

Income Generation and Employment Generation by Self-employment through Micro-entrepreneurship: A Comparative Study of Women Food-stall Owners (WFOs) of Dhubri district and Kokrajhar district of Assam

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Abstract: Almost half of the world's population consists of women. So, growth and development of the society could not be imagined without the well being of the female counterpart of the society. The present research is undertaken to study Women Food-stall Owners (WFOs) of Dhubri district and Kokrajhar district of Assam. The objectives of the research are (a) to compare the socio-economic background of WFOs of Dhubri and Kokrajhar district of Assam, (b) to compare the volume of income generation and employment generation by food-stall entrepreneurship to women of Dhubri and Kokrajhar district of Assam and (c) to examine the effects of the factors like age, education, number of family members, monthly investment and working hours of WFOs on Monthly return of WFOs. The study is based on mainly primary investigation, i.e., face to face interview of women food-stall owners (WFOs) of Dhubri district and Kokrajhar District, by using questionnaire tool. A total of 40 Women Foodstall Owners (WFOs) from Dhubri district and 42 WFOs from Kokrajhar district are selected by using simple random sampling technique. For presentation and analysis of data pie-chart, simple statistical as well as econometrical tools are applied. The research found that with lower investment and lower working hours per day, WFOs of Kokrajhar district generates higher income (benefit- cost ratio 1.44) and higher employment (69%) as compared to that of Dhubri district (benefit- cost ratio 1.41 and employment generation 52.5%). This is due to better market condition and higher effective demand in Kokrajhar district than Dhubri district. Among all other factors only monthly investment of WFOs affects monthly return of WFOs significantly in both Dhubri district and Kokrajhar district.

Keywords: Dhubri & Kokrajhar district, Employment Generation, Income Generation, Micro-entrepreneurship, and Women Food-stall Owners

Date of Submission: 10-09-2018

Date of acceptance: 27-09-2018

I. Introduction

Entrepreneurs are specialised individuals who bear uncertainty. Uncertainty is defined as a risk which cannot be insured against and the incalculable (Knight, 1921). Entrepreneurship is the purposeful activity of an individual or a group of associated individuals, undertaken to initiate, maintain or aggrandise profit by production or distribution of economic goods and services (Cole, 1959). Self-employment is the safer way to generate income. In addition, self-employment also changes the position of women from being job-seekers to job givers (Tapuriah, 1988). A woman in business is a recent phenomenon in India. As education spread and compulsion for women to earn, more and more, women have started going out of homes and opt either for wage employment or for self-employment/entrepreneurial career (Singha Roy & Debal, 2001). Different women have different attitudes towards entrepreneurship and the growth, profitability and survival of the enterprise depend on this attitude or view towards entrepreneurship. Some consider "business as a challenge" are ambitious, career oriented and innovative. Entrepreneurship is their first priority and they were prepared to take risks. And for some women, entrepreneurship is an avenue for additional income but despite their need for money the first priority was the home (Lalitha Rani, 2006). Regarding North-east India, the number of enterprise and number of employment in Assam, Manipur, and Meghalaya widely varies. Assam is the biggest state of these three states and the number of enterprise and number of employment in this state is the highest followed by Meghalaya. Manipur has the smallest number of enterprise and number of employment in these three states. Poor transportation and communication facility is mainly responsible for slow growth of entrepreneurship in this region (Sorokhaibam, Robita & Thaimai, Guloulung, 2012). The women micro-

entrepreneurs do not have enough time and energy to acquire knowledge about micro-finance. In short, the reasons behind this are lack of time, lack of energy, lack of willingness/interest, lack of knowledge and lack of instructor etc. They face problems in managing domestic works like cooking, rearing and feeding children and their business simultaneously, as they do not get support from their male counterparts and other family members sometimes. (Paul, Jogomaya, 2016).

II. Objectives of The Present Study

The present research study is undertaken targeting to fulfill three objectives. They are

1. To compare the socio-economic background of WFOs of Dhubri and Kokrajhar district of Assam.
2. To compare the volume of income generation and employment generation by food-stall entrepreneurship to women of Dhubri and Kokrajhar district of Assam.
3. To examine effects of the factors like age, education, number of family members, monthly investment and working hours of WFOs on Monthly return of WFOs.

III. Methodology

The study is based on mainly primary investigation, i.e., face to face interview of women food-stall owners (WFOs) of Dhubri district and Kokrajhar District, by using questionnaire tool. A total of 40 Women Foodstall Owners (WFOs) from Dhubri district and 42 WFOs from Kokrajhar district are selected by using simple random sampling technique. For reviewing existing literature and some other information, the help of some books, journals, magazines, newspapers and websites are taken into account. For presentation and analysis of data pie-chart, simple statistical as well as econometrical tools are applied.

IV. Rationale of The Study

Almost half of the world's population consists of women. So, growth and development of the society could not be imagined without the well being of the female counterpart of the society. From the last few decades, women have been observed to come forward and undertake various micro-entrepreneurship, irrespective of their socio-economic and educational background. Food-stall is one of them. The women of Dhubri district and Kokrajhar district of Assam are also observed to own and run food-stall enterprises in micro level. Hence, the present research is undertaken to study WFOs of Dhubri district and Kokrajhar district of Assam.

V. A Short Description of The Study Area

The present research covers two neighbor districts of Assam, namely Dhubri district and Kokrajhar district. Dhubri district¹ stands on west south corner of the state Assam in India. The district is bounded by both inter-state and international borders: Goalpara and Bongaigaon district of Assam and Garo Hills district of Meghalaya in the east; West Bengal and Bangladesh in the west; the river Brahmaputra, Bangladesh, State of Meghalaya and South Salmara-Mankachar district of Assam in the south; and Kokrajhar district in the north. The geographical area of Dhubri district is 1664.10 square kilometers. The district is located on the globe between 89.42 to 90.12 degree east longitudes and 26.22 to 26.58 degree north latitudes and situated at 30 meters above the sea level on an average.

Kokrajhar district is located on the northern bank of the Brahmaputra River. It is the gateway to the Seven Sister States of North-east India. The district is bounded on the north by the Himalayan kingdom of Bhutan, by Dhubri district on the south, Bongaigaon district on the east and the Indian state of West Bengal on the west. The present geographical area of Kokrajhar district is estimated to be 3,169.22 square km. Kokrajhar district is located on the north bank of the river Brahmaputra. The district lies between 89.46' E to 90.38' E longitudes and 26.19" N to 26.54" latitudes.

Total population of Dhubri district is 1,949,258 (6.25% of total population of Assam) and total population of Kokrajhar district is 887,142 (2.84% of total population of Assam) (2011 census). Of which, female population is 951,410 (48.80% of total population) in Dhubri district, and 434,237 (48.95% of total population) in Kokrajhar district. The sex ratio in Kokrajhar district (959) is higher than the sex ratio in Dhubri district (953). This is presented in table 1.1.

¹Source: (i)MSME-Development Institute (Ministry of MSME, Govt. of India) "Brief Industrial Profile of Dhubri District", & (ii) Government of India, North Eastern Council Secretariat "Basic Statistics of North Eastern Region 2015" pp. 34

Table 1.1 Demographic Profile of Dhubri and Kokrajhar district

Name of the State/District	Population	Males	Females	Sex ratio
Dhubri	1,949,258	997,848	951,410	953
Kokrajhar	887,142	452,905	434,237	959
Assam	31,205,576	15,939,443	15,266,133	958

Source: Economic Survey, Assam, 2014-15

In Kokrajhar district 51.8% (54,306) females are working as main workers, whereas in Dhubri district 40% (57,921) females are working as main workers. Therefore, in Dhubri district a large number of females about 60% (87,000) are marginal workers, as against 48.2% (50, 503) female marginal workers in Kokrajhar district. This is presented in table 1.2.

Table 1.2 Distribution of Population by Workers and Non-workers

Name of the state/district	Workers			Non-workers		
	Persons	Males	Females	Persons	Males	Females
Kokrajhar	341,131	236,322	104,809	546,011	216,583	329,428
Dhubri	669,819	524,898	144,921	1,279,439	472,950	806,489
Assam	11,969,690	8,541,560	3,428,130	19,235,886	7,397,883	11,838,003

Source: Economic Survey, Assam, 2014-15

VI. Results and Discussion

In the following sections, a discussion on the objectives of the research will be done on the basis of the results from analysis of collected data.

1. **Socio-economic background of WFOs of Dhubri district and Kokrajhar district:** The socio-economic background of WFOs could be discussed with the help of following tables and diagrams.
 - (i) **Various Averages:** Let us at first, present and compare various averages relating to WFOs of Dhubri and kokrajhar district, as shown in table 1.3.

Table: 1.3 Various Averages relating to Women Food-stall Owners (WFOs) of Dhubri district and Kokrajhar district

Averages	Dhubri	Kokrajhar
Average Age	43	43
Average Education	4.5	3
Average No. of Family members	4.5	5
Average Monthly Investment	Rs.24750	Rs. 22847.62
Average Monthly Return	Rs. 34982.5	Rs. 33059.52
Average Working Hour per day	10.5	10

Source: Primary Investigation

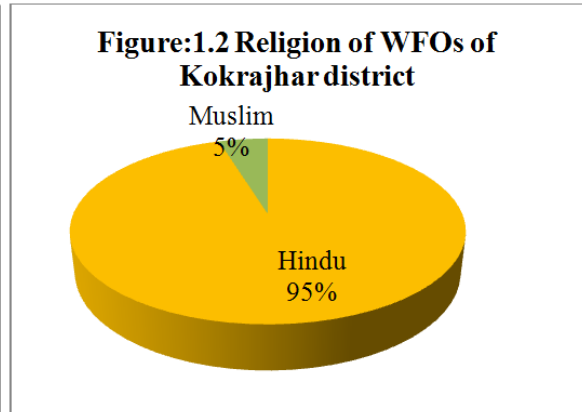
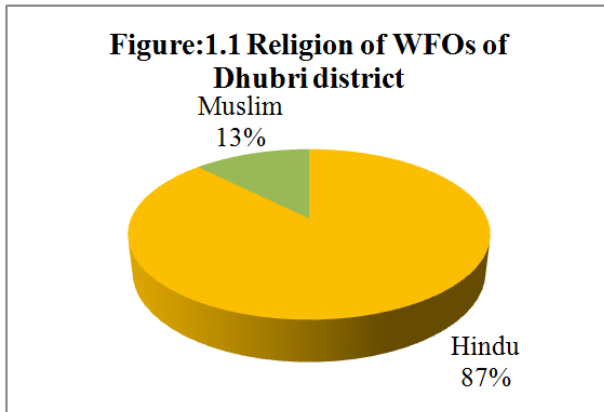
Above table may be explained as under the following headlines:

- a. Average age of the WFOs of both Dhubri and Kokrajhar district is found to be same as 43 years.
 - b. Average education of WFOs at Dhubri district is higher than the average education of WFOs at Kokrajhar district.
 - c. Mean number of family members including the particular WFO is higher in Kokrajhar district than Dhubri district.
 - d. Mean monthly investment of WFOs at Dhubri and Kokrajhar district is Rs.24750 and Rs. 22847.62 respectively.
 - e. Mean monthly return of WFOs of Dhubri district is higher (Rs. 34982.5) than that of Kokrajhar district (Rs. 33059.52).
 - f. In Dhubri district a WFO works on an average 10.5 hours per day, which is higher than that in Kokrajhar district (10 hours per day).
- (ii) **Religion of WFOs:** The religion of WFOs of Dhubri and Kokrajhar district shows that in Dhubri district 87.5% WFOs are Hindu and 12.5% are Muslim. Contrary to this, in Kokrajhar district 95.24% WFOs are Hindu and 4.76% are Muslim. This is presented in table 1.4 and diagram 1.1& 1.2.

Table: 1.4 Religion of WFOs of Dhubri District & Kokrajhar District

Religion of WFOs	Dhubri District	Kokrajhar District
Hindu	35 (87.5%)	40 (95.24%)
Muslim	5 (12.5%)	2 (4.76%)

Source: Primary investigation

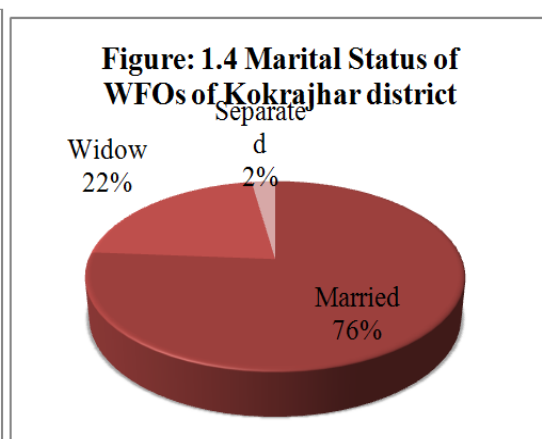
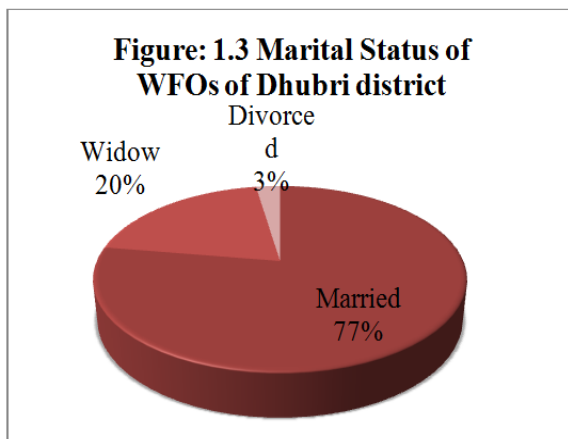


(ii) **Marital Status of WFOs:** The survey regarding marital status of WFOs found almost same result for the two districts. Majority of WFOs belong to married category in the two districts, i.e., 77% WFOs in Dhubri district and 76% WFOs in Kokrajhar district are married. Widows remain in the next highest position, 20% WFOs in Dhubri district and 22% WFOs in Kokrajhar district are widows, then divorced or separated in the third position, 3% WFOs in Dhubri district and 2% WFOs in Kokrajhar district. This is presented in tables 1.5 and pie-chart 1.3 & 1.4.

Table: 1.5 Marital Status of WFOs of Dhubri District & Kokrajhar District

Marital Status	Dhubri District	Kokrajhar District
Married	31 (77%)	32 (76%)
Widow	8 (20%)	9 (22%)
Divorced/Separated	1 (3%)	1 (2%)

Source: Primary investigation

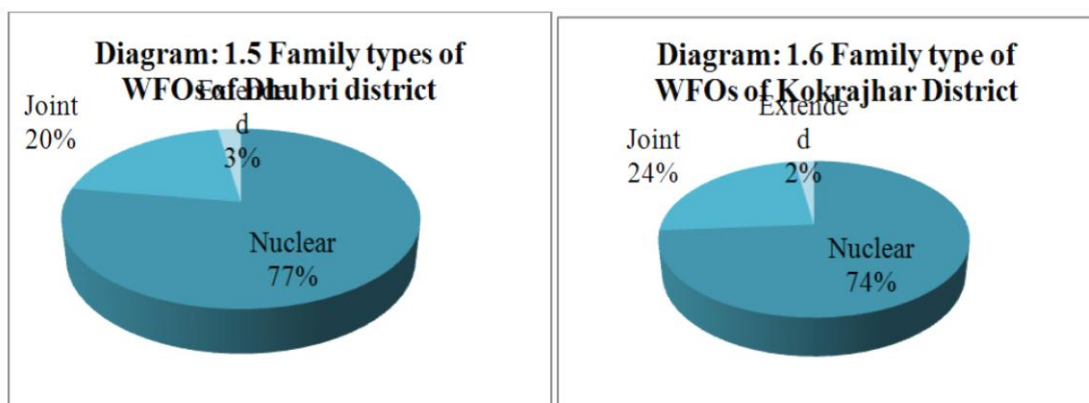


(iv) **Type of Family of WFOs:** It is observed that majority of WFOs emerged from nuclear family, 77% and 74%, in Dhubri district and Kokrajhar district respectively. And only 20% and 24% WFOs belong to joint family, and very less proportion of WFOs come from extended family, i.e., 3% and 2% in Dhubri district and Kokrajhar district respectively. It is presented in table 1.6 and pie-chart 1.5 & 1.6.

Table: 1.6 Type of Family of WFOs of Dhubri District

Family Type	Dhubri District	Kokrajhar District
Nuclear	31 (77%)	31 (74%)
Joint	8 (20%)	10 (24%)
Extended	1 (3%)	1 (2%)

Source: Primary Investigation

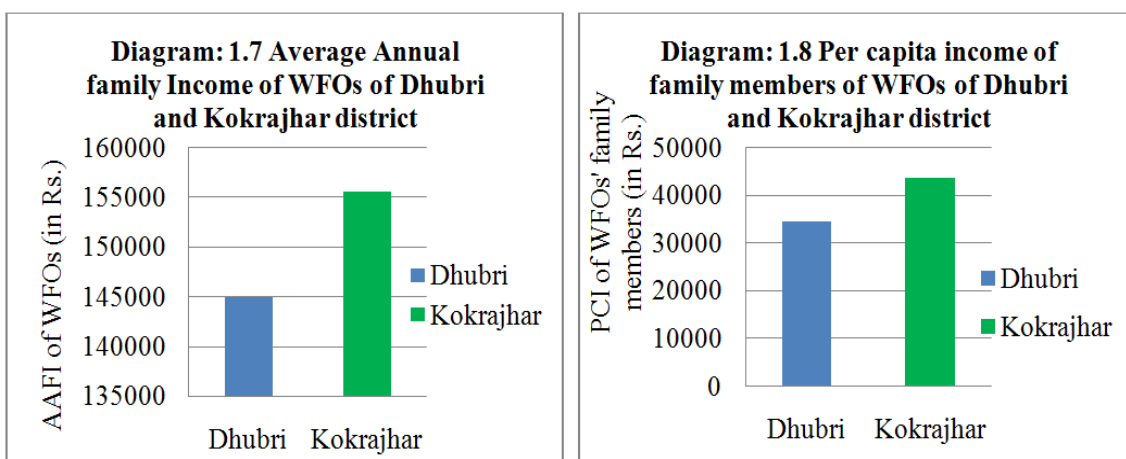


(v) **Economic Background of WFOs of Dhubri and Kokrajhar district:** Average Annual family income (AAFI) of WFOs of Dhubri district is Rs. 144900, which is lower than AAFI of WFOs in Kokrajhar district, about Rs. 155614.3. Similarly, Per Capita Income (PCI) of family members of WFOs of Dhubri district is Rs. 34685.68, again lower than that of WFOs of Kokrajhar district, i.e., Rs. 43741.77. This is presented in table: 1.7 and figures 1.7 & 1.8.

Table: 1.7 Economic Background of WFOs of Dhubri and Kokrajhar district

District	Total number of self-employed WFOs	Average Annual family Income of WFOs	Per capita income of family members of WFOs
Dhubri District	40	Rs. 144900	Rs. 34685.68
Kokrajhar District	42	Rs. 155614.3	Rs. 43741.77

Source: Primary Investigation



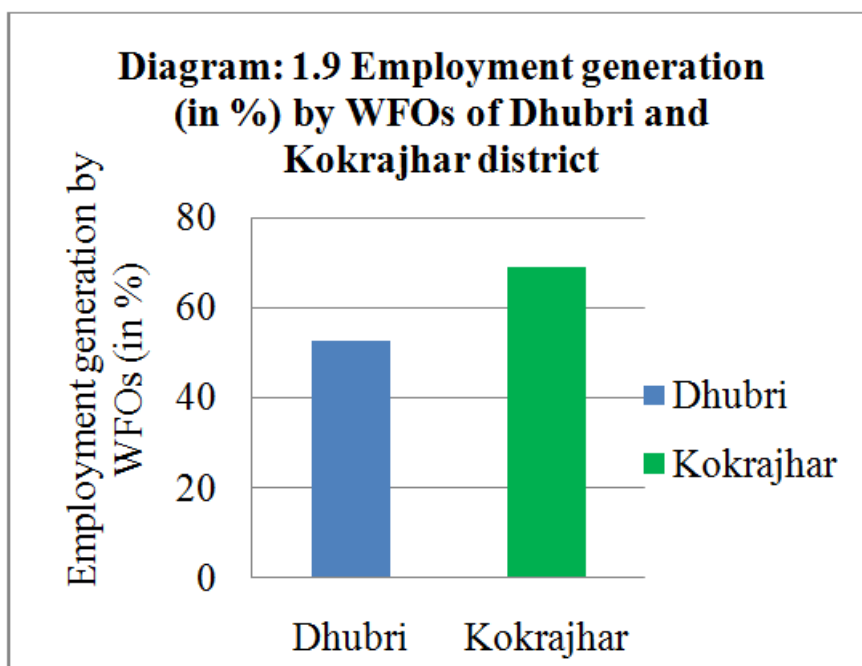
2. Volume of income generation and employment generation by food-stall micro-entrepreneurship to women of Dhubri and Kokrajhar district of Assam.

A. Contribution of WFOs in Employment Generation in Dhubri district and Kokrajhar district: Total Number of employees generated by total 40 food-stalls of Dhubri district is 21 (or, 52.5%). Contrary to this, total no. of employment generation by total 42 food-stalls in Kokrajhar district is 29 (69%). Thus, employment generation of WFOs of Kokrajhar district is higher than that of WFOs of Dhubri district, due to better market condition in Kokrajhar district as compared to Dhubri district. It is presented in table 1.8 and diagram 1.9.

Table: 1.8 Contributions of WFOs in Employment Generation in Dhubri and Kokrajhar district

District	Total number of self-employed WFOs	Total Number of Employment generation (Employment generation in %)
Dhubri District	40	21 (52.5%)
Kokrajhar District	42	29 (69%)

Source: Primary Investigation

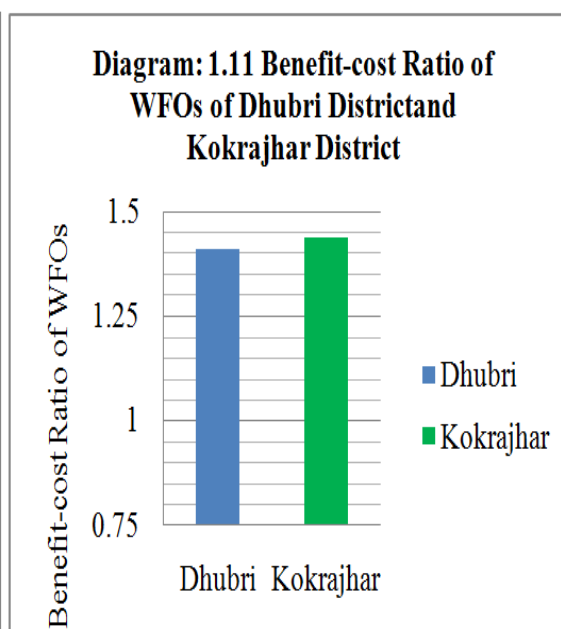
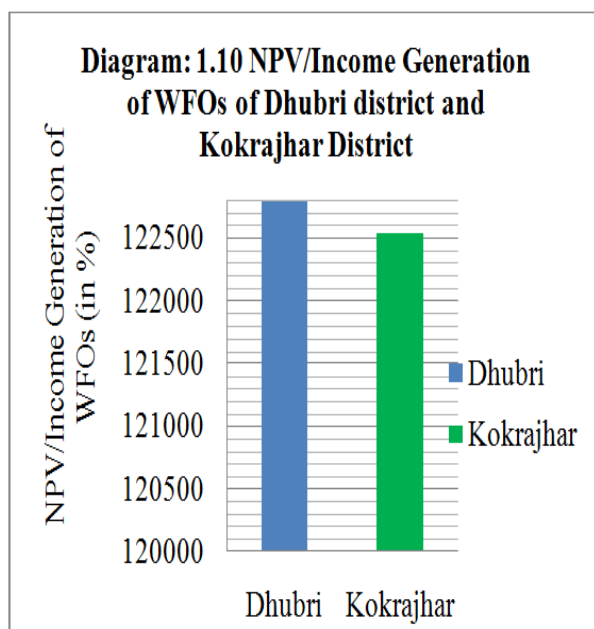


B. Cost-Benefit Analysis/Income Generation of Food-stall sector to women in Dhubri district and Kokrajhar district: In order to compare the profitability or income generation of WFOs of Dhubri and Kokrajhar district, let us obtain the Net Present Value (NPV) of WFOs of the two districts.

Table: 1.9 NPV of WFOs of the two districts²

District	Present Value of Benefits/Return of WFOs	Present Value of Costs (investment) of WFOs	NPV of WFOs	Benefit-cost ratio
Dhubri	Rs. 419790	Rs.297000	Rs.122790	1.41
Kokrajhar	Rs. 396708	Rs. 274171,44	Rs.122542.8	1.44

Source: Primary Investigation



² Here NPV of WFOs reflects income generation of WFOs.

It is evident from table 1.9 and diagrams 1.10 and 1.11 that the business volume (i.e., both costs and returns) of WFOs is higher in Dhubri district as compared to that of WFOs of Kokrajhar district. This is because the women headed food stalls at Dhubri district are observed comparatively bigger and organized in character than those at Kokrajhar district. But, profitability or income generation in women-headed food stall sector is higher at Kokrajhar district than Dhubri district. Because, the WFOs of Dhubri district are found to undertake business in organised and permanent basis giving higher taxes and rent, but, most of the WFOs of Kokrajhar district are found to run their business only at the time of *haats* with low tax and zero rent accompanied by high sale.

3. Regression Analysis for WFOs

The relationship between monthly return of WFOs and age, education, number of family members, monthly investment and working hours of WFOs is expressed with the help of following multiple linear regression line.

$$Y_t = \beta_0 + \beta_1 X_1 + \beta_2 X_2 + \beta_3 X_3 + \beta_4 X_4 + \beta_5 X_5 + U_t \quad \dots\dots\dots(i)$$

Where,

Y_t is monthly return of WFOs

X_1 is age of WFOs

X_2 is education of WFOs

X_3 is number of family members

X_4 is monthly investment

X_5 is working hour

β_0 is constant of the model

$\beta_1, \beta_2, \beta_3, \beta_4$ and β_5 are coefficients of the variables X_1, X_2, X_3, X_4 and X_5 respectively.

After application of OLS estimation the historical regression line for WFOs for Dhubri district will be

$$Y_t = 2194.8 - 12.45X_1 + 105.62X_2 + 791X_3 + 1.159X_4 + 59.02X_5 \quad R^2 = 0.982$$

(S.E) (9680.87) (152.036) (379.161) (806.53) (0.029) (593.89)

(t) (0.227) (-0.082) (0.279) (0.981) (39.914) (0.099)

(Sig.) (0.822) (0.935) (0.782) (0.334) (0.000) (0.921)

It is clear from above significant values in the parentheses (Sig.) that for WFOs of Dhubri district

$$\beta_1 = \beta_3 = \beta_2 = \beta_5 = 0 \text{ and } \beta_4 \neq 0$$

i.e., monthly return of WFOs in Dhubri district is significantly affected by only monthly investment of WFOs. And the effect of all other variables like age, education, number of family members and working hours of WFOs on monthly returns of WFOs is not significant. As far as, the effect of investment is concerned, it can be said that if all the other variables are kept constant, average monthly return rises by Rs. 1.16 with a unit (Rupee) increase in monthly investment i.e. Marginal Efficiency of Investment (MEI) is estimated to be 16% for WFOs of Dhubri district.

Again, after application of OLS estimation the historical regression line for WFOs for Kokrajhar district will be

$$Y_t = -3163.239 + 78.634X_1 + 76.879X_2 + 104.797X_3 + 1.402X_4 + 152.231X_5 \quad R^2 = 0.982$$

(S.E) (3672.01) (57.491) (142.015) (357.694) (.033) (171.844)

(t) (-.861) (1.368) (-.541) (-.293) (42.186) (.886)

(Sig.) (.395) (.180) (.592) (.771) (0.000) (.382)

Like Dhubri district, it is clear from above significant values in the parentheses that for WFOs of Kokrajhar district

$$\beta_1 = \beta_3 = \beta_2 = \beta_5 = 0 \text{ and } \beta_4 \neq 0$$

i.e., in Kokrajhar district also only monthly investment of WFOs affects monthly return of WFOs significantly. And the effect of all other variables like age, education, number of family members and working hours of WFOs on monthly returns of WFOs is not significant. Holding all the other variables constant, average monthly return increases by Rs. 1.40 with a unit (Rupee) increase in monthly investment i.e. MEI is estimated to be 40% for WFOs of Kokrajhar district.

VII. Findings And Conclusions

The findings of the research are mentioned as under the following headlines:

(i) It is evident, from the above discussion that the WFOs of Dhubri district is more educated than that of Kokrajhar district as majority of population (93.8%) in Kokrajhar district live in villages as compared to Dhubri district (89.54%).

- (ii) Average No. of Family Members of WFOs is 4.5 in Dhubri district and 5 in Kokrajhar district. As higher number of WFOs (24%) belong to joint family in Kokrajhar district than Dhubri District (20%).
- (iii) AAFI as well as PCI of WFOs is found to be greater at Kokrajhar district (Rs. 155614.3 & Rs. 43741.77 respectively) as compared to AAFI and PCI of WFOs at Dhubri district (Rs. 144900 & Rs. 34685.68 respectively).
- (iv) With lower investment and lower working hours per day WFOs of Kokrajhar district generates higher income (benefit- cost ratio 1.44) and higher employment (69%) as compared to that of Dhubri district (benefit-cost ratio 1.41 and employment generation 52.5%). This is due to better market condition and higher effective demand in Kokrajhar district than Dhubri district.
- (v) Among other factor only monthly investment of WFOs affects monthly return of WFOs significantly in both Dhubri district and Kokrajhar district. Thus, the effects of all other variables like age, education, number of family members and working hour of WFOs on monthly returns of WFOs is not significant.

The reasons behind lower income, employment generation and MEI in Dhubri district as compared to Kokrajhar district are lack of higher education, lack of business opportunities, lower effective demand, inefficient market condition, bad conditions of roads and communication etc. Contrary to this, Kokrajhar district is characterized by rapid development due to existence of higher educational institutions like University, CIT, presence of better road and communication facility, good market conditions, higher effective demand, good governance and greater proportion of tribal population etc. (the tribes receive various opportunities, incentives, funds and assistance from Central as well as State governments, e.g., the tribes in this area are enjoying income tax exemption). Thus, higher income generation, employment generation and MEI in Kokrajhar district may be attributed to all these factors.

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IOSR Journal of Business and Management (IOSR-JBM) is UGC approved Journal with SI. No. 4481, Journal no. 46879.

Jogomaya Paul."Income Generation and Employment Generation by Self-employment through Micro-entrepreneurship: A Comparative Study of Women Food-stall Owners (WFOs) of Dhubri district and Kokrajhar district of Assam" IOSR Journal of Business and Management (IOSR-JBM) 20.9 (2018): 53-60.