



Executive Summary

Baseline Survey of Minority Concentrated Districts

Cachar District Assam



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Housing
Drinking Water
Electricity
Health
Employment

Cachar District, Assam

The purpose of the Baseline Survey of the Minority Concentration Districts (MDCS) was to assess the development deficits in the district and identification of priority areas for policy interventions to be structured in the line of the Prime Minister's 15- Point Programme, which will be in the form of a Multi-sector Development Programme (MsDP) for the entire district. In order to do this, ten indicators - eight of which were identified and applied by the Ministry of Minority Affairs, Government of India for identifying the Minority Concentrated Districts across the country along with two additional indicators for assessing health status have been used. Since the basic purpose of the Baseline was specified as a pre-requisite for preparation of Multi-sector District Development Plan (MsDP) for the Minority Concentrated Districts (MCDs) characterised by relative backwardness and to bring those district at least to the national level, most recent national level official estimates were taken for finding the development deficits in terms of the ten selected indicators. Taking deficit so derived as weights, the indicators representing specific sectors are ranked on a ten point score-scale. The exercise results in following relative ranking for the Cachar district, Assam. The national estimates of the selected indicators are estimated on the basis of NSS 2004 -2005 rounds and NFHS - 3 with due approval from the Ministry.

Developmental deficits in Hailakandi district and their priority ranking

Sl. No	Indicators	Survey Result	Estimate for India	Deficit	Priority Ranking attached
<i>Socio-economic indicators</i>					
1	Rate of literacy	87.09	67.30	20.2	7
2	Rate of female literacy	82.82	57.10	25.72	9
3	Work participation rate	29.97	38.00	-8.03	6
4	Female work participation rate	6.8	21.50	-14.7	5
<i>Basic amenities indicators</i>					
5	Percentage of pucca houses	8.71	59.40	-50.69	1
6	Percentage of households with access to safe drinking water	42.11	87.90	-45.79	2
7	Percentage of households with sanitation facilities	92.90	39.20	53.7	10
8	Percentage of electrified households	27.00	67.90	-40.9	3
<i>Health indicators</i>					
9	Percentage of fully vaccinated children	68.36	43.50	24.86	8
10	Percentage of institutional delivery	22.30	38.70	-16.4	4

■ The survey of villages and the households revealed that the major development deficits in Cachar district includes its poor housing status, low infrastructure-roads, communication and power, social infrastructure-education and health, low farm investment and productivity, increasing landlessness and casualisation of labour.

■ The major deficit in the district is the work participation rate especially the female work participation rate. The survey revealed that only 46 percent of the main workers remain gainfully employed throughout the year which indicates the distressful work situation in the district. The low female work participation rate in the district shows that

economic independence of women is fairly restricted. The survey results revealed that 36.3 percent of the women are involved only in domestic work of the household.

■ The second major development deficit in the district is with respect to housing where only 8.71 percent of the households live in pucca houses. The proportion of households covered under IAY in the district is only 5.5 percent.

■ The access to institutional medical care is captured by the number of institutional delivery. The percentage of institutional delivery in the district stands at 22.30 percent in other words non institutional delivery in the district stands at 77.30 percent. More serious is the fact that 73 percent of these non institutional deliveries were taken care by untrained dais.

■ Next to institutional delivery is the percentage of electrified households in the district. Although the official records of the State Electricity Board shows that 90 percent villages in the district have been electrified, the survey shows that only 27 percent of the rural households have domestic connection for lighting.

■ Access to safe drinking water is another major concern in Cachar district. Only 42.11 percent of the households in the district have access to safe drinking water although the census estimate records that 92.64 percent of the villages have access to safe drinking water.

■ The survey revealed that 24.48 percent of the workforce in the district is cultivators and 29 percent of the households in the district possess and cultivate their own land. Size class wise cultivable land holdings possessed by sample households shows that majority (78 percent) are of marginal sizes, and only 10 percent are small holdings, while merely 2 percent and one percent are semi-medium and medium size respectively. However, agricultural practices are still traditional and low intensity as only 13 percent of the households possessed a plough. This explains the poor farm mechanization practices in the district and also the low proportion of households cultivating their own land in the district.

■ Another crucial gap that needs redress is the PDS. The survey indicated that of the total households who usually buy from PDS shops, 25.14 percent cannot regularly buy from the PDS. The main reasons cited are lack of adequate supply (64 percent) and discrimination by dealer (23 percent).



- Although the district has been implementing several development programmes of the government, the results of the Baseline survey showed that only 25 percent of the households have benefited from such schemes and proportion of religious minorities benefiting from various programmes is 42 percent.

- Transport and communication is a major constraint to sustain the development process in the district especially its road and rail connectivity.