

Baseline Survey of Minority Concentrated Districts

District Report

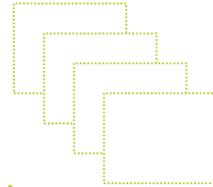
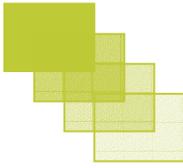
DHUBRI

Study Commissioned by
Ministry of Minority Affairs
Government of India

Study Conducted by



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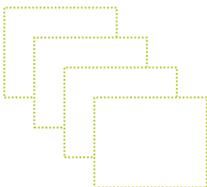


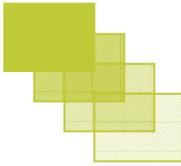
Commissioned by the Ministry of Minority Affairs, this Baseline Survey was planned for 90 minority concentrated districts (MCDs) identified by the Government of India across the country, and the Indian Council of Social Science Research (ICSSR), New Delhi coordinates the entire survey.

Omeo Kumar Das Institute of Social Change and Development, Guwahati has been assigned to carry out the Survey for four states of the Northeast, namely Assam, Arunachal Pradesh, Meghalaya and Manipur.

This report contains the results of the survey for Dhubri district of Assam.

The help and support received at various stages from the villagers, government officials and all other individuals are most gratefully acknowledged. ■



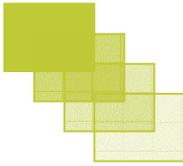


CONTENTS

BACKGROUND.....	7
METHODOLOGY.....	8
TOOLS USED	9
A BRIEF PROFILE OF DHUBRI.....	10
2.1 AREA AND LOCATION.....	10
2.2 ADMINISTRATIVE DIVISION	10
2.3 RESOURCE BASE	11
2.3.1 <i>Population</i>	11
2.3.2 <i>Sex Ratio</i>	11
2.3.3 <i>Literacy Rate</i>	11
2.3.4 <i>Distribution of workforce in Dhubri District</i>	11
2.3.5 <i>Human Development Index</i>	12
2.3 NATURAL RESOURCE BASE	13
2.4. ECONOMY	14
2.4.1 <i>Plantation and Horticulture</i>	14
2.4.2 <i>Livestock and Diary</i>	15
2.4.3 <i>Other Non-farm Sectors</i>	15
2.5 INFRASTRUCTURE AND CONNECTIVITY.....	16
2.5.1 <i>Transport and communication</i>	16
2.5.2 <i>Banking</i>	17
2.5.4 <i>Basic Amenities</i>	17
PROFILE OF THE SAMPLE VILLAGES	20
3.1 DEMOGRAPHIC PROFILE	20
3.2 SEX RATIO	20
3.3 LITERACY RATE.....	20
3.4 FACILITIES	21
3.4.1 <i>Electricity</i>	21
3.4.2 <i>Drinking Water</i>	21
3.4.3 <i>Toilet Facility</i>	21
3.4.4 <i>Education</i>	22
3.4.5 <i>Health Facilities</i>	22
3.4.6 <i>Other Facilities</i>	23
3.5 VILLAGE ORGANIZATIONS	23
3.6 CROP PRODUCTIVITY STATUS.....	23
3.7 INPUT STATUS FOR CULTIVATION	24
3.7.1 <i>Current Inputs</i>	24
3.7.2 <i>Capital Inputs</i>	24
3.8 HANDICRAFT.....	25
3.9 CREDIT.....	25
3.9.1 <i>Purpose for availing Credit</i>	25
3.9.2 <i>Sources of Credit</i>	26
3.10 MIGRATION, EMPLOYMENT AND WAGE INCOME EARNING	26
3.11 RURAL DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMMES AND BENEFICIARIES ASSISTED.....	27
3.11.1 <i>Sponsored Programmes</i>	27
3.11.2 <i>Old Age Pension & Widow Pension</i>	28
3.12 PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION SYSTEM.....	28
3.13 COMMON PROPERTY UTILIZATION PATTERN.....	29



3.14	DEVELOPMENT REALIZATIONS	29
3.15	SUMMARY.....	30
RESULT OF THE BASELINE SURVEY		31
4.1	RELIGIOUS AND CASTE COMPOSITION.....	31
4.2	MOTHER TONGUE.....	31
4.3	AGE AND SEX.....	31
4.4	HOUSEHOLD SIZE.....	32
4.5	MARITAL STATUS	32
4.6	EDUCATIONAL STATUS.....	32
4.7	OCCUPATION AND EMPLOYMENT	33
4.7.1	<i>Occupation and Industry</i>	33
4.7.2	<i>Self-Employment Scenario</i>	34
4.7.3	<i>Additional Employment and Preference</i>	35
4.7.4	<i>Migrant Workers</i>	35
4.8	LAND AND OTHER ASSETS	36
4.8.1	<i>Cultivated Land: Ownership and Operational Holding</i>	36
4.9	LIVESTOCK.....	37
4.10	OWNERSHIP OF PRODUCTIVE AND OTHER ASSETS	37
4.10.1	<i>Agricultural Implements</i>	37
4.10.2	<i>Transport</i>	37
4.10.3	<i>Non-agricultural Machinery Implements</i>	38
4.10.4	<i>Modern Household Assets</i>	38
4.10.5	<i>Financial Assets</i>	38
4.11	HOUSING STATUS	38
4.11.1	<i>House type and availability of living space</i>	38
4.11.2	<i>Domestic lighting and fuel use</i>	39
4.11.3	<i>Drinking water facilities</i>	39
4.11.4	<i>Sanitation and Drainage Facility</i>	40
4.12	INDEBTEDNESS OF RURAL HOUSEHOLDS	40
4.13	INCOME AND EXPENDITURE	41
4.14	CURRENT EDUCATIONAL STATUS, SKILL AND TRAINING	42
4.15	PRESENT HEALTH SCENARIO	43
4.16	MATERNAL AND CHILD HEALTH	43
4.16.1	<i>Immunisation of Children below 5 Years</i>	43
4.16.2	<i>Delivery Care</i>	44
4.17	POOR AND THE PDS SUPPORT.....	45
4.18	AWARENESS ABOUT GOVERNMENT SCHEMES	45
4.19	PARTICIPATION IN THE SOCIO-POLITICAL AFFAIRS.....	46
4.20	CONFLICT, INSECURITY AND ACCESS TO MEDIA AND COMMUNICATION	46
4.21	ASPIRATIONS.....	46
DEVELOPMENT DEFICITS		48
LIST OF SURVEYED VILLAGES.....		50



LIST OF TABLES

Table IV.1:	Religion and Caste Wise Distribution of the Households
Table IV.2:	Mother Tongue Wise Distribution of the Households
Table IV.3:	Age-group, Sex and Religion wise Distribution of the Households
Table IV.4:	Percentage Distribution of the Households by Household Size
Table IV.5:	Percentage Distribution of the Sample Population by Marital Status
Table IV.6:	Percentage Distribution of the Sample Population by Educational Status
Table IV.7:	Percentage Distribution of Main Occupation by Religion and Gender
Table IV.8:	Percentage Distribution of Secondary Occupation by Religion and Gender
Table IV. 9:	Percentage Distribution of Workforce by Main industry
Table IV. 10:	Percentage Distribution of Workforce by Employment Days -Main Occupation
Table IV. 11:	Percentage Distribution of Workforce by Employment Days - Secondary Occupation
Table IV.12:	Problems Faced by the Self-employed in Business
Table IV.13:	Distribution of Households Looking for More Employments
Table IV.14:	Percentage Distribution of People Looking for More Employment by Their Preference
Table IV.15 A:	Occupational Distribution of the Migrant Workers
Table IV.15 B:	Percentage Distribution of the Migrant Workers by Place of Migration
Table IV.16:	Percentage Distribution of the Migrant Workers by Duration of Migration
Table IV.17 A:	Size and Class Distribution of Own Cultivated land
Table IV.17 B:	Size and Class Distribution of Total Cultivated land
Table IV.18:	Size and Class Distribution of Leased in Land
Table IV.19:	Size and Class Distribution of Leased out Land
Table IV.20:	Size and Class Distribution of Households with Mortgaged in Land
Table IV.21:	Size and Class Distribution of Households with Mortgaged out Land
Table IV.22:	Distribution of Households with Livestock
Table IV.23:	Distribution of Households with Agricultural Implements
Table IV.24:	Distribution of Households with Financial Assets
Table IV.25:	Distribution of Households by Household Status
Table IV.26:	Distribution of Households by Type of House
Table IV.27:	Household by number of rooms
Table IV.28:	Household by Electricity connection
Table IV.29:	Household by Other Sources of light
Table IV. 30:	Household by Source of Drinking Water
Table IV. 31:	Household by Distance to Source of Drinking Water
Table IV. 32:	Household by Type of Toilet Facilities
Table IV. 33:	Household by Source of Fuel
Table IV.34:	Households with Drainage Facility
Table IV.35:	Indebted Households and Number of Loans
Table IV.36:	Indebted Households by Amount of Loan and Source
Table IV.37:	Indebted Households by Amount of Loan and Purpose

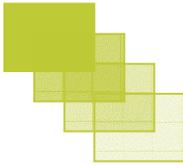
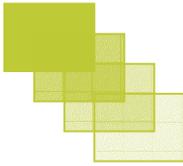


Table IV. 38:	Household by Net Income
Table IV. 39:	Households and Expenditure
Table IV. 40:	Expenditure on Cereals and Pulses
Table IV. 41:	Expenditure on Veg., Milk, Meat
Table IV. 42:	Expenditure on Cloths, Foot Wears and Bedding etc.
Table IV. 43:	Expenditure on education
Table IV. 44:	Expenditure on Health
Table IV. 45:	Expenditure on Festival and Social Ceremonies
Table IV. 46:	Expenditure on Electricity, Gas etc.
Table IV. 47:	Expenditure on Telephone
Table IV.48:	Expenditure on House repairing etc.
Table IV. 49:	Education Level
Table IV. 50:	Type of school
Table IV. 51:	Reason for Dropout
Table IV. 52:	Aspiration of education for Boys
Table IV. 53:	Aspiration of Education for Girls
Table IV. 54:	Households Interested to Take Training
Table IV. 55:	Desired type of Training (Percentage)
Table IV. 56:	Persons with Different Kind of Diseases
Table IV. 57:	Treated in Various Service Providers
Table IV. 58:	Hospitalization
Table IV. 59:	Immunization Details
Table IV. 60:	Children fully Immunized by Age-group
Table IV. 61:	Children Receiving Vaccine by Government Agency
Table IV. 62:	Children not immunized
Table IV. 63 :	Last child born
Table IV. 64:	Assistance in Delivery
Table IV. 65:	BPL Category
Table IV. 66:	BPL Ration Card
Table IV. 67:	Households by BPL category and BPL card
Table IV. 67:	Households by BPL category and BPL card
Table IV.68 A:	Avail PDS Ration
Table IV.68 B:	Able to Buy Ration from PDS
Table IV.69:	Difficulties Faced in Accessing PDS
Table IV.70:	Awareness about Various Govt. Programmes
Table IV.71:	Benefited from Various Govt. Programmes
Table IV. 72 A:	Vote in the Last Year
Table IV.72B:	Vote in the Last y Year
Table IV. 73:	Households by Membership
Table IV. 74:	Households by Level of Conflict-led Problems
Table IV. 75:	Households by Access to Newspaper, Radio, TV etc.
Table IV.76:	Lack in the Village
Table IV.77:	Important Deprivation
Table IV.78:	Opinion on Welfare of the Minority



BACKGROUND

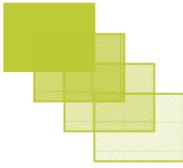
Issues relating to disparities across socio-religious communities have attracted much attention of the government of India of late. There is a growing realization about the relative backwardness of the religious minorities more particularly the Muslim as a religious community in India. The Sachar Committee, which was instituted specifically to look into the relative deprivations of Muslims vis-à-vis other socio religious categories in various dimensions of development, in its report on “Social Economic and Educational Status of the Muslim Community of India”, exhibited deficits and deprivations of Muslims in all dimensions of development. Assam is among the four states with large Muslim population where according to the Committee the situation is grave. Therefore, there is a need to generate data to evaluate and address issues of Muslim backwardness in the state.

In order to ensure that the benefits of schemes and programmes of government reach the relatively disadvantaged segments of society districts having a substantial minority population on the basis of backwardness parameters were identified. Based on 2001 Census, using two backwardness parameters, viz., (1) religion specific socio-economic indicators at the district level in terms of literacy rate; female literacy rate; work participation rate; and female work participation rate and (2) basic amenities indicators at the district level in terms of percentage of households with pucca walls, safe drinking water, electricity and w/c latrines, the Ministry of Minority Affairs identified 90 Minority Concentration Districts throughout the country which are falling behind the national average in these parameters. Of these 90 districts, 53 districts have both socio-economic and basic amenities below national average, 21 districts have socio-economic parameters below national average and 16 have basic amenities below national average. The basic idea is to formulate a multi-sectoral programme for the 90 MCDs which envisage for providing beneficiary oriented schemes to minorities and infrastructure development for the entire community in the districts.

Against this backdrop the baseline survey in MCDs was conceived to

- (a) identify how existing programmes are currently targeting these districts and on the basis of the assessment to develop special programmes to provide these facilities and ensure accessibility to them in the most backward areas in a faster way; and
- (b) create socio-economic profiles of the targeted districts, and receive inputs that would help improve literacy rate, especially female literacy rate, and overall work participation rate, especially female work participation rate that have a significant impact on economic development.

The survey would more specifically try to identify the gaps in (1) availability of infrastructure like schools, health centers, ICDE centers and drinking water supply (2) housing and sanitation (3) critical linkages like rural road, ITIs, banking facilities, markets etc. and also (4) identification of artisanal income generating activities in which villagers have comparative advantage.



METHODOLOGY

The present survey has been confined to rural areas. Considering the availability of data Tehsil level information has been used for stratification purpose.

Villages are taken as the first stage units (FSU) for the survey. However, before selection of sample villages, each district under the coverage was stratified first. All tehsils in a district were grouped into three strata in terms of minority population after arranging them in descending order of minority population. The grouping/stratification has been done in such a way so that the first stratum constitutes top 20% of tehsils, the second stratum constitutes middle 50% and the third/last stratum constitutes bottom 30% of tehsils in the arranged frame. The ranges vary in accordance with degree of concentration of minority population in respective districts.

Depending upon the size of the district, 25 or 30 villages were selected from each district. 25 villages were chosen if the rural population of the district is below 5 lacs; otherwise 30 villages were chosen.

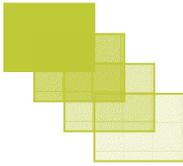
The number of villages surveyed in each stratum was directly proportional to the share of each stratum/group of tehsils (according to population) to the district population, subject to a minimum allocation of 6 villages to each stratum.

Required number of sample villages from each stratum have been selected as per the probability proportion to size (PPS) with replacement, size being total population of the village as per Census 2001.

In case of household selection, complete listing of all households (by door to door visit) has been done in case of sample villages with less than 1200 population. However, in case of those villages with population 1200 or more, three or more hamlet-groups (hg's) were formed in the village as per the practice followed by NSSO¹. From among them, a sample of 2 hg's was selected for listing of households. The hg having maximum concentration of minority population was selected with probability 1. From among the remaining hg's, one more hg were selected at random. The listing and sampling of households were independent for each selected hg.

In each selected hg, the listed households were grouped into strata as per the minority status of the household. In other words, all Muslim households formed one second-stage stratum (SSS), all Christian households another SSS, and so on.

About 30 households were selected in all from each sample village for detailed enquiry. These 30 households were allocated over 2 selected hg's (if hg's formed) and among the respective SSS in proportion to total number of households listed in the respective frames. A minimum of 2 households were allocated to an ultimate SSS. The required number of sample households from each SSS were selected by systematic random sampling without replacement (SRSWOR). In case of village having less than 30 households all the households were surveyed.



The rule followed by NSSO for forming hamlet-groups is

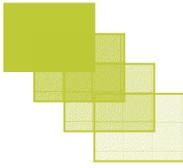
Approximate present population of the village	no. of hamlet-group to be formed
1200 to 1799	3
1800 to 2399	4
2400 to 2999	5
3000 to 3599	6
..... and so on	

Following the above methodology, total 30 villages of the district Dhubri were identified, and 30 households from each village was selected for the sample survey. The present report is based on the data gathered from the total 900 sample households of the district.

TOOLS USED

Relevant data were collected with the help of (1) Rural Household Schedule and (2) Village Schedule. The rural household schedule tries to capture different dimensions of socio-economic and situational variables like employment, migration and occupation details, land and other assets, ownership of productive and other assets, livestock details, housing status, rural indebtedness, family income and expenditure, current educational status and skill training, aspiration of parents of current students, awareness and participation, local conflicts and loss of life and property, access to media and communication and general aspirations of the people.

The village schedule tries to garner authentic data regarding the village. Information such as basic population data, facilities, village organizations, land use and land transfers, credit facilities, commuting and migration data, job and wage related information, information on individual beneficiary oriented programmes, data on education including physical facilities, health, different development programmes, common property resources, and the public distribution system prevailing in the rural areas. ■



A BRIEF PROFILE OF DHUBRI

2.1 Area and Location

Dhubri district is situated in the extreme western corner of Assam. This district is located on the globe between 89.42 to 90.12 degree east longitude and 26.22 to 25.28 degree north latitude. The district is situated at 30 meters above the sea level on average. The river Brahmaputra flows through the district. On the Northern side of the river Dhubri and Bilasipara Sub-Divisions are situated and on the Southern side with Southa Salmara-Mankachar Sub-Division. The district of Dhubri is surrounded by the Kokrajhar district in the north, Meghalaya & Bangladesh in the south, Bongaigaon & Goalpara district in the east, West Bengal and Bangladesh in the west. The total area of Dhubri district is 2838 sq. km. having a distance of about 290 k.m. from the State capital, Dispur. It has four urban areas [Dhubri (*Sadar*), *Bilasipara*, *South Salmara* and *Mankachar*] covering an area of 27.24 sq. km., with a total urban population of 190546.

2.2 Administrative Division

Administratively, Dhubri has three sub-divisions namely Dhubri, Bilasipara, and South Salmara-Mankachar along with eight revenue circles (Tehsils) with fourteen blocks.

Administrative Divisions of Dhubri

Sl. No.	Type	Number	Sl. No.	Type	Number
1.	Revenue Circle	8	2.	Tehsil	7
3.	Sub-Tehsil	2	4.	Revenue Village*	1133
5.	Model Village	3	6.	Anchalik Panchayat	14
7.	Mahkuma Parishad	3	8.	Municipal Board	1
9.	Gaon Panchayat*	168	10.	Police Outpost	7
11.	Basic Town	4	12.	Police Station	8
13.	Fire Service Station	2	14.	Police Watchpost	36
15.	Border Outpost	35	16.	River Police Outpost	3

* After the formation of the BTAD

The total number of revenue villages in the district is 1133. The total number of Gram Panchayats is 168 covering these villages. According to the 2001 Census, the total rural population of the district stands at 1444043 covering a rural stretch of 2810.76 sq. km.



2.3 Resource Base

2.3.1 Population

As per the Census data 2001, 1634589 persons lived in Dhubri out of which about 88 per cent are rural. About 70 per cent of the total population is from Minority communities of which more than 95 per cent are Muslims. The population density of the district is 584, which is much higher than the state density of population i.e. 340 persons as per 2001 Census.

The decadal variation of population growth shows that population growth has been maintaining a steady rate since 1951 to 1991. However, since 1991, there has been a fall in population growth in the district. The Crude Birth Rate (CBR) and Total Fertility Rates (CDR) for the district are 38.16 and 4.04 respectively.

Decadal Growth of Population

<i>Location</i>	<i>1901-1911</i>	<i>1911-1921</i>	<i>1921-1931</i>	<i>1931-1941</i>	<i>1941-1951</i>	<i>1951-1961</i>	<i>1961-1971</i>	<i>1971-1991</i>	<i>1991-2001</i>
Dhubri	29.97	26.92	15.76	14.83	9.25	27.10	40.51	56.57	23.42
Assam	16.99	20.48	19.91	20.40	19.93	34.98	34.95	53.26	18.92

Source: Statistical Handbook of Assam, 2006

2.3.2 Sex Ratio

The sex ratio of the district as per 2001 census is 944, which is slightly higher than the state sex ratio of 935.

2.3.3 Literacy Rate

The literacy rate of the Dhubri district is 49.86 per cent as against of 63.25 per cent of the state total. Of this, the male literacy rate is 45.37 per cent and female literacy is 33.82 per cent.

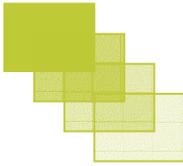
Literacy Rate by Area, Sex and Caste

<i>Total</i>			<i>Rural</i>	<i>Urban</i>	<i>SC</i>		<i>ST</i>	
Total	Male	Female	Total	Total	Male	Female	Male	Female
49.86	45.37	33.82	43.90	77.45	70.00	48.51	77.53	56.20

Source: Statistical Handbook of Assam, 2006

2.3.4 Distribution of workforce in Dhubri District

The work participation rate in the district is 28.87 in 2001, of which 28.84 and 29.11 represent rural and urban work participation rates respectively. The distribution of work forces in the district as per the Census 2001 is shown below.



Distribution of workforce

Location	Total/Urban/Rural	Total/Male/Female	% of Workers to total population		
			Total	Main Workers	Marginal Workers
Assam	Total	Total	35.9	26.6	9.3
		Male	49.9	42.3	7.6
		Female	20.8	9.7	11.1
	Urban	Total	32.0	29.6	2.4
		Male	51.0	48.2	2.8
		Female	10.3	8.4	1.9
	Rural	Total	36.4	26.1	10.3
		Male	49.8	41.5	8.3
		Female	22.3	9.9	12.4
Dhubri	Total	Total	28.07	24.47	15.24
		Male	50.48	43.67	10.05
		Female	4.34	4.14	48.42
	Urban	Total	4.92	24.18	16.16
		Male	8.82	43.32	10.60
		Female	0.80	3.92	51.49
	Rural	Total	23.15	26.69	8.30
		Male	41.66	46.29	5.95
		Female	3.54	5.89	24.13

Source: Statistical Handbook of Assam, 2006

Among the total rural workforce of Dhubri, the Census data, 2001 reveals that there are 184811 cultivators, 80118 agricultural labourers, 96954 are other workers. Besides, the total workforce of the district the total number of non-workers is 940082 and 30510 are marginal workers.

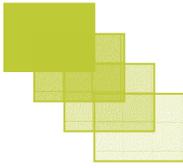
Non-Workers to Total Population

	Total	Rural	Urban
Persons	940082	822042	118040
Male	344332	299658	44674
Female	595750	522384	73366

Source: Statistical Handbook of Assam, 2006

2.3.5 Human Development Index

Dhubri is positioned at the bottom in the HDI list of Assam with considerable lags in the development procedure of the district. The major HDI components of Dhubri district are shown in the following Table:



Human Development Index

Location	HDI Value	Income Index	Education Index	Health Index
Dhubri	0.214	0.102	0.454	0.086
Assam	0.407	0.286	0.595	0.343

Source: Human Development Report, 2003, GOI

Relating to Gender related Development Index (GDI) also, Dhubri ranks at the lower part of the list having 21st rank, just before Karimganj and Nagaon.

Gender Related Development Index (GDI) of Dhubri

GDI Index	GDI Rank	HDI Index	HDI Rank	HDI rank - GDI rank
0.206	21	0.214	23	2

2.3 Natural Resource Base

The agro climatic region and zone of Dhubri district is lower Brahmaputra Valley, which falls under the Eastern Himalayan region. The region is endowed with 12% of the total geographical area under forest cover. The topography of the district is very peculiar. It has got many rivers, small ranges of hillocks as well as several natural depressions. Physically the greater part of the district is levelled plain land. The soil of the district has been found to be heterogenous in character. The majority of the places particularly reverine tracts loamy to sandy loam soil are predominant. In some areas, clay to heavy clay soil also in existence. Soil reaction is acidic and found to vary from 5.6 to 6.5 in pH scale.

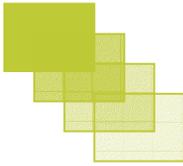
Land Utilisation Pattern (in Hectare)

Total area	Forest Cover	Non-agricultural Use of Land	Fallow Land	Not Sown Area	Total Cropped Area	Multiple Cropping Area
9478	39742	56283	15249	143797	220427	76630

Source: Statistical Handbook of Assam, 2006

Dhubri has a total of 27915 hectares of land under reserve forests along with a proposed 18588 hectares of land to be proposed reserve forest, altogether showing total forest cover as 46503 hectares for the district. However, no concret target has so far been made by the government for enhancing the forest coverage of the district.

Along with the river Brahmaputra, the district is also endowed with tributary rivers including *Gadadhar*, *Sonkosh*, *Saralbhang*, *Champabati*, *Hale*, *Jinjiram* etc., along with a few natural wetlands like *Tamranga Beel*, *Dhalani Beel* etc. These water sources are important reservoirs of fisheries. The district has a total of 75 registered *beel* fisheries and 13 registered river fisheries.



The district experiences a warm humid climate. Monsoon usually starts from the month of June and continue up to early September. The district also experience substantial amount of pre-monsoon rain starting from the month of April. The relative humidity is as on average 90% and average annual rainfall is about 2244 mm.

2.4. Economy

Dhubri district is primarily dependent on agriculture and forest products. Main source of income is paddy with surplus production along with cash crops including Jute and mustered seed. From forest mainly timber and bamboo add to the income though boulder and sand also available. Fish, milk, meat and egg have small contribution to the economy. Land revenue collection is very small in amount whereas excise duty occupies a lion's share of the Government exchequer. Devoid of any industrial production the district is considered as one of the poor districts of Assam. The share of different sectors contributing income in the district is shown below:

Sector wise Share in Dhubri

Primary	Secondary	Tertiary
75.8	6.2	18.0

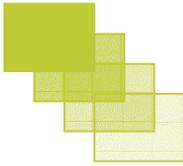
The economy of Dhubri is rural with lower rate of urbanization over the years. As already pointed out, the district has only three urban locations of which Dhubri is rated as class IV urban township. The total employment in agriculture sector of the district is 75.9 per cent with 28.84 per cent of agricultural labourers.

Major cropping pattern of the district is rice based cropping system in which combinations like winter rice - wheat, winter rice - mustard - jute, summer rice - winter rice - vegetables, and summer rice - mustard/pulses/potato/vegetables are followed. The farming system of the district is traditional in general, so far farm mechanization is concerned in general.

The industrial scenario of the district is not much encouraging. As of 31-12-2005, the district had 1120 registered Small-Scale Industries (SSIs). Although, number wise, Dhubri has a good number of SSIs, but in terms of profitable venturing the district has not attained desirable progress despite having rich potentialities.

2.4.1 Plantation and Horticulture

The district has vast potential for development of plantation and horticultural crops. There has been an impressive growth of horticultural crops in the district in recent years. At present horticultural crops are cultivated in 47150 with fruits and nut crops 20000 hectares, vegetables 11000 hectares, root and tuber crops such as tapioca, colocasia, sweet potato etc. in 6200 hectares. Besides, other horticultural crops are also cultivated in the district. Most of these horticultural crops are cultivated in traditional ways. Therefore, the yield and quality of these products are not up to the commercial grades available in



the market. Government record reveals that there are about 19300 hectares of additional area which can be brought under horticulture with minimum effort.

Regarding sericulture activities, Dhubri enjoys the reputation of being one of the important locations in Assam for producing the good quality *Eri* cocoons and its fabric. Since the feedstock is abundantly available, the district has very good potential for the development of *eri* culture in particular. The Department of Sericulture has so far established two Eri Concentration Centres(ECC) at Bongishijhora & Ujanpara along with four Collective Mulberry Gardens(CMG) at Kajigaon, Duligaon, Bonnyaguri and Borshijhora to produce Eri and Mulberry reeling cocoons and for free distribution of Eri and Mulberry food plants to the private rearers to conduct commercial rearing for producing more cocoons. At present the District has undertaken to plant 116.50 hectares of Eri food plants, 23 hectares of Muga food plants and 70.50 hectares of Mulberry food plants covering 107 sericulture villages among 4260. In the year 2000, the District has produced 12,753 Kgs. of Eri cut cocoons and 472 Kgs. of Mulberry raw silk. A central project has been introduced in this district under Catalytic Development Programme since 1998-99 for three years covering 60 acres of Eri food plants, 80 acres of Muga food plants and 25 acres of Mulberry food plants. The DRDA, Dhubri has sponsored a “Golden Thread Project “for the development of 250 of Eri farmers.

2.4.2 Livestock and Diary

Livestock farming and dairying practices are common in the rural households of Dhubri district. However, such activities have not properly been developed to be called for commercial ventures. As per the Livestock Census of 2003, the district has different types of livestock including cattle, buffaloes, sheep, goats, pigs, horses, fowls and ducks.

Livestock Population

Cattle		Buffaloes	Sheep	Goats	Pigs
<i>Crossed</i>	<i>Local</i>				
7105	510603	17434	14143	197507	50314

Horses & Ponies	Fowls	Ducks
201	872625	393199

Source: Statistical Handbook of Assam, 2006

The poultry farming is a growing business in Dhubri. The per capita per annum availability of eggs in the district is at 20 as against the state average of 18 eggs.

2.4.3 Other Non-farm Sectors

The district of Dhubri various natural resources like minerals, forest wealth besides adequate water from many rivers covering major part of the district. Based on these resources, productive units may be established. The district is potential enough to set up industries based on the raw materials available in this district, such as Jute, Bamboo,



Paddy, Pulses, Wheat, Potatoes and Mustered Oil seed. Moreover, fruits and vegetables such as Pineapple, Tomato, and Raw Cashew nuts can play significant roll in respect of food processing industries.

Handicraft Industries are performing a major roll in upliftment of economic condition of rural artisans engaged in making items from Jute (Chalakura, Dhubri, Gauripur and Alomganj etc.), Bamboo, Pith craft (Debottar Hasdaha, Jhapusabari, Gauripur and Bishkhowa), Terrakotta (Asharikandi, Agomoni and Bilasipara)etc. A few localities have become cluster area in a particular type of trade as indicated below which are providing vast employment to the people of this district.

The skill of weaving is inherited by almost every household in the district mostly by the Bodos, Rabhas, Rajbongsis, Tanti and Ansari communities. They have their own distinctive patterns, designs & motifs with magnificent colour combinations.

Agro-processing units like rice mills, flourmills and mustard oil extraction mills are also available in Dhubri.

2.5 Infrastructure and connectivity

Availability and assess to infrastructure are the primary requirements of socio-economic progress of a region. Of all the infrastructure facilities, transport and communication; power and energy; and banking are considered essential sectors.

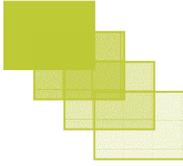
2.5.1 Transport and communication

The district mostly relies upon road transport. Air and water transport system have not been well developed in Dhubri. Besides, railway connectivity is not sufficient to meet the transport need of the people. Considering road transport, the average share of road length per thousand populations is dismally low at 34 km. As shown in the table below, only about 24 per cent of the PWD roads are surfaced; having more than 75 per cent of un-surfaced roads in the district. In this, it should also be noticed that following Table is not showing any information on the non-PWD roads like forest roads and village roads. Considering all these, it is clear that the transport system has not been developed to the requirement of the people in Morigaon.

PWD Road Length (in Km)

<i>Surfaced</i>	<i>Un-surfaced</i>	<i>National Highway (NH-31 & NH-37)</i>	<i>State Highway</i>	<i>Urban Roads</i>	<i>Rural Roads</i>	<i>Other Roads</i>	<i>Road Length per Lakh population</i>	<i>Road Length per '00 sq. km</i>
228	716	113	35	31	821	943	58	34

Source: Statistical Handbook of Assam, 2006



It is also to note that the lone airport in Dhubri, the *Rupshi* Airport is presently lying abandoned within a distance 15 k.m. from the district head quarter. Dhubri shares 59km of Meter Gauge railway track with Dhubri as the main railway station.

The communication system for the rural community in Dhubri district is mainly the postal service. Telecommunication networking has not touched the most of the rural areas. Only 7225 households are having landline telephone connections. The accurate position of mobile phone services could not however be determined.

2.5.2 Banking

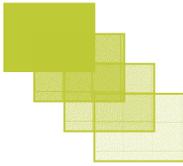
As on December, 2005, Dhubri district had 35 offices of Commercial Banks including State Bank of India, United Commercial Bank, and United Bank of India with a total deposit of Rs. 331 Crore as against Rs. 131 Crore as outstanding credit. Regarding rural credit, The Assam Cooperative Apex Bank (2 branches) and Pragiyotish Gaolia Bank (11 branches) cater the need of small credit by the rural borrowers along with the commercial banks. The existing situation of rural credit in the district reflects further ramifications on credit availability for productive purposes on strategic commitments. The present highest CDR is around 50.0 in case of rural credit, which is not much encouraging. The average population per branch shows that banking facilities in rural Dhubri is not sufficient.

Commercial banking is not up to the satisfaction in the rural areas of Dhubri. Besides, a sizeable amount of fund is transferred from the rural areas for low credit worthiness of the rural people.

2.5.4 Basic Amenities

Besides housing standard of the rural people, the standard of living is also judged based on the availability of certain basic community institutions in the rural locality along with easy access to these. Safe drinking water, facilities for basic education and health, and social security are some of the important elements of these basic requirements.

In respect of amenities in rural areas, there are facility wise variations. 80 per cent the villages of Dhubri have already been electrified. However the need of electricity is 12 MW per capita whereas the supply is only 5 MW. Besides, number of police stations and outposts, fire service station and like facilities are not adequately available.



Basic Amenities

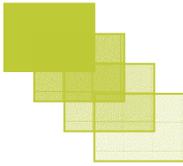
Amenities		Number
Total inhabited villages		1261 (94%)
Total households		297121
No. of villages electrified		1008 (80%)
No. of Police Stations		7
No. of Police Outposts		6
Fire Service Station		1
Educational Institutions		
(A)	Pre-primary Schools	0
(B)	Primary School	1807
(C)	High & Senior Secondary Schools	178
(D)	Colleges	15
(H)	Vocational/technical Education	31 (including 1 ITI)

Source: Statistical Handbook of Assam, 2006 & <http://www.dhubri.gov.in>

There has been development in the fields of education and public health in the district. However, the development process has not so far been sufficient as per the requirements of the households living in the district.

Elementary Education in Dhubri

No. of HSS / HS / High Madrassa				Availability of drinking water	Sanitation facility
Govt	Prov		Venture/ Pvt aided		
	HSS	HS			
2	32	56	115	28	Tube well facilities available in all categories of Prov./HS/HSS/HM in Dhubri sub-division
					Except in Govt. Schools, no other schools have hygienic sanitation

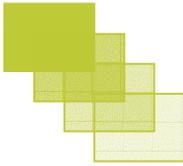


Public Health Scenario

Name of the Institution	No.	No. of Beds	No. of Meld. Staff		
			Doctors	Nurses	
1. C.H. Dhubri	1	200	25	48	All Medical Services are available.
2. Block P.H.C	7	6	15	42	Medical Services available as per norms.
3. C.H.C	6	30 Beds for each C.H.C	7	9	Do
4. St. Dispensary	11	Nil	6	10	Do
5. Mini P.H.C	16	Nil	10	6	Do
6. Sub-Centre	13	Nil	Nil	11	
7. S.H.C	5	NIL			

Source: <http://www.dhubri.gov.in>

Based on the brief profile of the Dhubri, it may be concluded that the district has been suffering from some major deficiencies related to almost all the areas of socio-economic progress. The deficits need proper assessment for assuring proper growth process in the district. ■



PROFILE OF THE SAMPLE VILLAGES

3.1 Demographic Profile

The present total population of the 30 sample villages of Dhubri district is 71159 and the total number of household is 12717. In comparison with the Census Data, 2001, the total population of the sample villages has increased by 1.75 per cent while the total number of households has increased by a little more than two per cent. As reported by the Census 2001, the total population of the sample villages constituted 4.92 per cent the total rural population of the district. (According to the Census Data, 2001, the total rural population of the district was 1444901). In the sample population, the percentage of the Scheduled Caste population is 1.32 per cent while the Scheduled Tribe population is 0.42 per cent.

Total Population Distribution in Sample Villages

<i>House Holds</i>	<i>Total Population</i>	<i>Male</i>	<i>Female</i>	<i>SC Total</i>	<i>ST Total</i>
12717	71159	36336	34823	941	297

3.2 Sex Ratio

The sex ratio of the sample population is estimated to be 940, which is a little lower than the Sex ratio of the district i.e. 947 as reported in the Census Report, 2001. However, it is higher than the State sex ratio of 935.

3.3 Literacy Rate

Literacy rate is one of the major indicators of human development. It indicates the level of consciousness of the general population towards better standard of living, understanding of basic duties towards the nation and assuring justice in enjoying fundamental rights. Besides, the size and proportion of literate and educated population has significant bearing on the overall socio-economic progress of the society. Female literacy, in particular, is an essential element of nurturing a better society as it is associated with the health and social development of the child. The literacy rate in the sample villages is found almost 68 per cent, which is higher than state as well as district averages. As evident from the following table, the sex wise literacy ratio of the sample villages together is also better than the state and district averages.

Literacy Rate in Dhubri (2001 Census)

Area Level	Male	Female	Total
State	71.28	54.62	63.25
District (Total)	56.61	42.64	49.86
District (Rural)	52.52	38.46	45.73
District (Urban)	84.77	71.21	78.20
Sample Villages	74.33	63.87	67.84



3.4 Facilities

Besides literacy, there are certain definitive facilitators of ascertaining quality of human life in a region. Presence of such facilitators, and accessibility and usability of these social overheads make way for qualitative up-liftment of the standard of living of the people. Sources of lighting, drinking water, sanitation, educational institutions, health facilities, accessibility of transport etc., are some of the basic requirements of any region to maintain and sustain basic standard of living.

3.4.1 Electricity

Proportion of households using electricity for domestic lighting in the rural areas instantaneously reflects the economic status of the households as well as the success of welfare state. The village survey data shows that only 14 out of the 30 villages under the sample are electrified. Consequently, more than 50 per cent of the sample villages have to depend upon other conventional sources even for domestic lighting. In the villages with electricity connection, the number of households using electricity for agriculture or commercial purposes is quite negligible. It is also to note that severe power cuts have been a common experience of the electrified villages. As the villagers reported, the average availability of electricity per day is about 9 hours. Over the years, there has been no significant improvement in the availability of electricity. The average duration of availability of electricity was 9 to 10 hours per day over the last 10 years. The sample data also reflect that two of the villages namely, Airkata and Balamara have been de-electrified.

Average Hours of Electricity Available per day in Sample Villages

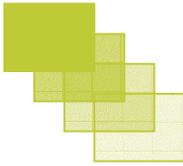
	Last Year	5 Years ago	10 years ago
<i>Average hours of electricity available</i>	9.43	9.07	10.21

3.4.2 Drinking Water

Availability and access to safe drinking water has been one of the most crucial factors involving serious health concerns in rural areas. All the sample villages have their own drinking water facilities. The various sources of water supply facilities as reported by the respondents are well, hand pump, tube well, tank/river water etc. However, no village is found having the access to public water supply by tap water inside houses. Distribution pattern of common drinking water supply facilities shows that more than 86 per cent are tube wells majority of which are private ones. It must however, be mentioned that overwhelming majority of at least two out of 30 sample villages still depend primarily on tank or river water, the most unsafe sources of drinking water.

3.4.3 Toilet Facility

The sample villages clearly witness a poor sanitation scenario of the district as indicated by lack of proper toilet facilities at the household level. The place of defecation for nearly



half of the households across the villages has been open field. Similarly, about 20 per cent of the households in the sample village use pit latrine. Therefore, the overall scenario of the district has been marked by unhygienic and unhealthy practices.

3.4.4 Education

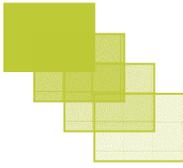
The base line survey reveals that 29 out of total 30 sample villages have at least one primary school within the village. In other words, almost 97 per cent villages of the district have primary school. The remaining villages have access to primary school either within the same Gram Panchayat or development block. Distance wise, more than 93 per cent of the primary schools are located within a distance of two kilometers. Nevertheless, it has been observed that the enrolment and attendance ratio has been abysmally poor. Only about 20 per cent of the students enrolled at the primary level regularly attend the school.

Although the pattern of distribution of primary schools in the rural area of the district is satisfactory, more than 50 per cent of the schools do not have pucca structure. About 40 per cent of them are semi pucca while the remaining buildings are katcha normally with mud flooring and thatch roof. It is also worth considering that almost 50 per cent of the village schools have only one room and 20 per cent have two rooms. Therefore, adequate space in the schools is a critical gap which may discourage the children to attend school. Similarly, only about 37 per cent of the schools have provision for desk for the students who regularly come to the school and about 47 per cent can provide the same for some children. More importantly, 12 per cent of the village schools still do not have even black boards.

The school sanitation scenario in the rural areas of the district, as indicated by the base line survey, is far below the expected level. It has been found that 50 per cent of the village primary schools do not have toilet facility. However, a little more than 73 per cent of the schools have drinking water facility. Although almost all the schools have been benefited by the mid-day meal programme, the students of 50 per cent of the schools reported that the quality, preparation and regularity of mid day meal is good.

3.4.5 Health Facilities

The sample villages reported to have health care centres at accessible distance of 1 to 15 kilometers. Altogether, the 30 sample villages have access to 52 health care centres including Health Sub centre, Primary Health Centre (PHC), Community Health Centre (CHC), Hospitals/dispensaries, Maternity/Child care centres, Family Planning Clinic, Medicine shop, Private Allopathic Doctors etc. The villagers mostly avail these facilities by walking or occasionally on vehicles. On an average one sub-centre is available in each the villages providing health care facilities to the villagers. Altogether 29 doctors have been appointed in the PHCs and SCs. A total of 62 ANM nurses have been appointed in these centres. Moreover, 9 medicine retailers are also present in the area. Regular health check up facility is available in 12 PHCs and SCs, although pathological check up and x-ray facilities are not sufficient. Besides, 49 beds are available in the SCs and PHCs to treat hospitalized patients.



3.4.6 Other Facilities

As the primary data on village level survey reveals that distance from the villages to the nearest block head quarters and nearest town ranges from 1 km to more than 10 kms. It is also to note that the majority of the villagers have to cover a distance of more than 10 kms to reach the block head quarter and the nearest town. The transport and communication systems of the villages are weak and insufficient to the need of the households. The nearest bus stop is available within an average distance of 2-5 kms., while the railway stations are available at a minimum distance of 5 - 10 kms. Similar is the case with post-offices and banks. Availability of other facilities like markets, shops, mandis, etc are available within the radius of 2 - 10 kms.

The approached roads to different facilitators to the village community are mostly *kuccha*. 43 village roads, 47 block connectors, 40 *panchayat* approaches and 19 district connecting roads are reported to be uneven and *kuccha*. However, 21 village roads, 68 block connectors, 12 *panchayat* approaches and 19 district connecting roads are reported to be either *pucca* or semi-*pucca*.

3.5 Village Organizations

The organizational activity within the village is an important indicator of overall socio-economic development. The collected data shows that the village level organizations are fairly active in the sample villages. Co-operatives, workers union, farmers organization, voluntary organizations, political parties, cultural organizations, youth and women mandals, flood relief village security force and like organizations are not highly found active in the surveyed villages. There are only 2 co-operatives relating to credit disbursement and agricultural inputs. Moreover, there are 1 workers organization, 8 farmers' organizations, and 3 voluntary organizations, along with youth (13) and women (1) mandals. However, political organizations are comparatively higher in the study area (17). Moreover, the villagers are also seen organized for providing occasional flood relief activities.

The presence of active village organizations is indicative of the potentiality of capacity building of pressure groups within villages for ensuring proper governance at the grass root level. However, such a tendency is not observed in the surveyed villages. Comparative dominance of the political organizations without horizontal spread of the organizational structure is an indication of ill motivated political agenda of different political wings.

3.6 Crop Productivity Status

The economy of Dhubri is agrarian with paddy as the prime crop. The survey results of the sample villages indicate that paddy is the major crop produced in all the villages. The maximum market price fetched for paddy one year before the survey as reported is Rs. 875 per quintal while the minimum price was Rs. 80 per quintal. Jute is another important cash crop produced in the region having around 60 per cent of harvest share. The maximum market price fetched for jute one year before the survey as reported is Rs. 1400 per quintal while the minimum price was Rs.375 per quintal. Besides, the sample



villages also produce cereals, potato, and mustard. The following Table shows the per hectare productivity of these crops and minimum and maximum market prices fetched one year before the present survey.

Crop Productivity Status

Crop	Average Yield (quintal)	Market Price (Rs.)	
		Highest	Lowest
Cereals	6081	900	40
Potato	8484	875	250
Mustard	45	2300	600

3.7 Input Status for Cultivation

3.7.1 Current Inputs

As already explained, the production base of the sample villages mainly include paddy. According to the Census Report, 2001, of the total rural population (260558) of Dhubri district, 174991 are cultivators, 111890 are agricultural labourers, 172420 household industries workers, and 166059 are other workers. The gross sown area is 317,443 hectares of which 59,200 hectares are irrigated.

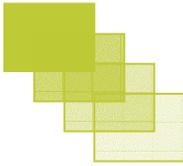
The survey data reveals that 90 cultivators use canal irrigation while 175 of the cultivators use public tube well irrigation. 355 of the cultivators use HYV seeds paddy with 150 using HYV seed wheat in the area. More than 3500 of the cultivators use pesticides/insecticides and chemical fertilizers. This is the clear symptom of unprivileged agricultural mechanization as well as inability of the soil to produce sufficient marketable surplus.

3.7.2 Capital Inputs

Investment and use of capital inputs in agricultural practices symbolizes agro-mechanization leading to growth of farm productivity. The village survey shows that out of the total cultivators, a sizeable segment makes use of capital inputs like pump set, tractor, power tiller, and improved cattle livestock etc. The following Table summarizes the status of the cultivators in using different capital inputs:

Capital Inputs

Input	Own	Using
Pump set/Boring	855	2316
Tractor	1	50
Power tiller	23	675
Thresher	10	100



Besides, the cultivators also use cattle livestock and other improved implements. However, it is observed that agricultural productivity in the region is not sufficient to maintain sufficient marketable surplus.

3.8 Handicraft

Handicraft and artisan works provide sizeable amount of additional income source to the village economy. In a number of cases, such activities become mainstay of the households. However, in the surveyed villages, it is found that the majority of the households are not interested in handicraft and other artisan works. In only 2 of the 30 villages under study, handicraft works are simultaneously done with agricultural works. Altogether, 100 households of Baladmara and Bamuni Pt. 1 are found to be engaged in artisan/handicraft works. However, as reported, most of the products in this segment do not have a proper market. Insufficiency of raw materials is another serious problem.

3.9 Credit

3.9.1 Purpose for availing Credit

Based on the responses of the villagers of the sample villages, it may be said that the major purpose of availing credit is the requirement arising out of sudden expenses. Out of the four different types of households, rural labour households from 23 villages incurred debt for this purpose. Small farmers put the reason of meeting the cost of agriculture along with sudden requirements for availing credit from different sources. Artisans and small businessmen are also found compelled by sudden requirements of business as well as family as the major purpose of availing credit. Agricultural investment related credit requirements were mostly shown by the medium and large farmers as well as the artisan households.

Purpose for Availing Credit

Household Type	Major Cause	Secondary Causes
Labourers	Meeting sudden expenses	Cultivation Cost (All types)
Small Cultivators	Cultivation Cost (Current)	Meeting sudden expenses
Medium & Large Cultivators	Meeting Current Cultivation Cost	Sudden expenses + investment in machinery
Artisans and Other Business	Meeting sudden expenses	Cultivation Cost, Investment in equipments



3.9.2 Sources of Credit

The survey findings report that the labourers and small farmers avail credit mostly from the village moneylenders as well as landlords for meeting sudden expenses along with current cultivation costs. There is a distinct difference of the source of credit of the medium & large cultivators with the labourers and the small-cultivators. The major source of credit of the medium & large cultivators is the institutional credit while the others rely upon friends and relatives. Moneylenders and landlord employers are the secondary sources of availing credit. The overall picture presents that there is twain problem of institutional credit availability and use. On the one hand, the financial institutions may not be interested in deploying agriculture loans, and on the other hand, it may also be possible that due to ignorance and illiteracy of the stakeholders, the impact of developmental financial plans can not be realized by them. In case of artisans and small businessmen the major source of credit is reported to be the institutional sources.

Sources of Credit

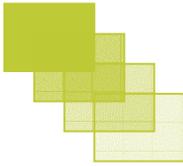
Household Type	Main Source of Credit	Secondary Sources of credit
Labourers	Friends & relatives	Moneylenders, Landlord, Institutional credit
Small- Cultivators	Friends & relatives	Moneylenders, Landlord, Institutional credit
Medium & Large Cultivators	Friends & relatives	Moneylenders, Landlord, Institutional credit
Artisans & Other Business	Friends & relatives	Moneylenders, Landlord, Institutional credit

3.10 Migration, Employment and Wage Income Earning

Out of the total population of the sample villages, 1497 went of the village to search jobs within the state, 200 went outside the State and, 125 settled outside the village but within the district of Dhubri.

The survey also showed that of the 30 sample villages, people from 24 villages move out looking for works on daily basis. More than 3000 people of these villages go out of the villages to work out side. The migration of workers extends from district level to national level. The monthly income of the migrated workers ranges from Rs. 900 to Rs. 12,200.

The survey data indicates that over the years there has been increase in the supply of casual labour in 29 of the 30 sample villages. Most of the migrant workers have been helped by the relatives or friends to get jobs outside their villages. It also indicates that migration of agricultural labour is basically due to the livelihood problem. Similarly, the existing wage rates in villages are not of any acceptable status. Moreover, gender disparity has been very high. This discrepancy is prominent in government programmes also. The evil of child labour may also be noticed in the surveyed villages.



Average wage income by kind of works

Wage Rate	Ploughing Land	Weeding/ Intercultural	Transplanting	Harvesting	Threshing	Unskilled	Skilled	Govt. Programme
Male	68.67	53.67	56.33	55.00	37.67	72.67	106.00	120.00
Female	-	50.00	49.05	56.43	45.00	70.00	-	80.00
Child	60.00	48.75	41.33	45.00	50.00	58.75	-	-

Religious group wise government jobs among village populations across the sample villages show that 538 persons from the villages are in government jobs of which about 35 per cent are Hindus with about 63 per cent of Muslims. Of the Hindus 2.6 per cent, are Scheduled Caste and 1.05 per cent are Scheduled Tribe.

3.11 Rural Development Programmes and Beneficiaries Assisted

3.11.1 Sponsored Programmes

29 of the total of 30 sample villages reported implementation of some programmes associated with rural sector development in the course of last three years. Some of the programmes under implementation are SGRY, PMGSY, NREGA etc. Out of such programmes PMGSY has so far allotted Rs.750000 for developmental activities under it. It is to note that PMGSY covered two of the sample villages namely, Baladmara and Hatsingimari. Other programmes (excluding SGRY) have so far allotted Rs.267500 in 10 of the 30 sample villages. The amount of allotment under SGRY policy could not be collected. Moreover, it is also found that the households have not been adequately assisted by the developmental programmes so far been undertaken. It is clear from the wide discrepancies in wage payments, inclusion of workers etc. Besides, there is a clear indication of lower induction of females in such developmental programmes. These programmes have created employment opportunities for 355 male and 47 females of the sample villages.

SGRY has completed 1 of its projects. Under PMGSY, 1 out of 2 projects have been completed. Similarly, NREGA and IAY have completed 8 out of 10 earmarked projects. The following Table is indicative of the fact that the government welfare programmes have provided equal emphasis on the development of the Muslims as well as the Hindus. However, the Scheduled Caste and Scheduled Tribe communities have not been assigned in these programmes.

RDP Beneficiaries

Scheme	Persons Assisted			Wage paid (Rs. Per day)		Projects Completed
	Hindu	Muslim	Total	Male	Female	
SGRY	475	400	920	60.00	-	1 out of 1
PMGSY	10	340	350	80.00/90.00	70.00/90.00	1 out of 2
NREGA	2	3	5	15.00/100.0/120.00	60.00	8 out of 10
IAY	161	129	293	15.00/100.00/120.00	60.00	
Total	648	872	1568	-	-	



3.11.2 Old Age Pension & Widow Pension

Provisions for old age pensions and widow pensions are two important indicators of welfare state. In the base line survey, it was found that there has been a gradual but positive increase in the providing old-age pension to the senior citizens since 2001-02.

Similar is the case with the widow pensions issued. However, the number of the senior citizens and widows not receiving pensions could not be traced.

Pension Beneficiaries

<i>Assessment Year</i>	<i>Old-age Pension</i>	<i>Widow Pension</i>
2001-02	118	10
2006-07	320	37
2007-08	438	47

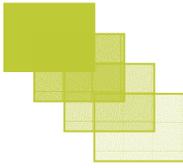
3.12 Public Distribution System

28 out of the 30 villages under study possess the facilities of the public distribution system. The total number of PDS outlets is 29 with a range of 2 - 5 kms., of the households. Out of the 28 villages availing PDS benefits, 17 of them have PDS shop within the villages. Scheme wise, the PDS includes schemes like Annapurna, Antodaya, BPL and APL. A brief account of the scheme wise beneficiaries is given in the following Table:

Scheme-wise Beneficiaries under PDS

Scheme	Persons Assisted		
	<i>Hindu</i>	<i>Muslim</i>	<i>Total</i>
Annapurna	11	18	29
Antodaya	215	630	847
BPL	418	1401	1819
APL	651	2164	3065
Total	1295	4213	5773

The PDS system seems to put higher emphasis on the Muslim community living in these villages as the highest number of Muslims are covered by the PDS schemes. More than 5000 families of the survey region procure household commodities from the PDS outlets. The households reported to be comfortable with the distance of the outlets as well as the behaviour of the dealers. However mixed responses are found regarding goods supplied allotment of quota per family, regularity of supply, honesty in measurement and pricing, quality of grains etc. From this, it may be concluded that the operating mechanism of PDS might have some definite flaws which needs urgent attention.



3.13 Common Property Utilization Pattern

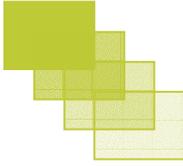
Ownership and utilization of common property in Indian village structure has been a common feature. The common property resources in the surveyed villages include village pond, pasture land, government/garmzrua land, etc were found. Except pasture land and forests, other common resources have not been used by the majority of the inhabitants. This automatically reflects lack of proper maintenance of these resources. In some case, it was also found that there has been encroachment of such property by some households.

3.14 Development Realizations

The villages under study have mixed experiences of development over the years. In certain segments there has been some positive development while in some other areas the villages are worse off. A brief account of these realizations is given in the following Table.

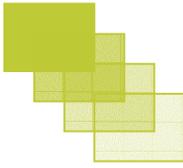
Development Indices		Level of Betterment			Total Villages
		Better Off	Same	Worse Off	
REASON - 1	Public Irrigation		2	1	3
	Private Irrigation	2		1	3
	Agricultural Productivity	12		2	14
	Wage Rates	5			5
	Social Condition	1			1
	Political Conditions	1			1
	Outside Jobs	1			1
	Access to education	1	1		2
	Total	23	3	4	30
REASON - 2	Agricultural Productivity	1	1		2
	Wage Rates	6		1	7
	Social Condition	1			1
	Outside Jobs	3			3
	Access to Health Facilities	1		1	2
	Access to education	6			6
	Access to Roads	4	2	2	8
	Total	22	3	4	29
REASON - 3	Private Irrigation	1			1
	Agricultural Productivity	1			1
	Wage Rates	2			2
	Social Condition	4			4
	Outside Jobs	3	1		4
	Access to Drinking Water	1			1
	Access to Education	4		2	6
	Access to Roads	5			5
	Access to Electricity	2	2	2	6
Total	23	3	4	30	

It may be seen from the Table that the concerned villages have developed to the satisfaction of the inhabitants to a large extent. Despite this certain areas are not having sufficient attention of the developmental programmes of the Government.



3.15 Summary

The village survey findings reveal that the sample villages of the district suffer from serious deprivation relating to public health, education, and other social sectors. From the productivity status, it is found that low farm productivity and insufficient market supply is resulted from a host of basic problems like lack or insufficient irrigation facilities, absence of farm mechanization and farmers' ignorance. At the same time, it is also observed that the socio-economic status of the Muslim as well as Hindus living in the study region does not differ significantly. In stead, it is seen that the government promoted development schemes have provided sufficient importance on all the religious communities. In contrast, the Scheduled Caste and Scheduled Tribe population are found to the least beneficiaries of the development schemes. ■



RESULT OF THE BASELINE SURVEY

4.1 Religious and Caste Composition

Out of the total 880 sample households (it is 880 in stead of 900 because one of the sample villages, namely Sialmari, has only 11 households) of 30 identified villages of the district of Dhubri, 76.25 per cent (671) are Muslim followed by 23.75 per cent (209) of Hindu households. As elaborated in Table IV.1, all the Muslim households represent general caste. On the other hand, about 4.7 per cent of the total sample households are from Scheduled Caste (SC), 3.5 per cent Scheduled Tribe (ST), and 12.4 per cent are from Other Backward Caste (OBC). The total households stand at 880.

4.2 Mother Tongue

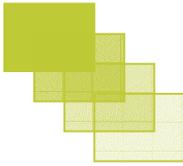
Majority of the respondent households reported Bengali (82.4 per cent) as their mother tongue while the remaining households reported Assamese (10.5 per cent), Hindi (0.9) and other languages (6.3) as their mother tongue. However, religion wise, 5.8 per cent Hindu and 4.7 per cent Muslim households reported Assamese as their mother tongue while 11.5 per cent Hindu and 70.9 per cent Muslim households reported Bengali as mother language (Table IV.2).

4.3 Age and Sex

Of the total population (4694) of the households under study, 2419 (51.53 per cent) are male and 2275 (48.47 per cent) are female. Of the total male population, around 79.66 per cent are Muslim and the rest are Hindus. Similarly, of the total female population, 79.87 per cent are Muslim and the rest are Hindus. It is apparent that the region under study is mainly dominated by the Muslim community. The details are given in Table IV.3.

Considering the two major religions, it is found that the number of dependents in Hindu families is much above the Muslim families. As the baseline survey indicates, 13.9 per cent and 28.9 per cent of the Muslim population are below 6 years and 6-14 years respectively. Of this, 7.2 per cent male and 6.7 per cent are female. Similarly, 14.4 per cent male and 14.5 per cent female of the Muslim population are within the age group of 6-14 years. On the other hand, regarding Hindu population, it is found that 8.9 per cent and 25.5 per cent of the population are below 6 years and 6-14 years respectively. Of this 4.6 per cent male and 4.3 per cent are female. Similarly, 13.1 per cent male and 12.4 per cent female of the Hindu population are within the age group of 6-14 years. Besides, about 4.6 per cent of the total population represents people above 60 years of age. Of this 5.8 per cent are Hindu and 4.3 per cent are Muslims.

In the age group 15-60 years, similar situation may be observed. 59.8 per cent of the Hindu population is in the working group of population comprising 51.9 per cent male and 48.1 per cent female. On the other hand, about 52.9 per cent of the Muslims form working population comprising 52.21 per cent male and 49.14 per cent female.



Notwithstanding a small data base, the differences probably indicate relatively a higher fertility and mortality rates the Muslims than the Hindu counterpart.

The sex ratio of the district, as per the Census data, has been better than the state average. The district sex ratio is 948 against the state average of 935. The present sample survey also reveals a positive picture. The sex ratio for the sample villages is worked out to be 940 per thousand male. This is above the state sex ratio.

4.4 Household Size

Majority of the sample households (58.1 per cent) are found to have family size up to 5 members while about 39.4 per cent households are of 6-10 members. In comparison, 74.6 per cent Hindu and 52.9 per cent Muslim households are found with up to 5 members and 24.9 per cent Hindu and 44.0 per cent Muslim households are found with up to 6-10 members. On the other hand, only 2.5 per cent households are found with family size of more than 10 members. It is to note that of this 0.5 per cent are Hindus and 3.1 per cent are Muslims (Table IV.4).

4.5 Marital Status

As shown in Table IV.5, 51.8 per cent of the Hindu and 49.3 per cent of the Muslim sample population are married.

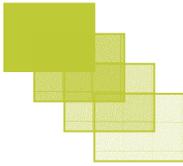
Although not prominent, the incidence of child marriage is present in the district under study as 0.2 per cent of the Muslim population and 0.1 per cent of the Hindu population are reported to be married at the age range of 6-14 years. Similarly, 1.3 per cent of the Hindu and 1.7 per cent of Muslim sample population are reported married in the age group 15-18 years. In the age group of 19-25, around 6.9 per cent Hindu and 9.3 per cent Muslim are found to be married. In the age group of 26-30, around 8.6 per cent Hindu and 8.7 per cent Muslim are found to be married. Moreover, in the age group of 31-45, around 21.0 per cent Hindu and 18.3 per cent Muslim are found to be married. Late marriage is also found (in the age group 45-60 years). 9.6 per cent Hindu and 7.5 per cent Muslim are found to be married at this age. Similarly 4.3 per cent Hindu and 3.5 per cent Muslim are found to be married in the age group of above 60 years.

The rate of divorce/separation is comparatively higher among the sample Hindu population with 0.1 per cent of representation, which is 0.2 per cent in case of Muslim. The number of widow/widower is highest above the age of 60 years, both for Hindus as well as Muslims.

The total unmarried population comprises 40.4 per cent of the total population of which 43.6 per cent are Hindus and 47.1 per cent are Muslims.

4.6 Educational Status

Educational deprivation is prominent in the sample population of the studied district. Of the total sample population, 25.67 per cent of the males and 36.13 per cent of the females are found illiterate. In terms of religion, about 32 per cent Muslim and 25 per cent Hindu



population are found to be illiterate. Moreover, female illiteracy (18.1 per cent Muslim as well as 15 per cent Hindu) is higher than male illiteracy (14.1 per cent Muslim and 10.0 per cent Hindu). Of the total population about 23.0 per cent are found to have primary level of education. The middle level of education is completed by around 15 per cent of the total population. Around 20 per cent of the Hindu and 10.0 per cent of the Muslim population have completed matriculation level of education. After matriculation, the enrollment rate in higher classes was found to be poorer. That the condition of technical and higher education is poorer in the studied district is evident from the Table IV.6. Not more than 1 per cent of the sample population is found to have managerial, technical or, post-graduate qualification.

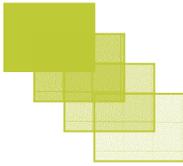
4.7 Occupation and Employment

4.7.1 Occupation and Industry

The baseline survey reveals that 54.32 per cent of the total sample population belongs to the age group of 15 – 60 years, the effective working age group in a predominantly agrarian society. Males constitute 52.16 per cent of this potential workforce while female potential workforce is constituted by the remaining 47.84 per cent. The section of sample population reported to have main occupation is, however, 58.75 per cent of the total population of the effective working age group. The work participation rate, therefore, can be estimated at 58.75. Similarly, the female population reported to have main occupation amount to only 10.90 per cent of the total potential female workforce. In other words, female work participation rate is 10.90 per cent. Considerably a high work participation rate can mainly be attributed to the prevailing agricultural practices which generate large demand for labour for a relatively short period in the year causing underemployment of a considerably big section of school dropouts. However, noticeably meager female work participation rate, as estimated, can be attributed mainly to the fact that a large number of women those who engage in agricultural activities at the time of need often do not report to have any income generating engagement.

Table IV.7 shows the occupation, sex and religion wise distribution of the sample population reported to have main occupation. The table reiterates that the female work participation rate, irrespective of religion, is considerably poor.

Farming being the largest source of livelihood absorbs almost 39 per cent of the Hindu male workforce while the same ratio for the Muslims is nearly 33 per cent. The difference indicates that landlessness in the district is more acute among the Muslims than their Hindu counterpart. About 25.0 per cent of the total workforce combining both the religious groups together is engaged in production related activities. In businesses, more than 10 per cent of the Muslim workforce is absorbed against around 12 per cent of their Hindu counterparts. In other areas like professional/technical activities, administrative and clerical jobs, less than 2.0 per cent of Hindus as well as Muslims are engaged. However, more than 13.0 per cent of the Hindu and about 20.0 per cent of the Muslim population did not sufficient information about the professional activities they are engaged in.



As it is shown in Table IV.8, about 91.0 per cent of the Hindu male workforce around 96 per cent of the Muslims male workforce are engaged in secondary occupations including services of different kinds along with production and related works. However, women participation rate is insignificant with only 8 per cent Hindu and about 4 per cent Muslim female engaged in secondary income earning activities.

The overall pattern of industry wise distribution of main occupation has been shown in Table IV.9. It is clear from the table that the main industry wise distribution of the Muslim workforce is not quite significantly different from that of the Hindu workforce. However, it is striking to note that irrespective of religion, the participation of females in the main occupation is very low. Only about 10 per cent of the Hindu and Muslim women are found to be engaged in different productive activities as their main occupation.

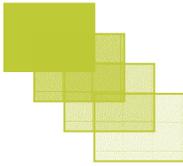
Table IV.10 shows the employment days of different workers in their main occupation. Clearly witnessing a scenario of underemployment, the table shows that only about 38 per cent male and a little more than 3 per cent of the female Hindu workforce get engagement for more than 260 days per year. The situation of the Muslim workforce is more deplorable. Only about 35 per cent male and a little more than 3 per cent of the female Muslim workforce get engagement for more than 260 days per year in their main occupation. More than 31 per cent of the Hindus and about 27.0 per cent of the Muslims get employment opportunities for more than 180 days per year. It is to note that a small segment of the total population is unable to get work for more than 100 days per year (4.5 per cent Hindu; 2.7 per cent Muslim) in the activities they reported as their main occupation.

In case of employment in the secondary sector, the survey reveals that about 25 per cent of the Hindu male workforce more than 101 days to a maximum of 180 days per year. Similarly, about 29 per cent male and only 1 per cent of the female Muslim workforce get engagement for more than 101 days to a maximum of 180 days per year. More than 66 per cent of the Hindu male and about 8 per cent of the Hindu female get engagement up to 100 days per year in secondary occupation. On the other hand, 66 per cent of the Muslim male and about 3 per cent of the Muslim female get engagement up to 100 days per year in secondary occupation (Table IV.11).

4.7.2 Self-Employment Scenario

Table IV.9 indicates that about 50 per cent of the Hindu and more than 60 per cent of the Muslim workforce is associated with self employment activities. Such activities include agro-based works such as livestock farming, horticulture, gishing, forestry, agro-based manufacturing etc. On the other hand, non-farm self employment activities including a number of activities such as wholesale and retail trade, transport, storage and communication, financing, insurance, electricity-gas and water related activities. This section of workers is essentially constituted by the self-employed people.

The problem ratings made by the self-employed persons (Table IV.12) relating to smooth conduct of business reveal that about 66 per cent of them face serious problems in business while one third of them (about 33 per cent) reported not to have any major



problem in running their business. About 17 per cent of the self-employed persons complained about the credit deployment system, inaccessibility of credit market and high rates of interests upon business loans. For more than 16 per cent of the self employed persons, market assess has been the major problem. It is significant to note that about 16 per cent of the self-employed persons complained about the shortage of raw materials for conducting production.

4.7.3 Additional Employment and Preference

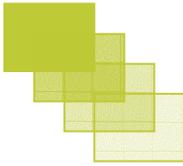
A sizeable section of the main labour force is engaged in agriculture, which has neither been adequately remunerative nor can generate substantial employment days throughout the year for various reasons. The overall occupational scenario supplemented by the figures given in Table IV.10 clearly indicates good amount of underemployment of labour force. Consequently, about 50 per cent of the sample households, as reported, are looking for more employment (Table IV.13). The preferences for additional employment are given in Table IV.14. It is worth noting that more than 84 per cent of the total households seeking self-employment activities as additional employment sources would prefer self-employment. It is also to note that this preference is framed by 84.5 per cent of the Hindu workers and 85.0 per cent of the Muslim workers. About 10.0 per cent of the Hindus and 8.0 per cent of the Muslims favoured salaried jobs as additional sources of employment.

4.7.4 Migrant Workers

The baseline survey reveals that altogether 22 Hindu and 123 Muslims workers migrate to different places outside their villages in search of employment. Table IV.15 A reveals the occupation of the migrant workers. It is found that majority of the of the workers move out of the village for production and related works. 72.7 per cent of the Hindu and more than 61 per cent of the Muslim worker who migrate to other places are engaged in jobs in this sector. Besides, people from the surveyed villages also migrate for job opportunities related with professional, technical, administrative and clerical works; small business as well as services and farm level works. It is to note that female migration is reported to be nil.

Migration pattern of workers may be divided into urban as well as rural. Of the Muslim rural migration, about 4 percent of the migrant workers migrate to the district centres, about 9 per cent workers move to other parts of the state and 2.4 per cent workers move outside the state. However except outside state migration of 4.5 per cent, Hindu migration is nil in other categories. Similarly, of the Muslim urban migration, about 3 percent workers migrate to the district centres, about 50.0 per cent workers move to the state level and 29.3 per cent workers move outside the state. However except outside state migration of 4.5 per cent, Hindu migration is nil in other categories. On the other hand, of the Hindu migration, about 9 percent workers migrate to the district centres, about 36 per workers move to the state level and 50 per cent workers move outside the state (Table IV.15 B).

Table IV.16 reveals the duration of migration of labour from the concerned villages. It is found that more than 50 per cent of the migrant Hindu and about 32 per cent of the



Muslim workers migrate for longer duration. This indicates that the Hindu workers get comparatively longer duration of jobs in the place of their migration than the Muslim counterpart.

4.8 Land and other Assets

4.8.1 Cultivated Land: Ownership and Operational Holding

Table IV.17 A shows the pattern of cultivated land distribution. Witnessing considerable magnitude of landlessness in the district, as the table reveals, about 52 per cent of the Hindu and 58 percent of the Muslim household do not possess their own cultivated land. Among the Hindus, the problem is more acute among the OBCs followed by the SCs. Moreover, dominance of marginal and small farmers also creates lower productivity of agriculture in the sample villages. The Table reveals that more than 38 per cent of the Hindu and almost 33 per cent the Muslim villagers are marginal by the nature of the ownership of cultivated land. It reveals that more than 50 cent of the Hindu as well as Muslim households does not possess sufficient cultivated land of their own. Similarly, more than 6 per cent of the Hindu as well as the Muslim villagers are small farmers by the nature of the ownership of cultivated land. Medium and large agricultural land holding is found to be negligible in the surveyed villages. The problem of the lack of ownership of the cultivable land is universal in the village households, it was not found associated with religious segmentation.

In terms of operational holdings, about 78 percent of the Hindu and 75 per cent of the Muslim households belong to the category of marginal farmers. In addition, about 15 per cent of the Hindu and 17 per cent Muslim households are small farmers. (Table IV. 17 B)

It is needless to say that the differences in terms of ownership and operational cultivated land are mainly due to the process of leasing in and leasing out and also mortgage of cultivated land. Notwithstanding the practices are of different forms, the nature essentially is share cropping on 50:50 basis. As shown in Table IV.18 & Table IV.19 the leased in and leased out practices are significantly higher in case of the marginal farmers. In case of the Hindu marginal farmers the amount of leased in and leased out land stands at about 92 per cent of and 66.7 per cent of the total cultivable land respectively. Similarly, in case of the Muslim marginal farmers the amount of leased in land and leased out land stands at about 96 per cent and 76.5 per cent of the total cultivable land respectively. However, in case of small and marginal farmers the rate of leasing in and out is lower.

Apart from the practices of share cropping on 50:50 basis, same section of the households i.e., the marginal farmers in terms of agricultural ownership, has also been severely affected by the prevailing practices of mortgaging of land for the purposes of acquiring smaller loans. The distribution pattern of mortgaging is shown in Table IV.20 and IV.21. The complex practices of mortgaging and leasing have adversely affected the agricultural scenario of the district. While the practices of share cropping has prevented crop diversification and restricted cropping intensity, the practice of mortgaging amounts to land alienation. To quote, in case of marginal farmers, the mortgaged in out land stands at 80.0 per cent & 71.4 per cent for the Hindus and 96.6 per cent and 88.5



respectively for the Muslims. Therefore, it reconfirms that technological interventions in absence of institutional reforms can not yield the desired results.

4.9 Livestock

In terms of livestock, the sample households mainly possess milch animals, draught animals, goats, sheep, pigs and cocks/hen/duck. Around 25.0 per cent Hindus and 74.7 per cent Muslim households have milch animals. The total number of milch animals was counted to be 344. Around 29.0 per cent Hindus and 70.1 per cent Muslim households have draught animals. The total number of draught animals was counted to be 167. The total number of young cattle was counted to be 280. Around 28.0 per cent Hindus and 71.8 per cent Muslim households have draught animals. Around 27.0 per cent Hindus and 72.0 per cent Muslim households have draught animals. The total number of draught animals was counted to be 254. Similarly, 17.3 per cent Hindus and 82.7 per cent Muslim households have cocks/hen/duck. The total number of cocks/hen/duck was counted to be 462. Besides some other domestic livestock like goat; pigs, sheep etc. are also possessed by the households under study (Table IV.22).

4.10 Ownership of Productive and other Assets

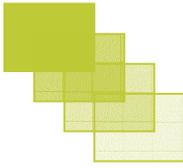
4.10.1 Agricultural Implements

Among the various types of agricultural implements, the households under study mainly possess traditional implements like plough and bullock. Along with these other implements like tractor, power tiller, threshing machine, pump sets etc., are also used by the farmers under survey. It is found that the Muslim households are better off regarding the possession and use of the mechanized implements of farm cultivation. As the respondents have reported, all the Muslim families have bullock, tractors and power tillers. 77.8 per cent of the Muslim households possess plough, about 82 per cent of them have pump sets, 95 per cent have sprayer machine, and 84 per cent of the Muslim cultivators possess fodder cutter. On the other hand the Hindu farmers do not possess bullocks, tractor, power tiller, and threshing machine. About 22 per cent of the Hindu cultivators have own plough, 17.2 per cent have pump sets, 5 per cent have sprayer, and about 15.0 per cent of them have fodder cutters.

Around 50 per cent of the households reported the utilisation modern methods of cultivation. This is indicative of development of farm mechanization to a large extent. The details of agricultural implements by the household are given in Table IV.23.

4.10.2 Transport

The common personal means of transportation of the surveyed households is bicycle. No household is found having four wheelers. The households also make uses the public vehicles where accessible.



4.10.3 Non-agricultural Machinery Implements

The non-agricultural machinery in possession of the households mostly includes handlooms. Besides, sewing machine is another item in this category. It is to note that the handlooms provide a small part of additional income to the households in the sample villages.

4.10.4 Modern Household Assets

Among the modern household assets, a few households were found possessing electric fan, television sets, mobile phone, CD players etc.

4.10.5 Financial Assets

Altogether 382 (about 8.0 per cent) of the households reported to have different types of financial assets including gold and silver ornaments. It is seen that nearly 25 per cent of the Hindu and 74.9 per cent of the Muslim households have reported to possess gold, 18.2 per cent of the Hindu and 81.8 per cent of the Muslim households have reported to possess silver. It is found that 50 per cent of Hindu and Muslim households having financial assets have fixed deposits with banks and about 24 per cent Hindus and 75.7 per cent of the Muslim households reported to have savings in banks. Moreover, households having investment in shares and stocks is nil. Table IV.24 provides the pattern the possession of financial assets by the households.

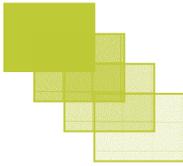
4.11 Housing Status

4.11.1 House type and availability of living space

The baseline survey reveals that all the sample households have their own house, including 3.52 per cent of them benefited under IAY. However, only 4.20 per cent of the sample households have pucca houses including the IAY beneficiaries. The distribution of household status among the sample households (Table IV.25) shows that the majority of the households possess their own house. Religion wise, 90 per cent of the Hindu and more than 98 per cent of the Muslim households reported to have their own houses. On the other hand, about 10 per cent Hindu and 1.5 per cent of the Muslim households have been the beneficiaries of Indira Awas Yojana/Government housing policy.

Nevertheless, of the section of households with own house, 65 per cent of them have kutchha houses and about 30 per cent live in semi-pucca houses. Religion wise data on the type of houses (Table IV.26) shows that more than 63 per cent Hindu and about 67 per cent of Muslim households live in Kutchha houses. The rest of the populations live in pucca or partially pucca houses.

The availability of housing space for the sample households (Table IV.27) reveals that majority of the households (more than 78 per cent of Hindu and Muslim households) possess 3 or less than 3 rooms. Of them, about 17 per cent of Hindu and 19 per cent of



Muslim households possess only single room houses. Households having 5-10 rooms form only a little more than 5 per cent of the total households.

It is evident from the available data that the condition of housing in the studied region does not suffice the needs of maintaining basic standard of life. Moreover, the condition of the Hindu is poorer than the Muslim households.

4.11.2 Domestic lighting and fuel use

As revealed in Table IV.28, around 66 per cent of the households do not have electricity connection. It is found that only about 14 per cent of the Hindu and 11 per cent of the Muslim households use electricity for lighting purposes. This finding testifies with the Census data of 2001, which showed that the use of electricity for lighting purpose is insufficient in Muslim households of Assam.

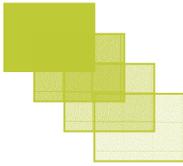
Considering the other sources of lighting (Table IV.29), it is found that nearly 55 per cent of the Hindu and 64 per cent of the Muslim household use oil lamps. Besides, oil lamps as sources of lighting other than electricity, the households also reported to have used lanterns, petromax and other sources of energy. However, the use of other sources forms an insignificant proportion of the households.

The fuel used for cooking is very important for better health, especially for the women who are normally assigned the duty of cooking in Indian families. As per the Census Report of 2001, just about 60 per cent of the rural households do not use any of the modern fuels for cooking such as Liquid Petroleum gas (LPG), electricity or even kerosene. Use of conventional fuel sources like wood, hay/leaves, coal and cow dung cakes emit smoke leading to different kinds of health hazards to the womenfolk. Although wood is the primary source of cooking among the sample households (nearly 71 per cent of the Hindu and 53 per cent of the Muslim households), it is used in combination of other sources like kerosene, hay/leaves, coal etc. Use of LPG is found negligible among the sample households. Table IV.33 reveals the composition of fuel sources as used by the sample households.

4.11.3 Drinking water facilities

Easy access to safe drinking water has been one of the basic objectives under ARWSP. The baseline reveals that nearly 90 per cent of the households have access to the sources of safe drinking water such as own or public hand pump, protected dug well etc. Nevertheless, a little more than 10 per cent of the households still depend on unsafe sources of drinking water such as unprotected dug well, river etc. It is worth noting that about 4 per cent of the the total sample households still depend on pond, stream, river etc. for drinking water. No household is found using public water supply. Religion wise, as Table IV.30 shows, about 58 per cent of the Hindu and more than 81 per cent of the Muslim households use own hand pump/tube wells. Other sources of water supply have been availed by small segments of the population.

It is also observed that majority of the households avail water supply sources within short distance of less than 10 metres (72.2 per cent users). Moreover, as shown in Table



IV.31, more than 22 per cent of the Hindu and 24 per cent of the Muslim households avail drinking water facility within 10-50 metres.

4.11.4 Sanitation and Drainage Facility

Sanitation facility is found to be inadequate in the studied region. The baseline survey reveals that 60 per cent of the households do not have sanitary latrine. The place defecation for majority of them is field. As quoted in Table IV.32, only around 4.3 per cent of Hindu and just above 3.1 per cent of the Muslim households use septic tank facility. 23.9 per cent of the Hindu and 16.7 per cent of the Muslim households use pit latrine. The sanitary practices among the households reveal that proportionately ST households from Hindu & Muslims use open field for defecation compared to other social and religious groups in the sample. The use of non-sanitary facilities is the highest among the Muslims in the sample population which establish the low awareness on health and hygienic living of the households.

Another important determinant of hygienic living condition is availability, access and use of drainage facility. The absence of civic amenities like drainage is one of the major problems for maintaining a clean environment. The survey findings, as shown in Table IV.34, establish that there is absence of drainage system in the villages. About 5.7 per cent Hindu and 10 per cent of Muslim households have drainage facility inside the household campus. The low literacy of females in the district is one of the important factors influencing poor sanitation and drainage system in the locality. However, the Hindus live in a poorer sanitation status than the Muslim counterpart.

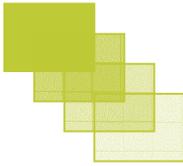
4.12 Indebtedness of Rural Households

The incidences of indebtedness among the sample households show that about 92 per cent Hindu and 85.4 per cent of the Muslim households are not indebted at present. The religion wise enquiry of the total indebted households reveals that in comparison to the Hindus, Muslims are more indebted. The total Muslim debtors stand at around 14.6 per cent while about 8 per cent Hindus comprising ST, SC, OBC, and general population are under debt pressure. (Table IV.34)

The number of loans taken by the indebted households ranges from 1 to 3 loans (Table IV. 35). 8.1 per cent Hindus and 13.3 per cent Muslim households are indebted with single loan. However, the households having debt burden of two or more than two loans comprise a small portion of the total households.

The source wise distribution of the incidence of the burden of indebtedness is shown in Table IV. 36. It reveals that the institutional mechanism plays a pivotal role in providing rural credit preceded by the sources of friends/relatives. Being specific to the Muslim households, reliance on the formal sources of credit is low in comparison to the loans taken from informal sources.

Purpose wise incidence of indebtedness (Table IV.37) among sample households reveals that the Hindus incur debts for reasons like household expenditure medical treatment and like consumption loans. On the other hand, the Muslims also incur major debts for



similar factors as the Hindus. However, a part of the loans taken by the Muslim households also represent productive loans including capital investment in farm as well as non-farm business. It is also found that a section of the households irrespective of the religious bend also resort to informal credit to repay back the loans already taken. Other major reasons of indebtedness are associated with unproductive loans taken for marriage and like social ceremonies, medical treatment, household expenditure, purchase of consumer durables besides a portion of productive needs like purchase of livestock and machinery, financial investments etc. Size and class wise distribution of indebtedness show that there exist no significant difference between Muslims and the Hindus as majority of loan amount falls below Rs. 5000.

4.13 Income and Expenditure

The net income of a large section of the households (38.3 per cent Hindus and 26.5 per cent Muslims) during the previous year of the assessment year falls below Rs. 19200.00 (Table IV. 38). More than 7.0 per cent Hindu and 11.5 Muslim households earned from Rs. 19200.00 to Rs. 22,800.00. Both the categories constitute the size of population living below the poverty line. Around 50 per cent of the people of the sample villages can be characterized as BPL. It is observed that only about 6 per cent Hindus and 12.7 per cent Muslims of the total households have income above Rs. 72000.00

As shown in Table IV. 39, approximately 98 per cent of the households have to make an expenditure of more than Rs. 9000.00 on different items of household consumption. Table IV. 40 to Table IV.48, explains the detail expenditure pattern of the households in the sample villages. Considering the food items, expenditure of more than 59 per cent Hindu and about 75 per cent muslim households on cereals and pulses have been more than Rs.9000.00, while the same expenditure for 20.6 per cent Hindu and 10 per cent Muslim household was less than Rs.6000.00 during last one year. Expenditure on vegetables, milk meat etc., of the majority of the households (about 75.0 per cent) has been up to Rs.9000.00. Similarly, expenditure on cloth, foot wears and bedding etc., for more than 62 per cent Hindu and 59.0 per cent Muslim households was up to Rs. 1800 during last one year.

Expenditure on education for more than 36.0 per cent Hindu and more than 26.0 per cent Muslim households was virtually nil during last one year. This is because of the free primary education policy and lower enrollment of students of more than primary education in the sample households.

Expenditure on health for more than 55.0 per cent of the Hindus and 39.5 per cent of the Muslims amounts to nil in the survey session. However, more than 13.0 per cent of the Hindus and more than 20.0 per cent of the Muslims spent more than Rs. 2101.00 last year for health related issues.

Some other major heads of expenditure for the sample households are clothes and footwear, repairing, construction of house, and ceremony & festivals. About 50 per cent of the population spent Rs. up to Rs. 1800 on clothes, footwear and bedding; up to Rs. 1000.00 on festivals and social ceremonies; Rs. 1001-5000 on electricity, gas etc., and up to Rs. 5000.00 on construction and house repairing during the last one year.



4.14 Current Educational Status, Skill and Training

Table IV. 49 to Table 55 provide the details of the educational scenario of the sample population across religion. The important aspects revealed by the present sample survey are summarized in the following paragraphs.

The schooling status of the sample households represents that 89.0 per cent of the Hindus and about 86.0 per cent of the Muslims are enrolled in Government schools and they are found regular in their activities. It is found that less than 5.0 per cent of the total population were either not enrolled in formal schooling or left school after enrolling in the school. High enrollment rate in public educational institutions and maintenance of

regularity in attending the schools by the pupils reflect an encouraging educational environment.

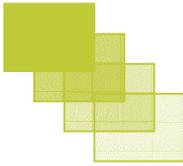
Regarding educational qualification, it is observed that more than 36 per cent Hindu and more than 45.0 per cent of the Muslim population have completed the primary level of education. About 27.0 per cent of Hindu and Muslim population have completed middle schooling. More than 23.0 per cent Hindu and 13.2 per cent Muslim of the total population have either completed or continuing education above matriculation.

The educational institutions where the sample population is enrolled are private as well as public controlled. However, the government schools are higher in number. More than 91.0 per cent of the schools are government controlled whereas about 3.0 per cent of the institutions are in the private sector. Besides, the sample villages are also covered by small number of religious schools like Madrassa, Missionary schools, Non-formal educational institutions etc.

It is found that majority of the population enrolled in the educational institutions of the area drop out at an intermediate or even at the preliminary stages of education. The reason for leaving school is primarily the need of earning of the family (28.0 per cent Hindu and 17.8 per cent Muslim). Besides, inability to afford educational expenses (More than 36.0 per cent Hindu as well as Muslim), work at home (20.0 per cent Hindu and 15.9 per cent Muslim), and lack of interest in learning etc., are also prominent reasons of high level of drop outs from schools.

Invariably, both boys and the girls enrolled in schools have the highest intension to have a Bachelor's degree (33.3 per cent Hindu and 25.9 per cent Muslim) and intermediate education (44.1 per cent Hindu and 38.8 per cent Muslim).

Regarding the expectation to take training programmes, it is found that only 8.1 per cent of the Hindus and about 9.5 per cent of the Muslim respondents showed their interest. The training activities the respondents are interested in are tailoring, weaving, auto mechanic, computer operator, handicrafts etc. They seem to be more interested in on job training.



4.15 Present Health Scenario

The village household survey of the district of Dhubri reveals that the most prevalent diseases suffered by both the religious communities are common fever (23.3 per cent Hindu and 20.1 per cent Muslim), cough and cold, malaria, and stomach ailment (13.7 per cent Hindu and 12.2 per cent Muslim). Traces of Diarrhea, dysentery, and women & pregnancy related diseases were also found in the surveyed households. Other serious diseases like leprosy, jaundice, typhoid, polio etc., were found in very small spread (Table IV.56).

Regarding treatment of the ailing household members, it was found that around 68.0 per cent of the Hindu and 59.0 per cent of the Muslims have been treated in government hospitals. About 22.0 per cent of the Hindu and 25.5 per cent of the Muslims have been treated by private medical practitioners. About 5.0 per cent of the Hindu and 7.5 per cent of the Muslims households have availed both the facilities of public and private medical care. It is encouraging to note that traditional unscientific healing methods have been seen obsolete as less than 2.0 per cent of the households are found using such methods to cure diseases (Table IV.57).

However, it is a point to note that local government health workers and the NGOs are found practically irrelevant as they have completely failed to provide basic minimum health services to the households. This necessitates the review of assigning public health related tasks to such organizations in.

So far, the hospitalization of the patients is concerned; only 16.4 per cent of the Hindu patients and 23.1 per cent of the Muslims were found to be admitted either in the public or private hospitals (Table IV.58). More than 75.0 per cent of the total households have not availed hospitalized medical treatment despite being sick.

4.16 Maternal and Child health

The Government of India has been making a continuous thrust on the improvement of maternal and child health care services in the country. The Ministry of Health and Family Welfare is also sponsoring various specific projects under the Maternal and Child Health Programme including Oral Re-hydration Therapy (ORT), Universal Immunisation Programme, Polio Eradication Programme etc. In 1996, these entire programme components were merged into single Reproductive and Child Health Programme (RCH). Besides, in 1976, the Department of Women and Child Welfare, under the Ministry of Human Resource and Development launched Integrated Child Development Programmes (ICDS). Under the ICDS, anganwadi centres were supposed to provide health, education and primary education from birth to the 6 years of age and nutritional & health related services to pregnant and breast feeding mothers.

4.16.1 Immunisation of Children below 5 Years

Immunisation of children against six vaccine-preventable diseases including tuberculosis, diphtheria, whooping cough, tetanus, polio and measles is vital for child health as it reduces infant and child mortality rates.



Children who receive one dose of BCG and measles each and three doses of DPT and Polio each, excluding the polio dose at birth are considered fully immunized. The present survey shows that the percentage of children fully immunized is not fully satisfactory. As Table IV.59 shows, 41.9 per cent of the Hindu male and 48.8 per cent of the Hindu female children are fully immunized while 36.7 per cent of the Muslim male and 33.0 per cent of the Muslim female children are fully immunized. Of the total, 73.1 per cent of the total children have been fully immunized.

It is also found that about 74.0 per cent of the Hindu children are fully immunized by the age of above 23 months. In case of Muslim children the percentage is 70.4 per cent. This proves that the households are well informed about the policy and practices of immunization of children.

The role of government agencies regarding child immunization has been found satisfactory. Cent per cent of the total children immunized, irrespective of religion, are immunized at government efforts. The role of NGOs in this regard is totally insignificant (Table IV.61).

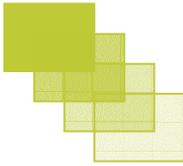
Lack of awareness (67.3 per cent) about the programme of child immunization and non-proximity of facility centres (12.5 per cent) are the main reasons of non-immunization of at least one fourth of the children not immunized (Table IV.62).

4.16.2 Delivery Care

One of the most important thrust of the Reproductive and Child Health Programme is to encourage safe delivery with appropriate natal care system. As the National Family Survey 3 (2005-06), reports, three out of every five births in India take place at home. However, institutional delivery has shown a steady rise in the recent past as response to various governmental programmes and special incentives. It is observed that home births are more common in rural areas among women who receive non-antenatal benefits and care with no education. Safe motherhood requires increase in the institutional births, access to trained attendants and increase in literacy and material well being of the rural people.

The present study indicates that 79.2 per cent of deliveries of Hindu mother and 92.2 per cent of the deliveries of the Muslim mother are taking place at home. Only 9.7 per cent of the women, irrespective of the religion, gave birth to their child in Government hospitals with a negligible 1 per cent in private hospitals (Table IV.63).

Regarding assistance in delivery of child the respondents were found relying more on the untrained dhai (52.8 per cent Hindu & 58.9 per cent Muslim). The percentage of delivery under the supervision of the doctors or trained midwife is not encouraging (Table IV. 64).



4.17 Poor and the PDS Support

Public Distribution System (PDS) being a powerful instrument of welfare state aims primarily at the enhancement of the standard of living of the poor. Food security is the basic objective of the PDS. To attain this, the PDS incorporates requirements like provisioning for essential commodities at fair price, special provisions for the BPL families and various support programmes specifically meant for the poor.

Table IV.65 to Table IV. 69, various aspects of PDS system on the household of the surveyed villages are explained. In the surveyed households it was found that there exist mixed reactions relating to the functioning of the PDS system. It is found that about 60 per cent of the Hindu as well as the Muslim households are BPL households. Out of the Hindu BPL families 21.3 per cent have received BPL ration card while out of the Muslim BPL households 48.3 per cent of the families have BPL ration cards (Table IV. 67). Similarly, out of the total APL Hindu households 79.2 per cent and out of the total APL Muslim households 66.1 per cent households possess APL cards.

Regarding the availing of the PDS ration, out of the 23.8 per cent of the Hindu households 19.7 per cent have enjoyed the benefits while out of the 76.3 per cent of the Muslim households 58.4 per cent are found to be benefited from the PDF ration.

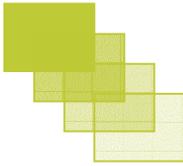
The effective functioning of the PDF system also depends upon its transparency of operation and making provisions for the focused groups. However, it is found in the survey that more than 61.0 per cent of the households (16.4 per cent Hindu and 45.1 per cent Muslim) are not able to buy ration from the PDS outlets. Besides poor purchasing power of the households (61.5 per cent of the respondents), some other factors like lack of adequate PDS supply (25.4 per cent of the respondents) and discrimination by the PDS dealers (13.1 per cent of the respondents) etc., also prove to be major factors in the insufficient PDS functioning.

4.18 Awareness about Government Schemes

Generation of public awareness and community participation are the two major aspects of developmental planning of the democratic nations like India. The Government of India has initiated a number of programmes and policies to ascertain these two aspects. The benefits of such programmes are naturally reaped through active community involvement.

The survey responses regarding public participation and awareness are tabulated in Table IV.70 to Table IV.71. It is found that more than 50 per cent of the households are aware of the government schemes available for community benefits. However the 50:50 awareness does not lead to a formidable assessment of these schemes. In this context, it should be mentioned that the schemes for which the awareness factor is talked about are SGSY, NREGA, IAY, TSD Swajaldhara, ARWSP, Sarvasiksha, ICDS, Anganwadi, Old age/Widow pension, Maternity benefit schemes etc.

The study also reveals that there is no specific pattern of benefits enjoyed by a specific religious group from any of the programmes that have been implemented or in the



process of implementation. In some the percentage Hindu beneficiaries are more (e.g., SGSY, IAY) while in some other programmes the Muslim beneficiaries are higher in number (e.g., NREGA, ARWSP, Sarvasiksha, ICDS/Anganwadi/ pension schemes, maternity benefits etc.) However, the rate of participation and benefits accrued by the Muslim households are better than the Hindu counterparts (Table IV. 71).

4.19 Participation in the Socio-political Affairs

People's participation in the socio-political affairs is a major factor determining the level of awareness and participation. Democratic decentralization of political power in the form of local governance has been one of the significant post-independence political developments of India. The essence of such decentralization process essentially needs active public participation with clarity of political ideology.

The baseline survey clearly indicates that political consciousness of the households under study is quite high. Almost 70.0 per cent of the households reported that they have actively participated in all the elections of the recent past including panchayat, assembly and parliamentary elections (Table IV. 72). However, the participation of the Muslims (76.3 per cent) is found better than the Hindus (23.8). So far membership to socio-religious organizations is concerned; no specific stress on the membership of SHGs, panchayat office bearers or membership of religious and other social organizations is found prominent.

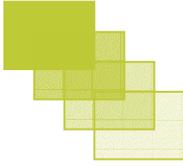
4.20 Conflict, Insecurity and Access to Media and Communication

Problems and losses related to communal or other conflicts have also affected the respondent households to some extent. Such conflicts generally arouse the feeling of insecurity among the people. As the Table IV.74 shows around 25.0 per cent of the Hindu and about 75.0 per cent Muslim households suffered from violent conflicts leading to major losses of life and property. Besides, communal insecurity has been common among the households. It is highly prominent among the Hindus (100.0 per cent) than the Muslims (zero per cent).

As far as the access to media and communication is concerned, the baseline indicates an overall low level of access. As the Table IV.75 is concerned, only 4.0 per cent of the households have the access to the reading of news papers, around 7.0 per cent watch television and about 10.0 per cent listen to radio. Community wise access to these media sources establish that the Muslims are better off than the Hindus (Table IV. 75). This is also an indication of low level of educational as well as economic condition of the households.

4.21 Aspirations

The study also tried to enquire into the level of aspirations of the people in the sample villages. As shown in Table IV.76, four most important facilities that the people think are lacking in their villages were communication (33.0 per cent Hindus and 42.3 per cent Muslims), Electricity (21.5 per cent Hindus and 18.8 per cent Muslims), education facilities (11.5 per cent Hindus and 10.7 per cent Muslims), and drinking water (17.7 per



cent Hindus and 11.0 per cent Muslims). In terms of deprivation, people mostly think that they are deprived of land (59.3 per cent Hindus and 50.4 per cent Muslims), housing (17.2 per cent Hindus and 23.0 per cent Muslims), health (12.0 per cent Hindus and 9.4 per cent Muslims), employment (7.7 per cent Hindus and 8.2 per cent Muslims), etc.

Therefore the major aspirations among the households emerge in terms of better transport and communication, improved electricity supply, provisions for safe drinking water, better healthcare, education, and employment opportunities. However, it is surprising to find that about 40 per cent of the households did not put their opinion regarding the welfare related aspirations for them.

The urgency of providing these services and opportunities to the minority concentrated areas can particularly be given importance due to their relative backwardness and poverty as evident from the present study.

It is to note that the surveyed households were also asked to put their opinions regarding welfare of the minority community living in that area. It is found that 35.4 per cent of the Hindus and 41.1 per cent of the Muslims favoured development of adequate educational facilities in the region. As shown in the Table IV.78, besides education, development of transport and communication, health services etc., were also stressed by the households for overall development of the minority communities there. However, 45.9 per cent of the Hindus and 32.9 per cent of the Muslims did not have any opinion about the welfare requirements. ■



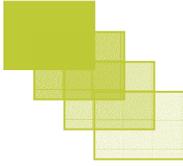
DEVELOPMENT DEFICITS

As reflected in the Assam Development Report, 2003, Dhubri is positioned at the bottom of the list in terms of Human Development Index (HDI). The HDI index for the district is 0.214, which is the lowest in comparison to other districts of Assam. Similarly, the income index (0.102), education index (0.454), and health index (0.086) are also at the bottom of the list. The overall present development scenario of the district as depicted by the baseline survey is not qualitatively much different. The development deficits of the district along with prioritization of the required development interventions are summarized below.

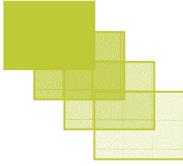
Developmental deficits in Dhubri district and their priority ranking

<i>Sl. No</i>	<i>Indicators</i>	<i>Survey Result</i>	<i>Estimate for India</i>	<i>Deficit</i>	<i>Priority Ranking attached</i>
<i>Socio-economic indicators</i>					
1	Rate of literacy	69.28	67.30	1.98	6
2	Rate of female literacy	63.87	57.10	6.77	8
3	Work participation rate	58.75	38.00	20.75	9
4	Female work participation rate	10.90	21.50	-10.60	4
<i>Basic amenities indicators</i>					
5	Percentage of pucca houses	4.20	59.40	-55.20	1
6	Percentage of households with access to safe drinking water	90.00	87.90	2.10	7
7	Percentage of households with sanitation facilities	40.00	39.20	0.80	5
8	Percentage of electrified households	34.00	67.90	-33.9	2
<i>Health indicators</i>					
9	Percentage of fully vaccinated children	73.1	43.50	29.6	10
10	Percentage of institutional delivery	9.7	38.70	-29.00	3

■ Compared to the national scenario, the first priority area for an effective development intervention in the district should be rural housing, making provision for pucca houses for the rural poor of the district under the existing centrally sponsored housing programme. As pointed out in the table above, the difference between the existing scenario of the district and the national average is quite prominent.



- Second, rural electrification deserve immediate attention, as the gap between the existing scenario of the district and the national average is quite prominent. As an alternative to electrification, the multi-sector development plan may aim at effective utilization of solar energy.
- Keeping in view the development deficits, the third priority of the multi-sector development plan for Dhubri is to work out a feasible strategy for promoting institutional delivery. It may be done in collaboration with the National Rural Health Mission.
- Enhancement of Female work participation rate in the district is to be the fourth priority of the multi-sector development plan for Dhubri. The present baseline survey provides sufficient insights for effective planning for grater female work participation in the district. For instance, besides highlighting the problems of self-employed people in the district, the baseline survey has clearly pointed out the kind of skill sought by the people.
- Sanitation and access to safe drinking water and are still two major problems in the rural areas of Dhubri, and therefore, the multi-sector development plan for the district may adequately emphasize on these two important issues.
- Although the literacy rate in the district is found a little above the national average, it is far below the State average. The present baseline survey has reflected that the rural areas are highly deprived of required education infrastructure leading to a relatively poor rate of illiteracy. The requirements are better education infrastructure, scholarship etc. In addition to incentives, the religious minority along side the ST & SC population should be sensitized.
- While aiming at promotion of literacy in the district, special emphasis should be on girls in order to address the issue of female literacy.
- The agricultural sector should be rejuvenated with farm mechanization, introduction of multiple cropping, providing crop loans at subsidized rate, and provision for adequate marketing of agricultural produces. Provisions for training o the actual cultivators for commercial cultivation are a felt need.
- It is also prominent in the study that like other rural areas of Assam rural Dhubri is also characterized by high rate unemployment and incidence of underemployment. Appropriate measures must be taken to provide employment opportunities to the rural youth. The pressure of unemployment may be reduced by creating self-employment avenues or by creating an environment to encourage youths to take up self-employment activities. ■



LIST OF SURVEYED VILLAGES

Sl. No.	VILLAGE
1	Khopati Pt. III
2	Baladoba
3	Kuchnimara
4	Airkata
5	Baladmara
6	Charibari Pt.1
7	Pathuria
8	Hatsingimari
9	Iswarpanga
10	Gutipara Pt.III
11	Majer Alga Pt.IV
12	Bamuni PT.I
13	Lakhiganj
14	Chaibari
15	Geramari Pt.1
16	Baraibari Pt.II
17	Pukhuripara Pt.II
18	Khamar
19	Nayeralga Pt.III
20	Debattar Barundanga
21	Chagolia Pt.1
22	Digholtari
23	Singimari Pt.1
24	Dumardaha Pt.IV
25	Kolapakani Pt.II
26	Boromera
27	Mora Gadadhar Char
28	Bidyapara Pt.II
29	Sialmari
30	Bisaindai Pt.III