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An Approach To Poverty Alleviation Ofchar Area's Bpl People In Assam

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Abstract:

Assam is the gateway of North Eastern Region (NER) of India occupying an area of 78,438 sq. km. The great river Brahmaputra covers 800 km across the length of Assam and virtually dividing the state into two halves. It touches through 19 districts of Assam and gives birth of *Chars* and *Chapories* in 14 districts as Barpeta, Bongaigaon, Darrang, Dhemaji, Dhubri, Goalpara, Jorhat Kamrup, Lakhimpur, Morigaon Nagaon, Nalbari, and Sonitpur, Tinsukia. According to the Socio-Economic Survey Report 2002-2003, the total *Char-Chaporia* areas of Assam consist about 3,60,927 hectares in which 2,42,277 hectares are cultivable and 1,18,650 hectares are uncultivable. The governments of Assam have introduced various measures for socio-economic development of char-chapories. But all these measures have no yield proper result due to various short comings related to their miss-implementation.

The proposed study focusses only on status and changing trend of rice cultivation among major food grains production in Assam which completely depends on secondary sources of data. The required data would collect from government publications, economic survey of state government, various journals and books.

Keywords: *Poverty, Alleviation, Char-Chapory, Cultivation, Erosion, Agriculture, Minorities.*

1. Introduction:

Assam is the gateway of North Eastern Region (NER) of India occupying an area of 78,438 sq. km. The plains comprise of the Brahmaputra Valley and the Barak Valley. The great river Brahmaputra covers 800 km across the length of Assam and virtually dividing the state into two halves. It touches through 19 districts of Assam and gives birth of *Chars* and *Chapories* in 14 districts as Barpeta, Bongaigaon, Darrang, Dhemaji,

Dhubri, Goalpara, Jorhat Kamrup, Lakhimpur, Morigaon Nagaon, Nalbari, and Sonitpur, Tinsukia. All along its path, the river has created sandy lands along both the banks as well as islands locally known as *Char*. The *Char-Chapori* areas of Assam are distributed in 23 sub-divisions falling under 14 districts. In these 23 sub-divisions, 2251 *Char-Chapori* villages are there which are clubbed into 299 Gaon panchayats and 59 development Blocks. According to the Socio-Economic Survey Report 2012-2013, the total *Char-Chapori* areas of Assam consist about 3,60,927 hectares in which 2,42,277 hectares are cultivable and 1,18,650 hectares are uncultivable.

The State Government of Assam categorically defines *Char* as, *first category*, *Char* is sandy land area extended from Sadiya to Dhubri of Assam within the river Brahmaputra or surrounded by water bodies where people can live and cultivate the land. *Second category*, *Char* is either sides of the river Brahmaputra extended up to nearby embankment which is seasonally affected by flood and where people can live and cultivate.

The *Char* Settlers:

Char-Chapori areas are generally pre-dominated by the immigrants who came from East-Bengal during the first half of the twentieth century and settled in the wastelands of Assam. The system of permanent settlement and its consequent fall out by way of excessive demand for fast growth of population and declining land-man ration were the major factors while unoccupied *Char* lands, wastelands, and fertile plain lands in Assam were the major factors that caused the immigration into Assam. Thus, economic interests played the vital role in settling the Muslims peasants from East Bengal into the *Chars* and *Chapories* of Assam. They have been contributing to the state's economy by engaging themselves in the field of agriculture.

According to the Socio-Economic Survey Report 2012-2013, the total *Char-Chapori* areas of Assam consist about 3,60,927 hectares in which 2,42,277 hectares are cultivable and 1,18,650 hectares are uncultivable. At present the following Government / Semi Government Organization is looking after the development of Minorities.

2. Objectives of the Study:

- To examine present status of *Char-Chapori* population in Assam.
- To focus on the various poverty Alleviation measures for *Char* development in Assam.

3. Methodology of the Study:

The descriptive research methodology has been used to collect the data. To evaluate the trend of cropping and rice productivity in Assam, secondary data are collected from various published sources and websites from year to year till 2020. The required data has collected from various sources i.e. books, journals, newspapers, government and semi-government publications and websites of various agencies etc. from year to year. The collected data would be tabulated and analyzed for completion of the Study.

4. Presentation and Analysis of the Study:

The main features of the study have analyzed in the following sections.

Present Scenario of the *Chars-Chapories* of Assam

Name of Districts.	Sub-Division	Nos. of GP	Nos.Dev. Block	Nos. of Village	Nos.of Families	Land (in hectare)		
						Cultivable	Uncultivable	Total
Dhubri	3	89	11	480	09,748	67,124	32,774	99,898
Jorhat*	1	20	2	293	35,316	28,016	14,158	42,174
Barpeta*	1	31	5	277	45,792	24,736	11,919	36,655
Goalpara	1	25	5	179	30,136	13,278	6,582	19,860
Kamrup*	2	16	5	175	27,874	11,654	5,513	17,167
Dhemaji	2	9	3	149	19,112	11,347	5,629	16,976
Sonitpur	3	23	7	145	23,428	16,410	7,758	24,168
Darrang	2	15	4	134	29,617	11,239	5,517	16,756
Bongaigaon	1	23	3	117	27,813	9,520	4,736	14,256
Lakhimpur	2	16	6	109	23,096	14,451	7,072	21,523
Tinsukia	1	4	1	79	10,670	9,496	4,598	14,094
Nagaon	2	6	4	43	17,920	8,056	3,980	12,036
Morigaon	1	15	2	39	18,129	7,954	3,978	11,932
Nalbari	1	7	1	32	16,103	8,996	4,436	13,432
Total	23	229	59	2,251	4,754	2,42,277	1,18,650	3,60,927

Sources: -Socio-Economic Survey Report 2012-2013 of *Char* areas of Assam, Government of Assam. Note: -* implies selected *Char-Chapori* Districts

As shown in Table-1, the *Char-Chapori* areas of Assam are distributed in 23 sub-divisions falling under 14 districts. In this 23 sub-divisions, 2251 *Char-Chapori* villages are there which are clubbed into 299 Gaon panchayats and 59 development Blocks. According to the Socio-Economic Survey Report 2012-2013, the total *Char-Chapori* areas of Assam consist about 3,60,927 hectares in which 2,42,277 hectares are cultivable and 1,18,650 hectares are uncultivable.

5. WELFARE MESURES FOR CHAR-CHAPORY'S MINORITIES:

The State Government has been taking various measures to improve the Socio-Economic condition as well as welfare of Minorities people living in the State. At present the following Government / Semi Government Organization is looking after the development of Minorities.

1. Directorate of Char Areas Development, Assam:

The reverie areas of the mighty river Brahmaputra formed either in heart or on its Bank are inhabited by large group of people specially Minorities people and suitable for cultivation. These areas are known as “Char Areas” of Assam. As per Socio-Economic Survey, 2012-2013 conducted in these Areas, there are 2251 Nos. of Char Villages from Sadiya to Dhubri under 60 Nos. of Community Development Blocks of 23 Civil-Sub-divisions within 14 nos. of District comprising 3.60 lakh hectare of land and 24.90 lakh population. Out of the total population, 19.31 percent are literate and 67.88 per cent people in average are living below poverty line.

In order to implement Developmental Schemes in these areas, the State Government had set up the Assam State Char Areas Development Authority in the year 1984. Subsequently, the Authority was converted to full-fledged Directorate in 1996 in the name of “Directorate of Char Areas Development, Assam.” The main function of the Directorate is to implement Development schemes as mentioned below-

1.1. Agriculture:

- a) Distribution of HYV Rabi seeds.
- b) Distribution of STWs.
- c) Tillage Operation by Power Tillers.

1.2. Veterinary and Dairy:

- a) Construction of Raised Earthen Platform for sheltering Cattle and Human being during Flood Season.

1.3. Drinking Water Facilities.

- a) Distribution of Hand Tube Wells.

1.4. Cottage Industry:

- (a) Distribution of Sewing Machine
- (b) Distribution of Handlooms.
- (c) Six months training Programmes for Weaving, Sewing, Cutting-Knitting etc. unemployed educated Girls of Char Areas.

1.5. Education scheme.

- (a) Aid for improvement of School building.
- (b) Computer training for educated unemployed Youths.
- (c) Nurse-cum-Midwife training Programme to educate girls.
- (d) Distribution of Sports Goods/Books to School/Club/Library etc.

6. ASSAM MINORITIES DEVELOPMENT BOARD:

With a view to promote Welfare activities the Assam Minorities Development Board was allocated a sum of Rs.50 lakh during the year 2012-2013 and Rs.35 lakh was released during the same period. The fund was spent in providing training in various fields of activities such as Computer, Cutting, Tailoring, Embroidery etc. Altogether 322 nos. of beneficiaries was imparted training during the aforesaid period.

The Assam Minorities Development and Finance Corporation Ltd. were constituted in 1997 with a view to extend financial assistance to the beneficiaries belonging to the Minority Communities of Assam. The performance of the Corporation in the State during the years from 1999-2000 to 2011-2012 may be observed from the information furnished at Table.

AMOUNT RECEIVED AND DISBURSED BY AMDFC

Period	Amount Received (In Rs.)	Disbursed (In Rs.)	No. of Loaners				
			Total	Rural	Urban	Male	Female
1999-2000	1,06,08,250	1,06,08,250	175	110	65	151	24
2000-2001	80,47,000	1,67,79,450	212	84	128	181	31
2011-2012	1,00,00,000	86,06,250	212	117	95	170	74
Total	2,86,55,250	2,70,07,950	599	311	288	502	97

Source: Assam Minorities Development and Finance Corporation Ltd.

7. Present Socio-economic condition of Char areas of Assam:

The governments of Assam have introduced various measures for socio-economic development of char-chapories. But all these measures have no yield proper result due to various short comings related to their miss-implementation. Present Socio-economic condition of Char areas of Assam can be explained by the following grounds.

7.1 River Erosion: As per Assam government revenue department records an area of 6116 hectares of land was affected by soil erosion in upper Brahmaputra valley and North Bank plain zone during 1994. It is observed that at some places kilometers of bank along the villages, fertile agricultural lands and roads are being eroded by the rivers. The extent of loss to the bank erosion varies from year to year depending on the severity of flood in the state. More than 4200 square kilometers of productive farmer land in Assam were eroded in the last 40 years about 0.9 million people mainly poor small holders and their families lost their land were left homeless and in poverty by losing their land they also lost their social identity and backup with in the rural community.

7.2. Flood: One of the most burning problems of char is flood. From June to September whether is wet and rainfalls regularly ended thus. For these heavy rainfall people of char area fall the problems of flood and erosion of Brahmaputra and its tributaries. If we justify about the losses of flood than we can include that the

socio-economic condition of people has degraded due to flood in Assam which damage a lot of and domestic animals others and these loss are extremely suffered by the people of Assam.

7. 3. Displacement of people: - The people of the block displaced due to river erosion of their housing land and earning sources. For their better livelihood they rush to some better places and for their better livelihood to various parts of the districts and town areas like Char-chapory, nearest villages and some reserve places of Assam.

7. 4. Poverty in Society: The incidence of poverty in India has also been declining in recent years. The planning commission estimate of poverty shows that the proportion of total population lying below the poverty line has declined 54.9 percent in 1972-73 to 38.9 percent in 1987-88 than to 24.4 percent in 2011-12.

7. 5. Lack of educational facilities: Education is the Backbone of a nation. Men and women all together should be well educated for the development of a society. But in char-chapory areas near about 90% people are illiterate for the lack of educational institutions.

7. 6. Backward Transport System: The transport system of char-chapories is extremely backward in all respect. Due to river erosion roads construction are not possible in those areas, so society faces the social problems in river eroded areas.

7. 7. Primitive Technology in Agriculture: In char-chapory is riverian area so there is no any modern technique in agriculture due to some risk which cannot able to invest on the agricultural field. So, agricultural productivity is not satisfactory. Thus the rate of economic development of the char area is quite slow, which leads to unemployment and poverty of this area.

7. 8. Level of infrastructural facilities: From the early period Char areas were neglected in respect of transportation, communication, and credit facilities. Due to this infrastructural backwardness economic development started very slowly in char-chapory.

7. 9. Population explosion: The birth rate of char area is very high for lack of education and proper family planning measures. So, population is going to increase speedily day by day. This increasing population has created poverty and food problem in char area.

8. Recommendation and Suggestions:

Flowing some recommendation and suggestions should be made for the solution of socio-economic problems of char-chapory areas in Assam.

- We should take some important measures which aggravated river erosion as given as flood control measures – (i) Short termed temporary or semi-permanent protective measurement. (ii) Long termed permanent and solving measurement up to date to control flood of Brahmaputra
- Positive attitude of parents should be made towards education of child for development of this area. Create community demand for education, not only elementary level but also all the level of education.
- Technical and vocational education should be made available for educated youth of char areas.

- Number educational institution need to extent up to all village of the community.
- Training facilities should be should be made for this area through which the people will get better chance to be specialized their capacity in work field.
- Self-employment opportunities like dairy firm, poultry firm etc. Should be setup for employment of unemployed person of char area.
- Modern agricultural facilities like HYV seeds, tractor, power tiller, water pump, cold storage house etc. should be supplied with cheap rate to the farmer for development of agriculture.
- Proper family planning policy should be providing for population control.
- Knowledge and information on Global changing business environment should be provided regularly through government and non-government efforts like NGOs and Self- Help-Groups (SHG).

8. Conclusion:

To conclude, it is noteworthy that the people of the community especially in char-chapories will develop properly when the human empowerment will be realized in its appropriate sense. For this great purpose, the mindset of the people should deeply concentrate that man and women cannot be differentiated in the reconstruction with the new dimension. A nation or region can only be developed if its people are given ample opportunities. To provide modern technology in agriculture and developing entrepreneurship among people of this area will be the right approach for development. The government along with voluntary organizations should take up concrete steps, to uplift the human status by providing safe, security and peaceful life for char-chapories in Assam.

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