



Executive Summary

Baseline Survey of Minority Concentrated Districts

Dhubri District Assam



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Dhubri District, Assam

The purpose of the Baseline Survey of the Minority Concentration Districts (MDCS) was to assess the development deficits in the district and identification of priority areas for policy interventions to be structured in the line of the Prime Minister's 15- Point Programme, which will be in the form of a Multi-sector Development Programme (MsDP) for the entire district. In order to do this, ten indicators - eight of which were identified and applied by the Ministry of Minority Affairs, Government of India for identifying the Minority Concentrated Districts across the country along with two additional indicators for assessing health status have been used. Since the basic purpose of the Baseline was specified as a pre-requisite for preparation of Multi-sector District Development Plan (MsDP) for the Minority Concentrated Districts (MCDs) characterised by relative backwardness and to bring those district at least to the national level, most recent national level official estimates were taken for finding the development deficits in terms of the ten selected indicators. Taking deficit so derived as weights, the indicators representing specific sectors are ranked on a ten point score-scale. The exercise results in following relative ranking for the Dhubri district, Assam. The national estimates of the selected indicators (1-8) are estimated on the basis of NSS 2004 -2005 rounds while (9-10) are from NFHS - 3 with due approval from the Ministry.

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



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

- Compared to the national scenario, the first priority area for an effective development intervention in the district should be rural housing, making provision for pucca houses for the rural poor of the district under the existing centrally sponsored housing programme. As pointed out in the table above, the difference between the existing scenario of the district and the national average is quite prominent.
- Second, rural electrification deserve immediate attention, as the gap between the existing scenario of the district and the national average is quite prominent. As an alternative to electrification, the multi-sector development plan may aim at effective utilization of solar energy.
- Keeping in view the development deficits, the third priority of the multi-sector development plan for Dhubri is to work out a feasible strategy for promoting institutional delivery. It may be done in collaboration with the National Rural Health Mission.
- Enhancement of Female work participation rate in the district is to be the fourth priority of the multi-sector development plan for Dhubri. The present baseline survey provides sufficient insights for effective planning for 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.
- Sanitation and access to safe drinking water and are still two major problems in the rural areas of Dhubri, and therefore, the multi-sector development plan for the district may adequately emphasize on these two important issues.
- Although the literacy rate in the district is found a little above the national average, it is far below the State average. The present baseline survey has reflected that the rural areas are highly deprived of required education infrastructure leading to a relatively poor rate of illiteracy. The requirements are better education infrastructure, scholarship etc. In addition to incentives, the religious minority along side the ST & SC population should be sensitized.
- While aiming at promotion of literacy in the district, special emphasis should be on girls in order to address the issue of female literacy.
- The agricultural sector should be rejuvenated with farm mechanization, introduction of multiple cropping, providing crop loans at subsidized rate, and provision for adequate marketing of agricultural produces. Provisions for training of the actual cultivators for commercial cultivation are a felt need.



■ It is also prominent in the study that like other rural areas of Assam rural Dhubri is also characterized by high rate unemployment and incidence of underemployment. Appropriate measures must be taken to provide employment opportunities to the rural youth. The pressure of unemployment may be reduced by creating self-employment avenues or by creating an environment to encourage youths to take up self-employment activities. ■