



OPPORTUNITIES & LIVELIHOOD – MEANS OF MAKING A LIVING: AN EMPIRICAL STUDY OF KATHALARTARY VILLAGE

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Abstract: Natural hazards, market uncertainties, political unrest and changes in the govt. policies are the major factors that forces individuals, households and communities to negotiate to reduce their vulnerability and improve their welfare and livelihood status. Sustainable livelihood is the fundamental key to eradicate poverty and hunger. Now the question arises “What is meant by livelihood?”

Keywords: livelihood, Opportunities

I. INTRODUCTION

Livelihood is a means of making a living. It encompasses people’s capabilities, assets, income and activities required to secure the necessities of life. A livelihood is sustainable when it enables people to cope with and recover from shocks and stresses (such as natural disaster and economic and social upheavals) and enhances their well-being and that of future generations. A people’s livelihood refers to their means of securing the basic necessities-food, shelter and clothing-of life.

“Livelihood comprises income in cash or in kind, the social relations and institutions that vacillate or constrain individuals or family standards of living; and access to social and public services that contribute to the well-being of the individuals or family.”(Ellis, 1998).

People may use two clusters of strategies:

1. Agriculture
2. Non-agriculture

There are many alternatives of the people’s livelihood to choose for generating income. People may be literate or illiterate. Mostly rural people are illiterate and mostly depend on agriculture. Literate people mainly generate income through working into a good organisation or business.

Agriculture and allied activities support livelihood of nearly 70% of India’s rural population. In recent years, land based livelihoods of small and marginal farmers are increasingly becoming unsustainable, since their land has not been able to support the family’s food requirements and fodder for their cattle. As a result, rural households are forced to look at alternative means for supplementing their livelihoods.

Rural livelihoods are not limited just to income derived solely from farming. The growing inflationary situations in the Indian economy during the past few years are aggravating standard of living of the rural people. They could not make it high through so they have to switch to other alternatives or non-farming activities for their livelihood. Non-farming activities are fishery, dairy-farming, poultry, etc.

IMPORTANCE OF THE STUDY

The economy of Assam is basically agrarian as it is rural based economy. But the people of Kathalartary village, Barpeta district, Assam is very poor and they are facing too much of problems. The problems are like poor socio-economic infrastructure, absence of industrial development, illiteracy, etc. They are very much

unaware of the necessities of education in life. Since their source of income is poor enough their standard of living is also poor. Their source of living doesn't feed them to their fullest. No govt. programmes have approached to help the poor ones. Despite these various problems research on this particular aspect is almost nil in this locality. So it is important to analyse the livelihood patterns of the poor who are almost neglected from Government end.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The basic objectives of this study are

1. To examine the different livelihood opportunities of the people of the Kathalartary village.
2. To determine the main source of livelihood.
3. To examine the relationship between educational level and livelihood alternatives.
4. To know whether any governmental schemes have helped them or not.

II. METHODOLOGY OF THE STUDY

Sampling Units: Individuals of the age group of 14 years to 60 years.

Data and Analysis Technique: The present study has been taken up in the Kathalartary village of Barpeta district of Assam. The study is based on the Primary Data which are collected through structured schedule. Simple random sampling technique is applied for the collection of data. The total sample size of the study is 34 respondents. The variables of the study included Name of the respondents, age, caste, religion, educational attainment, number of earners, monthly income, monthly expenditure, and government flagship programmes etc. Descriptive statistics (simple statistics) has been applied to analyse the collected data.

III. REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Numerous studies have provided a rationale for research on livelihood alternatives of the rural people which enhance a good standard of living.

I.Scoones (1997), in his study, this paper outlines a framework for analysing sustainable livelihoods, defined here in relation to five key indicators. The framework shows how, in different contexts, sustainable livelihoods are achieved through access to a range of livelihood resources (natural, economic, human and social capitals) which are combined in the pursuit of different livelihood strategies (agricultural intensification or extensification, livelihood diversification and migration). Central to the framework is the analysis of the range of formal and informal organisational and institutional factors that influence sustainable livelihood outcomes. In conclusion, the paper briefly considers some of the practical, methodological and operational implications of a sustainable livelihoods approach.

C. McDowell, A.de Haan (1999), in their study, they focuses on the links between migration and sustainable livelihoods, looking in particular at the institutional factors that connect the two. It argues that much of the development literature makes the false assumption that sedentary patterns in society are the norm, instead making the case that migration is often the rule, rather than the exception. It concludes that migration should be seen as just one of the livelihood strategies open to households, that it is often combined with other strategies, and that it is frequently a two-way process in which migrants maintain close links with their areas of origin over a much longer period than is frequently assumed.

I.I. Ahmed, M. Lipton (1999), in their study, their paper reviews the impact of structural adjustment on sustainability of rural livelihoods. It unpacks the elements of adjustment and looks at the effects of each of these on the quantity, quality and sustainability of rural livelihoods.

N Hasnip, S Mandal, J Morrison, P Pradhan, L Smith (2001), in their study this paper has reviewed for the purpose of seeking to help governments reduce poverty in rural areas in developing countries by providing information and policy guidelines to ensure that irrigated agriculture secures productive livelihoods for the poor. This literature review examines agricultural intensification through the practice of irrigation as a strategy for sustainable rural livelihoods. These emphasise that the approach will be people centred, holistic and dynamic in seeking to understand, learn from and build upon the changes introduced by irrigation development.

C.Ireland(2004), This study looks at the emerging literature on alternative livelihoods in order to build a better understanding on what benefits and opportunities exist with the introduction of alternative livelihoods in coastal areas. The study has been conducted under the Western Indian Ocean (WIO) Marine Biodiversity Conservation Project in order to document experience and best practice in the WIO region on implementing alternative livelihood projects. The idea driving alternative livelihoods is that they create an incentive for people to stop their current unsustainable livelihood activities and move into another activity which is sustainable. For this to work the alternative needs to be more economically profitable. However as this study shows, profitability is not the only factor. Attitudes to risk, access to assets, vulnerability and institutional influences all influence the way people make decisions. As a result, the concept of alternatives becomes much more complex. The goal is to find solutions that fit with people's current livelihood strategies and that will have positive impact on their livelihoods and the use of natural resources.

IV. DATA ANALYSIS WITH SIMPLE STATISTICAL TOOLS

TABLE-1
Age, Sex, Caste and Religion of the Respondents

Average Age in years	Sex		Caste				Religion		
	Male	Female	ST	SC	GEN	OBC	Hindu	Christian	Islam
35 years	17	17	29	0	5	0	3	29	2

Source: Field Survey 2016

Table-1 Represents the distribution of the respondents according to age, sex, caste and religion. Out of 34 respondents 17 are male remaining 17 are and female respectively.

In category of religion, altogether there are 3Hindu respondents', 24 Christian and 2 Islam has been taken into the study.

In the category of caste, 29 respondents are Schedule Tribe, 5 respondents are General.

FIG-1: Religion wise Distribution of the Respondents

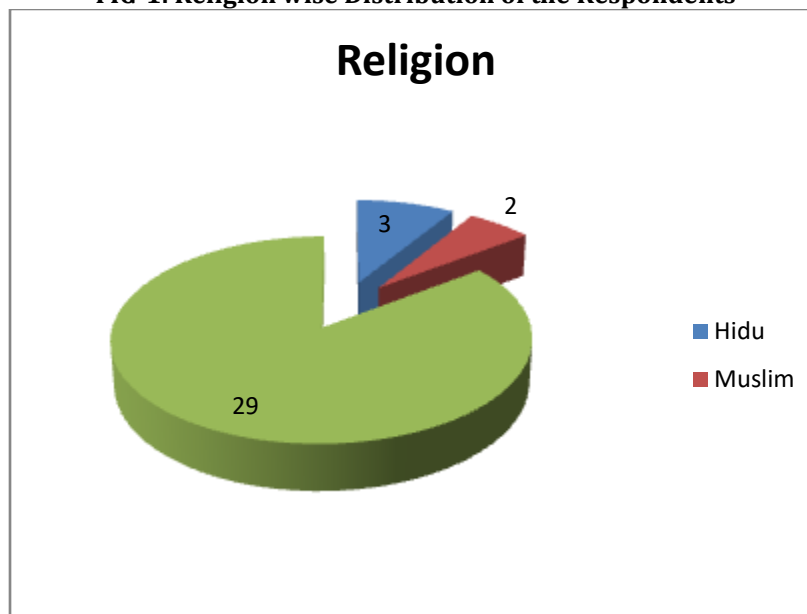


FIG-2: Caste of the 34 Households

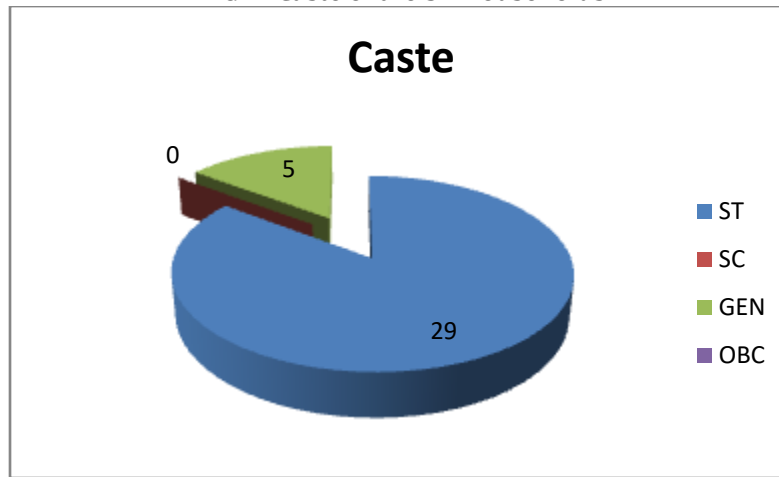


FIG-3: Gender Distribution of the 34 Respondents

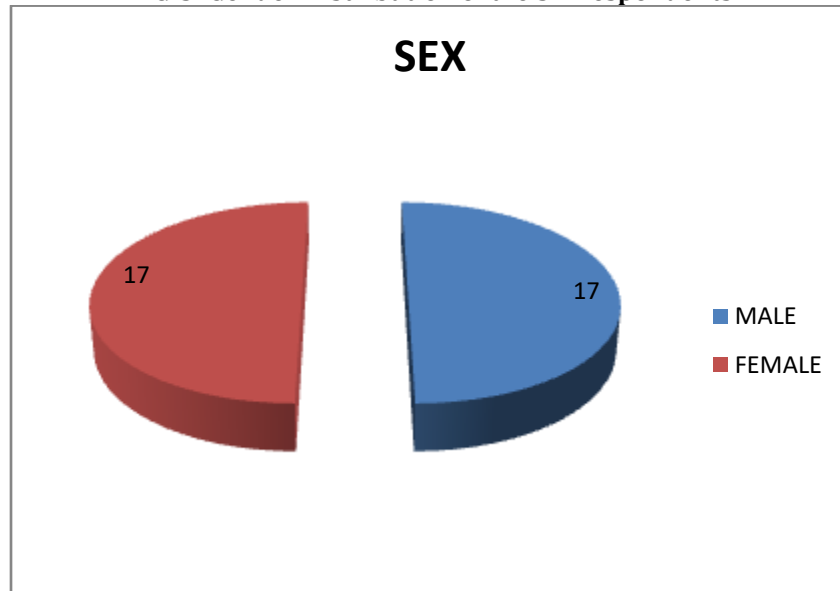


TABLE-2
Age group of the 34 Respondents (in years)

Persons with age group 14-25		Persons with age group 26-45		Persons with age group 46-60	
Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female
0	3	16	14	1	0

Source: Field Survey 2016

Table-2 identifies the Age group of the respondents. Under the age group of 14-25, there are 3 female and no male respondents. In the age group of 26-45, there are 16 male respondents and 14 female respondents. Under the age group of 46-60, only 1 male respondent is there and not a single female respondents.

FIG-4: Age Group of the Respondents

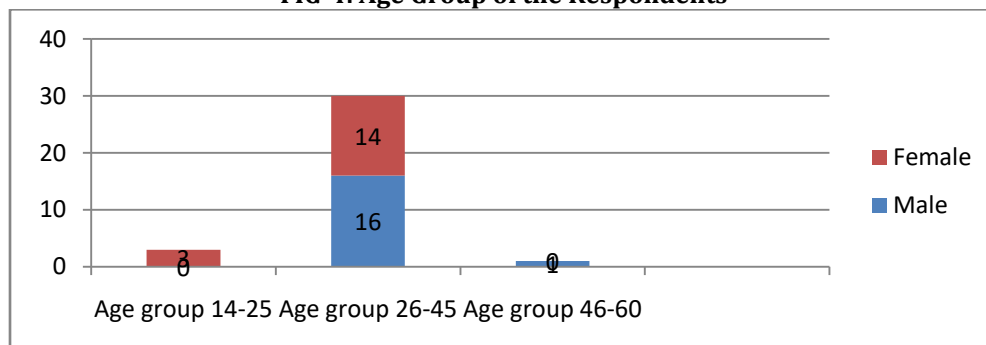


TABLE-3

Family Earners

Families with single earner	Families with more than 1 earner
22	12

Source: Field Survey 2016

Table-3 represents the number of earners in different families. Number of families having only 1 household earner is 22 and families with more than 1 earner are 12.

FIG-5: Number of Family Earners

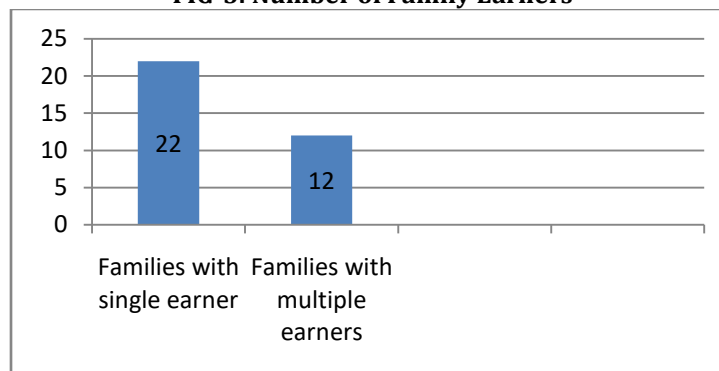


TABLE-4

Status of Monthly Income

Number of Families earning less than 10000	Number Of Families Earning more than 10000
15	19

Source: Field Survey 2016

Table-4 represents the status of monthly income of the respondents. Number of families earning less than 10000 is 15 and families earning more than 10000 are 19.

FIG-6: Total Monthly income of the 34 Respondents

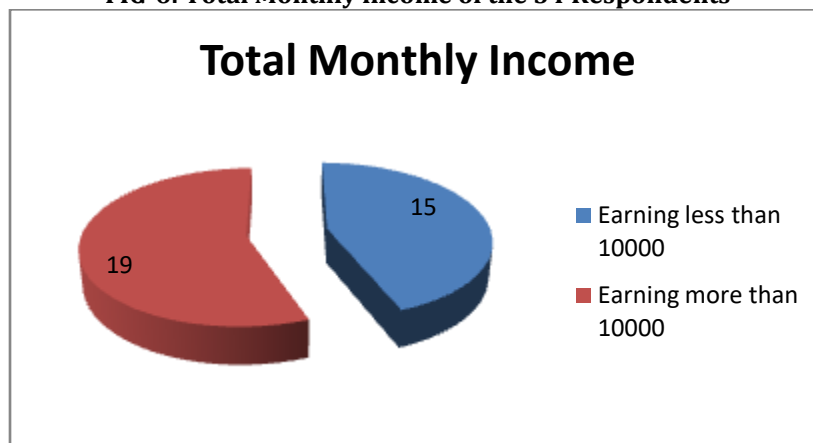


TABLE-5
Average Monthly Family Expenditure (in Rs.)

Expenditure on food	Expenditure on Education	Miscellaneous Expenditure
5897.05	1047.05	3686.76

Source: Field Survey 2016

Table 5 represents the monthly average family expenditure of 34 households.

The average monthly expenditure on food is Rs. 5897.05

The average monthly Expenditure on Education is Rs. 1047.05.

The average monthly miscellaneous expenditure is Rs. 3686.76

FIG-7: Average Monthly Family Expenditure of the 34 Respondents

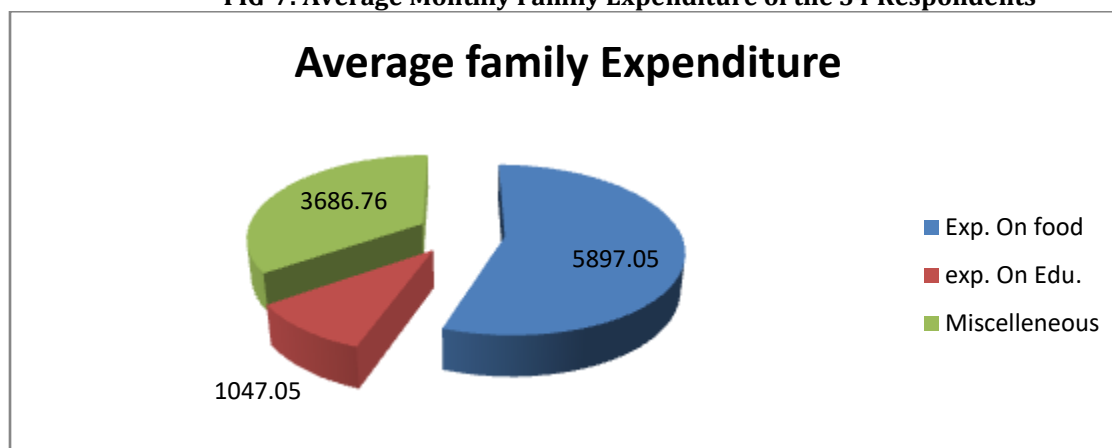


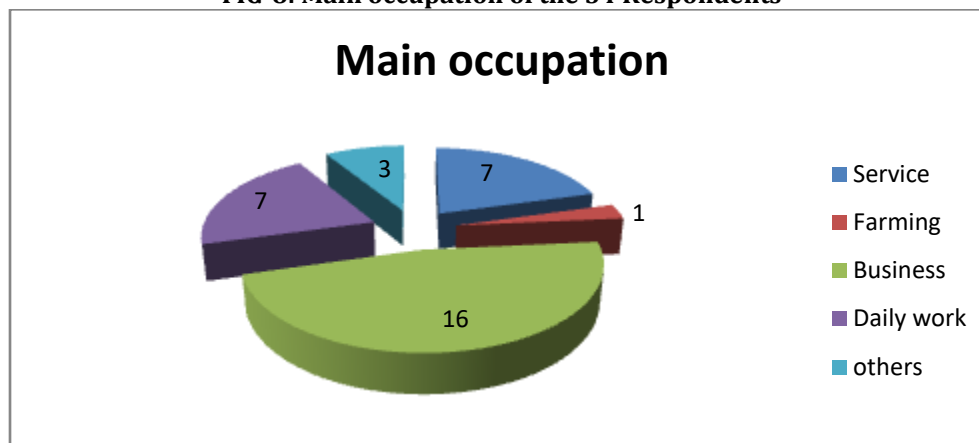
TABLE-6
Main Occupation

Service	Farming	Business	Daily labour	Others
7	1	16	7	3

Source: Field Survey 2016

Table-6 indicates the main occupation of the people of the Kathalartary village. It is noticed that most of the households main occupation as business i.e. 16 respondents of the total 34. 7 households has service as the main occupation out of 34, only 1 household represents Farming and 7 households represents daily labour and 3 households represents other occupation like Driving, etc.

FIG-8: Main occupation of the 34 Respondents



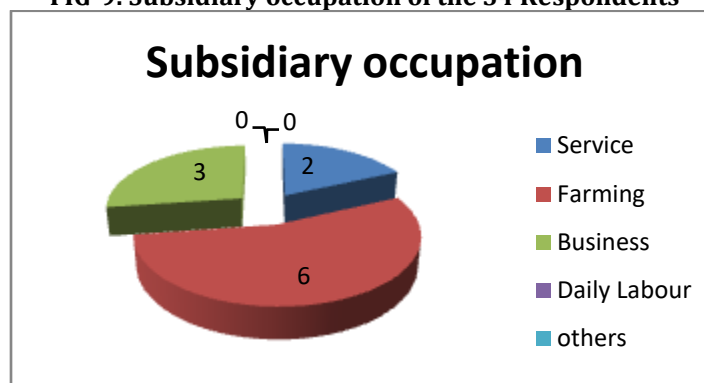
**TABLE-7
Subsidiary Occupation**

Service	Farming	Business	Daily labour	Others
2	6	3	0	0

Source: Field Survey 2016

Table-7 represents the subsidiary occupation of the people. Here from the survey it is observed that 6 households represent their subsidiary occupation as farming. Service as the subsidiary occupation is represented by 2 households where 3 households represent business as their subsidiary occupation.

FIG-9: Subsidiary occupation of the 34 Respondents



**TABLE-8
Economic Status of the respondents**

Rich above 6 lacs	Upper middle class 3-6lacs	Lower middle class BPL-3 lacs	BPL
0	14	20	0

Source: Field Survey 2016

Table-8 represents the economic status of the respondents of the village. It is observed that there are no rich households but none are also below poverty line. They hold the economic status of middle class family. 14

households represent their Economic Status as upper middle caste and 20 households represent lower middle caste.

FIG-10: Economic Status of the 34 Respondents

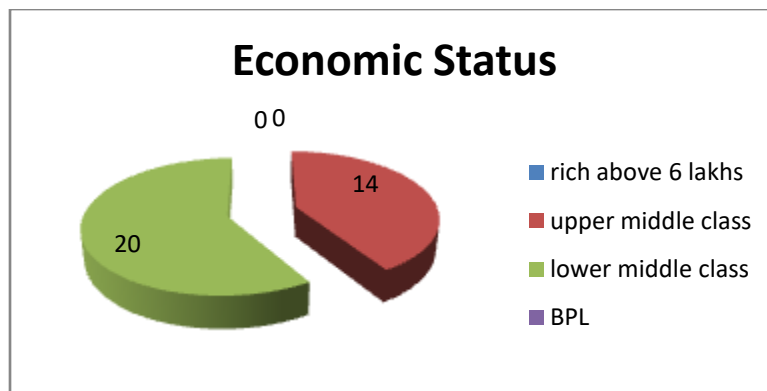


TABLE-9

Working Conditions

Permanent	Temporary
7	27

Source: Field Survey 2016

Table-9 shows the working condition of the respondents of the village. Out of 34 respondents only 7 respondents have permanent working condition and the remaining 27 respondents have temporary households.

FIG-11: Working Conditions of the 34 respondents

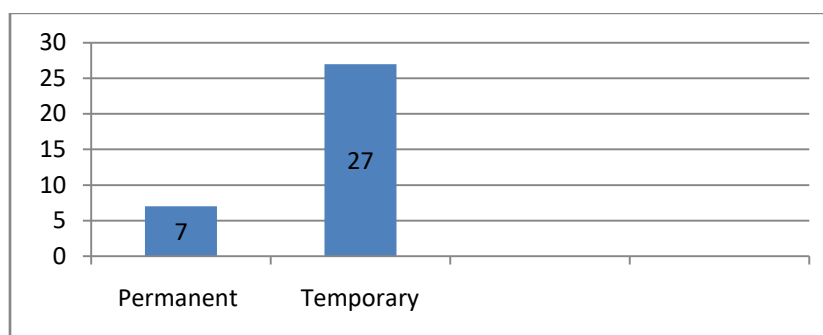


Table-10

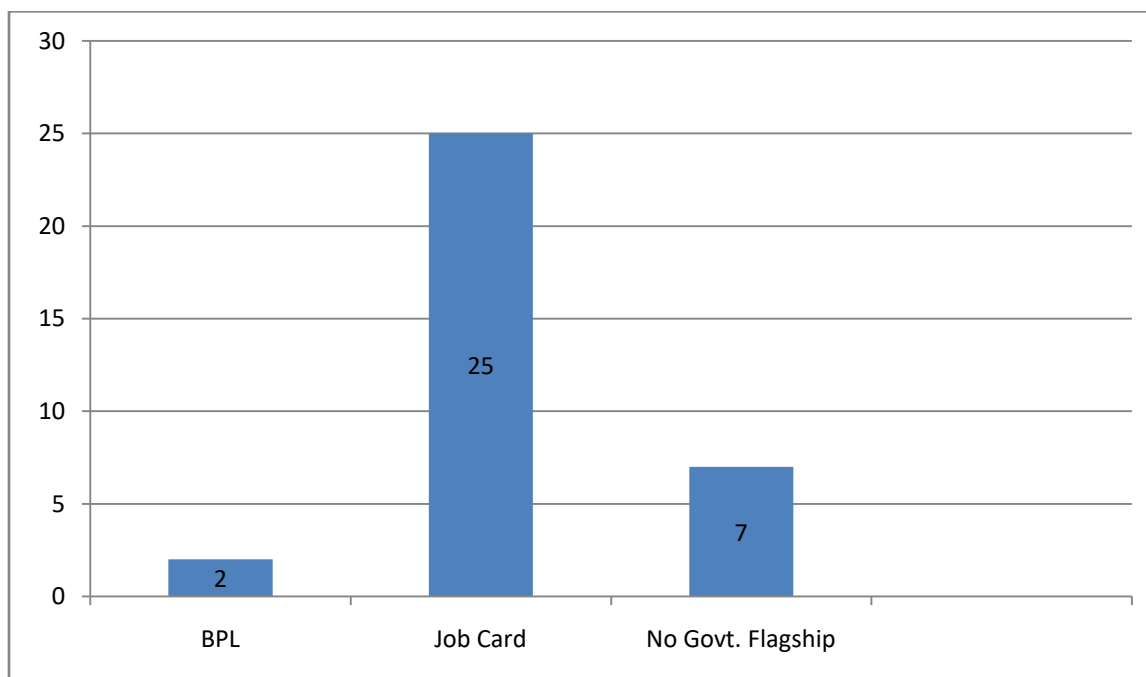
Government Flagship Programme

BPL	Job Card	No government flagship programmes
2	25	7

Source: Field Survey 2016

Table-10 shows the government flagship programmes in the Kathalartary village. Out of 34 households only 2 households have their BPL card, 25 households have Job card and 7 households did not get any help from the government flagship programmes.

FIG-12: Government Flagship Programmes



V. IMPORTANT FINDINGS

From the above objectives mentioned,

1. It analyses that other than the occupation of service work, the people of the Kathalartary village also chooses other occupation like business, farmer, daily labour etc.
2. It is seen that the main occupation of the people is business. Majority of the people do business through setting up their own shop. Only 7 households choose service as their main occupation. But the proportion of farming occupation as their subsidiary occupation is more in numbers. Most of the people of the village as observed from the field study choose farming as their subsidiary occupation.
3. From the field study it is observed that most of the people are illiterate. Their educational level is too poor. But according to their educational level, they are earning a good amount to seek a livelihood. Most of the families attained their education under matriculation but they are doing business and other subsidiary occupation like farming and daily work. Only the educated families are service holders.
4. It is also observed that government have provided only job cards to the people of the village. They did not get any other help from government programmes.

VI. CONCLUSION

This study was carried out to look at the different livelihood strategies adapted by households from different socio-economic backgrounds. 34 households were selected for the study from the villages of Kathalartary that included households from different groups on the basis of religion, caste, main occupation, subsidiary occupation, monthly expenditure, no. of household earners, economic status etc.

The main findings of the study reveal that the poorest households were daily wagers, casual labourers, business men, small land holding farmers, Govt. job seekers.

The poor households were representing almost all the economic activities; low-grade jobs in government and private agencies, remittances and petty businesses.

The study reveals that most of the people seek to do business and it is their main occupation. And they take farming as their subsidiary occupation. They hold a good livelihood according to the study.

In the study area, there were not much significant variations in the livelihood strategies of the different economic groups. But the poor socio-economic infrastructure is affecting on their livelihood.

The study reveals that farming is no longer a major livelihood strategy as more and more households are switching towards non-agricultural employment. The share of exclusively farming households as a primary economic activity has reduced in the study area, however, majority of these non-farm activities are survival oriented and have little to do with wealth accumulation. This development is caused by the large increase in the population as well as the decline in absolute number of agriculture farms in the study area.

The implication of the study is that rural non-farm sector needs its due share in development policies as it has the potential to uplift the rural areas. More precisely, the informal sector which is the main source of survival for rural poor is in urgent need of governmental support. This support can be given in allocating more credit for rural areas to initiate productive economic activities in these areas. Similarly, the hard and soft infrastructure development in rural areas can also stimulate more dynamic non-farm activities.

VII. RECOMENDATIONS:

The people of the Kathalartary village are not so literate. Government of India have introduced many developmental programmes related to livelihood enhancement and poverty alleviation such as NREGS (National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme), FWP(Food Work Programme), RLEGP(Rural Landless Employment Guarantee Programme), TRYSEM (Training For Rural Youth And Self Employment Programme),etc. As per my study of the project, government did not help the poor through their programmes. And the people of the village should increase their educational level to go for further better jobs. And they will get to know about different government programmes. They will get to know about the market conditions. Government should grant loans so that the rural poor get encouraged to engage in other non-farm activities other than business as per the study reveals that is the main occupation of the village.

Necessary training facilities should be provided to the rural poor so that they get employment in a good organisation and through this they can proceed to have a sustainable livelihood.

Government should set micro and small scale industries for the development of the village.

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