

Baseline Survey of Minority Concentrated Districts

District Report

NAGAON

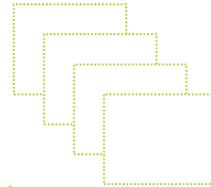
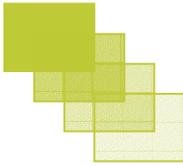
Study Commissioned by
Ministry of Minority Affairs
Government of India

Study Conducted by



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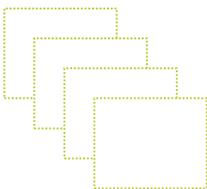


Commissioned by the Ministry of Minority Affairs, this Baseline Survey was planned for 90 minority concentrated districts (MCDs) identified by the Government of India across the country, and the Indian Council of Social Science Research (ICSSR), New Delhi coordinates the entire survey.

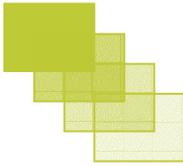
Omeo Kumar Das Institute of Social Change and Development, Guwahati has been assigned to carry out the Survey for four states of the Northeast, namely Assam, Arunachal Pradesh, Meghalaya and Manipur.

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

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



Omeo Kumar Das Institute of Social Change and Development is an autonomous research institute of the ICSSR, New delhi and Government of Assam.

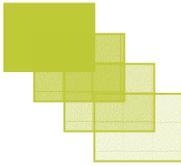


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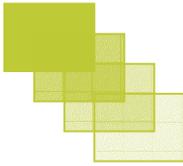


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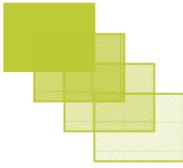
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BACKGROUND

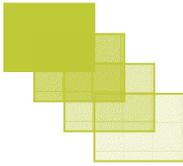
Issues relating to disparities across socio-religious communities have attracted much attention of the government of India of late. There is a growing realization about the relative backwardness of the religious minorities more particularly the Muslim as a religious community in India. The Sachar Committee, 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.

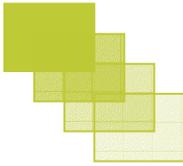
The number of villages surveyed in each stratum was directly proportional to the share of each stratum/group of tehsils (according to population) to the district population, subject to a minimum allocation of 6 villages to each stratum.

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

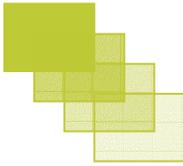
Approximate present population of the village	no. of hamlet-group to be formed
1200 to 1799	3
1800 to 2399	4
2400 to 2999	5
3000 to 3599	6
..... and so on	

Following the above methodology, total 30 villages of the district Nagaon were identified and 30 households from each village were 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 NAGAON

2.1 Area and Location

The Central Assam District of Nagaon (spelled by the British as Nowgong) is one of the largest districts of Assam. It sprawls across almost four thousand square kilometers of fertile alluvial plains and thickly forested hills. Nagaon extends from 250-45' to 260 -45' North Latitude and 920 -33' -6" East Longitude. The district is bounded by Sonitpur district and the river Brahmaputra in the north, West Karbi Anglong and North Cachar Hills in the south and East Karbi Anglong and Golaghat district in the east. The mighty river Brahmaputra flows along the northern periphery of the district. Other major tributaries meandering through the district such as Kolong, Kopili drain into the Brahmaputra. Lying at a distance of 123 kilometers by road from Guwahati, Nagaon town constitutes a vital corridor linking the Upper Assam districts of Golaghat, Jorhat, Sivasagar, Dibrugarh, Tinsukia and the North Assam districts of Sonitpur and North Lakhimpur. Nagaon has covered total area of 3,831 sq. km.

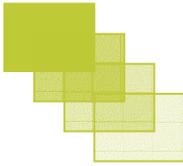
Nagaon was carved out as a separate district administrative unit in 1832. At one time, a large chunk of the Naga Hills, the Mikir Hills and North Cachar Hills were part of the district. With the passage of time they were sliced away to form separate districts.

Located in Central Assam, the eastern, western and southern segments of the newly organised district were once ruled by different small-time feudal kings or their agents. The residual effects of the rule of the Bara Bhuyans were imaginatively utilised and reorganised by Momai Tamuli Barphukana, an intrepid officer of the Ahom king Pratap Singha in the first half of the seventeenth century. This area, until then, was more of strategic than administrative concern. Newly organised village system-hence called "Nagaon", 'Na' means new.

At the social level, a great majority of the people were the Vaishnavites. Sankardeva, the great saint of the Bhakti movement era was born at Bordowa, at a distance of fifteen kilometres from the district headquarters town. Main places of tourist attraction are Brotodrava (Bordowa), Champavati Waterfall, Kziranga and Lawkhowa Wildlife Sanctuary. The famous Kaziranga National Park, home of the one-horned rhinoceros, stretches from the North Eastern parts of the district and spills into bordering Golaghat.

2.2 Administrative Division

On the administrative front, Nagaon district has 3 civil sub divisions namely Nagaon, Kaliabor, Hojai with 10 revenue circles and 18 development blocks (Table1). Out of 7 towns of the district, Nagaon town tops the list with highest population of 1 26,115. District has 240 gram panchayats in 1375 inhabited villages. Total number of police station is 21. Two National Highways, N.H.-36 and N.H.-37 cross the district.



Administrative division of Nagaon District

<i>Type</i>	<i>Number</i>
No. of Civil Sub Division	3
No. of Towns	7
Revenue Circle	10
No. of Development Block	18
No. of Gram Panchayat	240
No. of Inhabited Villages	1375
No. of Community Information Centre	18
National Highways Passing through the district	N.H. - 36 & N.H. - 37

2.3 Demographic characteristics

The district has been the meeting ground of diverse ethnic groups, cultural streams since time immemorial. Throughout the history, people of different stocks have been migrating into this land and merged into a common harmonious whole in a process of assimilation and fraternization.

About more than half of the population in the district are Muslim and others are Hindu and Christian. A sizeable section of the Hindus is Vaisnavite. According to 1991 census, the total population of Nagaon was 1893171 with sex ratio 929/1000. The population has increased to 2314629 with sex ratio 944/1000, according to census report 2001. The density per square km. is as high as 582, higher than the all Assam average of 340 according to the census, 2001. The literacy rate has also increased from 54.74 (Male-62.49, Female-46.30) in 1991 to 61.73 (Male-68.27, Female-54.74) in 2001 but the increment is less than the all Assam average.

Demographic Characteristics of Nagaon

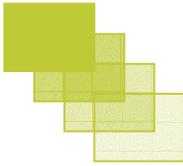
<i>Area</i>	<i>Year</i>	<i>population</i>	<i>Density per sq. K. m.</i>	<i>Sex Ratio</i>	<i>Literacy Rate</i>
Nagaon	1991	1893171	494	929	54.74
	2001	2314629	582	944	61.73
Assam	1991	22414322	286	923	52.89
	2001	26655528	340	935	63.25

Source: Census Report 2001, India.

The decadal variation of population growth shows that population growth rate has been fluctuating since 1951 to 1991. The decade 1971-91 witnesses considerably a high growth rate indicating a high incidence of migration to the district.

2.4 Occupational Pattern

The distribution of work forces in the district as per the Census 2001 is shown in the following table. Out of 727,641 workers 641,273 persons are engaged in rural sector and 86,368 are in urban sector. Again participation of female is encouraging in both rural and urban sectors as shown below.



Occupational Distribution of Nagaon

Items		Total	Rural	Urban
Total Workers	Person	727,641	641,273	86,368
	Male	586,631	510,766	75,865
	Female	141,010	130,507	10,503
Cultivators (%)	Person	38.4	43.2	2.4
	Male	39.4	44.9	2.3
	Female	34.2	36.7	2.9
Agricultural labourers (%)	Person	19.9	22.4	1.6
	Male	19.5	22.2	1.5
	Female	21.6	23.1	1.9
Workers in Household Industries (%)	Person	3.4	3.5	2.2
	Male	1.9	1.9	1.9
	Female	9.6	10.0	5.3
Other Workers (%)	Person	38.4	30.9	93.8
	Male	39.2	31.1	94.4
	Female	34.7	30.2	90.0

Source: Census Report 2001, India.

2.5 Natural Resources

2.5.1 Land Use Pattern

Nagaon district is rich in natural resources. Geologically the soil is sandy new alluvium. The Table below shows the classification of the total geographical area in the district. Almost 24 percent of the total area of the district is covered by forest of different intensity. The share of net sown area to the total geographical area amounts to a little above 57 percent, and witnessing a low cropping intensity, about 58 percent of the net sown area is sown more than once. Primarily due high population density, the percentage of fallow land in the district is considerably low.

Total Area and Classification of Area in Nagaon

	(Area in hectare)
Total geographical area	411030
Forest	97943
Area not available for cultivation	54051
Other uncultivated land excluding fallow land	19036
Fallow land	5440
Net area sown	234569
Total cropped area	369862
Area sown more than once	135293

Source: Statistical Hand Book, Assam, 2007



2.5.2 Plantation and Horticulture

The topography, agro-climatic conditions, prevalence of fertile soil and long tradition of growing plantation and horticulture crops have enabled commercial cultivation of several crop varieties. The major agricultural crops grown in the district are paddy, potato, mustard, jute, sugarcane, wheat and other vegetables. Besides these crops, the district produces various types of horticultural fruits like banana, papaya, litchi, pineapple, lemon etc. and other plantation crops such as coconut, areca nut etc. Tea cultivation is also done mostly in the organized sector. Sericulture is also an important activity practiced widely in the district. It is an important source of supplementary income and employment particularly to the rural womenfolk. The craft is mostly practiced in the tribal areas. Eri is most extensively raised in the district followed by Mulberry.

Horticulture could be one of the strongest features of the economy of Nagaon district because of its congenial agro-climatic and soil conditions. The district has definite advantages in producing potato, banana, chillies, areca nut, coconut etc. Bamboo, a large species of grass, grows abundantly in all parts of the district. It is an excellent substitute for timber in house building and for innumerable other purposes including handicraft industries. Presently a large quantity of bamboo grown in the district is consumed by Hindustan Paper Corporation Limited as one of the major raw material. Banana, pineapple, citrus are the major fruit crops grown in the district. In addition, other crops grown are guava, mango, mandarin and oranges. Though most of these fruits are produced since time immemorial, the productivity levels are very low due to lack of scientific approach in their cultivation.

2.5.3 Livestock and Diary

Live-stock rearing also provides supplementary income to a large number of rural households. Poultry, Duckery, Goatery and Piggery are major backyard activity of the rural households for food and nutrition. Pig rearing is taken as a subsidiary occupation by the small and marginal farmers and the agricultural labourers of the tribal community

Distribution of live stock

Plough Animals	2,78,235
Cows	6,26,649
Buffaloes	26,691
Sheep	2,501
Goat	1,69,821
Pig	31,860
Poultry- Fowl	7,38,929
Duck	2,12,945

Source: NER data bank

Pisciculture is a major allied agro-enterprise in the district. The mighty Brahmaputra as well as the large water bodies like beels and low lying swamps are the natural breeding places for large variety of fishes and provide large capture for markets both within and outside the district. The district has also large number of culture fisheries mostly ponds.



2.5.4 Minerals

Major minerals of the district are granite, quartz. Minor minerals as railway ballast, road metal, sand and brick clays are found in this district. The granites and gneisses near Jagiroad are being quarried for railway ballast and road metal. Granites and gneisses are also being quarried in many other parts of the district. The clay found extensively in the alluvial tract of the district is quite suitable for the manufacture of bricks and earthenware.

2.6 Economic Characteristics

The economy of the district is basically agrarian with more than 75 percent of population engaged in agriculture and land based activities. Next to agriculture, handloom and weaving is the main industrial activity.

2.6.1 Agriculture

Nagaon district is primarily dependent on agriculture and forest products. Main source of income is paddy with surplus production. Rice, wheat, jute, maize, sugarcane are major crops of the district. The district has net and gross cropped areas of 2,17,805 hectares and 417218 hectares respectively, the net cropped area being 57 percent of the total geographical area. About 1,47,410 hectares (63.5%) out of the net cropped areas is put under multiple cropping with an average cropping intensity 192 percent as against 152.43 percent for the state. Besides rice, jute and sugarcane, mustard seed, vegetables etc. are other important agricultural products of the area. Dhing town is surrounded by a fertile area of land which produces jute, rice and mustard seeds abundantly.

2.6.2 Industry

The district of Nagaon is practically dependent on agriculture and has not yet assumed a dominant role in industry. Tea manufacturing is the predominant industry in the district. In addition to the tea industry, there are three large scale industries, two medium scale industries in the co-operative sector. In the private sector, one medium scale industry is presently in operation. Important industrial units of the district are as follows.

2.6.2.1 Hindustan Paper Corporation

This is mainly a forest product based unit, the main raw material being bamboo. The items and inputs required in the production of paper can be ancillaries, and also downstream industries can be established with HPC's surplus caustic soda and industrial waste like lime, coal ash, etc.

2.6.2.2 The Assam Spun Silk Mill

This was set up to consume the locally available Eri and Muga and also to supply the weavers with Spun Silk yarns. Ancillary and downstream industry can be developed in tiny sector. As regards downstream unit, carpet making unit may be encouraged. Small carpentry unit for production of stick and bobbin may be encouraged.



2.6.2.3 Assam Co-operative Jute Mill

Nagaon is one of major jute growing areas of the country. A few cottage and household industries for producing jute bags, jute carpet and wall hangings can be set up for encouraging local prospective artisans with definite marketing arrangements. Highest concentration of agro-based industries found in and around Nagaon town. Forest based units are also mainly concentrated in and around Nagaon town. Among the forest based units, saw mills have their dominance. Other forest based industries are Agarbatti, wooden furniture, cane and bamboo products manufacturing units.

2.6.3 Handloom and handicraft industries

Jute and tea are two important export items of the district. Timber and cotton are the principal exports of this important trade centre. Hojai is a principal wholesale market for rice and known as the granary of Assam. Agor industry of Hojai is another important one. Dry fish is one of the important items going out from Jagiroad to number of places of this region.

2.6.4 District Income

In Nagaon agriculture has been the largest contributor. But now service sector is also growing along with manufacturing and other industrial activities. Yet, the primary sector is the largest contributor followed by the tertiary (service) and secondary (manufacturing industries) to the District Gross Domestic Product in (DGDP) 2000-01 (table 6).

Sectoral composition of DGDP

Area	Primary Sector	Secondary Sector	Tertiary Sector	Total DGDP	Per Capita DGDP
Nagaon	928002(50.14)	29658(16.02)	62594(33.82)	185054(100)	80881

Source: Statistical Hand book of Assam, 2006

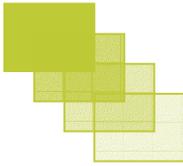
* Figures in brackets are in%

2.7 Infrastructure and connectivity

Infrastructure plays an important role in the development of a society. Of all the infrastructure facilities, transport and communication; power and energy; and banking are considered essential sectors. Infrastructural facility for industrial development and the development of other economic activity is not up to the mark in the district of Nagaon.

2.7.1 Transport and communication

Nagaon is well connected by road links. The National Highway No. 36 and No. 37 provide easy access to important places of Nagaon District. Road Distance from Guwahati to Nagaon Town is 123 Kilometers. The North-East Frontier railway has its Divisional headquarters in Lumding which is connected with all important centres in the district. The conversion of the meter gauge track to broad gauge from Guwahati to Lumding has eased the transportation problem of the region. Railway Station named Haiborgaon is at Nagaon town. Nearest Railway Junction is at Chaparmukh which is around 28 Kilometers from Nagaon Town. Nearest Airport is Lokapriya Gopinath Bordoloi Airport at Borjhar (Guwahati).



While the Brahmaputra offers tremendous scope as a waterway, rivers like the Jamuna, Kolong and Kopili are frequently used for water transport. Dhing town on the Brahmaputra was a well known steamer ghat in days past. Even now, milk and agricultural products are transported from Dhing by boat.

The communication sector in Nagaon is in its take-off stage with 60 numbers of telephone exchanges. The distribution can be seen from the following table.

Distribution of Telephone Facility

No. of Telephone Exchanges	60
Total no. of Telephone	34333
Density of Telephone	1.5 (per 100 population)
No. of WLL base stations	2
No. of WLL Telephone Connections	981

Source: www.nagaon.nic.in

2.7.2 Banking

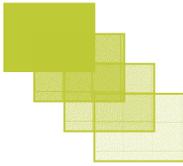
Banks have an important role to play in stimulating economic development of an economy. In Assam the networks of schedule commercial banks have widened the horizon of social banking policies and programmes, which support all the vital sectors of the economy. In Nagaon, the total number of banks stands at 15 and total number of bank branches is 97. Rs 40052 lakhs is deposited and Rs 8907 lakhs has been disbursed as advances as on 31. 3. 2000. The credit deposit ratio of the banks operating in the district is very low at 25 percent, and therefore, there is opportunity for availability of finance for new investment in the district.

2.7.3 Electrification

Total number of electrified villages in the district was 1413 in 2000. Total consumption of electricity was 82.752 Mega Watt (MW), out of which 43.703 MW was consumed domestically, 8.188 MW was consumed commercially, 13.522 MW was used by industrial units while 17.339 MW was used for other purposes.

2.7.4 Basic Amenities

There are some other basic amenities which are important for sustainable development and equal growth of the society. These are safe drinking water facility, facilities for basic education and health, and social security etc. For health, the district has only one civil hospital, nine primary health centres and 25 state dispensaries. Considering the size and population density, the government health care service providers in the district is not adequate enough. In terms of educational facilities too, the infrastructure for primary education is sound, but the same for high and higher education, especially for technical education is poor. There are only 55 Higher Secondary schools and 25 colleges in the district besides one polytechnic institute and one fishery college. So basically, Nagaon district is not in much developed stage. To raise the living condition of the masses, infrastructural facilities should be developed further. ■



PROFILE OF THE SAMPLE VILLAGES

3.1 Demographic Profile

The total population of the 30 sample villages of the district Nagaon, as per the census 2001, was 77,090 persons and the total number of households was 12,923 indicating an average size of family of six members. The census also indicated a sex ratio of 922 females per thousand males in the sample villages, considerably lower than the district average of 944. Religion wise, a little more than 45 per cent of the sample population is constituted by the Hindus while the remaining 55 per cent is constituted by the minority communities including more than 54 per cent of the Muslims. The Muslims, however, constitute 51 per cent of the total population of the district.

3.2 Literacy Rate

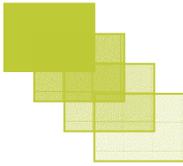
The literacy rate for the rural population of the district, as reported by census 2001, is 58.30 per cent. The same ratio for the district as a whole, however, is 61.73 per cent, 68.27 per cent for male against 51.51 per cent for female. In any case, all the figures are below the state average. Nevertheless, the literacy rate in the sample villages has been more than 74 per cent. The literacy rate for the sample villages for male is a little more than 79 per cent while the same ratio for the female is 68 per cent.

3.3 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 higher 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.

3.3.1 *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 25 out of the 30 villages under the sample are electrified. The total number of Hindu household electrified is 2119, of which, more than 97 per cent of the households use electricity for domestic lighting only and the rest use electricity for agricultural as well as commercial purposes. On the other hand, the total number of Muslim household electrified is 1532, of which, more than 84.0 per cent of the households use electricity for domestic lighting only and the rest use electricity for agricultural as well as commercial purposes. All the Christian households of the locality are found electrified using power for domestic lighting purposes only.



Consequently, the percentage of the sample villages has to depend upon other conventional sources even for domestic lighting seems to be lower. 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 16 hours. Over the years, there has been no significant improvement in the availability of electricity. The average duration of availability of electricity was 11 to 10 hours per day over the last 10 years. The sample data also reflect that five of the villages namely, Topakuchi, Gendhua Pathar, Niz Sahari, Kenduguri, and Matharbari have been de-electrified.

Average Hours of Electricity Available per day in Sample Villages

	Last Year	5 Years ago	10 years ago
Average hours of electricity available	16	11	10

3.3.2 Drinking Water

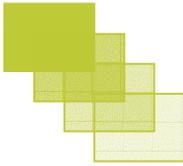
Availability and access to safe drinking water has been one of the most crucial factors involving serious health concerns in rural areas. All the sample villages have their own drinking water facilities. Public tube well comes out to be the leading source of drinking water accounting for 54 per cent of all sources combined followed by public hand pump accounted for 24 per cent. The sources of drinking water facility in the sample villages across religious groups indicate that the most used sources of drinking water for both Hindus and Muslims are private tube well consisting of 87 per cent and 90 per cent respectively.

3.3.3 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. The most common toilet facility among the sample households is the Sulabh/Soakage pit latrine cutting across all the religions. We observe that Sulabh/Soakage pit latrine constitute 59 per cent for Hindu households and 67 per cent for Muslim households. Therefore, the overall scenario of the district has been marked by unhygienic and unhealthy practices.

3.3.4 Education

Literacy and level of education are basic indicators of the level of development achieved by a society. Higher levels of education lead to a greater awareness and also contributes in improvement of economic and social state of affairs. It acts as a social catalyst for enhancing the returns on investment made in almost every aspect of development effort, be it population control, health, hygiene, environmental degradation control, employment of the weaker sections of the society. Lower literacy rate in rural areas may be attributable to various factors, which include lesser schools, distance to schools, and engagement of their wards in agricultural activities, among others.



Percentage distribution of total educational facilities available in sample villages

Schools	Primary		Middle		High/HS		Tech	Religious Schools	Non formal	Others	Total
	Boys	Girls	Boys	Girls	Boys	Girls	Nil	8	23	13	133
Total	30	4	19	4	28	4					
P.C	22.5	3	14.3	3	21.1	3	-	6	17.3	9.8	100

We observe from the above table that educational and schooling facilities for girls are much less compared to that of the boys in the sample villages. There are only 3 per cent primary and 3 per cent middle schools for boys compared to 22.5 per cent primary and 14.3 per cent of the middle schools for boys in the sample villages. Similar is the case for High/Higher Secondary schools. It may also be noted that there are 6 per cent religious schools, which indicates that Minority community in the sample villages also send their children to religious schools. More importantly, non formal educational institutes are also playing significant role in educational uplift of the villagers.

The base line survey reveals that all the 30 sample villages have at least one primary school within the village. 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.

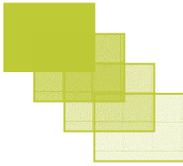
Although the pattern of distribution of primary schools in the rural area of the district is satisfactory, more than 75 per cent of the schools do not have pucca structure. About 10 per cent of them are semi pucca while the remaining buildings are kutcha normally with mud flooring and thatch roof.

3.3.5 Health Facilities

The sample villages reported to have health care centres at a distance of 1 to 15 kilometres. Altogether, the 30 sample villages have access to 109 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 of the villages providing health care facilities to the villagers. Altogether 22 doctors have been appointed in the PHCs and SCs. A total of 59 ANMs have been appointed in these centres. Moreover, 25 medicine retailers are also present in the area. Regular health check up facility is available in 19 PHCs and SCs. Besides, pathological check up and x-ray facilities are also available, although these facilities have not been sufficient. 17 beds are available in the SCs and PHCs to treat hospitalized patients.

3.3.6 Other Facilities

The quality of life of persons depends, among other factors, upon the basic amenities available to them. Though remarkable achievements have been made in extending basic



amenities to the people in the country, there are still large areas of deprivation, which requires urgent attention.

As the primary data on village level survey reveals, distance from the villages to the nearest block head quarters and nearest town ranges from 2 kms to more than 10 kms. It is also to note that the majority of the villagers have to cover a distance of more than 18 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 5-8 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.

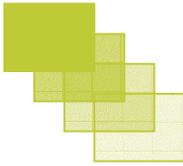
The approached roads to different facilitators to the village community are mostly *kuccha*. 50 village roads, 7 block connectors, 34 *pancahyat* approaches and 8 district connecting roads are reported to be uneven and *kuccha*. However, 36 village roads, 74 block connectors, 48 *pancahyat* approaches and 65 district connecting roads are reported to be either *pucca* or semi-*pucca*.

3.4 Village Organizations

The organizational activity within the village is an important indicator of overall socio-economic development. The collected data show that the village level organizations are fairly active in the sample villages. Co-operatives, workers union, farmers organizations, 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 sample villages. The available village level organizations include credit facility in 13 villages, marketing organizations in 14 villages; farmers and political organizations in 18 and 27 villages respectively. The youth and women organizations are also active in 15 and 11 sample villages respectively. Although women organizations are active in the sample villages, the overall scenario of the women community is quite dismal. Perhaps low level of literacy, lower age at marriage resulting in the larger number of children; other social and religious factors are some of the deterrents coming in the way of overall development of rural women. Moreover, picture of handicraft activities of the sample villagers also looks to be gloomy. Eighty percent of the sample villages are not engaged in any artisan/handicraft activity despite repeated urge by the Government. 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.

3.5 Crop Productivity Status

The economy of Nagaon is agrarian with paddy as the prime crop. It is observed that the survey results that paddy is the major crop produced in almost all sample villages. The maximum market price brought back by paddy for one year before the date of survey has been reported to be Rs. 1020 per quintal while the minimum price was Rs. 450. The other major crops produced in the sample villages include potato and sugarcane having 50 percent crop share. The maximum market price obtained for potato is Rs.800 per quintal while Rs. 1150 per quintal for sugarcane was reported.



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
Paddy	431	807	606
Jute	380	875	550
Potato	300	800	600
Sugarcane	15	1150	850
Vegetables	4900	350000	250000

3.6 Input Status for Cultivation

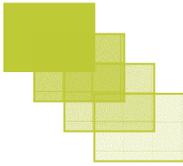
3.6.1 Current Inputs

As already explained, the production base of the sample villages mainly include paddy. Though Indian agriculture has enhanced better production levels in order to meet the needs and aspirations, yet very little has been done to reduce the adverse effects of the production process. In agriculture, for example, use of HYV seeds, chemical fertilizers, pesticides, insecticides and modern agricultural implements have boosted production of crops. However, bad farming practices, particularly the injudicious use of fertilizers and irrigation, have converted large tracts of our prime arable land into wastelands.

Nevertheless, out of the total of 16000 cultivators in the sample villages, 46 per cent reported using Pesticides / insecticides. Fertilizers were used by 41 per cent of the cultivators. On the other hand, in respect of irrigation - both Canal as well as public tube well were used by a meager 1.2 per cent of the cultivators. These facts suggest that irrigation facility has to be popularized among the cultivators to get more productive results. Popularity of fertilizers and pesticides/ insecticides may be attributable to adequate supply of fertilizers and pesticides/ insecticides as compared to other inputs.

3.6.2 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 of the total cultivators, 11.6 per cent have ownership of capital inputs (agricultural equipments) such as private pump set, tractor, power tiller, cattle livestock etc. while 75 per cent of the cultivators use the capital inputs. Of the various inputs used, private pump sets / boring are mostly used input having 36.5 per cent users followed by 18.9 per cent cultivators who use tractor as an input. Use of private pump set by most of the cultivators reflects the inadequacy of irrigation facilities in the sample villages. The other leading capital inputs used are power tillers (10.7per cent) and Pucca grain storage (5.6 per cent). The following Table summarizes the status of the cultivators in using different capital inputs:



Capital Inputs in the Agricultural Sector

Input	Own	Using
Pump set/Boring	1669	5833 (36.5)
Tractor	25	3018 (18.9)
Power tiller	34	1715 (10.7)
Cattle Livestock	30	30
Pucca Grain Storage	3	900 (5.6)

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.

3.7 Handicraft

Handicraft and artisan works ideally 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 sample villages, it is found that the majority of the households are not interested in handicraft and other artisan works. In only 6 of the 30 villages under study, handicraft works are simultaneously done with agricultural works. Altogether, more than 100 households of Pub-Nabhanga, Topakuchi, Dagaon, Gendhua Pathar, Bakulguri, and Niz-Sahari 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.

3.8 Credit

3.8.1 Purpose for availing Credit

As reported by the survey on villages, villagers belonging labourer category avail credit facility for the purpose of meeting sudden expenses. Whereas, small cultivators avail credit for the purpose of meeting current cultivation cost. Moreover, medium/large cultivators take recourse to credit facility for the purpose of financing investments in machinery or land and artisans take credit for meeting sudden expenses and current cultivation cost.

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	Current livelihood cost



3.8.2 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 and 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, it may also be possible that due to ignorance and illiteracy of the stakeholders, the impact of developmental financial plans cannot be realized by them. In case of artisans and small businessmen the major source of credit is reported to be the institutional sources.

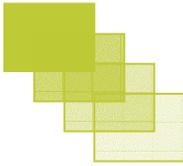
Sources of Credit

<i>Household Type</i>	<i>Main Source of Credit</i>	<i>Secondary Sources of credit</i>
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

3.9 Migration, Employment and Wage Income Earning

One important facet of study on population is the study of migration arising out of various social, economic or political reasons. For a large country like India, the study of movement of population in different parts of the country helps in understanding the dynamics of the society better. When a person is enumerated in census at a different place than her/his place of birth, she/he is considered a migrant. According to 2001 census, 29.9 per cent of the total population has been reported as total migrants in India.

The survey divulge that of the thirty sample villages, people from as much as 28 villages moved out of the villages looking for work on daily basis. On the average, 1615 persons from the sample villages daily go to various places outside the village for earning. The average monthly income for the villagers who go outside the villages for livelihood has been calculated as Rs. 4965.00. Moreover, place wise distribution of work shows that majority of the villagers migrate to either within the state or outside the state for earning a livelihood. The survey indicates that migration of the villagers is organized in most cases by local intermediary of contractors or through relatives/friends or who seek to work in a group.



Average wage income (in Rs.) prevailing in sample villages by kind of work

Wage rate	Agricultural wages					Non Agricultural		
	Ploughing /land preparation	Weeding /interculture	Transplanting	Harvesting	Threshing	Unskilled labour	skilled labour	Govt prog.
Male	78	67.5	70	69	67	70	128	75
Female	57.7	55.4	49.3	57.2	52.9	48	100.6	70
Child	38.75	36.88	36.25	35	29	30	-	-

The above table indicates high degree of gender disparity in prevailing wage rates in the sample villages. Although rural women have the potential and specialized skills for working in agricultural and other rural based activities, still the women folk is derived in terms of wage. Despite valiant effort by the government, child labour does exist in some of the sample villages. They earn between Rs. 29.00 to Rs. 38.00 on the average per day.

Looking at the data relating to community wise government jobs holders, we observe that out of the total of 997 persons from sample villages with government jobs, 55.5 per cent are Muslims, 41 per cent are Hindus, 2.6 per cent belong to SC category and a meager 0.9 per cent belong to ST community.

3.10 Rural Development Programmes and Beneficiaries Assisted

3.10.1 Sponsored Programmes

Of the total sample villages, 29 sample villages reported to be benefited by different programmes in the course of last three years. The majority of the beneficiaries are under the scheme IAY. Under this scheme, majority of the beneficiaries are Muslim consisting of 70 per cent of the total beneficiaries, followed by Hindus consisting of 15 per cent of the total beneficiaries.

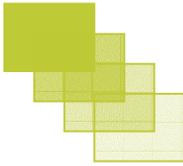
3.10.2 Old Age Pension and Widow Pension

Provisions for old age pension and widow pension are two important indicators of welfare state. As far as pension scheme is concerned, there are 2290 old age pension recipients comprising of all the 30 sample villages. Moreover, 1545 persons have been receiving the benefit since 2002-03 and 643 persons received assistance last year. There are 35 widow pensioners living in 5 sample villages, of which 17 widows received the pension since 2002-03 and 15 received last year. However, the number of the senior citizens and widows not receiving pensions could not be traced.

3.11 Educational state of affairs

3.11.1 School enrolment and attendance

Survey was also conducted regarding enrolment and attendance in local primary schools for all major religious groups and five different grades. We observe that for all the grades, male students belonging to Muslim community are highest in all the 22 sample



villages having primary schools. Out of the 2042 male students, 1529 belong to Muslim community, 511 are Hindus and only 2 students are Christians. Similar trend observed in case of girl students. Out of 1780 girl students, 1290 are Muslims and 490 belong to Hindu community. They survey also recorded attendance of the students on the day of the school visit. It is noted that 1228 Muslim boy students, out of 1529 Muslim students, were present on the day of the visit recording 80 percent of attendance. For Hindu boy students, the attendance is 65.5 percent and corresponding attendance for Christian is 100 percent. As far as attendance of girl students is concerned, Muslim students recorded attendance of 79.6 percent and Hindu girls recorded attendance of 59 percent. The attendance of girls is not bad as compared to their male counterpart, irrespective of their religious affinity.

3.11.2 Physical structure of the Schools

School drop-out is a serious problem faced by the society, particularly in rural areas. This is largely attributable to dilapidated school building, inadequate basic facilities etc. The present study also collected data regarding physical structure of the schools in the sample villages. The data indicate that 57 percent of the schools are having Pucca buildings, 57 percent of the school buildings are having Muddy flooring, 62.8 percent are having only one classroom, 85.7 percent of the schools are having usable blackboards, 63.3 percent schools provide desk for some students only. There are 90 teachers teaching in 35 schools spreading across 28 sample villages. Out of the 90 teachers, 60 were present on the day of the visit. Moreover, 80 percent of the schools do not have toilet facility. However, 82.8 percent of the schools are having adequate drinking water facility.

3.11.3 Mid-day meal provided in the Schools

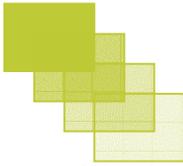
The survey also enquired about the mid-day meal provided to the students. 96.5 percent of the students opined that the quality of the meal is good, while 51.7 percent students like the preparation of the meal. 55 percent of the students spoke out about the average regularity of the meal.

3.11.4 Availability of slate, books with the students

Results of the survey conducted in sample villages reveal that 62.5 percent students are having slate, notebooks and books.

3.11.5 Quality and punctuality of the teachers

Quality and punctuality of the teachers engaged in primary schools are very important as teach and guide the students who are in their early ages. The survey result indicates that 89.6 percent students feel that quality of the teachers is good; the students feel that 58.6 percent teachers come with good preparation to take the class and 75.8 percent teachers maintain regularity.



3.12 Visit of health staff to the villages

The pursuit of health and longevity are among the fundamental pillars of development of the society. This is particularly useful for the rural areas of our state. Although government has employed various schemes aiming at rural folk of the state, lot has to be done. The survey enquired about the visits of the government health staff to the sample villages last year. The results indicate that maximum visits were made by ASHA workers last year. They made as many as 1126 visits last year to the 30 sample villages. Next, highest visits were made by A.N.M. workers, who visited 612 times last year. In case of illness, 86.7 percent of the villagers go to government health facility for necessary treatment.

3.13 Public Distribution System

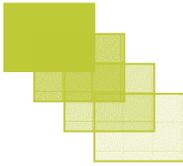
As far as PDS facility is concerned, 25 villages are reported to have PDS shops, and overwhelming majority of the households receive at least some amount of support from the system. In respect of ration card, majority of the households are benefited by Annapurna scheme, total of 7939 persons are below poverty line, out of which 1505 are Muslims and 496 are Hindus. Altogether, 10019 households generally do their purchasing from PDS. Availability of goods is quite good and generally customers get full quota and they more or less satisfied with the behaviour of the dealers.

3.14 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 sample villages include village pond, pasture land, government land, etc. 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. The survey results indicate that the most frequently used common resources in the villages are school lawn and other government buildings. These two resources are being used by the high caste community in the villages. However, the available government land is used by almost every household in the villages. Encroachment of few school plots of land has also been reported by the survey. Regarding non-formal panchayat, only one village is having caste panchayat and there are three villages where non-formal panchayat is more important and active in village and social life. The total number of self help groups in all the 30 villages combined is recorded as 171 with village Pachim Phutaljhar having maximum of 30 self help groups. In respect of availability of facilities, ICDS centers are available in 18 villages. However as reported, 10 are found to be in good condition. The visitors to ICDS, basically mothers and children, expressed satisfaction over the functioning of Anganwadi.

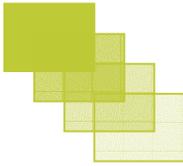
3.15 Summary

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.

The study has thrown up important statistics in respect of social sectors viz. education and health. It is observed that educational and schooling facilities for girls are much less than boys in the sample villages. 80 percent of the schools do not have toilet facility. Villagers have 20 percent of any medical unit within the average range of up to 2 K.M., 40 percent in the distance of 2 to 5 K.M and 40 percent in the distance of more than 5 K.M. These facts indicate poor health care facilities for the survey villagers. Moreover, deterioration in average hours of electricity facility over the last 5 years in two villages was observed. The availability of other facilities in the sample village indicate that majority of the sample villages are located at an average distance of more than 10 kilometers from the block head quarter and the nearest town. The communication facilities reveal a more dismal picture. Furthermore, picture of handicraft activities of the sample villagers also looks to be gloomy. Eighty percent of the sample villages are not engaged in any artisan/handicraft activity despite repeated urge by the Government. One has to find some ways out to popularize irrigation facility among the cultivators to get more productive results. Over dose of fertilizers and pesticides/insecticides may be harmful to the society. Despite valiant effort by the government, child labour does exist in some of the sample villages. ■



RESULT OF THE BASELINE SURVEY

4.1 Religious and Caste Composition

Out of the total 900 sample households of 30 identified villages of the district of Nagaon, 54.6 per cent (491) are Muslim followed by 45.2 per cent (407) of Hindu and paltry 0.2 per cent (2) Christian households. As elaborated in Table IV.1, all the Muslim and Christian households represent general caste. On the other hand, about 11.8 per cent of the total sample households are from Scheduled Caste (SC), 3.9 per cent Scheduled Tribe (ST), and 21.6 per cent are from Other Backward Caste (OBC).

4.2 Mother Tongue

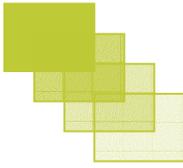
Majority of the respondent households reported Bengali (65.8 per cent) as their mother tongue while the remaining households reported Assamese (19.4 per cent), Hindi (2.6 per cent) and other languages (12.2 per cent) including Urdu as their mother tongue. However, religion wise, 16.9 per cent Hindu and 2.6 per cent Muslim households reported Assamese as their mother tongue while 14.2 per cent Hindu and 51.6 per cent Muslim households reported Bengali as mother language (Table IV.2).

4.3 Age and Sex

Of the total population (4860) of the 900 sample households, 2554 (52.6 per cent) are male and 2306 (47.4 per cent) are female. It is observed that 40.5 per cent of the population of the sample villages (Table IV.3), as compared to 35.5 per cent of the population of India (Census, 2001) is in the age group 0-14 years, which indicates that a large proportion of the population belongs to the younger age groups. Moreover, the survey recorded that 46.5 per cent of the population of the sample villages are less than 18 years of age as against the corresponding national figure of 41 per cent. It is to notice that 4 per cent of the villagers are more than 60 years of age. One significant observation is that for the Hindu households, the children up to the age 6 constitute almost 10 per cent of the total population, whereas, the corresponding figure for the Muslim community is 16 per cent. The highest proportion for the Hindu population is in the age group 30-45 years, while for the Muslims the highest proportion occurs in the age interval 6-14 years. These facts indicate that the younger proportion of population in the group 0-14 years of the total Muslim population in the sample villages is larger than that of the total Hindu population.

Of the total male population, around 56.00 per cent are Muslim and the rest are Hindus with less than 1 per cent of the Christians. Similarly, of the total female population, 57 per cent are Muslim and the rest are Hindus with less than 1 per cent of the Christians. It is apparent that the region under study is mainly dominated by the Muslim community.

Considering the two major religions, it is found that the number of dependents in Hindu families is smaller than that of the Muslim families. As the baseline survey indicates, 16.0 per cent and 29.0 per cent of the Muslim population are below 6 years and 6-14 years respectively. Of this, 11.3 per cent male and 11.2 per cent are female. On the other hand, regarding Hindu population, it is found that 9.9 per cent and 24.7 per cent of the



population are below 6 years and 6-14 years respectively. Of this 19.1 per cent male and 15.5 per cent are female. Besides, about 4.1 per cent of the total population represents people above 60 years of age. Of this about 45.0 per cent are Hindu and 55.0 per cent are Muslims.

In the age group 15-60 years, similar situation may be observed. 61.1 per cent of the Hindu population is in the working group of population comprising 51.3 per cent male and 48.7 per cent female. On the other hand, about 51.1 per cent of the Muslims form working population comprising 53.6 per cent male and 46.4 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. According to census 2001, sex ratio for Nagaon district is 944 females per 1000 males and the corresponding figure for the state is 935. As reported by the survey, sex ratio for the sample villages has been calculated as 903 females per 1000 males. This is lower than the state sex ratio. The sex ratio for the Hindu community is 898 and that of the Muslim community is 907. The child sex ratio (respondents below 14 years of age) of the studied villages stands at 921. For Hindu and Muslim population the child sex ratios stand at 809 and 996 respectively.

4.4 Household size

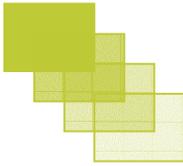
As reported by the survey on sample villages, more than 55 per cent of sample households are having up to five members of the family and 42 per cent with six to ten members. Religion wise break up shows 61.5 per cent Hindu households having up to five members and for the Muslim community, the corresponding figure is 50.2 per cent. The details are provided in Table IV.4

4.5 Marital status

Marital status of individuals classified according to age provides important impetus to the demographic studies. The Indian census categorizes the marital status of its population into four categories - never married, married, widowed and divorced/separated. The survey results indicate that 0.4 per cent of the married Hindu villagers are less than 18 years of age. Similarly for the Muslims the corresponding figure is 0.9 per cent. Although, negligible, these facts contradict the Child Marriage Restraint Act of 1978, which fixed the minimum legal age at marriage in India as 18 years for women and 21 years for men. Of the Hindu population, 48.3 per cent are married whereas the same ratio for the Muslim is 46.7 per cent (Table IV.5).

4.6 Educational Status

Educational deprivation is prominent in the sample population of the district. The present survey indicates that 74.10 per cent of the sample population is literate while the same ratio for female sample population is 68.15 per cent. Religion wise, of the total sample population, 23.4 per cent of the Hindus, 25 per cent of the Muslims, and 10.0 per cent of the Christians are found illiterate. Moreover, female illiteracy (14.1 per cent Muslim, 14.3 per cent Hindu, and 10 per cent Christian) is higher than male illiteracy



(11.6 per cent Muslim, 9.3 per cent Hindu, and 0.0 per cent Christian). Nevertheless, 30.7 per cent of the Hindu population has educational attainment only up to the primary level and the corresponding figure for the Muslim community is recorded as 32.9 per cent, which signifies a dismal level of literacy for the villagers. The middle level of education is completed by about 17.8 per cent Muslim and 18.7 per cent Hindu population. Around 17.0 per cent of the Hindu and 9.0 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 quite poor in the district as it 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. Moreover, the overall literacy scenario across religious affinity is same. However, the state of affairs of the females is worse than the males.

4.7 Occupation and Employment

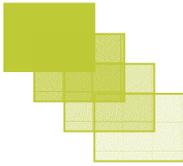
4.7.1 Occupation and Industry

The baseline survey reveals that 56.43 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. Gender wise, a little more than 56 per cent of male and about 57 per cent of the female population of the sample households belong to the same category or age group. Nevertheless, the work participation rate, as indicated by the present sample survey is 47.04 per cent only. The same ratio for female is only 9.77 per cent.

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. It is evident from the table that nearly one third of the people reported to be main workers are engaged in farming. Nevertheless, the nature of activities of a considerably a large section (more than 25 per cent) of the main workers are not adequately defined.

As it is shown in Table IV.8, more than 96.0 per cent of the Hindu male workforce around 98 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 3.2 per cent Hindu and about 1.7 per cent Muslim female engaged in secondary income earning activities. It is also to note that more than 63.0 per cent of the male labour force and more than 43.8 per cent of the Muslim labour force have not clearly defined the area of their secondary occupation.

Table IV.9 represents sex and religion wise distribution of the people with industry as main occupation. This table shows that more than 34 per cent of the Hindu population has been associated with cultivation either as farmer or agricultural labour. Similar results were recorded for the Muslim community; more than 30 per cent is associated with cultivation as the main industry. The overall patterns of industry wise distribution of main occupation among the religious communities do not exhibit any significant difference. However, participation of females across the religious subgroups shows a very dismal picture. Only 15 per cent of the Hindu females and 4.7 per cent of Muslim females are associated with industry as the main occupation.



It also deserves mention that in case of employment, the survey reveals that about 72 per cent of the Hindu population engaged in main occupation actually work for less than 260 days in a year. Similarly more than 76 percent of the Muslim work force actually works for less than 260 days in a year. The results are presented in table IV.10. As far as working days of secondary occupation is concerned more than 71 per cent of the Hindu workers work for less than 100 days in a year, while the proportion for Muslims is more than 82 per cent (Table IV.11).

4.7.2 Self-Employment Scenario

Table IV.9 indicates that irrespective of religion, a small fragment of the workforce (less than 20.0 per cent) is associated with self employment activities. Such activities include agro-based works such as livestock farming, horticulture, forestry, agro-based manufacturing etc. besides non-farm self employment 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.

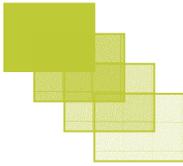
4.7.3 Additional Employment and Preference

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 the existing labour force. Consequently, about 38.0 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 69 per cent of the Hindu and about 75 per cent of the Muslim households in the sample villages seeking additional employment prefer self-employment, while salaried job has been preferred by nearly 22 per cent of the Hindu households and about 18 per cent of the Muslim households.

4.7.4 Migrant Workers

The baseline survey reveals that the Hindu as well as Muslim workers migrate to different places outside their villages in search of employment. Table IV.14 and Table IV.15 reveal the occupation of the migrant workers and place of migration. It is found that majority of the of the Hindu workers move out of the village for service related works. 46.9 per cent of the Hindu and more than 14.0 per cent of the Muslim worker who migrate to other places are engaged in jobs in this sector. In contrast, the Muslim workers are mostly found migrating for jobs related with production. It is found that 38.0 per cent of the Muslim workers are searching jobs in this sector. As against this, 32.0 per cent of the Hindu labourers are found migrating for 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 6.0 per cent of the migrant workers migrate to the district centres, about 32.0 per cent workers move to other parts of the state and 26.0 per cent workers move outside the state. Similarly, of the Muslim urban migration, 24.0 per cent workers move to the state level and 36.0 per cent workers move outside the state. On the other hand, of the Hindu rural migration, about 10.2 per cent of the migrant workers migrate to the district centres, about 22.0 per cent workers move to other parts of the state and 12.0 per cent workers move outside the state. Similarly, of the Hindu urban migration, 16.0 per cent workers move to the state level and 30.0 per cent workers move outside the state.

Table IV.16 reveals the duration of migration of labour from the concerned villages. It is found that more than 53.1 per cent of the migrant Hindu and about 54.0 per cent of the Muslim workers migrate for shorter duration. This indicates that the Hindu as well as the Muslim counterpart migrates for short term employment opportunities only.

4.8 Land and other Assets

4.8.1 Cultivated Land: Ownership and Operational Holding

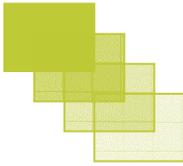
Table IV.17 presents an overall view of the pattern of cultivated land distribution, in terms of ownership holding while Table IV.20 provides the same for total cultivated land among the sample households of the district. It has been observed that among the Hindu households including the SCs and STs, 39 per cent are without having cultivated land of their own while of the Muslim households 36 per cent do not have cultivated land of their own.

In terms of total cultivated lands of the total households, Table IV.20 indicates that more than 63 per cent of the Hindu households belong to marginal farmer. Similarly about 54 per cent of the Muslim households belong to marginal farmer, indicating predominance of marginal farmers in the agricultural sector of the district.

It deserves mention that the differences in terms of ownership and operational cultivated land are basically due to the process of leasing in and leasing out and also mortgage of cultivated land. The complexities due to the prevailing practices, which partially explain the differences in land holding pattern as indicated by Table IV.17 and Table IV.20, are depicted in the Tables IV.18A to Table IV.19B. The marginal farmers have also been severely affected by the prevailing practice of land mortgage (Bandhaki) for a small amount at the time of crisis. While the practice of share cropping has prevented crop diversification and restricted cropping intensity, the practice of bandhaki amounts to land alienation.

4.9 Livestock

In terms of livestock, the sample households mainly possess milch animals, draught animals, goats, sheep, pigs and cocks/hen/duck. About 58 per cent of the Hindu households and 42 per cent of Muslim households own milch animals. Moreover, about 58 per cent of the Muslim households and 41 per cent of the Hindu households have goats. About 69 per cent of the Muslim households and 31 per cent of the Hindu



households have cock/hen/duck as live stocks. Besides some other domestic livestock like goat; pigs, sheep etc. are also possessed by the households under study. Table IV.21 and Table IV.22 exhibit the patterns of distribution of the households having livestock.

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. The mostly used agricultural implements among the sample households are bullock (about 78 per cent) for Hindu households and tractor (cent per cent) for all the Muslim households. Again, 50 per cent of the Hindu as well as Muslim households use power tiller. Moreover, 76 per cent of Muslim households and 24 per cent of the Hindu households use pump set as agricultural implements. Furthermore 45 per cent of Hindu households and 54 per cent of Muslim households use plough as an agricultural implement.

More than 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

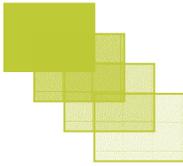
The non-agricultural machinery in possession of the households mostly includes handlooms. Besides, sewing machine is another item in this category. It is to note that the handlooms provide a small part of additional income to the households in the sample villages.

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

Availability of financial assets of the households reflects economic status of the households. Table IV.24 shows distribution of financial assets among the households reported to possess that. Altogether 598 (about 66 per cent) of the sample households have different kind of financial assets including gold and silver ornament. Nearly 47 per cent of the Hindu households and 25 per cent of Muslim households have gold ornaments. Only 22.5 per cent of the Hindu households and 14 per cent of the Muslim



households have savings in bank and only about 3 per cent of the Hindu households and 1.5 per cent of the Muslim households have fixed deposit.

4.11 Housing Status

4.11.1 House type and availability of living space

The baseline survey reveals the housing type and the status of living of the people. It has been observed that 9.77 per cent of the sample households are beneficiaries of IAY, and including this, only 22.22 per cent of the sample households have pucca houses. Table IV.25 A and Table IV.25B indicate that 79.4 per cent of Hindu households have their own accommodation for living and 92 per cent of the Muslims have their own houses to live. More than 12 per cent of the Hindus and about 7 per cent of the Muslim households are provided by government. Table IV.26 shows that 85.5 per cent of the households owned by Hindus are Kutcha and about 85 per cent of the Muslim households are Kutcha. The higher percentage of kutcha houses may have an adverse impact on the health status of the villagers. The availability of living space for sample households (Table IV.27) indicates that on an average the sample households live in houses with 2-3 rooms. 114 (17per cent) of sample households have only one dwelling room for living and proportion of Muslim households living in only one room (16 per cent) is higher than the Hindu households(8 per cent). A comparative picture with socially backward Hindu classes indicates that proportion of Hindu OBC and Muslim households living in two rooms is higher within their respective communities while the STs have more living space in terms of number of rooms per household. The Christian households also have an average living space of two rooms. Of the total households living in houses with 5-10 rooms, the share of Hindu and Muslim houses is same (6 per cent).

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

Electricity as the source of lighting is available to 181 (20.11 per cent) households. As indicated by Table IV.28, 15 per cent of the Muslim households have electricity in their house while it is 26 per cent for Hindu houses. The findings testify with census data 2001, which showed that the use of electricity for lighting purpose is less in the Muslim households. A comparative picture with socially backward Hindu households reveals that of the total electrified households 47per cent belongs to OBC population.

In respect of other sources of lighting (Table IV.29A) the survey revealed that 49 per cent of the households using sources other than electricity for lighting used oil lamps. The use of oil lamps as only source of lighting in Hindu houses (53per cent) is higher than Muslim households (47per cent). But lantern with lamps is used by 38per cent of Muslim households and by 23per cent of Hindu houses.

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. Firewood is still the mostly used source for fuel for cooking in our country. The survey reveals that (Table IV.29B.) among the sample households, wood is the primary source of cooking fuel where the share of Muslims (24 per cent) is higher than Hindus (9 per cent). The most commonly used fuel combination is wood with kerosene oil and it is found that 31 per cent Hindu households and 20 per cent of Muslims uses it for cooking. Although the survey reported that the number of households using LPG as the only medium of fuel for cooking is very negligible, only 5 per cent of the households reported using LPG with wood as fuel for cooking. However, concentration of LPG users was more in case of Hindu sample households.

4.11.3 Drinking water facilities

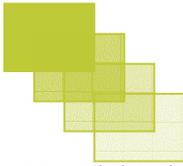
Easy access to safe drinking water has been one of the basic objectives under ARWSP. The baseline survey reveals that 80.44 per cent of the sample households have access to the sources of safe drinking water irrespective of distance to the sources. The baseline reveals, among the various sources of drinking water (Table IV.30), hand pump/tube well is the major source reported to be used by 53 per cent of the Hindu households and 80 per cent of Muslims. Moreover, Hindus have higher opportunity of access for public water sources than Muslims. Further, we observe vide Table IV.30 that more Hindu households use drinking water from unsafe sources as compared to Muslim households.

While availability of drinking water is one issue, more basic concern is the access to safe drinking water. The survey results indicate that 69 per cent of Hindu households and 83 per cent of Muslim households have their drinking water sources within a distance of less than 10 meters (Table IV.31). Moreover, 7.6 per cent of the Hindu households and 1.2 per cent of the Muslim households have to collect drinking water from a distance of 201-500 meters. In respect of distance traveled by villagers to access drinking water, Muslims have enjoyed better opportunity as compared to their Hindu counterpart.

4.11.4 Sanitation and Drainage Facility

An important requirement for sanitation is the presence of toilet facilities. It has been observed that 37 per cent of the sample households do not have toilet facilities. However, all the latrines of remaining 63 per cent of the households cannot be considered as sanitary. Alarming, 93.33 per cent of the sample households do not have sanitary latrine. This proportion is higher for Hindus as compared to Muslim households (Table IV.32). Only 5 per cent of the total households have sanitary latrine. Moreover, the use of in sanitary toilet facilities is highest among the Muslims. These facts indicate the low awareness on health and hygienic living of the households.

Another important indicator of hygienic living condition is availability, access and use of drainage facility. The survey findings (Table IV.33) nullify the availability of drainage facility in the sample villages. Although marginal drainage facility is available in Hindu and Muslim households, no facility was reported in Christian households.



4.12 Indebtedness of Rural Households

The incidences of indebtedness among the sample households show that about 87.7 per cent Hindu, 80.6 per cent of the Muslim households and all of the Christian 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 19.4 per cent while approximately 12.0 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). However, the villagers are not found having multiple burdens of loans. Majority of the Hindu as well as the Muslim households are bearing the burden of single loans. The households having debt burden of two or more than two loans comprise a small portion of the total households.

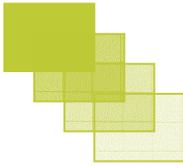
The source wise distribution of the incidence of the burden of indebtedness is shown in Table IV. 36. It reveals that the institutional mechanism has not been playing the pivotal role in providing rural credit. Source wise incidence of the indebtedness reveals that professional money lenders have been a major source (42%) for the Hindu households and 52% of the Muslim households. Size class wise distribution of indebtedness shows that majority of the indebted households have loan size in the category of up to Rs. 5000.00.

Purpose wise distribution of indebtedness (Table IV.37) indicates that for all categories of loan amount, medical treatment was the prime purpose for taking the loan for both Hindu and Muslim households. These reflect the impact of unhygienic living condition in terms of use of unsafe drinking water and practice of in sanitary toilet facilities. 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

Income and expenditure of households are important indicators of economic condition of the villagers. Income of 30 per cent of the households across religious affinity falls below Rs. 19,200. Another 10 per cent households earn from Rs 19,200 to Rs. 22,800 (Table IV.38). Both the categories constitute the size of population living below the poverty line. It amount to say that 40 per cent of the people of the sample villages can be characterized as BPL. It has been observed that only 5 per cent of the households have income Rs. 72,000. Religion wise distribution of the income structure of the sample households indicate that about 42 per cent of the Hindu households are in BPL whereas, 39 per cent of the Muslim households are in BPL. Moreover, higher proportion of



Muslim households was recorded as having income more than Rs. 72,000 as against Hindu households.

Table IV.39 to Table IV.48 provide the details expenditure pattern of the sample households. Considering the food items, expenditure on cereals and pulses constitute about 12 per cent of Hindu households and 6 per cent of Muslim households who incur expenditure up to Rs 6000, while 67 per cent for Hindu households and 80 per cent for Muslim households incur expenditure more than Rs. 9000 on the same items. Moreover, expenditure pattern on vegetables, milk, meat etc. of the majority of the households has been up to Rs. 9000 for both Hindu and Muslim households.

Table IV.43 indicates that expenditure on education for 25 per cent for Hindu households and 27 per cent of the Muslim households were virtually nil during one year prior to the survey. Being education up to primary level is free; the households with no student at the level of higher education have not incurred any expenditure on education. However, 53% of the Hindu households and 48 per cent Muslim households incur expenditure more than Rs. 850 on education.

Table IV.44 indicates that expenditure on health for 16 per cent for Hindu households; 14 per cent of the Muslim households and 50 per cent of Christian households were practically nil during one year prior to the survey. At the same time 29 per cent of Hindu and 35 per cent Muslim households spent more than Rs. 2100 on health.

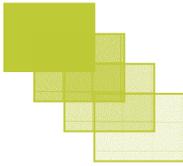
The other major heads of expenditure for the sample households are clothes and foot ware, festival and social ceremonies, electricity and gas, telephone, house repairing. 37 per cent of the sample households spend on the average up to Rs. 1800 on clothes, foot ware and bedding. 52 per cent of the households spend up to Rs. 1000 on festival and social ceremonies. However, 5 per cent of the households spend nothing and 63 per cent spend between Rs. 1001 to Rs. 5000 on electricity and gas. Similarly, 78 per cent of the households spend nothing on telephone. It has been reported that 60 per cent of the households spend nothing on house repairing while 38 per cent spend up to Rs. 5000.

4.14 Current Educational Status, Skill and Training

Table IV. 49A to Table 54 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 78.8 per cent of the Hindus, and 79.8 per cent of the Muslims population enrolled in Government schools and they are found regular in their activities. It is found that less than 10.0 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 with less than one percent of average illiteracy rate in the sample population, there are more illiterate among the Muslims than the Hindu population. The highest level of attainment among the sample



population is primary level, with more Muslims in the group. Moreover, as far as highly qualified person is concerned, Hindus recorded 0.9 per cent as compared to 0.1 per cent of the Muslims. The main reasons for dropping out being the need to earn followed by fees not affordable, work at home, not being interested by studies and due to marriage to female students. Majority of parents of the current Hindu students want their male to be graduates and female children to High School completion. Next level of aspiration for Hindu boys is High School completion and girl children to be graduates. Majority of parents of the current Muslim students want their male to be graduates, followed by High School completion and intermediate and female children to High School completion, followed by intermediate and graduates. These facts indicate gender differences in parental preferences as percentage of parents aspiring for male graduation is higher than that for the females in both the religious groups.

Table IV.55 reveals that only 11.3 per cent of the Hindu and 5 per cent of Muslim households are interested to take skill training. The interest in skill training is much less among Hindu ST households. Table IV.56 indicate that among the Hindus desire for training in computer operator tops the list followed by tailoring, weaving, auto mechanic and electronics. Among the Muslims, tailoring is the most preferred training course followed by computer operator, auto mechanic and driving. 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.

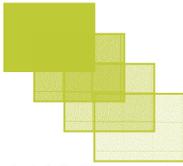
4.15 Present Health Scenario

The village household survey of the district of Nagaon reveals that the most prevalent diseases suffered by Hindu people one year prior to the survey were Malaria (25 per cent) followed by fever and stomach pain. Diarrhoea and Dysentery were also prevalent among Hindu population. However, in case of Muslim community the most prevalent diseases were fever (13 per cent), stomach pain (11 per cent), Malaria (10 per cent), Diarrhoea and Dysentery. Other serious diseases like leprosy, jaundice, typhoid, polio etc., were found in very small spread (Table IV.57A and B).

Table IV.58 and 59 provide information regarding treatment of the sample villagers in different service providers. Majority of the villagers, irrespective of religions prefer govt. hospital for any kind of treatment.

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; Muslims are lagging behind the Hindus (Table IV.58). These facts also corroborate the fact that Hindus spent more on health than their Muslim counterpart. (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

Immunization 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 by the age of 12 months are considered to be fully immunized. Table IV.60A to Table IV.62 provide the required information. It is evident that across religion, the coverage is lower in case of Hindu children (27 per cent) as compared to Muslim children (71 per cent).

It has been observe that most of the children got all required doses after the age of 23 months. It has been noted that only a small portion got immunized during proper time period. The picture is gloomier for Hindu child as compared to Muslim child. Out of the total children who got vaccination in government agency, 33 per cent are Hindu children and 67 per cent are Muslims. As for the reasons for not being vaccinated, people are mostly unaware of the second and third doses of vaccines and the facility centre was far away.

It is also found that about 77.0 per cent of the Hindu children are fully immunized by the age of above 23 months. In case of Muslim children the percentage is 74.9 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.

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.



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.

Table IV.63 indicates that in most of the cases deliveries are taken place at home. The proportion is marginally high in Muslim families (89 per cent) against Hindu families (72 per cent). Whereas, Hindu families recorded a higher proportion of deliveries in government hospital (26 per cent) as compared to Muslim families (10 per cent).

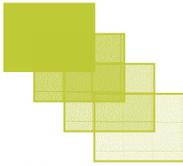
As regards of assistance in delivery, most of the Muslim families (86 per cent) and Hindu families (65 per cent) opt for untrained Dai for delivery of their baby. Moreover, about 34 per cent of the Hindu families and 10 per cent of Muslim families receive delivery care from doctors (Table IV.64).

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. The overall scenario of poverty alongside the support provided to the BPL families by PDS in the sample population has been depicted in Tables from IV.65 to IV.69.

All government programmes put high priority on the poor in the process of socio-economic development of the society. Public Distribution System (PDS) is seen as one of the prime requirements in making poor families food secure. It has been observed that about three-fourth (73.2 per cent) of the total households is under BPL. It deserves mention that 77 per cent of the Hindu households and 70 per cent of the Muslim households fall in the BPL category. It was also found that more than 36 per cent of the total households possess BPL cards. However, it is worth mentioning that 51.4 per cent Hindu households belonging to BPL category do not possess BPL cards while about 50 per cent Muslim households under BPL category does not have BPL cards.

The importance of the PDS becomes evident from the fact that more than 72 per cent of the households receive essential commodities from the PDS. It is important to note that most of them (80 per cent) reported that they receive all the items through PDS. Those who were not getting enough from the PDS reported lack of money (95 per cent) and inadequacy of PDS supply (5 per cent) as major problem in assessing the PDS support.



4.18 Awareness and Participation

4.18.1 Awareness about Government Schemes

The government of India has been initiating several specific programmes targeting the poor. The benefits of these programmes to a large extent depend on the level of awareness of the people about the programme. The awareness scenario of the sample population besides the programmes which have benefited them has been depicted in Tables IV.70A to IV.71B.

The household survey indicates that the Muslims are more aware about different government sponsored schemes than the Hindus. In terms of benefits, the Muslims got more benefit under SGSY, ICDS/Anganwadi and Sarvasiksha, while Hindus got more benefits from IAY and ARWSP than the Muslims.

4.18.2 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.

For successful democratic decentralization in the country, peoples' participation is must at the grass root levels. The baseline survey shows that the level of participation is quite high among the sample households at all levels. More than 97% of the total households reported to cast their votes in the Panchayat, Assembly and Parliamentary elections. Religion wise distribution indicates that Muslim is more active in casting their votes as compared to the other religions. So far as membership to various socio-economic organizations is concerned; membership to SHGs was found more prominent (Table IV.72 and Table IV.73).

4.18.3 Conflict, Insecurity and Access to Media and Communication

Table IV.74 provides information regarding loss of property, life etc. incurred by families for different types of conflict led problems. About 3 per cent of the families are suffered by any conflict in the sample villages. It is interesting to note that out of the total conflict led families; all belongs to Hindu religion. Those who confront with conflicts were mostly found to be communal in nature. However, only about 1.2 per cent of the total families feel insecure due to communal feeling. As obvious, all those families were reported to be Hindus, who are minority in the sample villages.

Regarding the access to media and communication, the survey indicates that only a few households have access to newspaper (5 per cent). Comparatively, access to radio is more common, about 19 per cent. About 13 per cent of the families watch T.V (Table IV.75). Religion wise break up shows that Muslims are ahead in respect of all forms of exposure to mass media in comparison to Hindus and Christians.



4.19 Aspirations

The household survey conducted in the sample villages also tried to figure out the level of aspirations of people in the sample villages. The most important facility that people think is lacking in their villages is good road and communication facilities. Majority of the villagers (52.3 per cent) cutting across religious affinity were of the view that they are lacking in that aspect. The next important lacking, according to the villagers is that of drinking water facility (17.3 per cent), out of which 11.5 per cent are Hindus as compared to 5.5 per cent Muslims. These indicate that the most of the minority villages are lacking in good road and communication facility, which is essential for the development of the society and lack most basic amenities like drinking water etc (Table IV.76).

As far as relative deprivation is concerned, Table IV.77 indicates that according to the villagers, they were mostly deprived of land for cultivation. About 49 per cent of the Hindu and more than 58 per cent are Muslim families, as reported are deprived of land. The other deprivations, according to the villagers, include housing, health, education and employment.

Regarding the opinion of the sample villagers on welfare of the minority, Table IV.78 reveals that about 31 per cent of the Hindu households and more than 32 per cent of the Muslim households feel that road and communication are essential for the welfare of the society. Similarly, the other important concerns mainly include drinking water, electricity and education facility.

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. ■



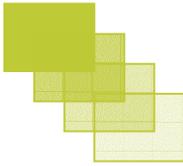
DEVELOPMENT DEFICITS

As reflected in the Assam Development Report, 2003, Nagaon is positioned at the fourteenth (14) in the list in terms of Human Development Index (HDI). The HDI index for the district is 0.356, which is lower in comparison to other districts of Assam. In case of Gender Related Development Index (GDI), the position of the district is even poorer. In terms of GDI, Nagaon ranks Twenty Second (22) with the GDI score of 0.068. Similarly, the income index, education index, and health index 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.

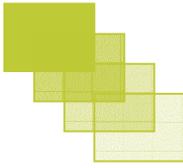
Developmental deficits in Nagaon district and their priority ranking

Sl. No	Indicators	Survey Result	Estimate for India	Deficit	Priority Ranking attached
<i>Socio-economic indicators</i>					
1	Rate of literacy	74.10	67.30	6.80	7
2	Rate of female literacy	68.15	57.10	11.05	9
3	Work participation rate	47.04	38.00	9.04	8
4	Female work participation rate	9.77	21.50	-11.73	5
<i>Basic amenities indicators</i>					
5	Percentage of pucca houses	22.22	59.40	-37.18	2
6	Percentage of households with access to safe drinking water	80.44	87.90	-7.46	6
7	Percentage of households with sanitation facilities	6.67	39.20	-32.53	3
8	Percentage of electrified households	20.11	67.90	-47.79	1
<i>Health indicators</i>					
9	Percentage of fully vaccinated children	63.36	43.50	19.86	10
10	Percentage of institutional delivery	17.06	38.70	-21.64	4

■ Compared to the national scenario, the first priority area for an effective development intervention in the district is rural electrification and it deserves 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.



- Second, 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.
- Sanitation and access to safe drinking water are still two major problems in the rural areas of Nagaon, and therefore, the multi-sector development plan for the district may adequately emphasize on these two important issues.
- Keeping in view the development deficits, the next priority of the multi-sector development plan for Nagaon is to work out a feasible strategy for promoting institutional delivery. It may be done in collaboration with the National Rural Health Mission.
- Increasing female work participation rate in the district is to be the fifth priority. The present baseline survey provides sufficient insights for effective planning for greater 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.
- The next priority of the development agenda should be the enhancement of literacy rate in general and female literacy rate in particular. The present baseline survey has reflected that the rural areas are highly deprived of required education infrastructure leading to an alarming rate of illiteracy. The requirements are better education infrastructure, scholarship etc.
- Enhancement of work participation rate in the district is to be the next priority of the multi-sector development plan for Nagaon. Creation of employment avenues as well as modeling job related training modules will be helpful in this regard.
- 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 of the actual cultivators for commercial cultivation are a felt need.
- Although the present rate of child immunization is satisfactory for the district of Nagaon, steps should be taken to ensure cent per cent child vaccination with related natal care system. ■



LIST OF SURVEYED VILLAGES

Sl. No.	VILLAGE
1	Jaysagar
2	Pub-Nabhanga
3	Pachim Phutaljhar
4	Mahkhuti
5	Mithigaon
6	Sarupathar
7	Pub-Salpara
8	Matia Pahar
9	Milik Basti
10	Jura-Pukhuri
11	Topakuchi
12	Dagaon
13	Uttar Dimarupar
14	Kachari Gaon
15	Rampur Pam
16	Sarupathar
17	Amlakee TE No. 3
18	Gendhua Pathar
19	Nedhar Gaon
20	Rongagarah Huj
21	Jungle Block
22	Amoni
23	Bakulguri
24	Dhuniabhati
25	Niz Sahari
26	Pub-Kandulimari
27	Marangial
28	Kenduguri
29	Mathar Bari
30	Bajiya Gaon