In Assam agriculture provides a livelihood for about 75 percent of the state population in which a major portion is provided by small and marginal farmers. Small and marginal farmers sector of agriculture provides employment to over 42 percent of the state workforce.

The small and marginal farmers of Assam, and North-East state did not receive adequate attention of the planners, administrators and even of the academicians. A number of schemes were being undertaking by the govt. for its upliftment. Despite the best effort of the planners the small and marginal farmers all over India particularly in North-East have to lead miserable life because of either insufficient schemes or non implementation of the schemes at the grass-root level of the department. Despite various economic planning in our country, most of the Indian particularly peasants community do not live a comfortable life, Economic inequality, income disparity, unemployment and spurt in prices are quite rampant throughout of our country. Almost two out of every three go struggling against hungry, poverty, ignorance and chronic ill-health. Small and marginal farmers sector of agriculture provides employment to over 35 percent of the state's workforce. But despite the huge importance of small and marginal farmers in Assam economy they face various socio-economic problems, As per various literature and field observation the main problems faced small and marginal farmers are as follows-

1. Low level of agricultural productivity.
2. Small level of land holdings.
3. Low level of income
4. Low level of adoption of Agricultural technology like, HYV seeds chemical fertilizer etc.
5. Orthodox or traditional methods of cultivation or farming
6. Lack of assured irrigation facilities
7. Ignorance and illiteracy etc.

Assam occupies a geographical area of 7.8 million hectares of which total cropped area is 4.o million hectares. However, only 5.4 percent of the gross cultivated area is irrigated and the average cropping intensity of the state is 145.9 percent. About 80 percent of the population in Assam lives I rural areas and about 70 percent of the state's

Population is directly or indirectly engaged in agriculture, while about 65 percent of the workforce in the state is actually engaged in agricultural activities. On the other hand , the sectors contribution to the states income has been falling sharply over time, the annual growth rate in respect of GSDP at constant price (2011-12) in agriculture and its allied sector has declined from 3.28 percent in 2014-15 to 1.04 percent in 2015-16.

Though this is natural while economic development occurs, in Assam this has come about despite the slow overall economic growth in the state. Assam economy is largely based on agriculture, with the sector directly or indirectly employing more than 53 Percent of the state's workforce. The state's total cropped area is 4.0 million hectares, with rice being the most important crop.

Marketing of agricultural produce in the state is a serious problem for the farming community. Lack of organized marketing facility, lack of storage infrastructure near the field, poverty and need of money after harvest for repayment of agricultural debt and other contingencies force the farmers to dispose off their hard earned produce at the earliest and at very low price or throughway prices.

The above facts indicate gravity of the situation. Situation in Assam is much more critical since this group of small and marginal farmers comprise a vast number of persons. The problems of improving their socio-economic condition is a challenge to the Planners, policy makers and implementing agencies of development schemes. Details studies on the problems of small and marginal farmers are practically non-existent in the North-East India, though another part of the country studies directly related to the problems of small and marginal famers are found to be satisfactory. This calls for urgent necessity to conduct in-depth studies to find out the resources and other constraints encountered by this group of farmers, and to suggest proper policy measures and to suggest measures for their development of small and marginal farmers and for this purpose the study is proposed to carry on.

The present study is based on both primary and secondary source of data. For assessing the problems of the Small and Marginal farmers of the state as a whole, data from the secondary sources are used which are supplemented by personal observation and experience of the field. Data from the primary sources relate to the erstwhile district of Barpeta the state of Assam. The particular district viz- Barpeta in the lower middle of Assam, different Agro economic conditions. Barpeta district has multiple cropping patterns. It is supposed that the district would more or less represent the socio-economic condition of the small and marginal farmers of the state.

II. Importance Of The Study

In Indian agricultural sector small and marginal farmers play an important role in Indian economy. Small and marginal farmer's makeup more than 85 percent farmers community and producing major share of agricultural products and provide employment to more than 42 percent work forced out of 53 percent in agricultural sector.

International Journal of Recent Development in Engineering and Technology
Website: www.ijrdet.com (ISSN 2347-6435 (Online) Volume 15, Issue 10, October 2026)

Despite such importance of small and marginal farmers are facing various socio economic hardship for which their economic condition is very deplorable and ekecable .

Therefore, at this point of things an investigation into the various socio-economic problems of small and marginal farmers is very important to find out the causes ,policy makers to frame and execute proper policy measures for the uplifment of small and marginal farmers

III. Review Of Liturature

Whether they live and what they produce, India's small and marginal farmer- Saini Sweta and choudhury Aneek, Observed –

As per Indian agricultural census 2015-16 86.1 percent of Indian farmers are small and marginal (SMF) i.e., have landholding sizes smaller than 2 hectares. More then half of these live in five Indian states of utter Pradesh, Bihar , Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra and Andhra Pradesh (Agricultural Census 2015-16). And most of them cultivate the classic combination of cereals i.e., Paddy in Kharif (and even in rabi in some causes) and wheat in rabi. Cotton is the third most preferred crop, followed by maize and gram (NSO 2018-19).

Fragmentation of land, small farmers, marginal farmers, cropping pattern, SAS 2018-19 1970-71-70. And 2015-146-86. These are important statistics on Indian agricultural landholdings. But what do they mean?

In simple words, they say that in 1970, India had about 71 million operational landholdings and 70 percent of them were small and marginal (Agricultural Census). By 2015-16, these numbers increased to about 146 million and 86 percent.

IV. Hypothesis

In order to study the proposed problems we shall try to examine the following hypothesis?

1. Whether the uneconomic small holding affects the socio-economic status of the small and marginal farmers?
2. Whether low production and low income is responsible for the poor economic condition of small and marginal farmers?
3. Whether a poor response to modern agricultural practices is responsible for poor economic backgrounds of the small and marginal farmers?
4. Whether the traditional farming is the main cause of socio-economic backwardness of the small and marginal farmers?
5. Whether problems of tenancy and land reforms have any relation with the socio-economic problems of the small and marginal farmers?

V. Objectives

The main objectives of the study are as follows:

1. To study the resource endowment of the small and marginal farmers and their socio-economic background.
2. To identify the constraints (problems) faced by small and marginal farmers.
3. To study the possibilities of other subsidiary occupation for creating employment opportunities and also generating new sources of income.
4. To study the potentialities of the existing farms and possibilities of increasing family income from the existing farms.

Besides, an attempt would be made to examine the impact of the small and marginal farmers development agency programme on the small and marginal farmers based on secondary data.

VI. Methodology

The methodology to be adopted for the study of the stated problems is as follows.

For first part of the study on the problems of the small and marginal farmers of the state as a whole secondary data will be used. These data will be collected from various publication of the state Government, Central Government, various organizations.

For the second part of the study primary data will be collected by the researcher through questionnaire and for this purpose the researcher will select certain villages considering some criteria's like having or not having irrigation facilities, and holding size village inhabitant by scheduled cast people and the village of agriculturally prosperous area.

A field investigation method will be carried out in two rounds. In the first round of the survey, list of the household with their population and land holding of ten selected villages will be prepared by personally visiting each household.

In the second round of the survey, personal interview method will be adopted to collect necessary information regarding the socio-economic status of the selected households

The small and marginal farmers will be identified on the basis of the definition of small and marginal farmers, given by the department of agriculture, Government of Assam and agricultural laboures development agency (1971).The small and marginal farmer will be listed on sample basis. The sampling method will be simple random sampling.

VII. Expected Results

Every investigation and study has certain limitations. Similarly the present study about socio-economic problems of small and marginal farmers many have certain limitations of time study area, Sample and other investigation facilities. But to make the study as objective as possible considerable care and thought will be exercise. The present investigation will be conducted in a limited geographical area consisting of particular agro-climatic and socio-economic conditions of RuposI dev. Block under Barpeta district, Assam. Therefore, the finding emanating from the study may not be applicable in all places and in all types of agro-climatic and socio-economic condition of our country. Of course the findings of the proposed study would be applicable in Assam and elsewhere having similar agro-climatic and socio-economic conditions.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

[1] Ali A.N.M Irshad:- Impact of Mayong lift irrigation project, Nawgong District, Assam Agro-Economic Research Centre for N.E. India Jorhat, 1975

[2] Kahlon, A.S and D.S, Tyagi (1983) Agricultural price policy in India, Allied publishers private Limited, New Delhi.

[3] Atteri B.R. and Josim P.R. (1982) "Capital requirements of marginal and small farmers- A case study in Delhi" Agricultural situation in India Vol.3(5)

[4] Chakravarty , S.K. " A change in saving investment Direction of the small cultivators in West Bengal (Case study in Hogly district , India Journal of Agricultural economics, Vol,XVII- 4 farmers" Indian Journal of Agricultural economics , Vol.XVII.

[5] Desai D.K. Small and Marginal Farmers- A second look at credit policy" The Economic Times, Calcutta, Vol. VI.313, 1981

[6] Datta N.C. Land problems and land reforms in Assam, S, Chand and company, Delhi, 1968 PP . 15-16

[7] ,Dutta P.C. and Gogoi, K.I.An Assessment of small and marginal farmers development programme in Assam (A Case study in Nawgong District) Agro- Economic Research Centre for N. E. India, Jorhat, 1973

[8] Bezburuah, M.P. Technical Transformation of Agriculture – A study in Assam (Ph.D. Thesis)Chanda, G.K. Waste land and rural India, policy initiatives and programmers for their development , National Bank for Agriculture and Rural Development (NABARD) Mumbai.

[9] Dhaliwal, G.S. Extension contacts in relation to adoption of Agricultural prices and socio-economic status of farmers, Indian Journal of Extension education Vol.III

[10] Dhar P.K. The Economy of Assam including Economy of North-East India, Kalyni publishers, New Delhi.

[11] Economic Survey of Assam (2023-24)- Directorate of Economics and Statistics, Assam Planning and Development Department, Govt. of Assam.

[12] Gorge, J.S. and Singh. G.N. Production pattern of the small farmers in the district Pratabgarh (U.P) Indian Journal Agriculture in District Economics Vol. XXVII.

[13] Goswami, P.C.I. The Economics of Development of Assam, Asian publishing House, Bombay. 1963

[14] Dr. upadhayaya,Tanka Prasad- Role of Agriculture in Economic Development of Assam, cognizance Journal of multidisciplinary studies, Vol-2