CHAPTER V

DEMOGRAPHIC, SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC CHARACTERISTICS OF URBAN POOR IN GUWAHATI CITY

This part of the study describes different population characteristics of the urban poor in Guwahati City. Each attribute of a population has certain implications regarding its development and its position in the context of a larger society. In the present work different population characteristics have been grouped into demographic, social and economic characteristics and have been portrayed on the basis of the primary data. The 824 households surveyed in different parts of the city covers 3679 persons (Table 5.1). The survey areas include slums, squatter settlements, and the settlements of the urban poor in other areas. The sizes of these settlements vary from 20 households to more than a thousand. The variation in settlement size in different areas depends on their geographical and land use characteristics. Wherever large open spaces are available, large settlements of the poor, mostly in the form of squatter settlements have come up; for example the settlements in Pandu area (Kailash Nagar, Pandav Nagar, etc), the Bhaskarnagar-Bamunimaidam settlement etc. On the other hand, along the narrow banks of river and under the railway over bridges, settlements are smaller in size. A temporary settlement at the river bank of Machkhowa and the settlement under the Panbazar flyover near Lakhtokia are two examples of this type. The areas outside the slums are generally very small settlements of the poor and the temporary road side settlers or those living within the residential areas fall into this category.
### Table 5.1: Number of Households and Total Population in Sampled Areas of the Study Area

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Serial Nos.</th>
<th>Areas</th>
<th>Households</th>
<th>Total Persons</th>
<th>Male</th>
<th>Female</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Sijubari</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>206</td>
<td>113</td>
<td>93</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Bimalanagar</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>116</td>
<td>73</td>
<td>43</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Narengi</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>153</td>
<td>66</td>
<td>87</td>
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<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Sitalabari</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>48</td>
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<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Gandhibasti</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>90</td>
<td>50</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Ambari</td>
<td>51</td>
<td>244</td>
<td>115</td>
<td>129</td>
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<td>7</td>
<td>Bharalumukh</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>148</td>
<td>73</td>
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<td>Fancybazar</td>
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<td>157</td>
<td>95</td>
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<td>Athgaon</td>
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<td>209</td>
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<td>10</td>
<td>Patharquarry</td>
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<td>39</td>
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</tr>
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<td>11</td>
<td>Baripara</td>
<td>10</td>
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<td>Darundha</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>37</td>
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<td>19</td>
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<td>13</td>
<td>Paltanbazar</td>
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<td>21</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>Lalmati</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>23</td>
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<td>15</td>
<td>Pachim Boragaon</td>
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<td>16</td>
<td>Jyotikuchi</td>
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<td>53</td>
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<td>19</td>
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<td>17</td>
<td>Uzanbazar Jahajghat</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
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<td>18</td>
<td>Santipur</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>162</td>
<td>95</td>
<td>67</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19</td>
<td>Maligaon Shuttlegate</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>112</td>
<td>61</td>
<td>51</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20</td>
<td>Pandu Barabazar</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>39</td>
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<tr>
<td>21</td>
<td>Maligaon Gotanagar</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>95</td>
<td>56</td>
<td>39</td>
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<td>Kamakhya Gate</td>
<td>12</td>
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<td>15</td>
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<td>56</td>
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<td>33</td>
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<td>Indrapur</td>
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<td>97</td>
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<td>25</td>
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<td>153</td>
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<td>75</td>
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<td>Bhutnath</td>
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<td>18</td>
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<tr>
<td>27</td>
<td>Hatigaon Bhetapara</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>197</td>
<td>102</td>
<td>95</td>
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<tr>
<td>28</td>
<td>Seujnagar Beltola</td>
<td>12</td>
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<td>30</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>29</td>
<td>Kalipur</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>99</td>
<td>57</td>
<td>42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30</td>
<td>Lakhotokia</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>31</td>
<td>Riverbank (Mchkhowa)</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>69</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>35</td>
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<tr>
<td>32</td>
<td>Narakasur</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>33</td>
<td>Dhirenpara</td>
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<td>15</td>
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<td>34</td>
<td>Bhaskarnagar</td>
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<td>175</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>95</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>35</td>
<td>Hedayetpur</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>36</td>
<td>Jalukbari Harijan Colony</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>37</td>
<td>Pandu (Kailashnagar, etc.)</td>
<td>53</td>
<td>272</td>
<td>144</td>
<td>128</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All</td>
<td></td>
<td>824</td>
<td>3679</td>
<td>1989</td>
<td>1690</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Source:** Primary Survey.
5.1 Demographic Characteristics

5.1.1 Crude Birth Rate

Crude Birth Rate is the annual number of births per thousand populations. It is an important demographic indicator of a society. In India, a low birth rate or Net Reproduction Rate of Unity (NRR-1) by 2000 was a goal of National Health Policy (1983), which corresponds to achieve a birth rate of 21 per thousand populations (GOI, 1994-95). In Assam, crude birth rate in 1971 was 38.5 which became 28.2 in 1997 with 29.0 for rural areas and 20.7 for urban areas (GOI, 2000). The crude birth rate among urban poor in Guwahati has been bound to be 30 in 2001 (Primary survey) which is quite higher than the state urban rate. Such high rate of birth reflects the social characteristics like low literacy rate, low status of women, lack of awareness, etc.

5.1.2 Age Sex Composition

Age sex composition has important social and economic implications as it determines fertility, mortality and mobility of a population group. It also indicates the population at juvenile and senile groups and thus gives the dependency ratio. Age composition also shows the availability of labour force in a population group.

Fig 5.1: Age-Sex Pyramid of Guwahati, 2001.
The population pyramid of Guwahati (2001) with a narrow base, a still narrower top and a bulging middle clearly indicates migration of adult population to the city (Fig 5.1). The young population aged below 15 years comprises 27 per cent of the city’s population. The young population aged below 15 years comprises 27 per cent of the city’s population. The economically active group aged between 15 to 59 years of age account for 67.5 per cent of the population and only 5.1 per cent are in the age group of 60 years and above. Age is not stated by the remaining 0.4 per cent (Census of India, 2001). However the age sex structure of the urban poor in the study area is similar to that of any less developed country. The young population below 15 years of age comprises nearly 40 per cent of the population, while the adult and the senile comprise 58 per cent and 2.5 per cent of the total population respectively (Table 5.2).

Table 5.2: Age-sex Structure of Urban Poor in Guwahati

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sex/Age group</th>
<th>0 – 6 yrs.</th>
<th>7 – 14 yrs.</th>
<th>15 – 59 yrs.</th>
<th>60 and above</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>300</td>
<td>406</td>
<td>1227</td>
<td>56</td>
<td>1989</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>325</td>
<td>424</td>
<td>906</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>1690</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>625 (17%)</td>
<td>830 (22.5%)</td>
<td>2133 (58%)</td>
<td>91 (2.5%)</td>
<td>3679 (100%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source. Primary data.

The low percentage of old population may be attributed to age-selective migration. The poor in the city are mainly rural migrants who have moved in to the city in search of livelihood and as such, they are mainly young people. The rate of this migration has been increasing with time (Table 5.7). However, some of the male adults who work and live in the city move back to original homes when they become old. The higher percentage for young group may be attributed to both high birth rate among the poor population and the migration of the whole family. Among the poor, family migration is common in other urban areas of India also. It has been observed that the percentage of migrants with wife and children is highest in slums of
Chandigarh and Bombay (Mumbai) and male selective migration is predominant among the unmarried only (Gill, 1994). Desai (1995) in another study of Mumbai also observed sequential migration, in which males first migrate to the city, followed by other family members in a later period. In Hyderabad slums, the proportion of population in the age group below 15 years is significantly large (Alam et al, 1987).

The dependency ratio among urban poor is found to be 72.5 while it is only 47.6 per cent for the city as a whole. For an economically less developed country, dependency ratio is generally high, often over 100 (Waugh, 2002). Therefore, dependency ratio in Guwahati City is relatively low in general and high among the poor.

5.1.3 Sex Ratio

Urban centres in general exhibit a low sex ratio i.e. lesser number of females per thousand males, because of male selective migration to the towns and the cities. In Guwahati, sex ratio is 839, which is far less than the state sex ratio (934 females per thousand males in 2001). Among the poor group of population in the city also, sex ratio is quite low, which is 836. But the age-wise break-up of sex ratio among this group of population reveals a different picture. While the child sex ratio of India has become a cause of concern to all (Table 5.3), it is found to be quite high among the poor population of Guwahati.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country/State/City</th>
<th>Sex Ratio</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>India</td>
<td>927</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assam</td>
<td>964</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Guwahati</td>
<td>949</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

It is 1083 in 0-6 years of age group and 1044 in 7-14 years of age group. But it is quite low in the 15-59 years of age group, which is only 738. This may be attributed to migration of unmarried adult males to the city. Migration of unmarried males to urban areas in the working age group is more common than unmarried females. Such rural-urban migration is a common aspect in all over India. Due to social and cultural constraints, independent migration of women in India is very rare (Desai, 1995).

Table 5.4: Age-Sex Composition of Urban Poor in Major Religious Groups of the Study Area

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Religious group</th>
<th>Sex/Age group</th>
<th>0 - 6</th>
<th>7 - 14</th>
<th>15 - 59</th>
<th>60 and above</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Hindus</td>
<td>Male (persons)</td>
<td>164</td>
<td>232</td>
<td>648</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>1078</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Female (person)</td>
<td>167</td>
<td>224</td>
<td>486</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>896</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Muslims</td>
<td>Male (persons)</td>
<td>135</td>
<td>173</td>
<td>572</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>901</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Female (person)</td>
<td>158</td>
<td>200</td>
<td>413</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>787</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Others</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Primary survey.

Religion-wise break-up of age-sex composition reveals some more facts (Table 5.4). The two major religious groups, Hindus and Muslims have overall 831 and 873 sex ratios respectively. The corresponding values for the city as a whole are 845 and 794 (2001). Child sex ratio is high in both the religious groups; Hindus having 1018 girls per thousand boys in the age group of 0-6 years, while for the same age group Muslims have a sex ratio of 1170.

5.1.4: Migration

Rural-urban migration is the most common type of migration in developing countries. There are many push factors such as declining rural economy and pull factors like better job prospects in urban centres leading to
such migration. In India, lack of agricultural land and employment opportunities are the main causes pushing the rural poor out of their villages. Villagers migrate to cities not because they have guaranteed jobs in the cities, but because they have no economic opportunity in the villages (Desai, 1995). The very concept that jobs at urban centres pull out villagers from native places is unlikely in respect of Indian cities (Kundu, 1987).

In Guwahati, 46.2 per cent people are migrants of which 56.4 per cent are males and 43.6 per cent are females (2001). Of the total migrants, 20.7 per cent have migrated for work and employment, 10 per cent for business, nearly 3 per cent for education, 14 per cent due to marriage, 16.6 per cent moved in with household and the rest for other reasons (2001). However during the field survey it has been found that the main reason of migration of urban poor is poor economic condition although it has been stated in different ways like lack of agricultural land, lack of jobs, mortgage of agricultural land, etc. (Table 5.5).

Table 5.5: Reason for Migrating from Native Place

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Reason</th>
<th>No. of Respondents</th>
<th>Per cent of Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Lack of agricultural land</td>
<td>347</td>
<td>42.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lack of jobs</td>
<td>398</td>
<td>48.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Flood and consequent erosion</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>0.73</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social conflict</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>0.50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Marriage</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>1.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0.36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mortgage of land</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>0.61</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other and not relevant</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>5.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>824</strong></td>
<td><strong>100</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Source: Primary survey.*

During field survey only 4 respondents are found who have migrated due to social conflict. After spending two years in refugee camps, these people with their families have moved into Guwahati in search of livelihood.
Among the female respondents, only 14 have stated that marriage was the immediate cause of their migration to the city. Three male respondents stated that they had initially come to the city for education and then stayed here by engaging themselves in different jobs.

The poor in Guwahati have migrated from different districts of the state, other states of the country and also a very few of them from outside the country (Fig 5.2). Of the total sampled households, 60.8 per cent have migrated from within the state and 5.5 per cent households are originally from Guwahati City itself. The others have migrated from almost all the districts of Assam except the two hill districts located in southern Assam and Tinsukia District at the extreme east of the state. However, the main contributors to the migration to Guwahati are the neighbouring districts of Barpeta, Dhubri, Nalbari, Kamrup, Goalpara and Nagaon. Significantly, the migration of the poor people from the immediate neighbouring states is negligible and those 4 households from Meghalaya and Nagaland are not local tribes of the states, but are Nepali and Bengali speaking people. However, the poor migrants from other states of the country are quite large in number and from Bihar (old) alone more than twenty per cent of sampled households have migrated followed by West Bengal and Uttar Pradesh (Table 5.6). One of the reasons for the least number of migrants from the neighbouring hill states may be the low population density in those states.

Table 5.6: Place of Origin of Urban Poor in Guwahati

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>District/State/Country/Area</th>
<th>No. of Households</th>
<th>Per cent of total households</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Kokrajhar</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>2.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bongaigaon</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>1.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Goalpara</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>4.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dhubri</td>
<td>95</td>
<td>11.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Barpeta</td>
<td>111</td>
<td>13.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nalbari</td>
<td>63</td>
<td>7.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Region</td>
<td>Number</td>
<td>Percentage</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-----------------</td>
<td>--------</td>
<td>------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kamrup</td>
<td>63</td>
<td>7.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Darrang</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>1.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sonitpur</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>1.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nagaon</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>3.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Marigaon</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>1.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Guwahati</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>5.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cachar</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>2.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Karimganj</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>1.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hailakandi</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0.24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Golaghat</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0.36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jorhat</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0.12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sibsagar</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0.24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lakhimpur</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0.24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dhemaji</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0.12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dibrugarh</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0.12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bihar (old)</td>
<td>169</td>
<td>20.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>West Bengal</td>
<td>56</td>
<td>6.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Uttar Pradesh</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>4.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sikkim</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>0.49</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tripura</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>0.61</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Meghalaya</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0.36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nagaland</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0.12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gujrat</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0.12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maharastra</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0.12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nepal</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>0.61</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td>824</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Source: Primary survey*
Migration Pattern of Urban Poor in Guwahati

Legend
Percentage of Households
- < 0.61
- 0.61 - 3.50
- 3.51 - 7.60
- 7.61 - 13.50
- 13.50 <

Fig. 5.2
With the growth of Guwahati City and increasing gap between rural and urban areas, the rate of migration of the poor has been increasing with time (Table 5.7). Of the total sample households, 41.6 per cent have migrated during 1990s and 12.9 per cent in the three years since 2000.

Table 5.7: Time of Migration of Sampled Households

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time of Migration</th>
<th>No. of Households</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Prior to 1970</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>7.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1970 – 79</td>
<td>88</td>
<td>10.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1980 – 89</td>
<td>227</td>
<td>27.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1990 – 99</td>
<td>343</td>
<td>41.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2000 – 2002</td>
<td>106</td>
<td>12.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>824</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Primary Survey.

During the field survey, it has been found that most of the people migrating from rural to urban areas generally migrate at a young age. The average age at migration of the 824 respondents has been recorded as 23.9 with a minimum of less than a year to a maximum age of 55 years. Some of them have migrated at a very young age with their parents while others have migrated with sons and other family members at an older age. However majority (48.8 %) of the respondents have migrated at the age group of 20 to 29 years (Table 5.8).

Table 5.8: Distribution of Respondents According to their Age at Migration

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age</th>
<th>No. of Respondents</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>0 – 9 years</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>1.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10 – 19 years</td>
<td>184</td>
<td>22.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20 – 29 years</td>
<td>402</td>
<td>48.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30 – 39 years</td>
<td>148</td>
<td>17.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>40 and above</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>3.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-migrants</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>5.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>824</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Primary survey
The kith and kin play a significant role in migration of the poor into the city. Most migrants have either come together with their friends and relatives or come later on through their connection. It has been found that people coming from the same locality generally live in the same area in the city.

5.2 : Social Characteristics

5.2.1. Religious Composition

Religion, although a matter of personal faith has social implications, as it determines certain social behaviour of a group. Religion may be a factor of solidarity in a social group and at the same time it is a factor of division among social groups. It may be a basis of social differentiation (Ahmad, 2001).

Assam is a Hindu majority state, with 64.8 per cent of its population being Hindus (2001). Here Muslims comprise 30.9 per cent of the state's total population, while other religious groups together account for only 4.05 per cent. The Muslim majority districts in Assam are Dhubri, Goalpara, Barpeta, Nagaon, Karimganj and Hailakandi. This spatial distribution of religious groups has tremendous bearing on religious composition of the city's poor population, as has been seen from their places of origin (Table 5.6).

The study area, Guwahati is also a Hindu majority city, with nearly 85 per cent of the population being Hindus (Table 5.9). Muslim is the second important religious community with 12.71 per cent population and the rest account for less than 3 per cent of the city's population.

Table 5.9 : Religious Composition in Guwahati, 2001

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Religious communities</th>
<th>Per cent of Total Population</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Hindu</td>
<td>84.97</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Muslim</td>
<td>12.71</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Christian</td>
<td>0.80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sikh</td>
<td>0.43</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Buddhist</td>
<td>0.15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jain</td>
<td>0.92</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other religious communities</td>
<td>0.02</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

However, religious composition of the urban poor in the city exhibits a different picture. Although the Hindus comprise the majority of the urban poor, they account for a little more than half of the total sample households (55.1%). The Muslims account for 44.4 per cent and the rest 0.5 per cent are Sikhs and Christians. The distribution of the urban poor according to religion in the city exhibits a significant pattern. The percentage of Hindu is quite high in and around the old commercial areas and early settled areas of the city, like Fancybazar, Paltanbazar, Uzanbazar Jahajghat, Bimalanagar, Bharalumukh, Santipur, etc (Table 5.10). On the other, the newly settled areas exhibit higher percentages of Muslim population as in Darundha, Hatigaon, Sijubari, Patharquarry, and Riverbank (a temporary settlement). However, there are certain exceptions like the bastees in Lakhtokia flyover and Hedayetpur which are traditionally Muslim dominated areas, with high percentage of Muslim population. Similarly, even in some newly settled areas like Jyotikuchi and Baripara, percentages of the Hindus are found to be high. It is important to note that percentage of the poor Hindu population is high in hilly areas of the city. However, there are other areas where the population is almost equally divided between both the religion and they generally live in an integrated way within these slum areas. Examples of such areas are Ambari Old Railway Track, Pandu Barabaraz and Rupnagar.

Table 5.10: Religious Composition of Urban Poor in Sampled Areas, Guwahati

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sampled Areas</th>
<th>Hindu</th>
<th>Muslim</th>
<th>Other</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Sijubari</td>
<td>11 (25)</td>
<td>33 (75)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Bimalanagar</td>
<td>26 (92.9)</td>
<td>2 (7.1)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Narengi (Kenduguri)</td>
<td>19 (63.3)</td>
<td>11 (36.7)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Sitalabari</td>
<td>12 (48.0)</td>
<td>13 (52.0)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Gandhibasti</td>
<td>2 (10)</td>
<td>18 (90)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Ambari, old rail track</td>
<td>24 (47.1)</td>
<td>27 (52.9)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Bharalumukh</td>
<td>26 (78.8)</td>
<td>7 (21.2)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Fancybazar</td>
<td>31 (59.6)</td>
<td>21 (40.4)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. Athgaon</td>
<td>18 (43.9)</td>
<td>22 (53.7)</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Area 1</td>
<td>Area 2</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---</td>
<td>--------</td>
<td>--------</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. Patharquarry</td>
<td>3 (37.5)</td>
<td>5 (62.5)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11. Baripara</td>
<td>6 (60)</td>
<td>4 (40)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12. Darundha</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>10 (100)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13. Paltan Bazar</td>
<td>7 (100)</td>
<td>-</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14. Lalmati</td>
<td>7 (58.3)</td>
<td>5 (41.7)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15. Pachim Boragaon</td>
<td>4 (57.1)</td>
<td>3 (42.9)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16. Jyotikuchi</td>
<td>10 (83.3)</td>
<td>2 (16.7)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17. Uzanbazar Jahajghat</td>
<td>6 (85.7)</td>
<td>1 (14.3)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18. Santipur</td>
<td>23 (60.0)</td>
<td>16 (40.0)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19. Maligaon Shuttlegate</td>
<td>17 (68.0)</td>
<td>8 (32.0)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20. Pandu Barabazar</td>
<td>9 (44.4)</td>
<td>11 (55.6)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21. Maligaon Gotanagar</td>
<td>13 (56.5)</td>
<td>8 (34.8) 2 (8.7)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22. Kamakhyagate</td>
<td>4 (33.3)</td>
<td>8 (66.7)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>23. Rupnagar</td>
<td>6 (50.0)</td>
<td>6 (50.0)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>24. Indrapur</td>
<td>15 (78.9)</td>
<td>4 (21.1)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25. Bishnupur</td>
<td>30 (75.0)</td>
<td>10 (25.0)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>26. Bhutnath</td>
<td>10 (90.9)</td>
<td>1 (9.1)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>27. Hatigaon Bhetapara</td>
<td>2 (4.1)</td>
<td>47 (95.9)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>28. Seujnagar Beltola</td>
<td>12 (100)</td>
<td>-</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>29. Kalipur</td>
<td>19 (95.0)</td>
<td>1 (5.0)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30. Lakhtokia</td>
<td>1 (20.0)</td>
<td>4 (80.0)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>31. Riverbank, Machkhowa</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>12 (100)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>32. Narakasur</td>
<td>9 (75.0)</td>
<td>3 (25.0)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>33. Dhirenpara</td>
<td>2 (22.2)</td>
<td>6 (66.7) 1 (11.1)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>34. Bhaskarnagar</td>
<td>25 (64.1)</td>
<td>14 (35.9)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>35. Hedayetpur</td>
<td>1 (10.0)</td>
<td>9 (90.0)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>36. Jalukbari Harijan colony</td>
<td>5 (100)</td>
<td>-</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>37. Pandu (Kailashnagar,etc)</td>
<td>39 (73.6)</td>
<td>14 (26.4)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>454 (55.1)</strong></td>
<td><strong>366 (44.4)</strong></td>
<td><strong>4 (0.5)</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Source: Primary Survey* (Figures in parentheses are row percentages)
5.2.2. Linguistic Composition

Language is 'a great force of socialization' (Hussain, 1999). As a carrier of ideas and messages, it plays a significant role in economic, social, religious and political spheres of a society.

Assamese is the main language in Assam, although there are numerous other languages spoken by different tribes, like Bodo, Missing, Karbi, etc. Moreover due to the migration of population from other parts of the country since pre-independence time, a large number of people speaking other languages such as Bengali, Nepali, Hindi, Gujrati, Sindhi, etc. are also found in the state.

Guwahati, acquiring the metropolitan characteristics in recent years, accommodates a population of more than 20 scheduled and non-scheduled linguistic groups. However, most of the urban poor in the city belong to three languages – Assamese, Bengali and Hindi (including many Bihari languages). The most dominant linguistic group of the urban poor in the city is the Bengali speaking people with 46.7 per cent of the sampled households, followed by Hindi (28.5) and then the Assamese speaking group (21.5). All other linguistic groups comprise only 3.3 per cent of the total surveyed households in Guwahati City (Table 5.11).

The pattern of distribution of language groups among the urban poor shows conformity with the distribution of religious groups. In different surveyed areas it has been found that the areas dominated by the Muslim population are mostly Bengali speaking; for example in Sijubari the percentage of Bengali speaking households is 68.2 and that of the Muslim households is 75 per cent. On the other hand, in Bhutnath 90.9 per cent households are Hindus and all of them are Hindi speaking. However there are certain variations like Bimalanagar, where Hindu Bengali speaking people are the dominating group. These are migrants from West Bengal.

Other distributional characteristics of the linguistic groups of the urban poor in the city include higher percentage of Hindi speaking population in the
old city region and also in and around the commercial centres like Fancy bazaar, Athgaon and Paltanbazar.

**Table 5.11**: Distribution of Sampled Households in Different Sampled Areas According to the Language Spoken

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sampled Areas</th>
<th>Assamese</th>
<th>Bangla</th>
<th>Hindi</th>
<th>Others</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Sijubari</td>
<td>7 (15.9)</td>
<td>30 (68.2)</td>
<td>7 (15.9)</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Bimalanagar</td>
<td>3 (10.7)</td>
<td>20 (71.4)</td>
<td>4 (14.3)</td>
<td>1 (3.6)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Narengi</td>
<td>7 (23.3)</td>
<td>14 (48.7)</td>
<td>4 (13.3)</td>
<td>5 (16.7)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Sitalabari</td>
<td>6 (24.0)</td>
<td>9 (36.0)</td>
<td>10 (40.0)</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Gandhibasti</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>19 (95)</td>
<td>1 (5.0)</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Ambari</td>
<td>13 (25.5)</td>
<td>30 (58.8)</td>
<td>7 (13.7)</td>
<td>1 (2.0)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Bharalumukh</td>
<td>16 (48.5)</td>
<td>6 (18.2)</td>
<td>9 (27.3)</td>
<td>2 (6.1)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Fancybazar</td>
<td>15 (28.8)</td>
<td>16 (30.8)</td>
<td>21 (40.4)</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. Athgaon</td>
<td>2 (4.9)</td>
<td>24 (58.5)</td>
<td>13 (31.7)</td>
<td>2 (4.9)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10 Patharquarry</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>6 (75.0)</td>
<td>2 (25.0)</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11 Baripara</td>
<td>2 (20)</td>
<td>7 (70)</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>1 (10)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12 Darundra</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>10 (100)</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13 Paltanbazar</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>2 (28.6)</td>
<td>4 (57.1)</td>
<td>1 (14.3)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14 Lalmati</td>
<td>2 (16.7)</td>
<td>5 (41.7)</td>
<td>3 (25.0)</td>
<td>2 (16.7)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15 Pachim Boragaon</td>
<td>1 (14.3)</td>
<td>4 (57.1)</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>2 (28.6)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16 Jyotikuchi</td>
<td>5 (41.7)</td>
<td>2 (16.7)</td>
<td>3 (25.0)</td>
<td>2 (16.7)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17 Uzanbazar Jahajghat</td>
<td>1 (14.3)</td>
<td>2 (28.6)</td>
<td>4 (57.1)</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18 Santipur</td>
<td>21 (53.8)</td>
<td>9 (23.1)</td>
<td>9 (23.1)</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19 Maligaon Shattlegate</td>
<td>6 (24.0)</td>
<td>5 (20.0)</td>
<td>14 (56.0)</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20 Pandu Barabazar</td>
<td>4 (20.0)</td>
<td>14 (70.0)</td>
<td>2 (10.0)</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21 Maligaon Gotanagar</td>
<td>2 (8.7)</td>
<td>9 (39.1)</td>
<td>10 (43.5)</td>
<td>2 (8.7)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22 Kamakhya gate</td>
<td>1 (8.3)</td>
<td>10 (83.4)</td>
<td>1 (8.3)</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>23 Rupnagar</td>
<td>3 (25.0)</td>
<td>6 (50.0)</td>
<td>1 (8.3)</td>
<td>2 (16.7)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>24 Indrapur</td>
<td>15 (78.9)</td>
<td>2 (10.6)</td>
<td>2 (10.5)</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25 Bishnupur</td>
<td>2 (5.0)</td>
<td>9 (22.5)</td>
<td>29 (72.5)</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>26 Bhutnath</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>1 (9.1)</td>
<td>10 (90.9)</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>27 Hatigaon Bhetapara</td>
<td>10 (20.4)</td>
<td>39 (79.6)</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>28 Seujnagar Beltola</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>12 (100)</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>29 Kalipur</td>
<td>5 (25)</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>15 (75)</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30 Lakhotokia</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>4 (80)</td>
<td>1 (20)</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>31 Riverbank Machkhowa</td>
<td>2 (16.7)</td>
<td>10 (83.3)</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>32 Narakasur</td>
<td>9 (75.0)</td>
<td>1 (8.3)</td>
<td>2 (16.7)</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>33 Dhrenpara</td>
<td>2 (22.2)</td>
<td>5 (55.6)</td>
<td>1 (11.1)</td>
<td>1 (11.1)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>34 Bhaskarnagar</td>
<td>11 (28.2)</td>
<td>20 (51.3)</td>
<td>8 (20.5)</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>35 Hedayetpur</td>
<td>3 (30.0)</td>
<td>6 (60.0)</td>
<td>1 (10.0)</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>36 Jalukbari Harijan Colony</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>2 (40.0)</td>
<td>3 (60.0)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>37 Pandu (Kailashnagar, etc.)</td>
<td>1 (1.9)</td>
<td>29 (54.7)</td>
<td>23 (43.4)</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>177 (21.5)</strong></td>
<td><strong>385 (46.7)</strong></td>
<td><strong>235 (28.5)</strong></td>
<td><strong>27 (3.3)</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Source: Primary Survey. (Figures in parentheses are row percentages)*
5.2.3. Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes

In Guwahati the scheduled castes population accounts for 4.96 per cent of the city's total population, while scheduled tribes account for 3.76 per cent. Among the poor also scheduled castes and scheduled tribes comprise less than 10 per cent of the sampled households (Table 5.12). But, many migrants from other states of the country belong to scheduled caste category in their original states. But, in this study only those are considered as scheduled castes that are regarded so within the state of Assam. There are very few tribal households living in the city as poor and most of them are Bodos who have migrated from the neighbouring districts.

Table 5.12: Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes Households among the Poor in Guwahati

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>No. of households</th>
<th>Per Cent of households</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>General</td>
<td>752</td>
<td>91.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>S.C</td>
<td>53</td>
<td>6.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>S.T</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>2.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>824</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Primary Survey.

5.2.4 Household Size

The average household size in Assam is 5.4, with a value of 5.5 for rural and 4.8 for urban areas (2001). In Guwahati, the average size of household is 4.3 (2001). The average household size of the urban poor in the city has been found to be 4.5, with a minimum size of 1 to a maximum of 12. There is, however, a spatial variation in average household size which varies from 2.6 to more than 5 in different surveyed areas. Small households are found to be most prevalent among the urban poor with a share of 52.5 per cent households. Medium sized households account for 45.6 per cent of the total sampled households while large households are rare (Table 5.13).
Table 5.13: Distribution of Sampled Household According to Size

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Household size in persons</th>
<th>Households</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 – 4</td>
<td>433 (52.5%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5 – 8</td>
<td>376 (45.6%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9 – 12</td>
<td>15 (1.8%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Primary Survey.

5.2.5. Family Type

The urban poor of Guwahati has been classified into five family types: the nuclear, extended, separated, joint and single person family, that is a household of unrelated persons living in the same house with a common kitchen. Most of the families of the urban poor are nuclear type while the numbers of extended and single person family are same (Table 5.14).

Table 5.14: Distribution of Sampled Households According to Family Type

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Family type</th>
<th>Households</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Nuclear</td>
<td>561 (68.1%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Extended</td>
<td>92 (11.2%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Single person</td>
<td>92 (11.2%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Joint</td>
<td>51 (6.2%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Separated</td>
<td>28 (3.4%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Primary Survey.

Religion does not play any role in types of family of the urban poor in the city. Nuclear families predominate in all religious groups (Table 5.15).

Table 5.15: Cross Tabulation of Religion and Family Type of Sampled Households

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Religion</th>
<th>Nuclear</th>
<th>Extended</th>
<th>Separated</th>
<th>Single</th>
<th>Joint</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Hindu</td>
<td>306 (67.4)</td>
<td>46 (10.1)</td>
<td>12 (2.6)</td>
<td>64 (14.2)</td>
<td>26 (5.7)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Muslim</td>
<td>252 (68.9)</td>
<td>46 (12.6)</td>
<td>16 (4.4)</td>
<td>28 (7.6)</td>
<td>24 (6.5)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Others</td>
<td>3 (75.0)</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>1 (25.0)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Primary Survey.
However the percentage of single person family is more among the Hindus which may be attributed to the selective male migration from other states like Bihar, Uttar Pradesh and West Bengal.

5.2.6 : Literacy and Level of Education

There are different ways of defining literacy in different countries. The Census of India has adopted the definition of literacy as given by 'The Population Commission of the United Nations' which states that a person who can both read and write a simple message with understanding in any language can be called a literate (Hussain, 1999).

Literacy, unlike the level of education is not much influencing in determining economic performance of a person but it can be considered a good indicator of social development. The literacy rate among the poor population of the study area has been found to be merely 47.2 per cent which is far below the city's literacy rate of 86.53 per cent (2001). Female literacy rate among the poor is more dismaying with a figure as low as 35.2, while it is 81.80 per cent in the city.

Table 5.16 : Literacy and Level of Education among different Age and Sex Groups of the Urban Poor in Guwahati

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Persons</th>
<th>Literates</th>
<th>Primary</th>
<th>Middle and High School level</th>
<th>H.S. and above</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>1442 (100)</td>
<td>869 (60.3)</td>
<td>527 (36.5)</td>
<td>46 (3.2)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>961 (100)</td>
<td>544 (56.6)</td>
<td>379 (39.4)</td>
<td>38 (4.0)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total 15 yrs and above</td>
<td>967 (100)</td>
<td>502 (51.9)</td>
<td>419 (43.3)</td>
<td>46 (4.8)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male 15 yrs. and above</td>
<td>707 (100)</td>
<td>360 (50.9)</td>
<td>309 (43.7)</td>
<td>38 (5.4)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female 15 yrs. and above</td>
<td>260 (100)</td>
<td>142 (54.6)</td>
<td>110 (42.3)</td>
<td>8 (3.1)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total 7-14 yrs.</td>
<td>475 (100)</td>
<td>367 (77.3)</td>
<td>108 (22.7)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male 7-14 yrs.</td>
<td>254 (100)</td>
<td>184 (72.4)</td>
<td>70 (27.6)</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female 7-14 yrs.</td>
<td>221 (100)</td>
<td>183 (82.8)</td>
<td>38 (17.2)</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source : Primary Survey. (Figures in parentheses are row percentages)
The level of education is far more important than mere literacy. It enhances the economic ability and awareness of a person. The level of education of 56.6 per cent of the total male literates of urban poor is limited to primary level and only 4 per cent literate males have education beyond high school level (Table 5.16). Similarly of the total female literates, more than 67 per cent have education limited to primary level, 30.8 per cent have up to secondary level, and a meager 1.6 per cent have studied beyond high school level. In all, only 4.8 per cent adult literates have completed high school education and studied in higher secondary level or had some vocational training. This education scenario of the poor indicates lesser possibility to have skilled labour force among them.

The education scenario among the children is equally dismaying. In Assam, 76 per cent children of 5-13 years age group were enrolled in school in 2001 (Sarba Siksha Abhijan Mission). The literacy rate in the age group of 7 to 14 years is 88.2 per cent in the city (2001). But in the same age group according to primary survey, only 57.2 per cent children of poor families have attended school. In this premier city, the children of poor families are really unfortunate to have remained illiterate. There are a substantial number of dropouts, thus increasing the percentage at primary level of education to 77.3 per cent with 72.4 for males and 82.8 for females (Table 5.16). The percentage of children at middle or high school level is 22.7 of the literates with figures 27.6 per cent and 17.2 per cent for males and females respectively (Table 5.16).

5.3 : Economic Characteristics

5.3.1. Workforce and Occupation Pattern

In a society the population eligible for work is generally considered as its workforce. In Guwahati, 67.5 per cent of the total population belongs to 15 to 59 years age group (2001). Among the poor, the percentage of population forming the workforce is lower than the city's workforce. It is only 57.9 per cent. Moreover 33.2 per cent of the city's population is main worker and 1.9 per cent is marginal worker, with a work participation rate of 35.1 per cent.
Service and trade and commerce are the two sectors which absorb the maximum number of workers in the city (1991). But the poor in Guwahati are engaged in a variety of jobs to earn their livelihood. They are engaged in different unskilled jobs like labourers in construction works; semi skilled jobs like mechanics, drivers, barbers, etc.; petty business like vegetable, fruit and fish vendors, pan shop, tea stall, etc. Lobo in his study of Surat slums have identified 478 specific jobs, which he grouped into 12 types – (i) white collar, (ii) blue collar, (iii) self-employed (higher level), (iv) self-employed lower level occupation (LL) – sales (v) self employed (LL) – production (vi) self employed (LL) – processing (vii) self employed (LL) – repairs (viii) self employed (LL) – services (ix) agriculture and allied (x) construction (xi) textile related and (xii) other occupation. On the other hand Rao and Rao (1984) have found other types of occupations among the slum dwellers in Vijaywada which were determined by functional characteristics of that city. In Vijaywada, caste has played an important role in absorption of workers in different jobs, because of their traditional skills. The main types of jobs identified by them are (i) salaried jobs (ii) casual labourers, (iii) caste occupations, (iv) contract labourers, (v) rickshaw pulling, (vi) skilled jobs, and (vii) others.

In Guwahati also heterogeneity marks the occupations chosen by the poor. In a study by Action Aid (2004), the activities of the poor have been classified into 4 broad types, viz., services, petty trade, petty transport services and production. However, in the present study, about 70 types of jobs have been found in which the poor engage themselves. A very few of them work in the formal sector but most others are working in the informal sector. All these jobs may be grouped into 4 main types like – (a) unskilled (b) semi skilled (c) self employed – (i) semi-skilled and (ii) unskilled, and (d) others. The jobs within each group are such –

(a) **Unskilled** – Construction labourer, household worker, porter in godown, security person, sanitation worker, etc.

(b) **Semi-skilled** – Carpenter, plumber, mason, tailor (employed), rickshaw puller (employed), driver, mechanic (employed), etc.
(c) **Self-employed** – (i) **Semi-skilled** - cycle and rickshaw mechanic, shoe-maker, tailor, electrician, etc.

(ii) **Unskilled** – all types of vendors, handcart puller, newspaper hawker, ticket blacker, rag picker, and workers engaged in pan shop, road side tea and food stall, grocery shop (in slums), etc.

(d) **Others** – industrial workers, workers employed in shops, private establishments and other small establishments, etc.

In most of the sampled households male as well as female workers are engaged in different unskilled jobs. Self employment is also significant in the sampled households, while household with female workers in ‘other’ category is quite insignificant (Table 5.17). During the field survey it has been found that the total number of urban poor employed (including child workers) is 1327, the average number per household being 1.59 with a minimum value of 0 to maximum of 5 persons in a family.

**Table 5.17 : Distribution of Sampled Households According to the Type of Occupation of the Males and Females**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Occupation</th>
<th>Male</th>
<th></th>
<th>Female</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>No. of HH</td>
<td>% of total HH</td>
<td>No. of HH</td>
<td>% of total HH</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Without any</td>
<td>63</td>
<td>7.6</td>
<td>595</td>
<td>72.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unskilled</td>
<td>422</td>
<td>51.2</td>
<td>183</td>
<td>22.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Semi skilled</td>
<td>148</td>
<td>18.0</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>1.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Self employed</td>
<td>156</td>
<td>19.0</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>4.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Others</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>4.2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>824</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>824</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*In case of more than one male or female employed, only the regular earner is considered here.

*Source : Primary Survey.

There are different ways of getting entry into the job market for the poor. Caste and kin play important role in case of certain skilled and unskilled jobs. The cobblers, barbers, coolie, washerman and sanitation workers are always from other states like Bihar and Uttar Pradesh. These jobs are done by people belonging to certain castes and groups and the kin play an
important role in their getting into these jobs in the city. During the survey it has been found that some of these workers, particularly from other states of India, work in the city for 30-35 years, leaving their families back at home. When they grow older, their sons and relatives come to work and the older generation moves back to their homes. This system has been going on now for three generations. Those who are skilled and self employed find their ways of livelihood by themselves. The unskilled labourers, mostly belonging to migrants from different districts of Assam, enter the job market through different ways. Most of them are seen at the labour recruiting points like Silpukhuri, Bhutnath, Ganeshguri, Chandmari, etc. in the morning. Labour mobility in informal sector is a common phenomenon. Change in occupation from time to time, particularly with season, is also very common among the poor.

5.3.2 : Income and Expenditure Pattern

Income and expenditure are two important economic criteria used to capture economic and related social well-being of a group of people of a society. Income level of a family or an individual determines its scope to attain the facilities for well-being and to enhance personal capabilities. Income among the poor is not only low, but also very uncertain, as most of them have to generate their income from informal functions.

The per capita income of Assam is Rs.5968.00 in 1999-2000 at 1993-94 prices (GOA, 2000-01). The family income of the poor in the city varies from Rs.5000.00 to a maximum of Rs.50,000.00 per year. However it is neither a fixed income nor an average income for a long period as the income may fluctuate from time to time.

The planning commission of India has fixed a family income of Rs.20845.00 at 2001-2002 prices as the poverty line to identify the poor families in cities (GOA, 2004). Considering this, the sampled households in this study have been classified into four income groups –
(a) Very low income group of the poor with family income below Rs.13898.00 per year, which is $\frac{2}{3}$ rd of the poverty line;

(b) Low income group of the poor with an income of Rs.13898.00 to Rs.20845.00, which is between the poverty line and the $\frac{2}{3}$ rd of the poverty line;

(c) Lower middle income group of the poor with Rs.20845.00 to Rs.31267.00, that is between the poverty line and 1.5 times of the poverty line;

(d) Upper middle income group of the poor with an annual family income more than 1.5 times of the poverty line.

There is no marked variation in distribution of households in different income groups across the areas (Table 5.18). In most of the areas the households are distributed around the poverty line, that is, below and just above the poverty line. But there are some areas where very low income group is absent and in some others the upper middle income group of poor is absent. However, there are areas like Kamakhyagate, Lakhtokia, Rupnagar and Riverbank where most households belong to the very low income group. The distribution pattern of households in the sampled areas shows that, 13.1 per cent households are in very low income group, 43.2 per cent in low income group, 35.9 per cent in lower middle income group and 7.8 per cent in the upper middle income group of the poor.

Table 5.18: Distribution of Households in Sampled Areas According to Annual Family Income

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Areas</th>
<th>&lt;Rs.13898</th>
<th>Rs.13898 to Rs.20845</th>
<th>Rs.20846 to Rs.31268</th>
<th>&gt;Rs.31268</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Sijubari</td>
<td>1 (2.3)</td>
<td>22 (50)</td>
<td>20 (45.5)</td>
<td>1 (2.3)</td>
<td>44 (100)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Bimalanagar</td>
<td>3 (10.7)</td>
<td>13 (46.4)</td>
<td>7 (25.0)</td>
<td>5 (17.9)</td>
<td>28 (100)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Narengi</td>
<td>1 (3.3)</td>
<td>17 (56.7)</td>
<td>12 (40.0)</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>30 (100)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Sitalabari</td>
<td>1 (4.0)</td>
<td>10 (40.0)</td>
<td>7 (28.0)</td>
<td>7 (28.0)</td>
<td>25 (100)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Gandhibasti</td>
<td>1 (5.0)</td>
<td>7 (35.0)</td>
<td>12 (60.0)</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>20 (100)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Ambari</td>
<td>2 (3.9)</td>
<td>22 (43.1)</td>
<td>22 (43.1)</td>
<td>5 (9.8)</td>
<td>51 (100)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Baralumukh</td>
<td>6 (18.2)</td>
<td>12 (36.4)</td>
<td>12 (36.4)</td>
<td>3 (9.1)</td>
<td>33 (100)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No.</td>
<td>Place</td>
<td>Population</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>-----</td>
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<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>8.</td>
<td>Fancybazar</td>
<td>79 (13.5)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>31 (59.6)</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>13 (25)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>1 (1.9)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>52 (100)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>9.</td>
<td>Athgaon</td>
<td>3 (7.3)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>6 (14.6)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>22 (53.7)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>10 (24.4)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>41 (100)</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>10.</td>
<td>Patharquarry</td>
<td>-</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>4 (50.0)</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>4 (50.0)</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>8 (100)</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>11.</td>
<td>Baripara</td>
<td>4 (40.0)</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>1 (10.0)</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>10 (100)</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>12.</td>
<td>Darundha</td>
<td>1 (10.0)</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
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<td>4 (40.0)</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>4 (40.0)</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>1 (10.0)</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>10 (100)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>13.</td>
<td>Paltanbazar</td>
<td>2 (28.6)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>1 (14.3)</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>3 (42.9)</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>1 (14.3)</td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>7 (100)</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>14.</td>
<td>Lalmati</td>
<td>4 (33.3)</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>2 (16.7)</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>6 (50.0)</td>
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<td>-</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>12 (100)</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>15.</td>
<td>Pachim Boragaon</td>
<td>1 (14.3)</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>4 (57.1)</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>2 (28.6)</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>7 (100)</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>16.</td>
<td>Jyotikuchi</td>
<td>1 (8.3)</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
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<td>5 (41.7)</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>5 (41.7)</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>1 (8.3)</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>12 (100)</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>17.</td>
<td>Uzanbazar Rahighat</td>
<td>1 (14.3)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
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<td>2 (28.6)</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>3 (42.9)</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
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<td>1 (14.3)</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>7 (100)</td>
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</tr>
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<td>5 (100)</td>
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<td>37.</td>
<td>Pandu (Kailash nagar etc)</td>
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<td>15 (28.3)</td>
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<td>30 (56.6)</td>
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<td>8 (15.1)</td>
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<td>53 (100)</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td><strong>108(13.1)</strong></td>
<td><strong>356(43.2)</strong></td>
<td><strong>296(35.9)</strong></td>
<td><strong>64(7.8)</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Primary Survey.
Type of employment exerts a significant influence on family income. The cross tabulation of family income with type of occupation of main male earner shows that highest percentage of households of unskilled group belong to the low income group, while the highest percentage of households with semiskilled, self employed and other category of occupations belong to the lower middle income group. On the other hand most households with no male earning members fall in the very low income group (Table 5.19). Similarly family type and family income also exhibit a close association (Table 5.20). More family members generally lead to a higher family income as the highest percentage of the households of extended family type belong to lower middle income group and that of the joint family type falls in the upper middle income group of the poor. Most of the households of the separated family type earn less than Rs.13897.00 (very low income) per year. A very close association is, therefore, seen between the household size and the family income (Table 5.21). Most households with 1 to 4 members belong to low income group with 5 to 8 members to lower middle income group and those with 9 to 12 members to upper middle income group of the poor.

Table 5.19: Cross Tabulation of Income Group and Types of Male Employment of Sampled Households.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Income group Rs./Year</th>
<th>No male employed</th>
<th>Unskilled</th>
<th>Semi-skilled</th>
<th>Self employed</th>
<th>Others</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>0 – 13897</td>
<td>33 (52.4)</td>
<td>45 (10.7)</td>
<td>14 (9.5)</td>
<td>15 (9.6)</td>
<td>1 (2.9)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13898 – 20845</td>
<td>22 (34.9)</td>
<td>221 (52.4)</td>
<td>56 (37.8)</td>
<td>49 (31.4)</td>
<td>8 (22.9)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20846 – 31268</td>
<td>8 (12.7)</td>
<td>137 (32.5)</td>
<td>65 (43.9)</td>
<td>69 (44.2)</td>
<td>17(48.6)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&gt; 31268</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>19 (4.5)</td>
<td>13 (8.8)</td>
<td>23 (14.7)</td>
<td>9 (25.7)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>63</td>
<td>422(100)</td>
<td>148(100)</td>
<td>148(100)</td>
<td>35(100)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Primary Survey.
Table 5.20: Cross Tabulation of Income Group and Family Type of Sampled Households

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Income group (Rupees/year)</th>
<th>Nuclear</th>
<th>Extended</th>
<th>Separated</th>
<th>Single</th>
<th>Joint</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>0 – 13897</td>
<td>57(10.2)</td>
<td>4 (4.3)</td>
<td>15 (53.6)</td>
<td>27(29.3)</td>
<td>5(9.8)</td>
<td>108(13.1)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13897–20845</td>
<td>265(47.2)</td>
<td>24(26.1)</td>
<td>6(21.4)</td>
<td>47(51.1)</td>
<td>14(27.5)</td>
<td>356(43.2)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20846–31268</td>
<td>210(37.4)</td>
<td>54(58.7)</td>
<td>5(17.9)</td>
<td>15(16.3)</td>
<td>12(23.5)</td>
<td>296(35.9)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&gt; 31268</td>
<td>29(5.2)</td>
<td>10(10.9)</td>
<td>2(7.1)</td>
<td>3(3.3)</td>
<td>20(39.2)</td>
<td>64(7.8)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>561(100)</td>
<td>92(100)</td>
<td>28(100)</td>
<td>92(100)</td>
<td>51(100)</td>
<td>824(100)</td>
</tr>
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</table>

Source: Primary Survey.

Table 5.21: Cross Tabulation of Household Size and Income Group of Sampled Households

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Household size</th>
<th>Income Groups (Rupees/year)</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>0– 13897</td>
<td>13897–20845</td>
<td>20845–31268</td>
<td>&gt;31268</td>
<td>Total</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1– 4 persons</td>
<td>78 (18.0)</td>
<td>224(51.7)</td>
<td>117(27.0)</td>
<td>14(3.2)</td>
<td>433(100)</td>
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<tr>
<td>5 - 8 persons</td>
<td>29(7.7)</td>
<td>129(34.3)</td>
<td>174(46.3)</td>
<td>44(11.7)</td>
<td>376(100)</td>
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<tr>
<td>9–12 persons</td>
<td>1(6.7)</td>
<td>3(20.0)</td>
<td>5(33.3)</td>
<td>6(40.0)</td>
<td>15(100)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>108(13.1)</td>
<td>356(43.2)</td>
<td>296(35.9)</td>
<td>64(7.8)</td>
<td>824(100)</td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Primary Survey.

The average annual expenditure of the sampled households has been found as Rs.18556.00. The poor households generally spend more on food items than on non-food items. The proportion of expenditure on food is expected to decline with economic prosperity (GOI, 2002). Although at the national level the share of expenditure on food item is declining, in Assam it is over 65 per cent of the total expenditure in 1999-2000. Even in Urban Assam it is over 50 per cent (GOI, 2002). In India the very poor spend 80 to 85 per cent of their household budget on food, while not so poor spend 60 per cent of their budget on food (Pugh, 1995). It has been found that the poor in Guwahati spend 70 per cent of their total expenditure on food items, with an average value of Rs.12970 per year. The minimum and maximum household expenditure on food per year are Rs.1100.00 and Rs.40, 000 respectively.
House rent and fuel are two other important components of annual expenditure, each of which accounting for 9 per cent of the total annual expenditure. The amount spent on education, on the average is found to be lower than the amount spent on religious functions and festivals. The average annual expenditure on education is Rs.175 only with a minimum of Rs. 0 to a maximum of Rs.6000/- a year (Table 5.22).

Table 5.22: Expenditure Pattern of Urban Poor in Guwahati

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Items</th>
<th>Minimum (Rs.)</th>
<th>Maximum (Rs.)</th>
<th>Average (Rs.)</th>
<th>Per cent to total expenditure</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Food</td>
<td>1100</td>
<td>40,000</td>
<td>12,970</td>
<td>70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rent</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>18,000</td>
<td>1712</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clothing</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>7700</td>
<td>606</td>
<td>3.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>6,000</td>
<td>175</td>
<td>1.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fuel</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>5,000</td>
<td>1678</td>
<td>9.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Religious Exp.</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2,000</td>
<td>239</td>
<td>1.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Others</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>12,000</td>
<td>1176</td>
<td>6.4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Primary Survey.

In many households, the reported expenditure is found to be much higher than the income. This situation has been encountered by Lobo and Das in their study of Panchsheel slum of Surat city (Das and Lobo, 2001). On the contrary, there are households where the reported income is good but still they hardly have their necessities fulfilled. In many other cases unwise expenditure is a major cause of poverty. Many spend a major part of their income in alcohols daily.

The urban poor in Guwahati mainly comprise two religious groups and three linguistic groups. They have migrated from different places of the state as well as the country. Although a sizeable number of them belong to the working age-group, they find it difficult to earn for their lack of education and skill. Major portion of their income is spent on food items and little is left for spending on education and health for the younger generation. Thus they are trapped in poverty for generations.
REFERENCE


17. Assam Sarba Siksha Abhijan Mission at –

http://ssaassam.org/pEduScene.htm
SOCIAL PROBLEMS OF URBAN POOR AND PATTERN THEREOF

The present study is concerned with different social problems associated with the poor city dwellers of Guwahati. This chapter is devoted to discuss the severity of these problems, the factors responsible for them and their geographical pattern if any. The social problems are those adverse conditions which hinder healthy existence, performance, growth and betterment of a society. As this study is concerned with the poor people of urban area, the problems examined here are related to this section of society. The problems which are found to be relevant to this underprivileged group of people and which seem to affect them constantly are (a) illiteracy and low level of education (b) unemployment and underemployment (c) child labour (d) low status of women (e) housing condition (f) poor sanitation (g) lack of amenities (h) poor health condition and (i) crime. To evaluate each of these problems, certain indicators have been selected. For example, to evaluate illiteracy and level of education, male and female illiteracy, school attendance rate of children, adult illiteracy rate, etc. are examined.

6.1 Illiteracy and Low Level of Education

Literacy is considered as a basic criterion for calculating HDI by the United Nations. Literacy and education are very essential for social, economic and political development of a region or a country. Illiteracy on the contrary, indicates ignorance and mental isolation, a higher rate of which is a hampering factor for a country's growth. Hence, adult illiteracy is an important component of Human Poverty Index of UNDP. Illiteracy also has significant implications on demographic attributes like fertility, mortality, mobility, occupation etc. (Hussain, 1999). Illiteracy acts as a contributing factor in a number of related social problems.