

Situational analysis of unemployment in Bor-Amjuli village of Udalguri district in Assam

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Abstract

The purpose of the study was to analytically assess the dimension of unemployment, examine the problems and identify the factors leading to deprivation of employment opportunities. Relevant empirical data for the study was collected using Interview Schedule. Data analysis reveals, seventy-five percent male unemployment. The male folk were found to indulge in gambling, drinking and idle living. Unemployment was high within the age group of twenty to forty years. Among the educated youth, respondents with an education qualification of Graduate pass were found to be more vulnerable than any other. Unemployment among the married was also undesirable. The villagers solely depend on agriculture for livelihood but they still practices traditional method of cultivation. The villagers hardly receive benefits from the government. As far as preference over job is concerned, larger population prefers to go for government jobs because of the nature of stability and security over the private players.

Keywords: Education, Employment, Government, Occupation, Unemployment

Introduction

Unemployment has assumed an alarming dimension in the recent years. The problem has drawn global attention of the political thinkers, administrators, social scientists and others at the helm of affairs. Prolonged unemployment may cause untold human suffering. When unemployment strikes a family for any period of time, there can be an inevitable impairment in the family's living standard. In addition to accompanying evil effects, the family members can be subjected to great physical and mental strain resulting from continued deprivation. The chronic unemployment of the youths, give rise to a multiplicity of social problems. The recent upswing trend of crime statistics throughout the world is a manifestation of continued unemployment coupled with mass poverty. The current upsurge of insurgency, the political aspirations, ethnic identity etc. are the offshoot of economic underdevelopment marked by the haves and have-nots.

About the surveyed area

Bor-Amjuli is a homogenous tribal village. It is situated 15 km to the north of the district headquarter, Udalguri. The village is bounded by Bhutan in the north which is just 9 km. The village lies on both sides of the Bhutan-Corammore PWD road which passes through the middle of the village. There is no such written record about the village but one can get some information from the elders and from the record book of the village church. The village was established in the year 1961. The village was formed by a group of migrants from the main town of Udalguri. During the period of migration, there were five (5) families. As told by the village head, before the formation of the village, the place was deeply covered with dense forests. But they burnt down the forests and later settled down with their family members. During that period of time, the people of the village had to encounter against different wild animals such as elephant, deer, tiger, wild buffalo etc. Their houses and crops were also being destroyed by the wild

animals. Today, such situation in the village has improved but there needs to be lot of infrastructural development.

Review of Literature

Agarwal A.N. (1975) reveals three concepts to estimate the rate of unemployment in the country. The first is the measurement of unemployment on the Usual Status (US) basis throughout the reference year. The estimates are given in terms of numbers or persons. Second is unemployment on Current Weekly Status (CWS) basis. The estimates are made in terms of the average number of persons unemployed per week. Third is unemployment on Current Daily Status (CDS) basis. It records the activity status of a person for each day of the seven days preceding the survey. A person who worked for one hour or more during a day, the person was considered having worked for half a day. If worked for four hours or more during a day, the person was considered as employed for the whole day. The estimates are given in terms of the total person days of unemployment, that is, the aggregate of all the unemployment days of all persons in the labour force. The US unemployment may be regarded as a measure of chronic or long-term unemployment during the reference year. The CWS unemployment also measures chronic unemployment but with the reduced reference period of a week. Its estimates also indicate seasonal and part-time unemployment or under-employment. The CDS is a comprehensive measure of unemployment. It measures both chronic unemployment as well as underemployment on weekly basis.

Dholakia, Jitendra (1977) classified four major criteria by which a person may be called unemployed. The first is the time criterion according to which a person can be considered unemployed or under-employed if he is gainfully occupied during the year for a number of hours or days less than some normal hours or days defined as full employment hours or days. According to him, a gainfully occupied person was defined as severely under-employed if he worked for 28 hours or less and

moderately under-employed if he worked for more than 28 hours but less than 42 hours during the reference week. The second is that of the income. A person is said to be unemployed if he earns an income per year less than some desirable minimum. This can be termed as the poverty criterion of unemployment because the person has secured some work but the income from the work is less than the acceptable minimum. The third criterion is the willingness criterion. A person may be called under-employed if he is willing to do more work than he is doing at present. Such a person may either be actively searching for more work or be available for more if it is offered to him on terms to which he is accustomed. It is possible that willingness criterion may be an aspect of poverty or income criterion. The fourth criterion is the productivity criterion according to this criterion, a person may be called unemployed or under-employed if he is removable from his present employment and his removal would not reduce the total output. Singhvi, L.M (1977) highlights unemployment among the educated as a serious problem in India. It is true that unemployment among the educated is not a new problem. India is producing far more highly educated and technically trained persons that are necessary for the growth and development of the economy. The simplest way of accounting for growing number of educated unemployed is to argue that supply of the educated youth has moved consistently ahead of demand due to uncontrolled expansion of secondary and higher education. It can also be said that educated unemployment arises from the fact that the Indian students get the wrong kind of education. Fault probably lies with the educational system in imparting too general and literary education devoid of any practical content. He emphasized more on practical or professional education rather than the traditional education system in India.

Masum Muhammad (1975), discusses unemployment as involuntary idleness due to lack of work. Unemployment refers to persons belonging to the labour force, not doing any work during a specified period but seeking work. He considers underemployment as an intermediate phase between employment and unemployment. He attuned to the Ninth International Congress of Labor Statisticians definition: "Underemployment exists when persons in employment who are not working full time would be able and willing to do more work than they are actually performing, or when the income or productivity of persons in employment would be raised, if they worked under improved conditions of production or transferred to another occupation account being taken of their occupational skills". In the agricultural sector, the employment pattern is significantly influenced by the seasonality of production process. Seasonality arises from the problem of inelasticity of the time pattern of primary production. Although, seasonality of employment for cultivators is a function of crop pattern, it cannot be eliminated completely. Most of the cultivators remain unemployed at particular periods of the agricultural season. When the whole year is taken as the reference period, all the cultivators turn out to be unemployed.

Reddy Sateesh, K. (1999), reveals unemployment as a serious problem for any economy and the awareness of the problem has grown over the years. The worst sufferers of this problem are the millions of people in the Third World countries. The alarming trend has created a sense of frustration and restlessness among the educated youth and a feeling of misery in the rural areas. The prevalence of unemployment in general and among the educated youth in particular is loss to the nation

as the country spends its scarce resources on educating them. Unemployment is a measure of the amount of manpower that is going waste. Unemployment in this sense is nothing but the number of

idle days spent due to want of work and these are the man days available for productive work but unutilized due to shortage of work. Employment is a means of ensuring a given income distribution. Unemployment signifies a failure to provide an opportunity to earn income through work. This leads to a high dependency ratio. The problem of unemployment is truly gigantic and is posing a formidable challenge. Large spell of unemployment ruins a man's dignity and self-respect, creates tensions within the family and within the community, renders men apathetic to ordinary social actions and duties.

Almost all the relevant literatures found to have dealt with the concepts. At the same time, unemployment in the lower strata of the society such as village has not been dealt in a big way. Studies such as the situational analysis of unemployment with special reference to Boramjuli village have not been conducted so far. Thus the need was felt to study the unemployment in the smallest unit of the society such as Boramjuli village in Assam.

Objectives of the study

The main objectives of the study are to:

1. Analytically assess the dimension of rural unemployment and its trend.
2. Examine the problems of unemployment in the study area.
3. Throw light on the unexplored frontiers related to the problem.
4. Identify the factors leading to deprivation of employment opportunities.

Methodology

Relevant empirical data for the present study was collected through primary sources using Interview Schedule. The primary data were collected to get into more intensive information about unemployment. The Bor Amjuli village has a population of 360. In order to examine the unemployment in the village, the population under the age group 14-60 years is taken into consideration. Preliminary data from the village-head reveals that there were 122 persons within

the age group (i.e. 18-60 years) which is approximately 34% of the total population of the village. Since all persons cannot be interviewed only 40 persons have been considered as a sample which is 33% of the universe. This sample size can give 99% confidence level to the outcome of the study. There were 52 household in the village. To make it more meaningful to the study approximately 1 (one) person from each households of the village have been selected purposively.

As a working definition, we have used the definition of unemployment provided by the 27th Round of NSS i.e. "A person working 8 hours a day for 273 days in a year is regarded as employed on a standard person year basis, on the basis of the recommendations of the Committee of Experts on Unemployment Estimates set up by the Planning Commission. Secondary Sources such as relevant books, Journals, government documents and websites were used to supplement the primary data.

Analysis and Interpretation

A simple percentage method is used to analyze and interpret the data. The analysis takes into consideration the current status,

age group, gender, family type, marital status, education, preferences to government jobs, benefits from the government, problems and suggestions regarding unemployment.

Current status of employment- unemployment

Unemployment is a chronic social problem. It is probably the largest single factor breeding social unrest. Large population

remains unemployed. Quite a number, though educated, find no or little work to use their talent or skill. Unemployment issues are the real issues that need to be addressed through good governance. The following table shows the current status of unemployment in the Bor Amjuli village.

Table 1: Current Status of employment-unemployment

Current Status	Persons (No.)	%	Male (No.)	%	Female (No.)	%
Unemployed	27	67.5	21	75.0	7	58.33
Employed	13	32.5	7	25.0	5	41.67
Total	40	100	28	100	12	100

Source: Field Survey

Based on the analysis of the surveyed data, 67.5 percent of the populations were found to be unemployed as against 32.5 percent employed in either of the government or private sector. It was also found that seventy-five (75) percent of the male population remains unemployed as against twenty-five (25) percent employed. Comparatively, women employment was higher (41.67 pc) than male employment (25 pc). Male unemployment stands at 75 percent and female at 58.33 percent. Thus female employment was better than male in the village.

Age and Employment Status

Age is an important parameter to assess the level of employment. It is directly related to the human resource of the country. India has a large chunk of youth population. The youth within the age group of 18-35 years has been considered as the most viable and productive age. Thus need was felt to understand the age and employment status of the village.

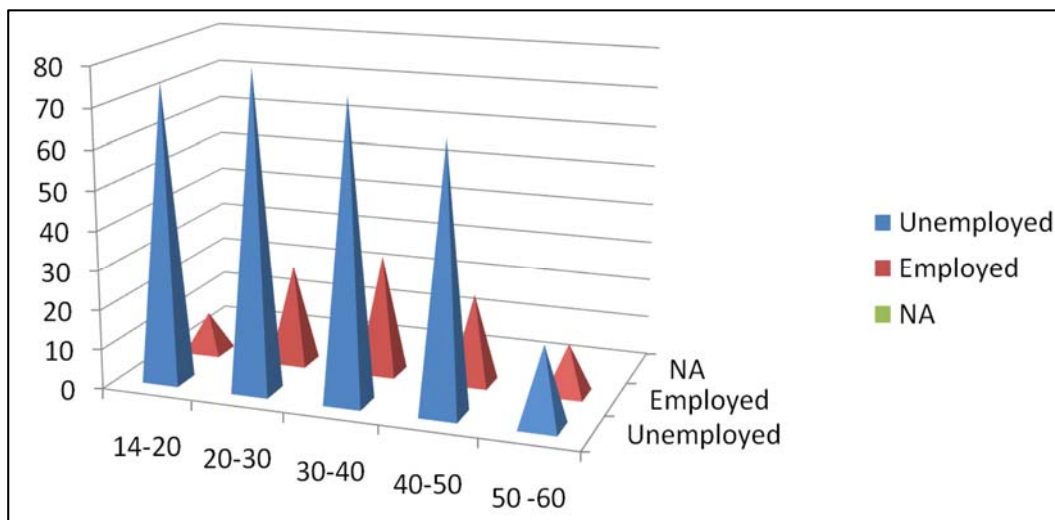


Fig-1: Age and Employment Status

Analysis of the data shows 75 percent of respondent within the age group of 14-20 years unemployed and 25 percent employed. In the age group of 20-30 years, 80 percent of population remains unemployed and only 20 percent employed. Similarly, within the age group of 30-40 years, 75 percent of populations were found to be unemployed as against 25 percent employed. 66.67 percent of population were found to be unemployed as against 33.33 percent employed in the age group of 40-50 years. Employment rate was high only in the age group of 50-60 with 80 percent of the population employed and only 20 percent unemployed. Thus highly employable age group i.e 20-40 years remains unemployed and idle.

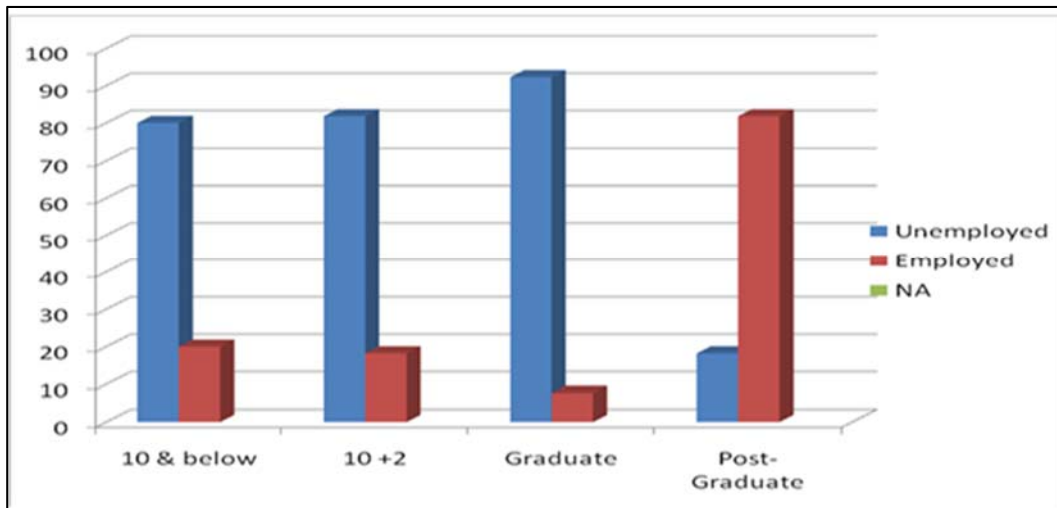
Marital status and family type

The marital status of the village was measured. 77.5 percent of the population were found to married and 22.5 percent unmarried. There was high rate of unemployment among both

married and unmarried population. Unemployment among the unmarried (88 pc) was more than that of married (61.3 pc) persons. Nuclear family was found to be prominent; 85 percent of the families were of nuclear type and 15 percent joint family. They were of the opinion that nuclear family was helpful for them to spend less money on family maintenance and henceforth can have a happy family.

Education and unemployment

Education is an effort to transfer knowledge from elder member of society to the younger. It is an institution, which plays a important role in integrating an individual with his society and in maintaining the perpetuation of culture. Emile Durkheim defines education as “the influence exercised by the adult generation upon those who are not yet ready for adult life”. Thus need was felt to examine the parameter of education in the Bor-Amjuli village.



Source: Field Survey

Fig 2: Education and Unemployment

Highest unemployment was found among the graduate respondents. As many as 92.3 percent of the educated graduates were in search of jobs. The rate of unemployment was also high amongst the respondent with matriculation (80 pc) and 10+2 (81.82pc) qualified respondents. High rate of employment was found only with Post- Graduate respondents with as many as 81.82 percent employed. Overall we can find high rate of unemployment in the village.

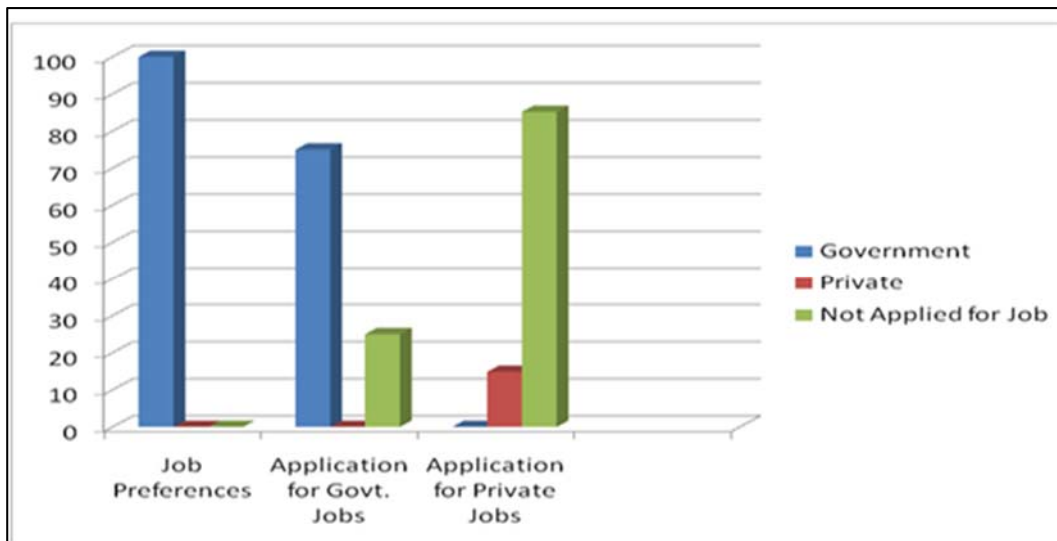
Economic Activities

BorAmjuli village is basically rural in nature and character. Agriculture was the main occupation of the village. It was the main source of the income of the family. The village practices old method of agriculture even in this modern age of science and technology. The whole family budget was dependent on agriculture production. At times, crop failure ruins them and changes their whole programme and planning. Rice is the main

food of the villagers. Other major crops include jute, wheat, betel nut, betel leaves, papaya, banana etc. Apart from these, vegetables such as cabbage, cauliflower, brinjal, potatoes, tomatoes etc. were cultivated seasonally. Such small vegetation was the source of the villager's meager income. Educated youth were found to engage in cultivation of tea and rubber for their livelihood.

Preferences on employment opportunities

Job preferences correspond to the degree to which an individual derives satisfaction from engaging in different tasks. For instance, some people are more satisfied working outdoors, while others are happy to sit at a desk. Research indicates that job satisfaction is directly influenced by the degree of match between individual vocational preferences and specific job requirements.



Source: Field Survey

Fig 3: Job preferences

Analysis of the collected data reveals 100 percent job preference over government job. They were of the opinion that government job was stable and has security over the private job.

They felt that once a person gets a government job, they need not look for any other alternatives for livelihood. In fact, even an educated graduate prefers to find a job such as police

constable, security guard in banks or a grade IV in government sector. Among the unemployed population, 75 percent have applied for Government job. It was also observed that only 14.82 percent of people have applied for private jobs while 85.18 percent have not applied for it.

Benefits from the Government

The villagers do not receive any schemes or benefits from the government. They were of the opinion that in order to get the benefits of the government schemes, one have to pay money even for a small benefit. It was also felt that if one has a good connection with the officials, he or she will definitely get such benefits. The respondents term this as corruption among the government officials.

Results and Discussions

The main findings of the present study are:

1. Unemployment in the village was very high. 67.5 percent of the population was unemployed as against 32.5 percent employed in the village. Women (41.67 pc) were employed as against male employment (25 pc). The female employment was higher than male in the village. Seventy-five (75 pc) male populations remain unemployed. The male folk were found to indulge in gambling, drinking and idle living. Thus unemployment is a cause of concern for the village.
2. Age wise unemployment was very high to the tune of 80 percent in the age group 20-30 years. The phenomenon is quite alarming as this age group is considered to be highly employable. The rate of employment is high (80 pc) only in the age group 50-60 years but this age group has immense pressure of running a family.
3. Unemployment among the unmarried persons (88 pc) was more than that of married persons (61.3 pc). Nuclear family was very popular in the village. Just after getting married, the couple can establish a nuclear family. Eighty-five (85) percent of the families in the village were of nuclear type as against fifteen (15) percent joint family. It was also revealed that the villagers prefer to live in a nuclear family because it reduces family expenditure, thereby leading to happy family.
4. Unemployment among the graduates (92.3 pc), 10+2 pass (81.82 pc), class 10 pass and below (80 pc) was all time high. It can be said that graduates educated youths were most severely affected by unemployment.
5. Agriculture is the main occupation of the village. It provides them livelihood and was the main source of income of the family. The village practices old method of agriculture even in the modern age of science and technology. The whole economic system, family budgeting is linked with agriculture. At times, failure of crops ruins them and changes their whole planning and programme.
6. The youth prefers to go for government job (100pc) because they felt that the government job was stable and has security over the private job. They felt that once they enter the government system, they will be stable and need not look for any other alternatives for living.
7. The villagers hardly receive schemes and benefits from the government. They are of the opinion that in order to enjoy the benefits of the government schemes, one have to pay money howsoever small the benefit may be. It was also felt

that, if one has a good connection with the officials, they are likely to get the benefits.

Apart from the above, the villagers highlighted the following problems:

- Poor road connectivity, irrigation and water supply facilities.
- Insurgency, ethnic and insecurity among the villagers
- Long official process and corruption for availing government policies.
- Lack of professional, technical, vocational institutions in the area.
- Lack of Bank loan facilities.
- No industries in the locality

Conclusion and suggestions

The problem of unemployment in the village is alarming. The male unemployment and unemployment within the age group of twenty to thirty (20-30) was a worst trend. It has become a complicated economic, social and political issue. Steps to eliminate such a problem are of utmost need. Half-hearted measures or temporary solutions of the government will not yield any fruitful results. The government must provide adequate road connectivity, electricity, water supply and irrigational facilities. The education system must be reformed from syllabus oriented to a job oriented education. Systematic changes must be made from producing degree-oriented job seekers to practically job-oriented technocrats, capable to start their own ventures. Educational infrastructure such as school colleges, vocational and technical institutes need to be established in the area. There should be perfect co-ordination and integration between the education and the industrial system. The youth need to be engaged in different sectors apart from the traditional agricultural system of employment. Unemployed youths can be engaged in handloom and handicraft activities. The state government can go for fast development of cottage and small scale industries. New avenues in farm sector, herbal and medical fields can be explored in the Bor Amjuli and nearby village to bring overall opportunities and development.

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