

Article

Celebrations During COVID-19 Pandemic in Udhabond Goan Panchayat of Assam

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A B S T R A C T

Since the Vedic era, villages in India were considered as the unit of administration and the powers were decentralized. The Panchayats held a very important place in the public administration during Ramayana and Mahabharata periods. Similarly, during the Buddhist and Mauryan periods, Panchayats or Gram Sangh was entrusted to run the village administration of republics. From the very beginning of the First Five Year plan, planners and policy makers paid serious attention to 'planning from below'. In 1952, the Community Development Programme was started, followed a year later by the national extension service, which envisaged an administrative set up to reach the population and to secure the fullest development of the rural community.

With regards to Coronavirus, as of February 2021, the total number of confirmed cases of Corona virus in Cachar District stands at 3302, active cases are 1794, recovered cases are 1498 and deceased 10 as per the Assam government portal. The first case of Covid-19 pandemic in Assam was reported on 31st March 2020 and Silchar being the north-east's second gateway reported to be one of the worst affected places with coronavirus. In the fight against coronavirus, many frontline warriors of this region tested positive for COVID-19. Due to the timely steps taken by Government Authorities, which was implemented smoothly at the local Goan Panchayat level, also helped control the spread of COVID-19.

Thus it became important for the researcher here to study the level of awareness people had in order to understand, how the local Udhabond Goan Panchayat at the village level worked along with the concerned government authorities in order to implement and control the spread of the virus.

Keywords: Goan Panchayat, Pandemic in Udhabond, COVID-19

Review of Literature

Numerous studies of Panchayati Raj System in India covering variety of problems and topics on historical, micro and macro levels, regional level as well as almost on all general aspects of panchayats have been conducted both by the government as well as by individuals scholars. Main findings

of these studies have been discussed in the following paragraphs.

Malaviya (1956) concluded that village panchayats are not relics of tribalism or feudalism but are the result of mature political thinking through ages. Village panchayats in India could really succeed in bringing about decentralisation

of economic and political power under the conditions of social and economic equality. Khanna (1956) revealed that panchayati raj has been suffering from a crisis of confidence and a low level of self-esteem. The Panchayati Raj System also suffers from some others difficulties like inadequate financial resources, in egalitarian attitudes of officials, mass illiteracy, ignorance, class consciousness, party strife and limited financial and administrative autonomy and lack of faith in grass-roots democracy. Finally, the author suggested that the basic needs of Panchayati Raj are (i) Sound, Scientific and properly articulate structure of government and (ii) an effective administrative machinery geared up to operate without friction.

Mathur and Narain (1969) concentrated basically on two issues: (i) Panchayati Raj and democracy and (ii) the political administrative aspects of panchayati Raj. They were of the view that there is a conflict between Panchayati Raj and parliamentary democracy. They concluded that the problem of official and non-official relationship is not so baffling as it is made out to be. Lastly, they suggested that the training and education programme for the elected representatives is essential for their success.

Desai (1969) dealt with the political struggle on the basic of caste and class in the context of Panchayati Raj. Maddick (1970) in respect of rural local government in India discussed that the Panchayati Raj in playing a great role in certain areas, particularly in promoting social change, economic development and the intelligent administration of representative Government.

Tak (1973) concluded that the present set-up of village panchayats under the three-tier system of Panchayati Raj based on the 'Lokneeti' (people's policy) and hence a number of new problems have emerged for making the Gram rajya a reality, it is essential to organise gram sabha in every village with sufficient powers, resources and representation. Bhatnagar (1978) dealt with political and administrative rules in interacting situations in a given system. It was inferred that linkages between politicians and administrators may be vertical as well as horizontal.

Objective of the Study

- To find out the level of exposure with regards to festival celebrations by the respondents
- To find out the level of exposure regarding Coronavirus by the respondents
- To find out the level of exposure on the role-played by Udharbond Goan Panchayat with regards to Covid-19

Methodology

The study was done in Udharbond Goan Panchayat in Cachar district of Assam. The base data was collected by administering a questionnaire, on educated middle-class people, belonging to the age group from 15-45 years. A

total of 50 respondents were selected with the help of purposive sampling method. The survey was done in the months of October-December 2020.

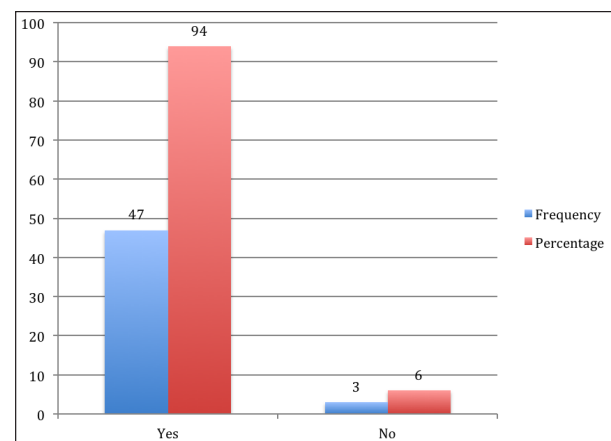
Findings of the Study

Table 1. Distribution of Respondents According to Festival Celebrations During COVID-19 Pandemic

S. No.	Response	Frequency	Percentage (%) of the respondents
1.	Yes	47	94
2.	No	3	6
Total		50	100

Graphical Representation of Table: 1

Graph: 1.1



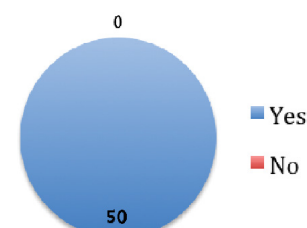
The above Table 1 and the above graphical representation shows that majority that is 94 percent of the respondents did celebrate festivals during the pandemic, while the rest 6 percent did not celebrate festivals during the pandemic.

Table 2. Distribution of Respondents According to Enjoying Festivals During the Covid-19 Pandemic

S. No.	Response	Frequency	Percentage (%) of the respondents
1	Yes	50	100
2	No	0	0
Total		50	100

Graphical Representation of Table: 2

Graph: 2.1



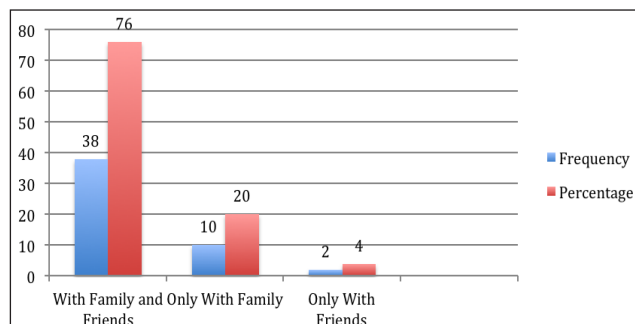
The above Table 2 and graph no.2.1 shows that 100 percent of the respondents did enjoy festivals during the pandemic.

Table 3.Distribution of Respondents According to Whom the Respondents Like to Spent for the Festivals During the Pandemic

S. No.	Response	Frequency	Percentage (%) of the respondents
1.	With Family and Friends	38	76
2.	Only with Family	10	20
3.	Only with Friends	2	4
Total		50	100

Graphical Representation of Table: 3

Graph 3.1



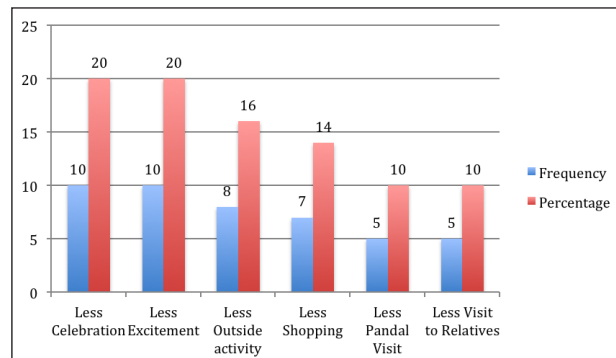
The Table 3 and Graph no. 3.1 reveals that majority, i.e. 76 percent of the respondents enjoy festivals with their Family and Friends during the pandemic, followed by 20 percent who enjoy festivals only with Family. Very few respondents enjoy festivals only with Friends during the pandemic.

Table 4.Distribution of Respondents According to Affects of Festive Celebrations During Pandemic

S. No.	Response	Frequency	Percentage (%) of the respondents
1.	Less Celebration	13	26
2.	Less Excitement	12	24
3.	Less Outside activity	8	16
4.	Less Shopping	7	14
5.	Less Pandal Visit	5	10
6.	Less Visit to Relatives	5	10
Total		50	100

Graphical Representation of Table: 4

Graph: 4.1



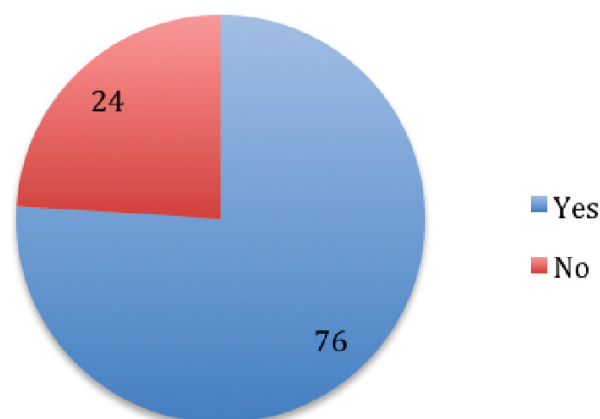
The Table 4 and Graph no. 4.1 shows that the Pandemic celebrations did affect the respondents festival celebrations as equal percentage of the respondents (20% each) did less celebration and were less excited. 16 percent of the respondents did less outside activity, followed by 14 percent, who did less shopping. 10 percent each respondent went for less Pandal visit and gave fewer visits to their relatives during the pandemic.

Table 5.Distribution of Respondents According to Celebrating Community Festivals Being Completely Prohibited by Goan Panchayat

S. No.	Response	Frequency	Percentage (%) of the respondents
1.	Yes	38	76
2.	No	12	24
Total		50	100

Graphical Representation of Table: 5

Graph 5.1



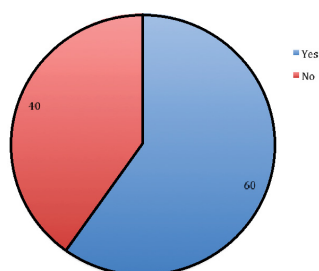
The Table 5 and Graph no. 5.1 reveals that 76 percent of the respondents felt that community festivals should be completely prohibited by Goan panchayat, followed by 24 percent who do not feel the same.

Table 6. Distribution of Respondents According to Celebrating Community Festivals Keeping the Goan Panchayat Approved/ Reviewed Covid Protocols in Mind

S. No.	Response	Frequency	Percentage (%) of the respondents
1.	Yes	30	60
2.	No	20	40
Total		50	100

Graphical Representation of Table: 6

Graph 6.1



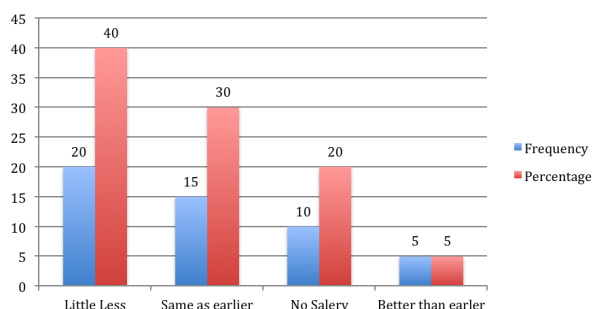
The Table 6 and the above graphical representation shows that majority i.e. 60% of the respondents celebrate community festivals by keeping the Goan Panchayat approved/ reviewed COVID-19 protocols in mind. The rest 40% did not follow community festivals by keeping the Goan Panchayat approved/ reviewed COVID-19 protocols in mind.

Table 7. Distribution of Respondents According to Family Shopping Spends for Celebrations During Pandemic Situation

S. No.	Response	Frequency	Percentage (%) of the respondents
1.	Little Less	20	40
2.	Same as Earlier	15	30
3.	No Salary	10	20
4.	Better than earlier	5	10
Total		50	100

Graphical Representation of Table: 7

Graph 7.1



The Table 7 and the above graphical representation reveals that 40 percent of the respondents did less shopping, 30 percent of the respondents did their shopping same as earlier. 20 percent of the respondents did not get paid and thus had no money to do shopping and the rest 10 percent did better than earlier with regards to celebrating festivals during the pandemic.

Table 8. Distribution of Respondents According to their Reaction on the Sop Issued In Regard to COVID-19 Pandemic by the Concerned Government Department and Role Played by Udharbond Panchayat Authorities During the Festive Season

S. No.	Response	Frequency	Percentage (%) of the respondents
1.	Neither Agree/ nor Disagree	20	40
2.	Satisfied	11	22
3.	Dissatisfied	10	20
4.	Very Dissatisfied	7	14
5.	Very Satisfied	2	4
Total		50	100

Graphical Representation of Table: 8

Graph 8.1

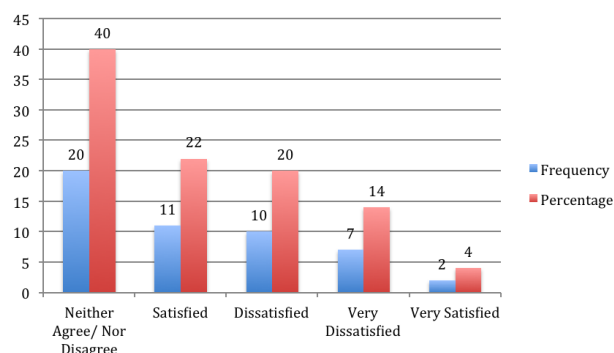


Table 9. Distribution of respondents according to following guidelines/ sop communicated to by the udharbond goan panchayat in compliance to the sop issued by the concerned government department

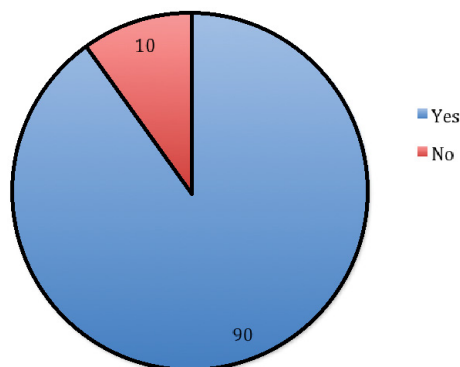
S. No.	Response	Frequency	Percentage (%) of the respondents
1.	Yes	45	90
2.	No	5	10
Total		50	100

The Table 8 and the above graphical representation shows that majority i.e. 40 percent of the respondents neither agree/ nor disagree on the sop issued by the concerned government department and role played by Udharbond

Panchayat authorities during this pandemic festive season. 22 percent of the respondents are satisfied, 20 percent are dissatisfied and 14 percent are very dissatisfied. The rest 4 percent are very satisfied.

Graphical Representation of Table: 9

Graph 9.1



The Table 9 and the above graphical representation shows that majority i.e. 90 percent of the respondents did abide by the guidelines/ SOP communicated to by the Udharbond Goan Panchayat in compliance to the sop issued by the concerned government authorities whereas only 10 percent did not follow the rules.

Major Findings of the Study

The following are the major findings from the Survey on “Celebrations during Pandemic in Udharbond Goan Panchayat of Assam”. A total of 50 respondents belonging to the age group of 15 to 45 years and different faith from Silchar Town were chosen for the study in the month of October-December 2020. The survey questionnaire is based on purposive sampling method.

- The study revealed that more than 94 percent of the respondents did celebrate festivals during the pandemic
- 100 percent respondents did enjoy festivals during the pandemic
- 76 percent of the respondents did enjoy festivals with family and friends during the pandemic
- Interestingly, it was found that Covid-19 did affect their festival celebrations as equal percentage of the respondents (20% each) did less celebration and were less excited. 16 percent of the respondents did less outside activity, followed by 14 percent, who did less shopping. 10 percent each respondent visited less Pandals visit and gave fewer visits to their relatives during the pandemic
- When enquired about community festivals to be completely prohibited by Goan Panchayat, majority (76%) of the respondents agreed, whereas only 24 percent of the respondents did not agree to it

- Moreover 60 percent of the respondents celebrated community festivals by keeping the Goan Panchayat approved/ reviewed COVID-19 protocols in mind. The rest 40 percent did not follow community festivals by keeping the Goan Panchayat approved/ reviewed COVID-19 protocols in mind
- When enquired about the family shopping spends in the Udharbond Goan Panchayat it was found that 40 percent of the respondents did little less shopping whereas, 30 percent of the respondents did their shopping same as earlier. 20 percent of the respondents did not get paid and thus had no money to do shopping and the rest 10 percent did better than earlier with regards to celebrating festivals during the pandemic
- 40 percent of the respondents neither agree/ nor disagree on the sop issued by the concerned government department and role played by Udharbond Gaon Panchayat authorities during this pandemic festive season. 22 percent were satisfied, 20 percent dissatisfied and 14 percent very dissatisfied. The remaining 4 percent were very satisfied
- Lastly it was found that 90 percent of the respondents did abide by the rules laid down by the Udharbond Goan panchayat in compliance to the SOP issued by the concerned govt. department whereas only 10 percent did not follow the rules

From the above discussion, it is clear that the respondents who belongs to the Udharbond Goan Panchayat did celebrate festivals and also enjoyed it with their family and friends during the pandemic. It was found that Covid-19 had affected the celebrations of festivals as majority of them were less excited, had less outside activity, and did less shopping during the pandemic. Also few of the respondents did not participate in any celebrations, went out for fewer Pandal, relative house visits, did less shopping during the pandemic situation.

Interestingly majority i.e. 60 percent of the respondents agreed that community festivals should be celebrated by keeping the Goan Panchayat approved/ reviewed COVID-19 protocols in mind. The rest 40 percent did not follow community festivals by keeping the Goan Panchayat approved/ reviewed COVID-19 protocols in mind. Majority of the respondents neither agree/ nor disagree on the sop issued by the concerned government department and role played by Udharbond Panchayat authorities during this pandemic festive season. Lastly, 90 percent of the respondents did abide by the rules laid down by the Udharbond Goan Panchayat in compliance to the sop issued by the concerned department whereas only 10 percent do not follow the rules.

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