Chapter Six: Demographic Profile of the Sample

For this study, the sample for data collection was selected from 41 villages. These 41 villages included seven forest villages, 14 revenue villages and 20 non cadastral villages. Responses have been collected from 1000 respondents, out of which 921 were selected for analysis. The rest 79 responses have been rejected due to incomplete responses. Out of the 921 respondents, 317(34.4%) were from forest villages, 295 (32%) were from revenue villages and 309 (33.6%) from non cadastral villages.

During the survey, it has been found that the population of the study area is mainly from seven communities, namely, Bodo, Koch, Garo, Mishing, Adivashi, Nepali and Rabha and they belong to any of the four castes, namely, General (GEN), Other Backward Caste (OBC), Scheduled Tribe Plains- ST (P) and Scheduled Tribe Hills -ST (H). No scheduled caste was found in the study area. Four occupational activities prevailed in the study area. The respondents were either cultivators, or service holders, or in business or daily wage earners. Educational qualification of the respondents varied from illiterate to graduates. The respondents' belonged to different income categories, the lowest group fell in below rupee one lakh per annum and the highest belonged to the category of above four lakh per annum. On the basis of land holdings, the respondents can be divided into five categories – Marginal Farmer (having land holding of 0 to 1 hectare), Small Farmer (having land holding 1 to 2 hectare), Semi Medium Farmer (having land holding 2 to 4 hectare), Medium Farmer (having land holding 4 to 10 hectare) and Large Farmer (having land holding above 10 hectare).

The demographic break up of the sample is discussed in the following section of this chapter.

It has been found that 41% of the sample belongs to the Bodo community, followed by the Koch community who constituted 27% of the respondents. The total break up of the sample is shown in figure 6.1.
If we look at the composition of the respondents on the basis of caste, it is found that 50% of the respondents are of Scheduled Tribe (plains). It is followed by Other Backward Castes consisting of 37% of the respondents.
Break up of the respondents on the basis of occupation is given in figure 6.3.

**Figure 6.3: Different occupation group in the study area**

- Cultivation
- Labour
- Service
- Business

Figure 6.4 shows the composition of the sample with respect to education level. It is seen that 92% of the respondents are educated up to primary standard. The factor to be noticed here is that 45% of the respondents are illiterate.

**Figure 6.4: Different education group in the study area**

- Illiterate
- Primary
- 10 pass
- 10+2
- Graduate
It is evident from Figure 6.5 that 91% of the respondents earn less than rupees one lakh per annum.
It has been found that per capita land holding is small. 44% of the respondents belong to the small category whose per capita land holding is one to two hectare. This segment is followed by the category of marginal farmers who constitutes 37% of the respondents and whose per capita land holding is less than one hectare.

Apart from these variables, it has been found that 85% of the respondents are Hindu and 15% are Christian. It has also been found that 80% of the respondents use forest land for private purposes.