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The Present Socio-economic Status of Gorkha Community in Takdah Village, Darjeeling

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Abstract:

Many researches from different aspects have studied the problem of the hill section. The study of Takdah Village is particularly interesting as it traces the development of the society. This paper has tried to bring out a conclusion about the socio-economic problems which are increasing with time and are being faced by the members of the society. The paper has also tried to provide a picture of the historical scenario as well as the present condition of Takdah Village and its associated problems. In other words, the present scholar attempts to analyse the past and present situation of socio-economic condition of Takdah Village, to formulate strategies for improvement from their present situation. Traditional socio-economic status is also different between modern and tribal community. Lack of Government initiatives and difficult lifestyle of mountainous regions are other factors responsible for lower economic development. Sometimes responsibilities of local political leader make their status. After 2005, Gorkha community started their own revolution regarding various issues against the West Bengal government for 'Ghorkhaland'. Socio-economic condition was the main issue among all other problems. Physiographic and climatic conditions do not support their present conditions. Demographic scenario (total population, sex ratio, child birth and mortality), Economic status (monthly income, dependency ratio, working population and women income) and Social scenario (source of drinking water, religion, caste, literacy rate, language and other way) are also influential in this type of research. We have basically focused on the present socio-economic condition of Gorkha community, based on primary survey.

Keywords: Socio-economic, Gorkha community, Demographic, Takdha.

1. Introduction

Socio-economic conditions of Darjeeling district are quite diverse in nature. A number of tribal communities like Nepalese, Lepchas, Bhutias and Gorkha are present here. Among them, people from Gorkha community are predominantly found in the hilly area of this district (Sarkar A K, 2014). Gorkha people were part of the Mongolian and originated from tribal community (Farwell, 1984). Economic status of Darjeeling district, mainly of the Gorkha community is not well developed. Local people depend on tea gardens and market economy mostly. Gorkha community is an independent and peaceful one among the other tribal communities. All India Gorkha League, Adivasi Bikash parishad, Akhil Bharatiya Adivasi Bikash Parishad, and Gorkhaland Territori Administration are the major human and political associations and bodies in this area. These are primarily originated for the social, political and economic development of the local communities. The Socio-economic condition is a framework for studying the structure of a community. It focuses and identifies the different characteristics of a society. Education is an important element and rolemaker for the development of a community because an educated person is able to make his or her decisions for their own betterment. Higher level of education in a particular area may provide development to that particular area as well as its surrounding regions (Shuangji and Koblinsky, 2009; Sohail, et al., 2012). Disparity of socio-economic conditions is another important factor for poorer community development. In a specific area, misbalance in social, political, demographic and economic condition indicates under development or developing state (Ramadas.K. et al., 2011). National development also depends on state community development. Sometimes regional disparity of a state affects their national development greatly (Khader.V. et al., 2010). Good health is the best indicator for socio-economic conditions; it is important for standard of living (Ravindran, 1996; Waggstaff, 2002; Marmot, 2005). Socio-economic condition between hill, mountain, plateau and plain has also different characteristics. Mountain socio-economic status is not like plain region because natural hazard and regional disparity is the key factor for their lower development (Rubinson, 1990). The present socio-economic status of Takdha village is a visual socio-economic scenario of Gorkha community.

1.1. Study Area

Darjeeling is one of the places with the most natural beauty in India. Geographically this area is under the Himalayan mountain region. Takdha Village is located at 27°01'32"N latitude and 88°21'58"E. The local socio-economic status is similar at other hilly region but has some differentiations in the other parts. The average altitude of this village is about 1094 meter from mean sea level. Majority of the local people is Gorkha and tea garden is the main source of income.

1.2. Research Objectives

The main objective is to focus on the developmental status of tribal people, their culture and traditions. In the work mainly emphasizes on the socio-economy of Gorkha people of Takdah Village.

2. Methodology

This research was based on two types of data; primary and secondary. Primary survey included door to door survey of the resident of Takdah Village of Darjeeling district. A questionnaire was formed related to present scholars' topic & these questions were asked by the present scholar to the residents. On the basis of their answer, the whole project was prepared. Secondary data is one that had been already collected from other sources. When we use statistical method with primary data from other purpose we refer to it as secondary data. Such as literature survey, study of journals, various books on the related topic & the network surfing is also necessary sources of secondary data. In pre-field stage, this work is done with the help of books from college library & internet regarding her topic- "concern for socio-economic status" & life styles of the people of Takdah Village. Then the present scholar prepared a questionnaire schedule on socio-economy. In field stage, face to face interviews & door to door survey conducted to collect the primary data. In post field stage, after the collection of primary data from the field various cartographic & statistical techniques were applied to identify the factors associated with socio-economic status. Here IBM SPSS statistics 22 is used for cartographic representation. And programs are used Microsoft Excel 2010 and mainly Microsoft Word document 2010.

3. Results

3.1. Demographic Scenario

The primary data was used to explain the demographic characteristics of Takdah Village. The demographic characteristics may be sub-divide into categories such as, total female and male population, family wise female and male population, family size and age sex structure. 37 Gorkha families in Takdah village in Darjeeling district were surveyed. Of those 37 families (population 140), male constitutes 49.3 % (69) & female constitute 50.7 % (71) (Figure 1).

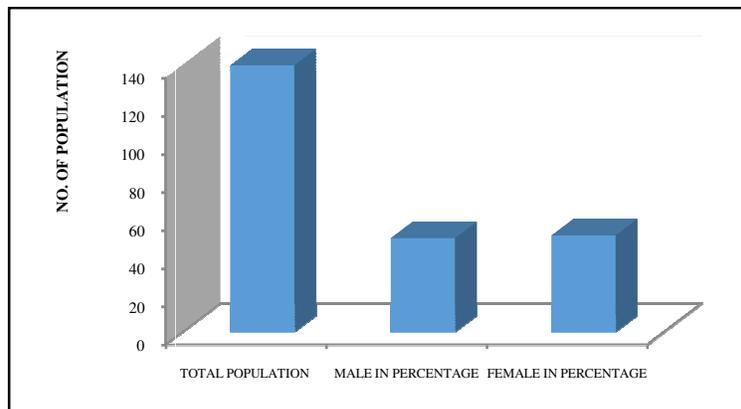


Figure 1: Demographic scenario (Total Population with Male-Female) of Gorkha community, Takdah Village (Source: Primary data, 2015).

It signifies that the male & female population are nearly equal. Family wise male and female population shows different characteristics. In many cases male population is lower than the female population but family wise male & female population variation is present. Many family sizes in this area are nucleated Family (1 to 4), medium Family (5 to 7) and large Family (8 to 12). Here nucleated family no. is 24, medium family no. is 10 & large family no. is 3 (Figure 2).

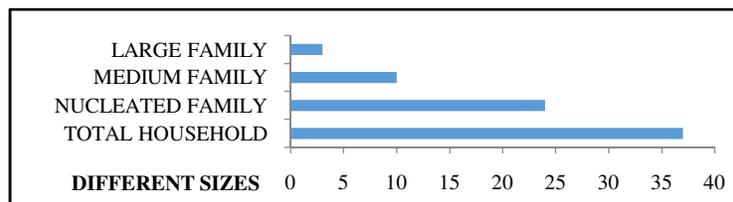


Figure 2: Family form of Gorkha community, Takdah Village (Source: Primary data, 2015).

So, in this village most of the family is nuclear size. The most significant demographic features of population are the age sex structure. The total surveyed people have been divided into five broad age groups. This pyramid shows that the proportion of age group <6 ages and >60 ages is very low. The age group between 6 ages to 15 ages is moderate and the working group is 15 ages to 60 ages are dominant (Figure 3).

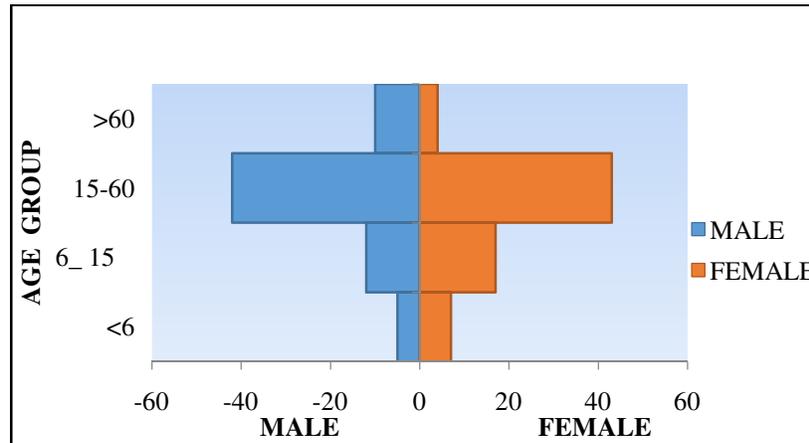


Figure 3: Age-Sex structure of Gorkha community, Takdah Village (Source: Primary data, 2015).

3.2. Economic Status

Economic factors are important studies which are totally related to people’s occupation, income and land ownership. The total population of Takdah Village faces difficulties to sustain its livelihood in this harsh mountain environment. The Problem is not only the limitation of bio-physical characteristics and agricultural production but also remoteness from markets & the aftermath of the transition. The number of working and non-working people of Takdah Village is a different scenario. In this Village 39 male (56.5%) & 10(14.1%) female are engaged in working activities whereas 30 male (43.5%) & 61 female (85.9%) are non-worker people. So, the majority of male population are employed but a few female populations are engaged in working activities. It represent that the females are mainly involved in household work. Different level of income of Gorkha people’s in this Village. Here, the level of income is divided into 5 income classes; those are 0 to 5000, 5000 -15000, 15000 - 25000, 25000 – 35000 and 35000 – 50000 rupees (Figure 4).

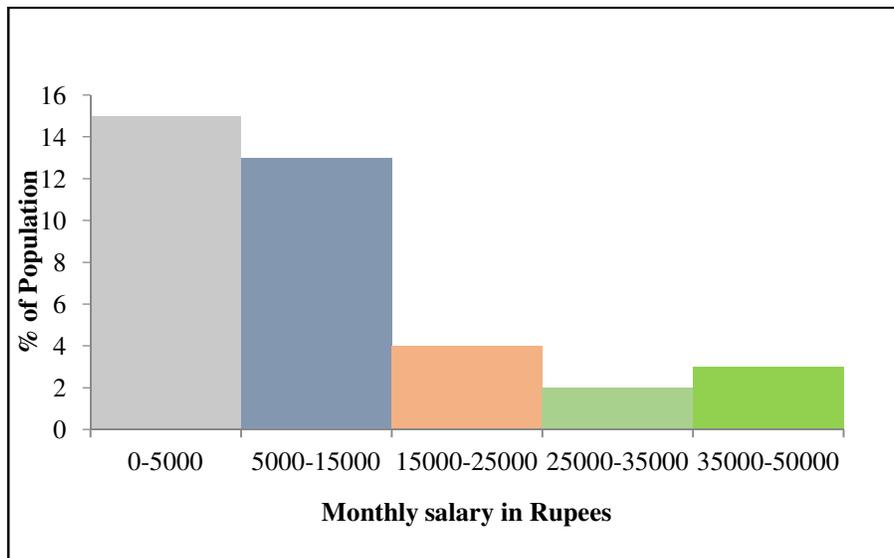


Figure 4: Monthly income of residents of Gorkha community, Takdah Village (Source: Primary data, 2015).

It is formed from the survey that about 75.7% of total surveyed households are in the lower income group whereas 10.8% of total surveyed households are in the middle income group and 13.5% house out of total households are in higher income group. Occupational pattern of Gorkha people in Takdah Village are also different. Here, majority of working people (both male & female) i.e. 25 people are engaged in primary sectors such as agricultural activities. Only 7 people are engaged in secondary activities. The remaining workers i.e. 19 people are engaged in tertiary or service sectors like teacher, doctor, army etc. Here, highest monthly income is Rs. 50,000 & the lowest monthly income is 1500 whereas the highest & lowest expenditure are 28,800 & 1000. Poverty status of the Gorkha people is so pathetic. In Village area, most of the people live below the poverty line. But the number of people above poverty line is low in comparison to the population of below level (Figure 5 & 6). Below Poverty Level (BPL) list includes 75.7% and Above Poverty Level (APL) list includes 24.3% of this region.

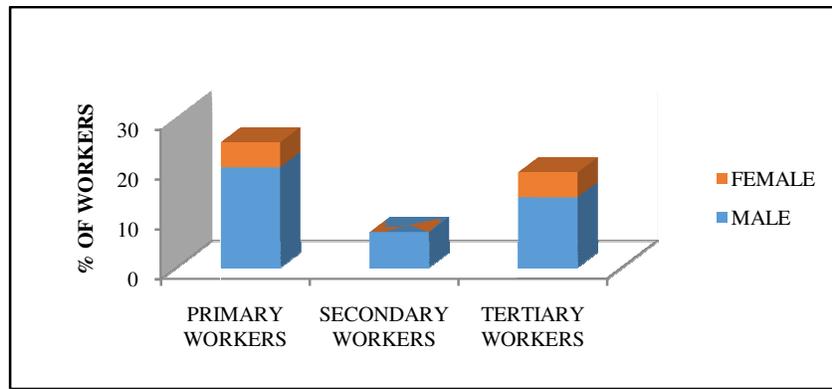


Figure 5: Economic activity of residents of Gorkha community, Takdah Village (Source: Primary data, 2015).

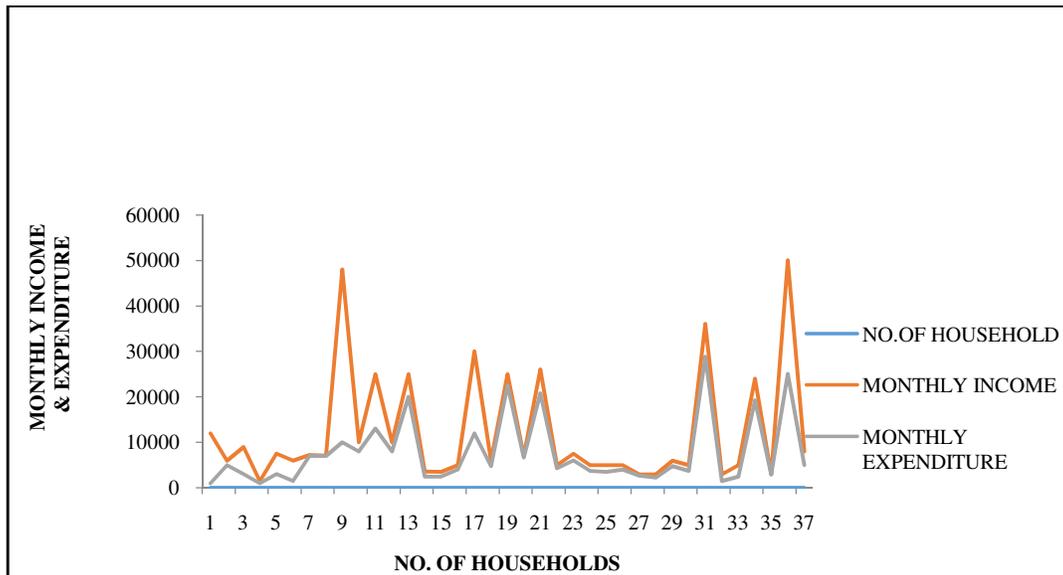


Figure 6: Monthly income and expenditure of residents of Gorkha community, Takdah Village (Source: Primary data, 2015).

3.3. Social Status

In the Takdah Village there is wide variety of social features. To describe the social feature of the area of Takdah, there are some indicators. Those are Caste, Religion, Language and Literacy. To collect the primary data of Takdah, it has been clear that the Gorkha people in this village prefer to use mainly Nepali language. Besides they can speak Hindi & English also. Here, most of the peoples were Buddhist but many of them have now adopted Hinduism. On the basis of household survey of 37 households out of 140, 64 males & 44 females are literate. Conversely, 5 males & 27 females are illiterate (Figure 7).

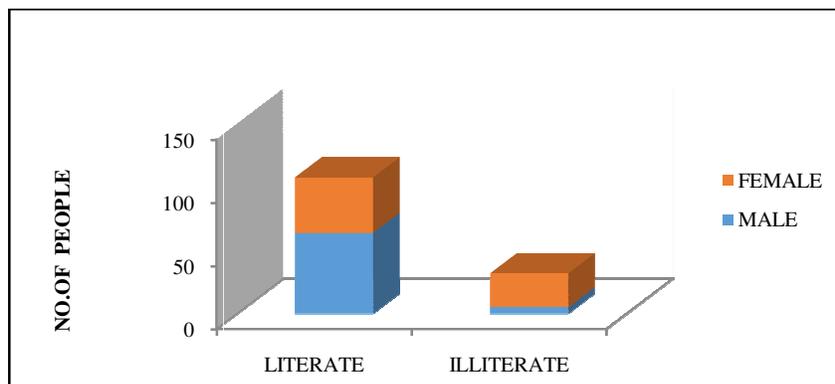


Figure 7: Literacy scenario of Gorkha community, Takdah Village (Source: Primary data, 2015).

The educational standard of the villagers have been categorized into primary, secondary, higher secondary & graduate. The data on the educational status shows that a large number of villagers are educated till primary & secondary section and their 27.8 % and 55.5 % respectively. The percentage of higher secondary and graduate are same like 8.3% (Figure 8).

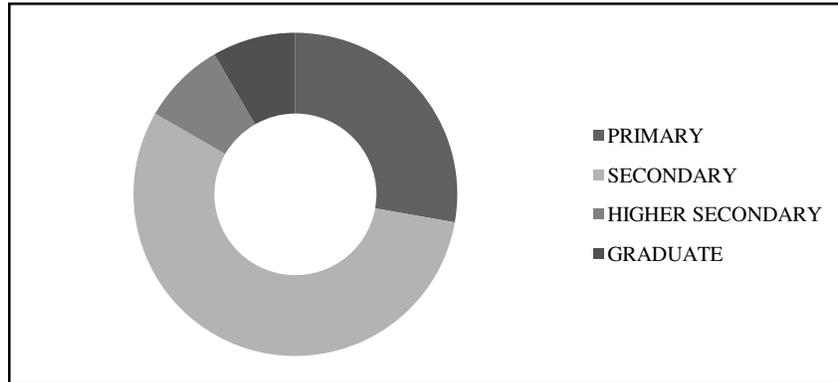


Figure 8: Education level of Gorkha community, Takdah Village (Source: Primary data, 2015).

To collect the primary information it is clear that in this village there is opportunity to get only primary, secondary education but for higher education there is no high school or colleges. If they want to get any higher educational degrees they have to go Kalimpong or other district like Kolkata. Mortality scenario is another important aspect of social science. The highest percentage of people had died due to the diseases of asthma cough & high pressure that is 25 & 41.7 and 16.7 is lower percentage of people had died due to the cause of sugar. The lowest percentage of people had died due to liver damage and cancer. It signifies that such deaths reduce the ability of people to live long and healthy life (Figure 9).

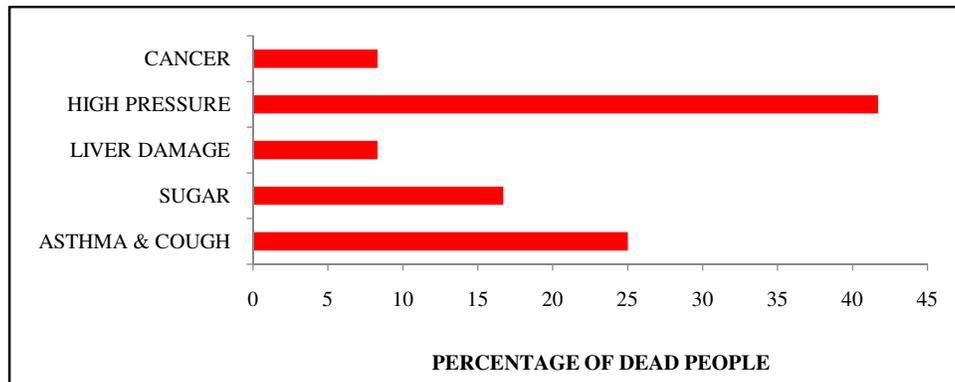


Figure 9: Mortality scenario of Gorkha community, Takdah Village (Source: Primary data, 2015).

It is found that 62.2% of total households of the village use unsafe drinking water and 37.8% of total household used safe drinking water (Figure 9 & 10). The sources of water in this Village are Tap, Tank & Spring. This unsafe water comes from spring through the plastic pipes. It can be concluded that this huge percentage of using unsafe water affects the living standard of Gorkha people. Basic facilities and amenities are always important social indicators. In Takdah Village many people are poor, they do not have safe drinking water, proper sanitation & sewage but the total 34 household have electricity. In this picture out of total 37 household, only 8 household have the sewage, 32 have the proper sanitation and 34 household have the electricity facilities. Most of the people in that place don't have the radio but nearly in every household they have television, mobile facilities. The diagrams illustrate that only 1 household out of 37 households have radio, 30 households have television and 32 households have mobile (Figure 11). Participation in social and political action of male and female population was also different in this area. 13 of total male people out of 69 male population and 4 females out of 71 female population are involve in social bodies and only 5 male populations are involving in political activity but no female are involve in this action.

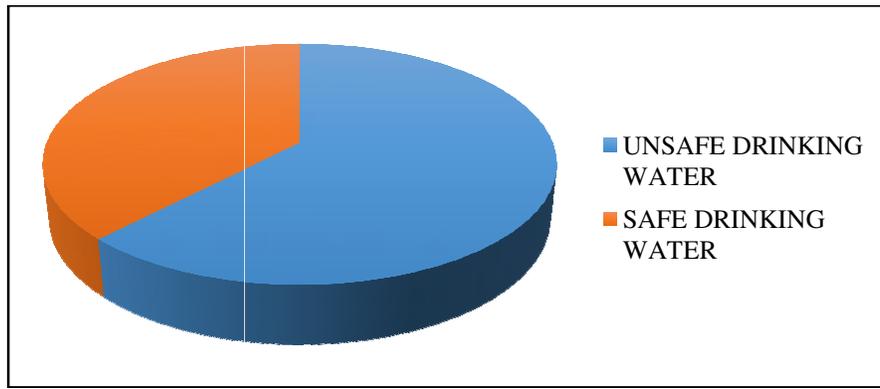


Figure 10: Condition of drinking water of Gorkha community, Takdah Village (Source: Primary data, 2015).

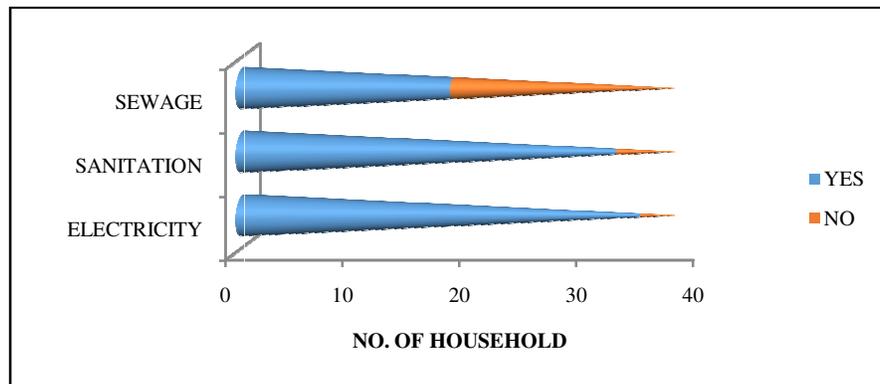


Figure 11: Facilities and amenities of households of Gorkha community, Takdah Village (Source: Primary data, 2015).

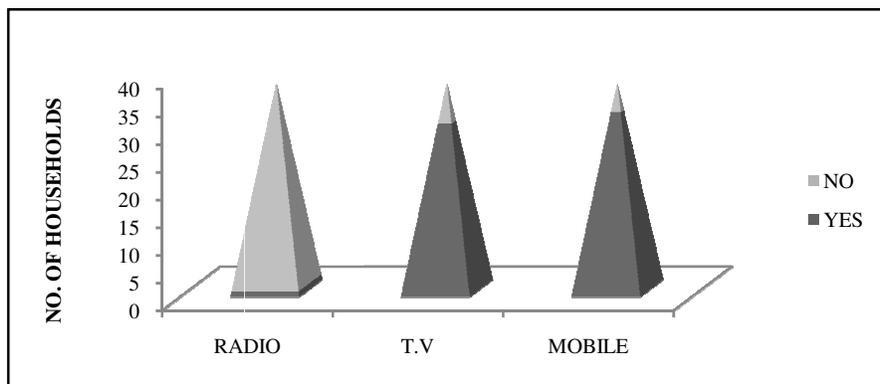


Figure 12: Entertainment received of Gorkha community, Takdah Village (Source: Primary data, 2015).

4. Conclusion

Presenting an entire scenario of the socio-economic conditions of a society is a very difficult task. In this 21st century, though we are very advanced socially, culturally, economically but Gorkha have conserved their traditional culture. Result shows this type of information but Sex ratio is an important result, it is like the developed societies because gender diversity out of total population is very low. Nuclear family is dominant of Gorkha people. Economic condition of this area is so pathetic because 43.50% people are worker and participation of female in job is very less (14.10%). Monthly salary of working population are very low like <15000 rupees only. 75.70% people includes in below poverty level. Education scenario is not perfect and positive in Gorkha society. Secondary educated persons are dominant in here. Participation of political action of females is not higher than male. Unsafety water is an essential hazard for Gourkha community and drinking water is not properly purified. Lack of good governance is evident in this village and socio-economic problems have become part of their daily life. However, at present the Gorkha people are being influenced by the modern world so they are not preserving in their old, worn out traditional rituals.

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