Corruption And Errors İn Identifying Beneficiaries Of Poverty Alleviation Programmes İn Dhemaji District Of Assam

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Abstract

The paper aims to analyse the awareness about Poverty Alleviation Programmes among surveyed households and tried to find out inclusion and exclusion errors, nepotism corruption in identifying beneficiaries of the poverty alleviation schemes. The study was based mainly on primary data. The primary data was collected from the Dhemaji district and it was based on multi stage sampling technique. Further, the result showed the inclusion and exclusion error, nepotism corruption and the awareness about Poverty Alleviation Programmes among surveyed households.

Keywords: Poverty Alleviation Programmes, Inclusion and Exclusion Error, Bribe and Kickback, Nepotism, Multi stage Sampling.

1. Introduction:

Poverty alleviation programmes aims to reduce the rate of poverty by providing proper assesses to food, financial help and basic essential to the households and families who are living below the poverty line. In India, the Department of Rural Development and Rural Development Ministers of almost all the states are implementing a number of programmes particularly in the rural areas for poverty alleviation and rural development. But corruption and error in identifying the beneficiaries of poverty alleviation schemes have adversely affected the implementation of the poverty alleviation programmes as a result of which we have not been able to eliminate poverty from our country up to the expected level.

The term corruption can be identified and classified in different ways since it contains different types of human actions as it is explained " as the misused of entrusted power for personal or private gain" (World Bank,2007). According to Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), 2008 corruption means "the abuse of public or private office for personal gain….the active or passive misused of the powers of public officials for private financial or other benefits. It must be remembered that corruption hurts everyone who depends on the integrity of people in position of authority.

Different types of corruption are found in the implementation of poverty alleviation programmes in India. The implementation of poverty alleviation programmes in the state of Assam also not free from corruption. The most popular types of corruption which is generally found are bribery, kickback, nepotism, and inclusion and exclusion error. It may be noted that although corruption is found in different level of poverty alleviation schemes but corruption is more pronounced in identifying the beneficiaries of the poverty alleviation schemes.

According to UNDP Report of 2010, 29.8 percent people live below poverty line in India while in the state of Assam 40.5 percent people of rural area living below poverty line and 17 percent are living below the poverty line in the urban area.(Human Development report, 2014)

According to a Report of Centre for Media Studies (2005) in Assam corruption has reduced to 18 percent in 2017 from 34 percent of 2005. The present Government of Assam has taken strict steps to remove corruption from all level of administration so that people can gain from the Government's schemes. The Government has given special attention for rural development and poverty alleviation.

In the present paper, an attempt was made to examine the awareness of the households regarding poverty alleviation schemes and types of corruption related in identifying the beneficiaries of such schemes.

2. Review of Literature:

The brief review of literature regarding corruption and poverty alleviation programmes are furnished as follows:

India Corruption study Report (2007) conducted jointly by Transparency International and Centre for Media Study described that corruption level of Assam was "alarming" and Assam rank as most corrupt state in India. The study conducted 11 basic services including housing service, education, NREGAs etc. which shows that corruption level is very high in all the sectors in Assam. This study also suggested some measures to control corruption in these sectors.

Transparency International Secretariat's Global Programme on Poverty, in collaboration with the Policy and Research Department (2008) in their working paper 'Poverty and Corruption' analyzed the ways to meet the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and the target to end extreme global poverty by 2015. This work highlighted some of the linkages between poverty, inequality and corruption. By comparing Corruption Perceptions Index (CPI) with their human development rankings they expressed that there is a strong correlation between corruption and development. This work also shows that low rate of corruption of the countries have the higher HDIs, and vice versa.

Aina Olu and Abuja (2014) in his paper 'How Corruption Contributes to Poverty', attempted to evaluate corruption and poverty in the grassroots level in Nigeria where large number of people are poor. The study shows that due to corruption in Nigeria huge public fund were misused for which proper infrastructural development, improvement of human capital and production capabilities, health care etc. has greatly distressed. The study found that because of corruption, the poor people of Nigeria became poorer and Nigeria is still count among the states of the world having highest number of poor people. However, several challenges have emerged through various anti-corruption measures which ultimately determine how far Nigeria can go in its efforts to eradicate poverty.

Ildirar Mustafa and Iscan Erhan (2015) in their paper 'Corruption, Poverty and Economic Performance: Eastern Europe and Central Asian (ECA) Countries' tried to examine the relation between corruption, poverty, and economic performance by using a panel data with estimating econometric model consisting of countries in the Eastern Europe and Central Asia countries. This study shows that corruption does not lead to poverty directly rather it gives rise to poverty through indirect channels by affecting socio-economic, administrative and political conditions. They identified that corruption affects the quality of government services and the shape of public expenditures, employment levels and income distribution etc. Further they suggested some measures such as laws and control, good governance to check corruption and eradicate poverty for improving the condition.

Centre for Media Study Report (2017) stated that virus of corruption is present at the grassroots level of the local Government system of Assam but it is decreased slowly for the initiative of the Government, public awareness and Medias' cooperation etc. According to this report, corruption in Assam is reduced to 18 percent during 2017 as against 34 percent in 2005.

3. Objectives

The main objectives of the paper are as follows:

a) To examine the awareness about PAPs among surveyed households of poverty alleviation schemes.

b) To find out whether there are any inclusion and exclusion errors in identifying beneficiaries for the poverty alleviation schemes.

c) To explore regarding corruption and its types in identifying the beneficiaries of poverty alleviation schemes.

4. Methodology

The present study was basically empirical in nature. The study was based on primary data. The primary data was collected from the Dhemaji District which is selected as the universe of study. The data was collected from the sample beneficiaries of the selected four poverty alleviation schemes through interview schedule. The collection of primary data was based on multi stage sampling technique. In the first stage, the district under investigation was selected by using purposive sampling technique. For example, Dhemaji district was selected for study which has a high percentage of population below poverty line. As per Human Development Report of Assam, 2014, in Dhemaji district 36.5 percent of population live below the poverty line. In the second stage, two development block i.e- Dhemaji and Sisiborgoan Development Block were selected purposively so as to ensure adequate representation of various population groups such as Schedule Tribes (ST), Schedule Caste (SC) and Other Backward Class (OBC). In the third stage, four villages namely Kechukhana, No 2 Lakhipather, Chinaichuk and Lawmuri were selected from the two blocks on the basis of distance from block headquarter. In the final stage, 226 beneficiaries were selected randomly on the basis of Below Poverty Line (BPL) families.

5. Results and Discussion

A number of poverty alleviation programmes are under operation either newly launched or restructured old programmes to reduce poverty in the country. It is highly essential for the people particularly those who are living below poverty line to know about the poverty alleviation schemes for their self interest.

During field study an attempt was made to analyse awareness level of beneficiaries regarding the poverty alleviation schemes. In order to do this, actual or potential beneficiaries were asked whether they had heard of or were aware about different poverty alleviation schemes. On the basis of response of the respondents a table was prepared which is furnished in Table 1.

**Table: 1: Percentage of Respondents' Awareness about Poverty Alleviation Schemes**

Name of the Schemes	Respondents' Awareness
Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA)	87.14
Indira Gandhi National Old Age Pension Scheme (lGNOAPS)	77.01
Pradhan Mantri Awaas Yujana (PMAY)	84.32

Mukhya Mantri Anna Suraksha Yojana (MMASY)	92.16

Source: Field Survey

Table 1 show that 92.16 percent of surveyed households were aware about MMASY followed by MGNREGA, PMAY and IGNOAPS. It shows that the awareness level about poverty alleviation schemes is quite satisfactory in the study area. However, if they are not aware about their own rights in the form of benefits it should be easy for the corrupt people to deprive the beneficiaries.

The awareness level of the surveyed households regarding the selected four Poverty Alleviation Schemes has been shown below with a bar chat in Figure 1.

Figure 1: Percentage of Respondents' Awareness about Poverty Alleviation Schemes
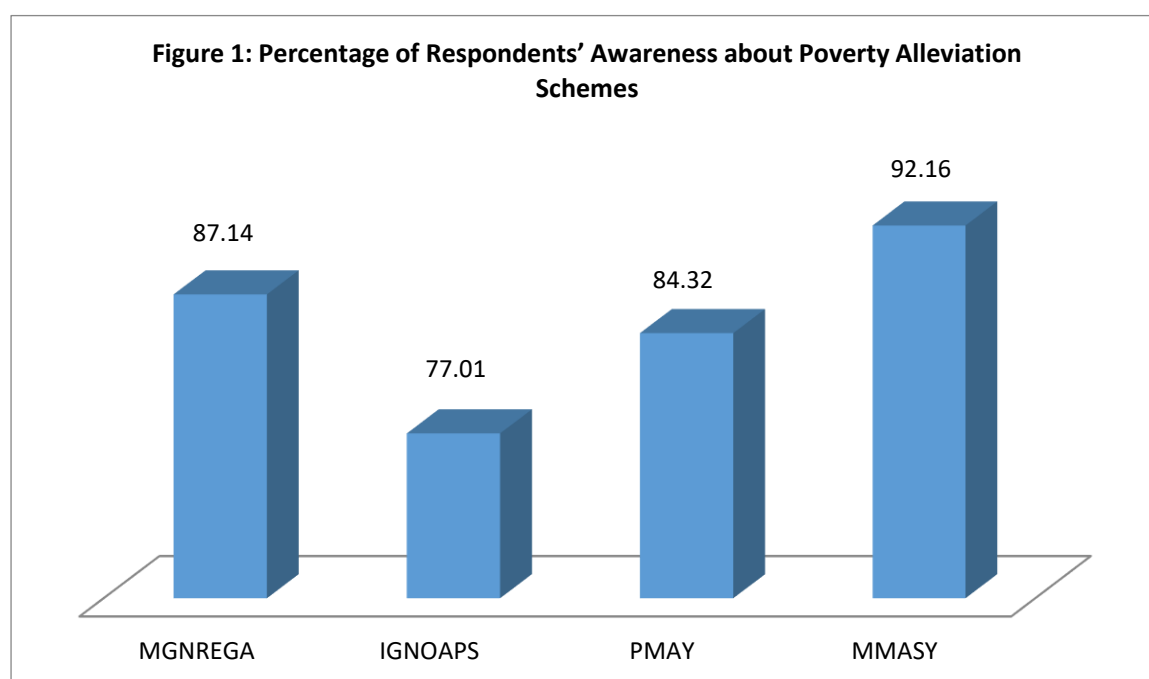
Source: Field Survey

Let us now begin our analysis of inclusion and exclusion errors of different poverty alleviation schemes. Inclusion Error will occur when a household/person does not satisfy the eligibility criteria for the scheme but enjoys the benefits of the schemes. It is found that in identifying the beneficiaries for poverty alleviation schemes some beneficiaries are selected with inclusion error which is really a great problem for proper execution of poverty alleviation schemes. So, an attempt was made to find out how many beneficiaries got the benefits of our selected poverty alleviation schemes under the study with inclusion error. The information collected from the beneficiaries was in Table 2

Table 2: Inclusion Errors in Identifying Beneficiaries.

Name of the Schemes	Error (Percentage)
Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA)	19.47
Indira Gandhi National Old Age Pension Scheme (lGNOAPS)	13.71

Pradhan Mantri Awaas Yujana (PMAY)	25.22
Mukhya Mantri Anna Suraksha Yojana (MMASY)	14.60

Source: Field Survey

Table 2 clearly reveals that in selecting the beneficiaries for an important scheme like MGNREGA 19.47 percent beneficiaries were identified with inclusion error. On the other hand, it is found that in identifying the beneficiaries for PMAY highest level of inclusion error (25.22 percent) was found. In case of identifying beneficiaries for IGNOAPS and MMASY inclusion error were 13.71 and 14.60 percent respectively. Thus it is found that the highest inclusion error occurs in case of PMAY and the least occurred in case of IGNOAPS.

The inclusion error may be considered by different factors. For example, a person or a household who is unlawfully receiving the benefits may be characterised by a number of non-eligibility conditions. These conditions may be different for different schemes. Hence an attempt was made to analyse the conditions which are not satisfied by the beneficiary and hence leads to inclusion error. In order to make things simple and illustrative only these major such conditions for each scheme are reported in Table 3.

Table 3: Percentage of Beneficiaries Violating Eligibility Criteria (Scheme wise)

Consumer Durables	Name of Schemes			
	MGNREGA	IGNOAPS	PMAY	MMASY
Four Wheeler	27.60	33.33	21.19	24.96
Three wheeler	56.86	46.68	69.75	53.18
Refrigerator	15.89	19.98	9.05	21.85

Source: Field Survey

Table 3 makes it clear that highest percentage of error arises in case of MGNREGA because of (56.86 percent) three wheeler followed by (27.60 percent) four wheeler and (15.9 percent) refrigerator. In case of IGNOAPS (46.68 percent) three wheeler followed by (33.33 percent) four wheeler and (19.98 percent) refrigerator. On the other hand, error arises in case of PMAY and MMASY because of (69.75 percent and 53.18 percent) three wheeler followed by (21.19 percent and 24.96 percent) four wheeler and (9.05 percent and 21.85 percent) refrigerator respectively.

The percentage of beneficiaries violating eligibility criteria regarding the selected four poverty alleviation schemes has been shown with a bar chat in Figure 2.

Figure 2: Percentage of Beneficiaries Violating Eligibility Criteria
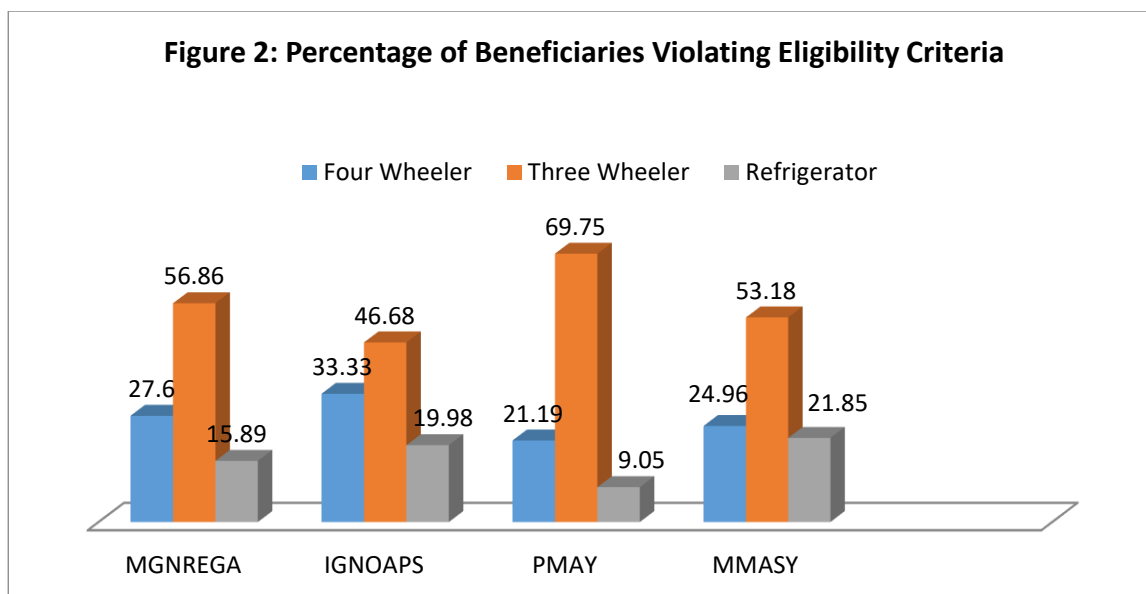
Source: Field Survey

During field study, some information regarding exclusion error was also found and it is important to examine the magnitude of exclusion error. An exclusion error occurs when a household/person does identify the criteria for a particular scheme but does not enjoy the benefits of the scheme. In the present study, some surveyed households informed that they got no benefits of the poverty alleviation schemes though they were eligible for the benefits of such schemes. All the collected information about exclusion error of our selected four schemes is presented in Table 4.

**Table 4: Exclusion Error in Identifying Beneficiaries (Percentage)**

Name of the Schemes	Error (Percentage)
Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA)	9.21
Indira Gandhi National Old Age Pension Scheme (lGNOAPS)	11.43
Pradhan Mantri Awaas Yujana (PMAY)	23.32
Mukhya Mantri Anna Suraksha Yojana (MMASY)	6.16

Source: Field Survey

Table 4 shows that the highest incidence of exclusion error occurred in case of PMAY (23.32 percent) followed by IGNOAPS (11.43 percent) MGNREGA (9.21 percent). On the other hand MMASY exhibits the least incidence of exclusion error.

The percentage of exclusion error in identifying beneficiaries has been shown below with a pie diagram in figure 3.

Figure 3: Exclusion Error in Identifying Beneficiaries
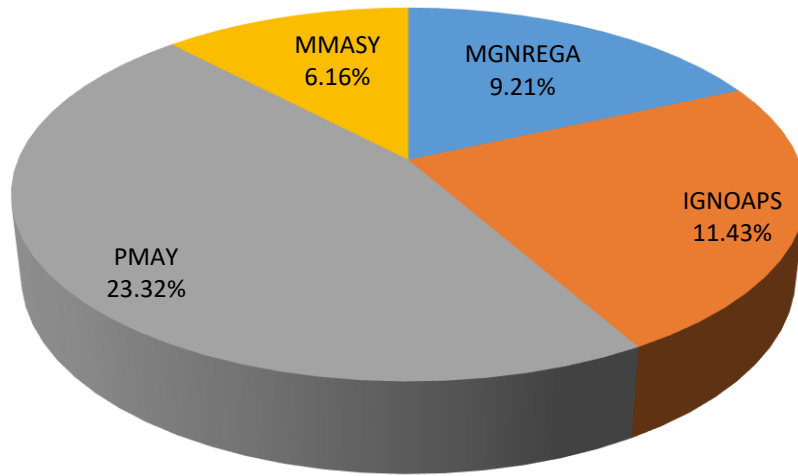
Source: Field Survey

In the present study an attempt was made to examine the extent of corruption in poverty alleviation programmes. Here the corruption is defined as a situation when a poverty alleviation benefits is given to a person by taking bribe or kickback in exchange or because of nepotism. Bribe is defined as offering money in exchange for a benefit. On the other hand kickback is defined as a negotiated bribery in exchange for services rendered. It is different from bribe in the sense that bribe is offered in advance to tempt or pursued public representative to get enrolled in the list of poverty alleviation benefits where as kickback is offered after the incidence of beneficiaries name in the list and starts receiving illegal benefits.

The details are furnished in Table 5.

Table 5: Variation of Bribes and Kickbacks Paid (Percentage)

Name of the Schemes	Beneficiaries providing Bribe	Beneficiaries providing Kickback
Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA)	5.31	7.05
Indira Gandhi National Old Age Pension Scheme (lGNOAPS)	14.06	4.43
Pradhan Mantri Awaas Yujana (PMAY)	87.12	15.34
Mukhya Mantri Anna Suraksha Yojana (MMASY)	2.24	1.15

Source: Field Survey

Table 5 shows that the percentage bribes and kickbacks is the highest in case of PMAY (87.12 percent providing bribes and 15.34 percent kickbacks). The practice of bribe and kickbacks is less progress in case of IGNOAPS and MGNREGA. The lowest was found in case of MMASY (2.24 percent providing bribe and 1.15 percent kickback).

Percentage of beneficiaries who took the benefits of our selected schemes by providing bribe and kickback is depicted with a bar chat in figure 4.

Figure 4: Variation of Bribe and Kickback Paid
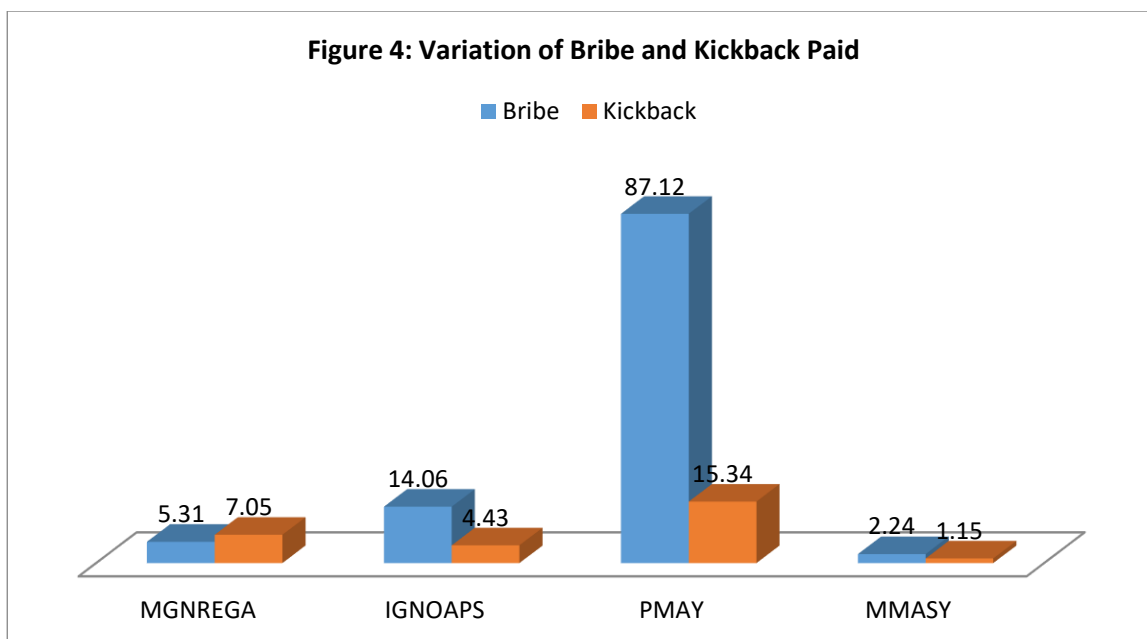
Source: Field Survey

Corruption in poverty alleviation programmes takes place not only in terms of bribe and kickback. Another form of corruption which is very popular in the study area with regard to distribution of benefits under poverty alleviation programmes is nepotism i.e. occur which a person is given benefits illegally simply because he or she has a relation of blood or otherwise with public representatives. The details are furnished in Table 6.

Table 6: Incidence of Nepotism in Poverty Alleviation Schemes

Name of the Schemes	Nepotism (Percentage)
Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA)	7.41
Indira Gandhi National Old Age Pension Scheme (lGNOAPS)	24.40
Pradhan Mantri Awaas Yujana (PMAY)	31.23
Mukhya Mantri Anna Suraksha Yojana (MMASY)	9.00

Source: Field Survey

Table 6 reveals that highest percentage of nepotism has occurred on the scheme PMAY and the total percentage was 31.23. On the other hand, it was found that in case of MGNREGA only 7.41 percent beneficiaries got the benefits of the scheme due to nepotism which is the lowest percentage among the four selected schemes. Thus it was found that in case of all the schemes a good percentage of beneficiaries took the benefit through nepotism and out of our 226 households 72.04 percent beneficiaries were related with nepotism.

During field study an attempt was made by the researcher to find out the type of nepotism corruption occurred in the study area in selecting beneficiaries. Nepotism was found mainly from three angles such as relatives, friends and neighbour. The information regarding nepotism corruption is shown in Table 7.

Table 7: Type of Nepotism Corruption Occurred in the Study Area.

Type of Nepotism	Percentage
As relatives	33.62
As friends	23.41
As neighbour	15.10

Source: Field survey

Table 7 clearly indicates that highest percentage (33.62 percent) of beneficiaries got the benefit of the schemes by nepotism corruption in the form of as relatives followed by as friendship (23.41percent). At the same time it was found that there were 15.10 percent beneficiaries who got the benefit of the schemes as neighbours of public representative or middleman.

Figure 5 indicates the percentage of nepotism corruption on different grounds.

Figure 5: Types of Nepotism Corruption
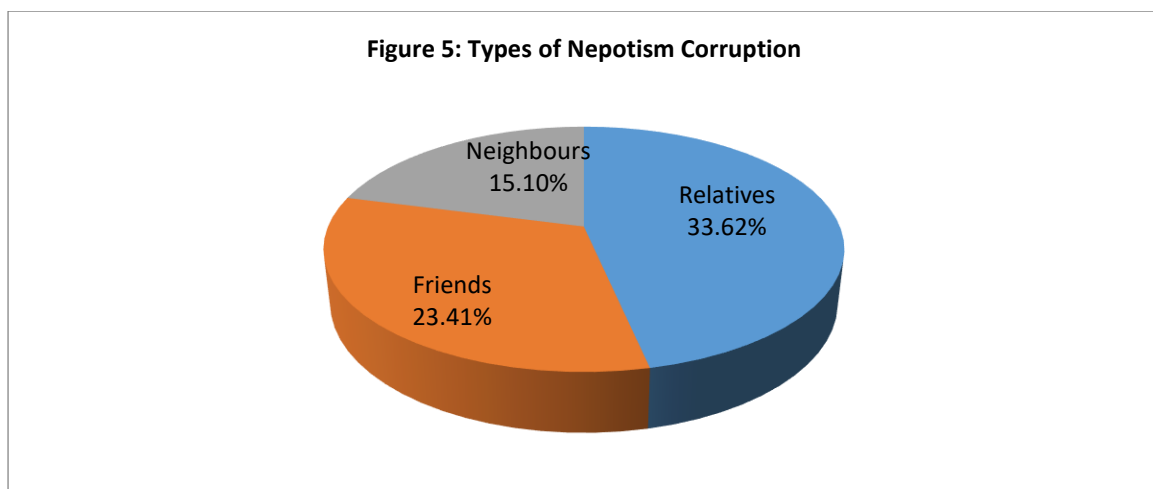
Source: Field survey

6. Conclusion:

The present study reveals that majority of the sample households were aware about selected poverty alleviation schemes under the study, while around 15 percent sample households were not aware about any such schemes. The identification of beneficiaries of different poverty alleviation schemes was also not free from corruption. It was found that some beneficiaries were selected for the poverty alleviation schemes though they were not eligible and the main reason behind this was corruption. The highest percentage of corruption was found in the selection of beneficiaries for the scheme PMAY.

Another important point is that some household were omitted as beneficiaries though they were eligible to get the benefit of some poverty alleviation schemes and the percentage of such households were 12.53 percent. There are also reported cases of bribery and kickbacks in the selected poverty alleviation schemes. This draws serious attention of the planners of government of Assam.

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