



## Executive Summary

# Baseline Survey of Minority Concentrated Districts

## Darrang District Assam



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## Darrang 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 Darrang district, Assam. The national estimates of the selected indicators (1-8) are estimated on the basis of NSS 2004 -2005 rounds while (9-10) are from NFHS - 3 with due approval from the Ministry.

SI No	Indicators	Survey Results	India	Deficit	Priority assigned
<i>Socio-economic indicators</i>					
1	Rate of literacy	74.70	67.30	7.40	8
2	Rate of female literacy	67.30	57.10	10.20	9
3	Work participation rate	39.90	38.00	1.90	6
4	Female work participation rate	32.30	21.50	10.80	10
<i>Basic amenities indicators</i>					
5	Percentage of pucca houses	7.60	59.40	-51.80	1
6	Percentage of households with access to safe drinking water	83.40	87.90	-4.50	5
7	Percentage of households with sanitation facilities	3.80	39.20	-35.40	3
8	Percentage of electrified households	17.40	67.90	-50.50	2
<i>Health indicators</i>					
9	Percentage of fully vaccinated children	16.80	43.50	-26.70	4
10	Percentage of institutional delivery	43.19	38.70	4.49	7

In terms of achievements in health, knowledge and decent standard of living, as indicated by HDI value, the position of Darrang is far below the state average. With more than 95 per cent of rural population, its economy is primarily agrarian although the agricultural sector is heavily loaded with the traditional practices, both in terms of production and relations. In terms of religious composition of population, nearly 58 per cent of the total population of Darrang is Hindu while more than 35 per cent is Muslim and a little less than one per cent belong to other religious minority communities, mainly Christian. The major development deficits as indicated by the present baseline survey are pointed out below.

- More than one-fourth of the households depend mainly on agriculture, almost all of them are marginal farmers and many of them supplement their income from petty diversified jobs at the lower end of labour markers. In absence of appropriate institutional reforms, despite several legislations, the technological reforms initiated in the state have little impacts. Almost near absence of modern agricultural implement with the farming households clearly witnesses wide prevalence of traditional practices in the villages. Agricultural development in few pockets of the district is quite prominent, but does not reflect the overall situation.
- In case of a sizable section of the Muslim farmers, land settlement to issue periodic patta (myadi patta) is an important issue which demands immediate attention. This will also help them in their access to institutional finance.
- Agriculture not being remunerative, majority of the Hindu as well as Muslim households is looking for additional employment. Although they have not yet adequately proved their entrepreneurship, the households engaged in self employed ventures across the religious categories reported that market, raw materials, credit and power are the major constraints.
- Although IAY has some visible impact, housing has a matter of serious concern for more than 60 per cent of the households across religion. Besides overwhelming domination of katcha houses, about eight per cent of the Hindus and 17 per cent of the Muslims households suffer from acute housing space with single room house.
- Alongside a poor scenario of modern housing amenities, electricity is not available in more than 75 per cent of the sample households.
- More than 12 per cent of Hindu households, 5 per cent of Muslim and almost 16 per cent of Christian households consume water from unprotected sources, which amount to say that they are still deprived of safe drinking water.
- It has been found that the drop out rate is quite high, especially at the primary level, the phenomenon that deserves serious attention. The phenomenon is more prominent among the Muslim households. The major reasons for higher dropout rate among the Muslims are, need to earn (26 percent), work at home (21 percent) and not interested in reading (19 percent). For higher education, one of the principal reasons is non-affordability of fees as recorded for 22 per cent of such cases.
- More than one fourth of the sample households (Hindu - 27.2 percent, Muslim - 23.9 percent, and Christian - 13.8 percent) are willing to go for skill promotion through



training for their family members. The commonly most preferred trades are computer operation and tailoring. However, the Hindu households also have preference for weaving while the Muslim households have preference for automobile repairing.

- Immunization coverage has been found much poorer among the Muslim children than their Hindu counterpart. The major reasons are non-availability of the facilities lack of awareness.

- It has been found that the Muslim women have far less access (just in case of 12 percent) to government and institutional facilities for child delivery. Child delivery at home assisted by untrained dais (more than 86 percent) has been a common phenomenon.

- Further witnessing poor social security measure, a sizeable section of the BPL families has been found not having the BPL card across the religions. Although the PDS is weak, its importance can be judged from the fact more than 70 per cent of the sample households are getting their essential commodities through the PDS. The major problem with the PDS, however, is inadequate and irregular supply of the essential commodities.

- It is reflected that Muslims are more aware and responsive to certain government programmes, but benefits accrued from the programmes are less than the Hindu community.

In terms of relative deprivation, common perception of the people is that they are deprived of land, housing, health, education and employment. The major aspirations of the people that have emerged through the survey are communication and connectivity, safe drinking water, better health care, education and livelihood securities. ■