



(In 27 Volumes)

SURVEY OF RURAL INDIA

A Comprehensive Study of
Gram Panchayat
and
Community Development Block

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Community Development Block

In 27 Volumes

Volume 26

Assam, Sikkim

Editor

Dr. N. Seshagiri



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Introduction

Physical Aspects

Location

Assam, the eastern most state of the Indian sub-continent. It is the biggest state of the northeast region, and has as its neighbours some independent sovereign countries. The state is bordered in the North and East by the Kingdom of Bhutan and Arunachal Pradesh. Along the south lies Nagaland, Manipur and Mizoram. Meghalaya lies to her South-West, Bengal and Bangladesh to her West. Assam is connected with the rest of the Indian Union by a narrow corridor in West Bengal that runs for 56km below the foothills of Bhutan and Sikkim. Assam extends from 22°19' to 28°16' North Latitude and 89°42' to 96°30' East Longitude between the foot hills of the Eastern Himalayas and the Patkai and Naga Ranges. Area 78,438 sq. km.

Physiography

Assam has four well defined seasons in a year. Summer, monsoon, winter and spring—these four seasons present Assam in different moods. The best time to visit Assam is during the winters and spring seasons. October to April offer a mild and moderate climate. Assam is never extremely cold or hot.

Pleasant sub-alpine climate prevails in the hills. The plains however experience tropical climate making them uncomfortably humid especially during the rainy seasons. Winter sets in from around the end of the month of October and lasts till the end of February.

The temperature drops to a minimum of 6 to 8° Celcius, the nights and early mornings are foggy, and rain is scanty. Summer arrives in the middle of May accompanied by high humidity and rainfall. The temperature reaches a maximum of 35 to 38° Celcius. The frequent rains however serve to push the mercury down. The monsoons blow full blast during the month of June. Thunderstorms known as Bordoichilla is a

frequent occurrence during the afternoons. Spring and Autumn with moderate temperatures and modest rainfall are the best seasons.

Assam falls in a zone prone to earthquakes. Though mild tremors are familiar to the region, high-intensity earthquakes are rather infrequent. However, they do occur as in 1869 when the bank of the Barak sank by 15 ft, in 1897, and again in 1950 when a large part of the State was ravaged by an earthquake of unprecedented intensity.

The climate of Assam is characterised by its extreme humidity. Its most distinguishing feature is the copious rainfall between March and May at a time when precipitation in upper India is at its minimum. Climatically the year may be divided into the cold season and the rainy. The cold weather lasts from October to February and the rest of the year is rainy.

The southwest monsoon begins from middle of June. The neighbourhood of Cherapunji and Mawsynram are known to receive the highest rainfall in the world. It is concentrated in four months, June to September.

Rivers

Due to heavy rainfall in the Himalayan and other watersheds of the eastern India region, Assam is endowed with extensive river system consisting of the Brahmaputra, the Kusiya and the Barak and their tributaries. All the rivers in Assam are liable to floods, mainly because they receive heavy rainfall within a short time. These rivers are in their early stage of maturity and are very active agents of erosion.

The river waters collect a tremendous amount of silt and other debris and raise the level of the river beds. Therefore, it becomes impossible for the main channel to cope with the vast volume of water received during the rains.

Principal Rivers in Assam

Rivers	(Lengths within the borders of the state; Units are in miles (kilometers))
Brahmaputra	435 (700)
Burhidihing	223 (360)
Danshiri (South)	219 (352)
Subansiri	198 (318)
Kopili	185 (297)
Dihang	163 (263)
Disang	142 (230)
Dikhou	124 (200)
Lohit	119 (192)
Puthimari	118 (190)
Kalang	106 (171)
Manas (Main)	95 (153)
Jinjiram	89 (143)
Dikrang	83 (134)
Kulsi	76 (122)
Janji	67 (108)
Aai	64 (103)
Nonoi	60 (97)
Gangadhar	62 (99)
Dhansiri (North)	58 (94)
Ronganadi	63 (102)
Krishnai	50 (81)

The alluvial Brahmaputra Valley which commands a lion's share of the territory is the result of the erosional and depositional work of the river Brahmaputra and its many tributaries. It is a flat plain with a slope of only 12 cms every kilometer, 80-100km wide in its upper reaches, narrow almost by half in the area where it passes the hilly region which demarcates it from the Barak Valley, and ballooning out again to form the as wide Kopili plains in the west.

The 724 km-flow of the Brahmaputra through the entire length of the valley with more than a hundred tributaries flowing down from the surrounding hills to merge with it, is a spectacular phenomenon. Once the tributaries hit the valley, they lose their momentum, deposit the silt they carry, form ox-bow lakes and alluvial plains and branch out before picking up their courses again to join the Brahmaputra.

The Brahmaputra itself is no less capricious. Due to the low slope of the land it flows through, it tends to meander and form riverine islands. Majuli, the largest

of these islands with an area of 929 sq km, is deemed to be the biggest riverine island in the world. But it is also a temperamental river. If on one hand it brings rich and fertile soil to its valley, on the other, it overflows its banks and causes destructive floods during the rainy seasons.

The sluggish river of the dry winter months turns into a raging torrent during the rainy summers. And with all its natural vagaries, the magnificent Red River forms one of the most majestic river systems in the world. The Assamese call it Luit and call themselves Luitporias — such is the bond between river and people.

The Barak plays a similar role in the south though on a much smaller scale. The Barak Valley is a swampy plain interspersed with low hills. Like the Brahmaputra, the Barak has also created a fertile valley and is given to destructive floods during the rainy seasons. The Sonai and the Dhaleswari are two important tributaries of the Barak.

Brahmaputra River

The Brahmaputra also called Tsangpo-Brahmaputra, is a transboundary river and one of the major rivers of Asia.

With its origin from Talung Tso Lake in southwestern Tibet as the Yarlung Tsangpo River, it flows across southern Tibet to break through the Himalayas in great gorges and into Arunachal Pradesh (India) where it is known as Dihang. It flows southwest through the Assam Valley as Brahmaputra and south through Bangladesh as the Jamuna (not to be mistaken with Yamuna of India). In the vast Ganges Delta it merges with the Padma, the main distributary of the Ganges, then the Meghna, before emptying into the Bay of Bengal.

About 1,800 miles (2,900 km) long, the Brahmaputra is an important river for irrigation and transportation. The average depth of the river is 124 feet (38 m) and maximum depth is 380 feet (120 m). The river is prone to catastrophic flooding in spring when the Himalayan snows melt. The average discharge of the river is about 19,300 cubic metres per second (680,000 cu ft/s), and floods can reach over 100,000 cubic metres per second (3,500,000 cu ft/s). It is a classic example of a braided river and is highly susceptible to channel migration and avulsion. It is also one of the few rivers in the world that exhibit a tidal bore. It is navigable for most of its length.

The river drains the Himalaya east of the Indo-

Nepal border, southern-central portion of the Tibetan plateau above the Ganges basin, south-eastern portion of Tibet, the Patkai-Bum hills, the northern slopes of the Meghalaya hills, the Assam plains and the northern portion of Bangladesh. The basin, especially south of Tibet is characterized by high levels of rainfall. Kangchenjunga (8,586m) is the only peak above 8,000m and the highest point within the Brahmaputra basin.

The Brahmaputra's upper course was long unknown, and its identity with the Yarlung Tsangpo was only established by exploration in 1884–86. This river is often called Tsangpo-Brahmaputra river.

The lower reaches are sacred to Hindus. While most rivers on the Indian subcontinent have female names, this river has a rare male name, as it means "son of Brahma" in Sanskrit (putra means "son").

The Brahmaputra river, called Yarlung Tsangpo in Tibetan language, originates on the Angsi Glacier located on the northern side of the Himalayas in Burang County of Tibet and not Chema-Yungdung glacier, which was previously identified by geographer Swami Pranavananda in the 1930s. The river is 3,848 km long, and its drainage area is 712,035 square km according to the new findings, while previous documents showed its length varied from 2,900 to 3,350 km and its drainage area between 520,000 and 1.73 million square kms.

The Brahmaputra enters India in the state of Arunachal Pradesh, where it is called *Siang*. It makes a very rapid descent from its original height in Tibet, and finally appears in the plains, where it is called *Dihang*. It flows for about 35 kilometres (22 mi) and is joined by the Dibang River and the Lohit River at the head of the Assam Valley. Below the Lohit the river is called *Brahmaputra*, enters the state of Assam and becomes very wide—as wide as 10 kilometres (6.2 mi) in parts of Assam. It is joined in Sonitpur by the Kameng River (or *Jia Bhoreli*).

Between Dibrugarh and Lakhimpur districts the river divides into two channels—the northern *Kherkutia* channel and the southern Brahmaputra channel. The two channels join again about 100 kilometres (62 mi) downstream forming the Majuli island, which was, until some time back, the largest river island in the world. At Guwahati, near the ancient pilgrimage centre of Hajo, the Brahmaputra cuts through the rocks of the Shillong Plateau, and is at its narrowest at 1 kilometre (1,100 yd) bank-to-bank. Due to the river's narrow width, the Battle of Saraighat was fought here in March 1671. The first rail-cum-road bridge across the

Brahmaputra was opened to traffic in April 1962 at Saraighat.

The environment of the Brahmaputra floodplains in Assam have been described as the Brahmaputra Valley semi-evergreen forests ecoregion.

James Rennell's 1776 map shows the Brahmaputra's flow before an earthquake on April 2, 1762, and the Teesta R. flowing in 3 channels to the Ganges before a flood in 1787

In Bangladesh, the Brahmaputra is joined by the Teesta River (or *Tista*), one of its largest tributaries. Below the Teesta, the Brahmaputra splits into two distributary branches. The western branch, which contains the majority of the river's flow, continues due south as the Jamuna (*Jomuna*) to merge with the lower Ganges, called the Padma River (*Pôdda*). The eastern branch, formerly the larger but now much smaller, is called the lower or old Brahmaputra (*Bromhoputro*). It curves southeast to join the Meghna River near Dhaka. The Padma and Meghna converge near Chandpur and flow out into the Bay of Bengal. This final part of the river is called *Meghna*.

In the past the course of the lower Brahmaputra was different and passed through the Jamalpur and Mymensingh districts. In a 7.5 magnitude earthquake on April 2, 1762, the main channel of the Brahmaputra at Bhahadurabad point was switched southwards and opened as Jamuna due to the result of tectonic uplift of the Madhupur tract.

The Ganges Delta, fed by the waters of numerous rivers, including the Ganges and Brahmaputra, is 59,570 square kilometres (23,000 sq mi) the largest river deltas in the world.

Flooding

During the monsoon season (June–October), floods are a common occurrence. Deforestation in the Brahmaputra watershed has resulted in increased siltation levels, flash floods, and soil erosion in critical downstream habitat, such as the Kaziranga National Park in middle Assam. Occasionally, massive flooding causes huge losses to crops, life and property. Periodic flooding is a natural phenomenon which is ecologically important because it helps maintain the lowland grasslands and associated wildlife. Periodic floods also deposit fresh alluvium replenishing the fertile soil of the Brahmaputra River Valley. Thus flooding, agriculture, and agricultural practices are closely connected.

Cooperation on the Brahmaputra

The waters of the River Brahmaputra are shared by China, India, and Bangladesh. In the 1990s and 2000s, there was repeated speculation about China building a dam at the Great Bend, with a view to divert the waters to the north of the country. This was denied by the Chinese government for many years. At the Kathmandu Workshop of Strategic Foresight Group in August 2009 on Water Security in the Himalayan Region, which on a rare occasion brought together leading hydrologists from the Basin countries, the Chinese scientists argued that it was not feasible for China to undertake such a diversion. However on 22 April 2010, China confirmed that it was indeed building the Zangmu Dam on the Brahmaputra, but assured India that the project would not have any significant effect on the downstream flow to India.

In a meeting of scientists at Dhaka at 2010, 25 leading experts from the Basin countries issued a Dhaka Declaration on Water Security calling for exchange of information in low flow period, and other means of collaboration. Even though the UN Convention on Trans-boundary Water of 1997 does not prevent any of the Basin countries from building a dam, Customary Law offers relief to the lower riparian countries. Also, there is potential for China, India and Bangladesh to develop hydroelectricity projects and transboundary water navigation.

Annual Rainfall

Kokrajhar (333.05 mm), Kokrajhar (333.05 mm), Dhubri(3403.1mm), Goalpara (146.3 mm), Bongaigaon (3125.9 mm), Barpeta (146.3 mm), Kamrup (2634.8 mm), Nalbari (2443.3mm), Darrang (911.2 mm), Marigaon (1276.4 mm), Nagaon (1848.8 mm), Sonitpur (1384.8 mm), Lakhimpur (1762.3 mm), Dhemaji (3459.2 mm),Tinsukia (1983.3 mm), Dibrugarh (1860.2 mm), Sibsagar (2314.3 mm), jorhat (2164.8 mm), Golaghat (2425.3 mm), Karbi Anglong (1065.2 mm), North Cachar Hills (N.A mm), Cachar (2178.4 mm), Karimganj (3087.0 mm), Hailakandi (1807.3 mm).

Ground Water

District : Barpeta. Availability : (1161MCM). Irrigation: (987MCM). Drinking: (174MCM). *District* : Bongaigaon. Availability : (591MCM). Irrigation: (502MCM). Drinking: (89MCM). *District* : Cachar. Availability : (817MCM). Irrigation: (694MCM). Drinking: (123MCM). *District* : Darrang. Availability : (1407MCM). Irrigation: (1196MCM). Drinking: (211MCM). *District* : Dhemaji. Availability : (1660MCM). Irrigation: (1411MCM). Drinking: (249MCM). *District* :

Dhubri. Availability : (1300MCM). Irrigation: (1105MCM). Drinking: (195MCM). *District* : Dibrugarh. Availability : (1635MCM). Irrigation: (1390MCM). Drinking: (245MCM). *District* : Goalpara. Availability : (495MCM). Irrigation: (421MCM). Drinking: (74MCM). *District* : Golaghat. Availability : (1794MCM). Irrigation: (1525MCM). Drinking: (269MCM). *District* : Hailakandi. Availability : (98MCM). Irrigation: (83MCM). Drinking: (15MCM). *District* : Jorhat . Availability : (1496MCM). Irrigation: (1242MCM). Drinking: (219MCM). *District* : Karbi Anglong. Availability : (584MCM). Irrigation: (496MCM). Drinking: (88MCM). *District* : Kamrup. Availability : (1229MCM). Irrigation: (1045MCM). Drinking: (184MCM). *District* : Karimganj. Availability : (133MCM). Irrigation: (113MCM). Drinking: (20MCM). *District* : Kokrajhar. Availability : (1580MCM). Irrigation: (1343MCM). Drinking: (237MCM).

District : Morigaon. Availability : (321MCM). Irrigation: (273MCM). Drinking: (48MCM). *District* : Nagaon. Availability : (935MCM). Irrigation: (795MCM). Drinking: (140MCM). *District* : Nalbari. Availability : (639MCM). Irrigation: (543MCM). Drinking: (96MCM). *District* : N.C.Hills. Availability : (607MCM). Irrigation: (516MCM). Drinking: (91MCM). *District* : North Lakhimpur. Availability : (1167MCM). Irrigation: (992MCM). Drinking: (175MCM). *District* : Sonitpur. Availability : (1615MCM). Irrigation: (1373MCM). Drinking: (242MCM). *District* : Sibsagar. Availability : (1658MCM). Irrigation: (1409MCM). Drinking: (249MCM).

District : Tinsukia. Availability : (1832MCM). Irrigation: (1557MCM). Drinking: (275MCM).

Forest and Wildlife

The Biodiversity of Assam, makes it a biological hotspot with many rare and endemic plant and animal species. The greatest success in recent years has been the conservation of the Indian rhinoceros at the Kaziranga National Park, but a rapid increase in human population in Assam threatens many plants and animals and their natural habitats.

Apart from the Rhinoceros and the Tiger, the Spotted Deer or Chital / Futukihorina (*Axis axis*), the Swamp Deer or Dolhorina (*Cervus duvauceli duvauceli*), the Clouded Leopard (*Neofelis nebulosa*), the Hoolock Gibbon, Pigmy Hog or Nol-gahori (*Sus salvanis*), the Hispid Hare, the Golden Langur (*Trachypithecus geei*), the Golden Cat, the peculiar Giant Civet, the Binturong, the Hog Badgers, the Porcupines, the Civet cats, etc. are

found in Assam. Moreover, there are abundant numbers of Gangetic Dolphins, Mongooses, Giant Squirrels and Pythons. The largest population of the Wild Water Buffalo anywhere is in Assam.

Few of the major birds in Assam are: Blue-throated Barbet or Hetuluka (*Megalaima asiatica*), the White-winged Wood Duck or Deuhnah (*Cairina scutulata*), the Ring-tailed Fishing Eagle or Kuruwa (*Haliaeetus leucorythus*), the Great Pied Hornbill or Rajdhonesh (*Buceros bicornis homrai*), the Himalayan Golden-backed Three-toed Wood-pecker or Barhoituka (*Dinopium shorii shorii*), and the Migratory Pelicans.

Assam is also known for orchids and also for valuable plant species and forest products.

Forestry is a vital sector of Assam. The State Forest Department has been entrusted the maintenance and management of Forest, Forest Produce and Wild life in the State. In the recent past the importance of environment protection and conservation of natural resources has been given wide attention at state and national level. As a result various NGO's with the Forest Department has come forward to protect and maintain the Forestry sector of the State. The State of Assam is enriched with extensive forest area and also rich with different species and strains of floras and faunas along with valuable forest products.

Forest Cover:

The forest cover in the state, as per India State Forest Report 2009, based on interpretation of satellite data of October 2006-January 2007, is 27,692 sq km, which is 35.30% of the State's geographical area. In terms of forest canopy density classes, the State has 1,461 sq km very dense forest, 11,558 sq km moderately dense forest and 14,673 sq km open forest. Probably more than what the nation aspires to achieve by the end of 11th Five Year Plan. The National Forest Policies (1952 and 1988) aim at having one third of country's land area under forest and tree cover. The concept of extension forestry initiated in the early eighties under State Plan has percolated well in terms of extent of forest cover outside the notified area.

As per Forest profile of the State, the Reserved Forest area and Proposed Forest area is 14212 sq km and 2102 sq km respectively in 2010-11 as against 14206 sq km and 1942 sq km reported in 2009-10 by the State Forest Department. The total Forest area excluding unclassified State Forest is 20092 sq km and 3778 sq km area is under Protected Area in 2010-11, as reported. Thus, the reserved forest area constitutes around 18 percent and

total forest area excluding unclassified forest constitute around 26 percent of the total geographical area of the State. However, the scenario within the notified area depicts rather gloomy state in terms of degradation during the last 20 years due to various biotic factors and encroachment. As a result, considerable rich bio diversity has been lost which need to be re-built again. Forest profile of the state; Production of Forest Product of the State; Revenue earned from the forest product in the State; Area of the National Park and Wildlife Sanctuaries in Assam Proposed Wildlife Sanctuaries; Tiger Project; Project Elephant;

Population of Rhino, Tiger, Leopard and any others Primates in various censuses in the state.

Communication

Roads: The total length of roads in the State is 37,515 km which includes 2,836 kms of National Highways. The Construction of 160 km of barbed wire fencing and 27 kms of the border road along the Indo-Bangladesh international Border have been completed.

National Highway: NH No: 31. **Route:** From W.B. Border- Gouripur-North Salmara-Bijni-Amingaon, Junction with NH 37. **Length (km):**322 . **District Served:**Dhubri, Kokrajhar, Bongaigaon,Barpeta, Nalbari, Kamrup.NH No: 31B. **Route:** North Salmara-Junction with NH 37 near Jogighopa . **Length (km):** 19. **District Served:** Bongaigaon.NH No: 31C. **Route:** From W.B. Border-Kochgaon-Sidli Jn. With NH 31 near Bijni. **Length (km):** 93. **District Served:** Kokrajhar, Bongaigaon.NH No: 36. **Route:** Nagaon-Dabaka-Amlakhi-Nagaland Border.**Length(km):**167. **District Served:** Nowgong,Karbi-Angalong.

NH No: 37. **Route:** Junction with NH 31B near Goalpara-Paikan-Guwahati-Dispur-Nowgaon-Numaligarh-Jorhat- Jhanzi-Dibrugarh-Tinsukia-Makum-Saikhoaghat. **Length (km):**680 . **District Served:** Goalpara, Kamrup, Morigaon, Nowgong, Golaghat, Jorhat, Sibsagar, Dibrugarh, Tinsukia.NH No: 37A. **Route:** Kuwarital- Junction with NH 52 near Tezpur . **Length (km):**23 . **District Served:** Nowgaon, Sonitpur.NH No: 38. **Route:** Makum-Ledo-Lekhapani . **Length (km):** 54. **District Served:** Tinsukia.NH No: 39. **Route:** Numaligarh-Naojan-Bokajan up to Nagaon Border. **Length (km):**115 . **District Served:** Golaghat, Karbi-Anglong.NH No: 44. **Route:** From Meghalaya Border-Badarpur-Karimganj-Patharkandi up to Tripura Border . **Length (km):**111 . **District Served:** Cachar, Karimganj.NH No: 51. **Route:** Paikan up to Meghalaya Border. **Length (km):** 22. **District Served:** Goalpara. NH

No: 52. *Route:* Baihata-Charali-Mangaldai-Dhekiajuli-Tezpur-Gohpur- Banderdewa-North Lakhimpur-Dhemaji-Kulajan-Arunachal Border-Junction with NH No.37 near Saikhoagha. *Length (km):*540 . *District Served:* Tinsukia, Darrang, Sonitpur. *NH No:* 52A. *Route:* Gohpur-A.P.Border-Banderdewa . *Length (km):* 15. *NH No:* 52B. *Route:* Kulajan-Dibrugah. *Length (km):*31 . *NH No:* 53. *Route:* Junction with NH44 near Badarpur-Silchar-Lakhipur up to Manipur Border. *Length (km):*100 . *District Served:* Cachar.*NH No:* 54. *Route:* Dabaka-Lumding-Langting-Hablong-Silchar-Dwarband up to Mizoram Border. *Length (km):* 338. *District Served:* Cachar. *NH No:* 61. *Route:* Jhanzi-Amguri-Nagaland border. *Length (km):*20 . *NH No:* 62. *Route:* Dudhnai -Damaraup to Meghalaya Border. *Length (km):*5 . *NH No:* 151. *Route:* Karimganj-Bangladesh Border. *Length (km):*14 . *NH No:* 152. *Route:* Patacharkuchi-Hajua-Bhutan Border. *Length (km):* 40. *NH No:* 153. *Route:* Ledo-Lekhapani-Arunachal Pradesh Border. *Length (km):* 20. *NH No:* 154. *Route:* Dhaleswar (Badarpur)-Bairabi-Mizoram Border . *Length (km):*110 .

Natural Division

Zone: North Bank Plains Zone. *District Covered:* North Lakhimpur, Sonipur and Darrang. *Zone:* Upper Brahmaputra Valley Zone. *District Covered:* Enire eastern districts Beyond Central Brahmaputra Velly and Hill Zones. *Zone:* Central Brahmaputra Valley Zone. *District Covered:* Karbi Anglong in the east and South Kamrup in the west and the river Brahmaputra in the North covering in the district of Nalgaon. *Zone:* Lower Brahmaputra Valley Zone. *District Covered:* Kokrajhar, Dhubri, Goalpara, Barpeta, Nalbari Kamrup and Pragjyotishpur. *Zone:*Barak Valley Zone. *District Covered:* Cachar and Karimganj. *Zone:* Hill Zone. *District Covered:* Karbi Anglong (66%) and North Cachar Hills (34%) with total of 15222sq.Km.area which represent 19.4 Percent area of the whole State .

Administration

Assam is divided into 27 administrative districts. These districts are further sub-divided into 49 "Sub-divisions" or *Mohkuma*. Every district is administered from a district head quarter with the office of the District Collector, District Magistrate, Office of the District Panchayat and usually with a district court. The districts are delineated on the basis of the features such as the rivers, hills, forests, etc. and majority of the newly constituted districts are sub-divisions of the earlier districts. The local governance system is organised

under the *jila-parishad* (District Panchayat) for a district, *panchayat* for group of or individual rural areas and under the urban local bodies for the towns and cities. Presently there are 2489 village panchayats covering 26247 villages in Assam. The 'town-committee' or *nagar-somiti* for small towns, 'municipal board' or *pouro-sobha* for medium towns and municipal corporation or *pouo-nigom* for the cities consist of the urban local bodies. Assam has two big cities. Largest City is Guwahati and other major cities are Silchar, Jorhat and Dibrugarh. Smaller Cities are Tezpur, Tinsukia, Sivasagar, Dhuburi, Nagaon etc. For the revenue purposes, the districts are divided into revenue circles and *mouzas*; for the development projects, the districts are divided into 219 'development-blocks' and for law and order these are divided into 206 police stations or *thana*. Assam is evergreen state of india.

Parliamentary Constituencies and Assembly Constituencies of the State.

1. **Karimganj (SC).** — 1-Ratabari (SC), 2 — Patharkandi, 3 — Karimganj North, 4 — Karimganj South, 5 — Badarpur, 6 — Hailakandi, 7 — Katlicherra and 8 — Algapur.
2. **Silchar.** — 9 — Silchar, 10 — Sonai, 11 — Dholai (SC), 12 — Udharbond, 13 — Lakhimpur, 14 — Barkhola and 15 — Katigora.
3. **Autonomous District (ST).** — 16 — Haflong (ST), 17 — Bokajan (ST), 18 — Howraghat (ST), 19 — Diphu (ST) and 20 — Baithalango (ST).
4. **Dhubri.** — 2 — Mankachar, 22 — Salmara South, 23 — Dhubri, 24 — Gauripur, 25 — Golakganj, 26 — Bilasipara West, 27 — Bilasipara East, 37 — Goalpara East, 38 — Goalpara West and 39 — Jaleswar.
5. **Kokrajhar (ST).** — 28 — Gossaigaon, 29 — Kokrajhar West (ST), 30 — Kokrajhar East (ST), 31 — Sidli (ST), 33 — Bijni, 40 — Sorbhog, 41 — Bhabanipur, 58 — Tamulpur, 62 — Barama (ST) and 63 — Chapaguri (ST).
6. **Barpeta.** — 32 — Bongaigaon, 34 — Abhayapuri North, 35 — Abhayapuri South (SC), 42 — Patacharkuchi, 43 — Barpeta, 44 — Jania, 45 — Baghbar, 46 — Sarukhetri, 47 — Chenga and 61 — Dharmapur.
7. **Gauhati.** — 36 — Dudhnai (ST), 48 — Boko (SC), 49 — Chaygaon, 50 — Palabari, 51 — Jalukbari, 52 — Dispur, 53 — Gauhati East, 54 — Gauhati West, 55 — Hajo and 60 — Barkhetry.
8. **Mangaldoi.** — 56 — Kamalpur, 57 — Rangiya, 59

- Nalbari, 64 — Panery, 65 — Kalaigaon, 66 — Sipajhar, 67 — Mangaldoi (SC), 68 — Dalgaoon, 69 — Udalguri (ST) and 70 — Majbat.
9. **Tezpur.** — 71 — Dhekiajuli, 72 — Barchalla, 73 — Tezpur, 74 — Ramgapara, 75 — Sootea, 76 — Biswanath, 77 — Behali, 78 — Gohpur and 109 — Bihpuria.
10. **Nowgong.** — 79 — Jagiroad (SC), 80 — Marigaon, 81 — Laharighat, 82 — Raha (SC), 86 — Nowgong, 87 — Barhampur, 90 — Jamunamukh, 91 — Hojai and 92 — Lumding.
11. **Kaliabor.** — 83 — Dhing, 84 — Batadroba, 85 — Rupohihat, 88 — Samaguri, 89 — Kaliabor, 93 — Bokakhat, 94 — Sarupathar, 95 — Golaghat, 96 — Khumtai and 97 — Dergaon (SC).
12. **Jorhat.** — 98 — Jorhat, 100 — Titabar, 101 — Mariani, 102 — Teok, 103 — Amguri, 104 — Nazira, 105 — Mahmara, 106 — Sonari, 107 — Thowra and 108 — Sibsagar.
13. **Dibrugarh.** — 115 — Moran, 116 — Dibrugarh, 117 — Lahowal, 118 — Duliajan, 119 — Tingkhong, 120 — Nahar Katia, 122 — Tinsukia, 123 — Digboi and 124 — Margherita.
14. **Lakhimpur.** — 99 — Majuli (ST), 110 — Naoboicha, 111 — Lakhimpur, 112 — Dhakuakhana (ST), 113 — Dhemaji (ST), 114 — Jonai (ST), 121 — Chabua, 125 — Doom Dooma and 126 — Sadiya.

Gram Panchayat

The Panchayat and Community Development was created by the Government of Assam in the year 1952 with the motto for upliftment of the rural people of the State of Assam. Originally 3 Nos. of Community Development Projects and 135 Nos. of Development Blocks were created in Assam. Now the Development Blocks have been increased up to 219 for implementation of various development programmes and schemes for proper upliftment of rural people. The erstwhile Panchayat & Community Development Department and the Rural Development Department have been amalgamated into one Department in the name and style as Panchayat & Rural Development since 1.7.1989. The Department has taken the responsibility of enhancing rural livelihoods through a variety of programmes and projects. The emphasis is on building up of local resources through increasing the capability of the rural poor through self-employment programmes and through building up of critical infrastructure in the rural areas of Assam. The Panchayat and Rural Development Department is actively taking new

innovative projects for building community assets, strengthening the existing occupational strategies of the poor farmers and cultivators and to provide wage employment to the needy from amongst the poorest section of the rural society.

Education

The education scene in Assam is characterized by the following facts. A large number of eligible children of school going age still remain out of school. The recent NFHS survey indicates that 72 per cent of the population in the 6-17 age group is attending school in Assam, which is same as the all India average. This figure is however much lower than that of Kerala (91 per cent) and lower than all other North-Eastern States (in the range of 80 per cent to 87 per cent). The school completion rates are found to be low, indicating high dropout rates. Median number of years of schooling completed among the male population age 6 and above is 4.4 compared to 8.1 for Kerala and 5.5 for all India (Table . Female educational achievement in Assam is found to be better relative to the all India performance. The various gaps: rural-urban gap, gender gap (male/female) and poverty gap (poor/non-poor) is very much evident from the data on educational attainment. The problem of school dropouts in Assam relative to other Indian States has also been brought out sharply in the Economic Survey 2000-01. During 1998-99, the gross enrolment ratio for primary school (class I-V) children was 109.63 in Assam compared to 92.14 per cent in all India. But for the upper primary level (classes VI to VIII), the enrolment ratio was merely 61.12 compared to 57.58 per cent for all India. Although the primary level enrolment during 1998-99 in Assam is higher than most other States, the gross enrolment ratio is considerably lower at the upper primary level indicating a high percentage of dropouts. One important reason for high dropout rate is the non-availability of educational facilities above the primary level in villages. A large percentage of the villages are still without an upper primary school. This especially accounts for a large chunk of girls dropping out after primary level. The parents are reluctant to send the girls to other villages for schooling, for fear of their security. Literacy rate for the State has improved substantially between 1991 and 2001. The district wise performance in literacy shows wide variations in performance. Not only has there been an overall reduction in illiteracy but there has also been a substantial reduction in regional disparities in literacy. The gender gap in literacy however persists. The role of literacy in bringing about a demographic transition

and better health outcomes is well recognized in the literature.

Medical

Health Infrastructure of Assam: Sub-centre: Required: (5063) working (4592). Primary: Required: (826) working (844). Community Health Centre: Required: (206) working (108). Multipurpose Worker (Female) / ANM: Required: (5436) working (875). Health Worker (Male)/MPW (M): Required: (4592) working (359). Health Assistants (Female)/LHV: Required: (844). Health Assistants (Male): Required: (844). Doctor at PHCs: Required: (844) working (344). Surgeons: Required: (108) working (24). Obstetricians & Gynaecologists: Required: (108) working (67). Physicians: Required: (108) working (18). Paediatricians: Required: (108) working (33). Total specialists at CHCs: Required: (432) working (142). Radiographers: Required: (108). Pharmacist: Required: (952) working (291). Laboratory Technicians: Required: (952) working (557). Nurse Midwife: Required: (1600) working (3014).

Scheduled Castes

The total population of Assam in 2001 Census has been 26,655,528. Of them, 1,825,949 persons are Scheduled Castes (SCs), constituting 6.9 per cent of the total population of the state. The state has registered 10 per cent decadal growth of SC population in 1991-2001. There are sixteen (16) notified SCs, and all have been enumerated in 2001 Census.

Population: Size & Distribution (SC)

Kaibartta (31.8 per cent) and Namasudra (30.4 per cent) are the two major SCs in the state sharing more than half of the total population. Patni (8.3 per cent), Jhalo (4.2 per cent), Muchi (3.9 per cent), Sutradhar (3.4 per cent), Bhuinmali (3.2 per cent), Hira (3 per cent), Dhupi (2.7 per cent), Brittil Bania (2.6 per cent), and Jalkeot (1.3 per cent) also have sizeable population in the state. SCs namely Lalbegi, Mahara, Dugla, Mehtar, and Bansphor each accounts for less than one per cent (Statement-1).

Statement-1: Scheduled Caste Population, 2001

Sl. No.	Name of the Scheduled Caste	Total population	Proportion to the total SC population
1	All Scheduled Castes	1,825,949	100%
2	Bansphor	14,760	0.8
3	Bhuinmali	57,974	3.2
4	Brittil Bania	47,974	2.6
5	Dhupi	49,929	2.7
6	Dugla	6,364	0.3
7	Hira	55,106	3.0
8	Jalkeot	23,511	1.3
9	Jhalo	77,533	4.2
10	Kaibartta	581,559	31.8
11	Lalbegi	552	0.0
12	Mahara	1,725	0.1
13	Mehtar	12,715	0.7
14	Muchi	70,954	3.9
15	Namasudra	555,621	30.4
16	Patni	151,992	8.3
17	Sutradhar	62,032	3.4

Among the districts, Cachar (14.4 per cent), Karimganj (13 per cent), Marigaon (12.9 per cent), Hailakandi (10.9 per cent), and Bongaigaon (10.3 per cent) are the main SC concentrated districts in Assam, each having more than 10 per cent SC population. These five districts together share 32.4 per cent of the total SC population of the state (Statement-2).

Statement-2: District wise SC population

Sl. No	State/ District	Percentage or SCs to total population of the State/ District	Percentage of SCs to total State's SC population
1	ASSAM	6.9	100
2	Kokrajhar	3.4	1.7
3	Dhubri	3.9	3.5
4	Goalpara	4.8	2.2
5	Bongaigaon	10.3	5.1
6	Barpeta	5.7	5.1
7	Kamrup	6.8	9.3
8	Nalbari	7.5	4.7
9	Darrang	4.6	3.7
10	Marigaon	12.9	5.5

Sl. No	State/ District	Percentage of SCs to total population of the State/ District	Percentage of SCs to total State's SC population
11	Nagaon	9.3	11.8
12	Sonitpur	5.2	4.8
13	Lakhimpur	7.9	3.8
14	Dhemaji	5.3	1.7
15	Tinsukia	2.7	1.7
16	Dibrugarh	4.1	2.6
17	Sibsagar	3.4	2.0
18	Jorhat	7.9	4.3
19	Golaghat	5.4	2.8
20	Karbi Anglong	3.6	1.6
21	North Cachar Hills	1.8	0.2
22	Cachar	14.4	11.4
23	Karimganj	13.0	7.2
24	Hailakandi	10.9	3.2

According to 2001 Census, 85 per cent of the SCs are living in rural areas. Individual SC wise, there is wide variation with regard to their rural-urban distribution of population. A high of 27.9 per cent urban population has been recorded among Dhupi, followed by Brittial Bania with 23.3 per cent. On the contrary, Patni has recorded the lowest of 7.3 per cent urban population. Namasudra, Hira, Muchi, and Kaibartta are predominantly residing in rural areas having more than 85 per cent rural population.

Sex Ratio (SC)

The sex ratio of the total SC population is 935, which is very close to the national average for SCs (936). Of the eleven major SCs, low sex ratio has been registered among Muchi (916), Dhupi (920), Jhalo (923), Jalkeot (923), Patni (924), and Namasudra (924). It is higher than the national average among Hira (966), Kaibartta (955), Brittial Bania (951), Sutradhar (938), and Bhuinmali (937).

The child sex ratio (0-6 age group) at 959 is above the aggregated figure at national level for SCs (938). The child sex ratio among Hira (986), Kaibartta (977), Jalkeot (971), and Bhuinmali (961) has been recorded higher than the state average for SCs. On the contrary it is below the state average among Sutradhar (915), Jhalo (932), Brittial Bania (939), Patni (940), Dhupi (947), Muchi (952), and Namasudra (958).

Literacy and Educational Level (SC)

The literacy rate among the SCs is 66.8 per cent, which is above the aggregated national figure for SCs (54.7 per cent). Having male and female literacy rate of 75.7 per cent and 57.1 per cent respectively, the gender gap in literacy is quite conspicuous (Statement-3).

Statement-3: Literacy Rate among Major SCs

Sl. No.	Name of the Scheduled Caste	Literate Rate (7 years and above)		
		Total	Male	Female
1.	All Scheduled Castes	66.8	75.7	57.1
2	Bhainmali	72.2	79.8	64.0
3	Brittial Bania	81.0	88.6	73.0
4	Dhupi	76.0	83.1	68.3
5	Hira	72.5	82.7	61.8
6	Jalkeot	69.3	78.9	58.8
7	Jhalo	52.8	64.3	40.3
8	Kaibartta	72.1	80.5	63.3
9	Muchi	47.9	60.4	34.2
10	Namasudra	60.2	70.1	49.4
11	Patni	75.9	81.5	69.9
12	Sutradhar	67.2	76.6	57.2

Brittial Bania with 81 per cent literacy rate are not only on top among the eleven major SCs but also are well above the state average for SCs. On the other hand Muchi are at the bottom having a low literacy rate of 47.9 per cent.

The gender gap in literacy is very conspicuous among Muchi with male and female literacy rate of 60.4 per cent and 34.2 per cent respectively. The Muchi women are lagging behind their male counterparts by 26.2 percentage points. The gender gap is comparatively low among Patni (11.7 percentage points) where female literacy is nearly 70 per cent.

According to the 2001 Census, 64.6 per cent of the SC population in the age group 5-14 years has been attending schools or any other educational institutions. Brittial Bania have recorded the highest 78.1 per cent, closely followed by Dhupi (72 per cent), Hira (71.9 per cent), and Kaibartta (70 per cent). It is comparatively lower among Muchi (50.6 per cent), Jhalo (56.3 per cent), and Namasudra (59.4 per cent).

The SCs having educational level graduation and above are only 2.5 per cent. Jalkeot with 4.7 per cent and Brittial Bania with 4.3 per cent are well ahead of

others. On the contrary Muchi have registered less than one per cent of their total literates having this level of education. It is also low among Jhalo (1.3 per cent), Sutradhar (1.7 per cent), Namasudra (1.8 per cent), and Patni (1.9 per cent).

Work Participation Rate (WPR) (SC)

12. The percentage of SC workers to total population (WPR) is 34.4 per cent, which is lower than the aggregated average for SCs at national level (40.4 per cent). Of the total workers, 74.8 per cent have been recorded as main workers and 25.2 per cent as marginal workers. The female WPR is only 17.3 per cent, which is lower than their male counterparts (50.3 per cent). The majority of workers among males are main workers (85.4 per cent), Statement-4.

Statement-4: Distribution of Total, Main & Marginal Workers among SCs

T/M/F	Total Workers (Percentage to Total Population)	Main Workers (Percentage to Total Workers)	Marginal Workers (Percentage to Total Workers)
Total	627,688 (34.4%)	469,427 (74.8%)	158,261 (25.2%)
Male	474,892 (50.3%)	405,522 (85.4%)	69,370 (14.6%)
Female	152,796 (17.3%)	63,905 (41.8%)	8,8891 (58.2%)

Category of Workers (SC)

Of the total main workers among SCs, 32.7 per cent have been recorded as cultivators, 8.1 per cent as agricultural labourers, and merely 5.1 per cent in the category of household industry. The remaining more than half of the total main workers (54.1 per cent) have been returned as 'other workers' outside agriculture and household industry.

Of the eleven major SCs in Assam, Namasudra, a traditional cultivating caste, registered 41 per cent cultivators of their total main workers, Hira, who are hand-made potters by their traditional occupation, have recorded the next highest 36.2 per cent cultivators. On the other hand the percentage of cultivators among Muchi (14.9 per cent) is low. But, Muchi have registered a high of 10.5 per cent agricultural labourers among them.

Marital Status (SC)

As regards marital status, 55.3 per cent of the SCs are never married, 39.6 per cent currently married, 4.7 per cent widowed, and only 0.4 per cent divorced/separated.

Child marriage is not common among the SCs in Assam. Merely 1.8 per cent of the SC females below 18 years – the minimum legal age for female marriage – have been registered as ever married. Among the eleven major SCs, Kaibartta have recorded the highest 2 per cent of their females of this stipulated age as ever married, while it is the lowest among Patni (1.2 per cent).

The ever married SC males below 21 years – the minimum legal age for marriage – constitute only 1.1 per cent of the total population of this category. Both Hira and Kaibartta have recorded 1.4 per cent of their population in this age category as ever married, which is the highest among the eleven major SCs of the state.

Religion (SC)

In 2001 Census, of the total of 1,825,949 SC population in Assam 1,824,472 persons are Hindus constituting 99.9 per cent of the population. Besides, 822 persons are Sikhs and 655 Budhists.

Scheduled Tribes

The total population of Assam in 2001 Census has been 26,655,528. Of them, 3,308,570 persons are Scheduled Tribes (STs), constituting 12.4 per cent of the total population of the state. The state has registered 15.1 per cent decadal growth of ST population in 1991-2001. There are total twenty three (23) notified STs in the state. Of these, no population of Pawi has been returned in 2001 Census. Pawi is a small community of Mizoram.

Population: Size and Distribution (ST)

Among STs, Boro represents nearly half of the total ST population of the state (40.9 per cent). Miri (17.8 per cent), Mikir (10.7 per cent), Rabha (8.4 per cent), Kachari (i.e. Sonowal Kachari) (7.1 per cent), and Lalung (5.2 per cent) are the other major STs each having 5 per cent or above of total STs. Along with Boro they constitute 90 per cent ST population of the state. Besides them, Dimasa constitutes 3.4 per cent and Deori 1.2 per cent of the total ST population of the state. The rest of the Scheduled Tribes are very small in their population size (Statement-1).

Statement-1: Population of Major STs, 2001 Census

Sl. No.	Name of the Scheduled Tribes	Total population	Proportion to the total ST population
1	All Scheduled Tribes	3,308,570	100%
2	Boro	1,352,771	40.9
3	Miri	587,310	17.8
4	Mikir	353,513	10.7
5	Rabha	277,517	8.4
6	Kachari	235,881	7.1
7	Lalung	170,622	5.2
8	Dimasa	110,976	3.4
9	Deori	41,161	1.2

The ST population in Assam is predominantly rural with 95.3 per cent rural and only 4.7 per cent urban population. Of the eight major STs, Dimasa have recorded the highest 10.4 per cent urban population, followed by Mikir (8.3 per cent). On the other hand Miri have recorded the lowest 1.8 per cent urban population.

North Cachar Hills and Karbi Anglong the two autonomous hill districts of Assam are predominantly tribal housing two important STs of Assam - the Dimasa and Mikir (now recognized as Karbi). As per 2001 Census, the North Cachar Hills has got the highest 68.3 per cent ST population, followed by Karbi Anglong (55.7 per cent). In absolute number Karbi Anglong is on top sharing 13.7 per cent of the total ST population of the state. Hailakandi, Karimganj, and Cachar districts have a negligible presence of ST population (Statement-2).

Statement-2: District wise ST population

Sl. No	State/ District	Percentage of STs to total population of the State/ District	Percentage of STs to total State's ST population
1	ASSAM	12.4	100%
2	Kokrajhar	33.7	9.2
3	Dhubri	2.0	1.0
4	Goalpara	16.0	4.0
5	Bongaigaon	12.2	3.3
6	Barpeta	7.5	3.7
7	Kamrup	9.9	7.6
8	Nalbari	17.6	6.1
9	Darrang	16.6	7.6

Sl. No	State/ District	Percentage of STs to total population of the State/ District	Percentage of STs to total State's ST population
10	Marigaon	15.6	3.6
11	Nagaon	3.9	2.7
12	Sonitpur	11.6	5.9
13	Lakhimpur	23.5	6.3
14	Dhemaji	47.3	8.2
15	Tinsukia	5.8	2.0
16	Dibrugarh	7.5	2.7
17	Sibsagar	3.9	1.3
18	Jorhat	12.3	3.7
19	Golaghat	9.9	2.8
20	Karbi Anglong	55.7	13.7
21	North Cachar Hills	68.3	3.9
22	Cachar	1.3	0.6
23	Karimganj	0.3	0.1
24	Hailakandi	0.2	0.0

Sex Ratio (ST)

The overall sex ratio of ST population is 972, which is below the national average for STs (978). Of the eight major STs, Lalung have recorded the highest sex ratio of 985, while it is the lowest among Dimasa (951). The state has recorded child sex ratio (0-6 age group) of 962, which is again lower than the national average (973) for STs. The child sex ratio among Kachari (Sonowal) of 945 is the lowest, followed by Lalung (949).

Literacy and Educational Level

The ST population of Assam has recorded 62.5 per cent literacy rate, which is well above the national average for STs (47.1 per cent). The male and female literacy rate of 72.3 per cent and 52.4 per cent respectively show that women are lagging behind by 19.9 percentage points.

Kachari (Sonowal) with 81.4 per cent literacy rate are well ahead of others. On the other hand it is low among Mikir (53.7 per cent). Among Kachari (Sonowal), the female literacy rate of 74.4 per cent is quite close to male (88.2 per cent). Gender gap in literacy among Miri, however, has been recorded to be the highest. With 71.4 per cent male and 48.3 per cent female literacy, the Miri women are lagging way behind by as much as 23.1 per cent points (Statement-3).

Statement-3: Literacy Rate among Major STs

Sl. No.	Name of the Scheduled Tribe	Literate Rate (7 years and above)		
		Total	Male	Female
1	All Scheduled Tribes	62.5	72.3	52.4
2	Dimasa	59.6	69.4	49.3
3	Mikir	53.7	64.1	43.0
4	Boro	61.3	71.4	51.1
5	Deori	76.2	84.8	67.5
6	Kachari	81.4	88.2	74.4
7	Lalung	61.8	72.0	51.6
8	Miri	60.1	71.4	48.3
9	Rabha	66.7	76.2	57.0

A two third (65.4 per cent) of the ST population in the age group 5-14 years has been attending schools or any other educational institutions. Of the eight major STs, it is the highest among Kachari (Sonowal) with 80.2 per cent of their population of this age group attending educational institutions. In addition Deori (79.8 per cent), Rabha (70.2 per cent), and Boro (68.2 per cent) have also registered this proportion above state average for STs, while Mikir have registered below the state average (54.9 per cent). Almost half of the Mikir population in the age group of 5-14 years - the category of potential students - has not been attending schools.

Literates among STs who are having educational level graduation and above are 2.3 per cent only. Deori is well ahead, among the eight major STs in Assam, with 4.9 per cent graduate and above. Mikir, Rabha, and Lalung are at the bottom, each having less than two per cent of their literate population with educational level graduation and above.

Work Participation Rate (WPR) (ST)

According to 2001 Census, 43.2 per cent of the STs have been registered as workers, which is below the aggregated national figure for STs (49.1 per cent). Of the total workers 65.3 per cent are main workers and 34.7 per cent marginal workers. The WPR of 35.8 per cent among females is high though lower than males (50.5 per cent).

Gender wise disparity is, however, distinct in case of main workers; 80.9 per cent among males and only 42.6 per cent among females are main workers (Statement-4).

Statement-4: Distribution of Total, Main and Marginal Workers among STs

T/M/F	Total Workers (Percentage to Total Population)	Main Workers (Percentage to Total Workers)	Marginal Workers (Percentage to Total Workers)
Total	1,430,404 (43.2%)	934,217 (65.3%)	496,187 (34.7%)
Male	847,229 (50.5%)	685,708 (80.9%)	161,521 (19.1%)
Female	583,175 (35.8%)	248,509 (42.6%)	334,666 (57.4%)

Among the major STs in the state, Deori have recorded the highest WPR of 55.5 per cent. It is lowest among Dimasa (38.9 per cent). Deori have recorded almost equal participation of male and female in the workforce with 58 per cent male and 52.9 per cent female WPR. On the contrary the gender gap in WPR is quite significant among Rabha (male 51.2 per cent, female 30.7 per cent), Lalung (male 51.8 per cent, female 33.1 per cent), and Dimasa (male 47 per cent, female 30.4 per cent).

Category of Workers (ST)

The Scheduled Tribes of Assam are predominantly cultivators as 70.6 per cent of the total ST main workers have been recorded as cultivators, while merely 6.1 per cent as agricultural labourer.

At the individual ST level, Miri have recorded a high of 85.6 per cent of their total main workers as cultivators, closely followed by Mikir (79.3 per cent) and Deori (78.2 per cent). Rabha have recorded the highest percentage of agricultural laborers, which is only 9 per cent of total main workers thereby indicating that majority of the STs in Assam are not landless.

Marital Status (ST)

The distribution of ST population by marital status shows that 57.5 per cent is never married, 39.1 per cent currently married, 3.3 per cent widowed, and merely 0.2 per cent divorced /separated. There is no conspicuous variation among the different individual STs (Statement-5).

As regards child marriage, 1.6 per cent of the ST female population below 18 years - the minimum legal age for marriage - has been recorded as ever married. Among the twelve major STs, Lalung have registered the highest at 2 per cent of their female population of this age category as ever married, while it is the lowest at 1.3 per cent among Miri.

Statement-5 : Marital Status Wise Population among Major STs

Sl. No	Name of the Scheduled Tribe	Per cent to Total Population			
		Never married	Currently married	Widowed	Divorced Separated
1	All Scheduled Tribes	57.5	39.1	3.3	0.2
2	Dimasa	59.0	37.7	3.0	0.2
3	Mikir	59.9	36.6	3.3	0.1
4	Boro	56.5	40.0	3.3	0.2
5	Deori	60.2	36.6	3.1	0.1
6	Kachari	54.7	41.4	3.7	0.2
7	Lalung	54.3	41.2	4.2	0.2
8	Miri	60.5	36.7	2.6	0.1
9	Rabha	55.1	40.7	4.0	0.2

The ever married males below 21 years - the minimum legal age for marriage - constitute only 1.4 per cent of the total ST population of this age category. Of the eight major STs, Lalung have registered the highest at 1.6 per cent of their male population below the stipulated age as ever married, closely followed by Deori and Miri, each with 1.5 per cent. Dimasa have registered the lowest at 1.2 per cent.

Religion (ST)

Of the total ST population of Assam, 90.7 per cent are Hindus and 8.8 per cent Christians. Besides these two main religions, 6,267 persons are Muslims, 5,153 Buddhists, and another 3,574 persons have returned pursuing various other faiths and have been categorized under "Other Religions and Persuasions".

Agriculture

In Assam among all the productive sectors, agriculture makes the highest contribution to its domestic sectors. Accounts for more than a third of Assam's income and employs 69% of workforce. Assam's biggest contribution to the world is tea. It produces some of the finest and expensive teas and has its own variety *Camellia assamica*. Assam also accounts for fair share of India's production of rice, rapeseed, mustard seed, jute, potato, sweet potato, banana, papaya, areca nut, sugarcane and turmeric. It is also a home of large varieties of citrus fruits, leaf vegetables, vegetables, useful grasses, herbs, spices, etc. Assam's agriculture is yet to experience modernisation in real sense. With implications to food security, per capita food grain

production has declined in past five decades. Productivity has increased marginally; but still lower comparing to highly productive regions. For instance, yield of rice (staple food of Assam) was just 1531 kg per hectare against India's 1927 kg per hectare in 2000-01 which itself is much lower than Egypt's 9283, US's 7279, South Korea's 6838, Japan's 6635 and China's 6131 kg per hectare in 2001. On the other hand, after having strong domestic demand, 1.5 million hectares of inland water bodies, numerous rivers and 165 varieties of fishes, fishing is still in its traditional form and production is not self-sufficient. The Assam Agriculture University is located at Jorhat, Assam. It is the only agricultural university for the Seven Sisters.

Irrigation

Agriculture and its allied activities played an important role in the socio-economic development of the State of Assam. This vital sector is the major contribution of the State economy as well as providing livelihood to a significant proportion of the population of the State. This Sector continues to support more than 75 per cent population of the State directly or indirectly providing employment to a sizeable section of the workforce. Irrigation is the main input to this agriculture practice. To coping with the growing problem of food shortage due to formidable increase in population and adverse & unpredictable weather condition, natural calamities etc., multiple cropping, modernization of agricultural practices in agricultural sector is highly essential in Assam. For a sustained development in the agricultural sector availability of assured irrigation facility is undoubtedly the most important prerequisite. Thus, the importance of irrigation development bears special significance in the context of efforts towards economic development of the State. Land use pattern in Assam indicates that out of the total geographical area of 78.44 lakh hectares, the Gross Cropped Area of Assam is 41.05 lakh hectares. Against this, the ultimate irrigation potential i.e. the ultimate Gross Irrigation Potential (Annually Irrigable Area) has been estimated at about 27 lakh hectares, which constitutes 65.8 percent of the Gross Cropped Area. Out of the estimated ultimate Irrigation Potential of 27 lakh hectares, necessary plan has been taken up to irrigate 10 lakh hectares through Major and Medium Irrigation projects from surface water sources and 17 lakh hectares through Minor Irrigation Schemes (including ground water schemes). The development programmes for improvement of irrigation facility in Assam has been taken up under two broad heads, viz., Major & Medium

Irrigation and Minor Irrigation. While the Irrigation Schemes are classified as Major, Medium and Minor, they are categorized as Surface Flow, Surface Lift (For Major / Medium and Minor) and Ground Water Lift (for Minor only). Three Departments, viz. Irrigation, Agriculture and Panchayat and Rural Development are associated with development of irrigation facilities in the State. While the Irrigation Department, being the Nodal Department for development of irrigation in the State, executes and maintains Major, Medium and Minor Irrigation Schemes, the irrigation works of the other two departments are confined to Minor Schemes like Shallow Tube Wells, Low Lift Points and Temporary Minor Irrigation Schemes only. Out of the Gross Cropped Area of 41.05 lakh hectares of the State, the Irrigation Department created potential of 7.97 lakh hectares up to 2010-11 of which 2.44 lakh hectares through Major & Medium Irrigation Projects and the rest 5.53 lakh hectares under Minor Irrigation Schemes. Of the 5.53 lakh hectares of created potential under Minor Irrigation Sector, a potential of 4.04 lakh hectares was created through the Govt. Minor Irrigation Schemes executed by the State Irrigation Department and the rest 1.49 lakh hectares through Shallow Tube Wells (STWs) and Low Lift points (LLPs) installed by the Assam State Minor Irrigation Development Corporation (ASMIDC) Limited .

Religion

There are 17,296,455 Hindus, (64.92 Percent) 8,240,611 Muslims, (30.93 Percent) 986,589 Christians, (3.71 Percent) 22,519 Sikhs, 51,029 Buddhists, 23,957 Jains and 22,999 belonging to other religious communities. The latter includes Animism (Khamti, Phake, Aiton etc. communities).

Language

Assamese and Bodo are the major indigenous and official languages while Bengali holds official status in the three districts in the Barak Valley and is the second most widely spoken language of the state (27%). Traditionally Assamese was the language of the commons (of mixed origin – Austroasiatic, Tibeto-Burman, Prakrit) in the ancient Kamarupa and in the medieval kingdoms of Kamatapur, Kachari, Sutiya kingdom, Borahi, Ahom and Koch. Traces of the language is found in many poems by Luipa, Sarahapa, etc. in Charyapada (c.7th–8th AD). Modern dialects Kamrupi, Goalpariya etc. are the remnants. Moreover, Assamese in its traditional form was used by the ethno-cultural groups in the region as lingua-franca, which

spread during the stronger kingdoms and was required for needed economic integration. Localised forms of the language still exist in Nagaland, Arunachal Pradesh. The form used in the upper Assam was enriched by the advent of Tai-Shans in the 13th century. Linguistically modern Assamese traces its roots to the version developed by the American Missionaries based on the local form in practice near Sibsagar (Siwoxagor) district. Assamese (*Osomeeya*) is a rich language due to its hybrid nature with its unique characteristics of pronunciation and softness. Assamese literature is one of the richest. Dimasa is a one of the oldest languages spoken in North East India particularly in Assam. The word Dimasa etymologically translates to "Son of the big river " (Di-Water, ma- suffix for great, sa-sons), the river being the mighty Brahmaputra. The Dimasa word "Di" for water forms the root word for many of the major rivers of Assam and the North East India like Dikrang which means green river, Dikhow which means "fetched water", Diyung (huge river) etc. The mighty river Brahmaputra is known as Dilao (long river) among the Dimasas even now. Many of the important towns and cities in Assam and Nagaland found their names from the Dimasa word such as Diphu, Dimapur (a capital of Dimasa Kingdom), Dispur, Hojai, Khaspur, etc. In fact, Dimasa language is one of the last languages of the North East India which still has undiluted rich vocabularies. Bodo is an ancient language of Assam. Spatial distribution patterns of the ethno-cultural groups, cultural traits and the phenomenon of naming all the major rivers in the North East Region with Bodo-Kachari words (e.g. Dihing, Dibru, Dihong, D/Tista, Dikrai, etc.) reveal that it was the most important language in the ancient times. Bodo is presently spoken largely in the Western Assam (Bodo Territorial Council area). After years of neglect, now Bodo language is getting attention and its literature is developing. Other native languages of Tibeto-Burman origin and related to Bodo-Kachari are DEORI Mising, Karbi, Rabha, Tiwa, etc. Rajbongshi also known as Kamatapuri/ Goalpariya is also widely spoken by the people of western Assam. Nepali is also spoken in almost all parts of the state. There are approximately thirty lakhs of Nepali speakers spreading over the area of all the district of Assam. Assamese language being the main language, they are well versed in it. Assamese language is the main medium in educational institutions but Nepali language is also taught as a major Indian language. In Guwahati and Digboi, many Jr. basic School and Jr. high School are Nepali medium where all the teachers are Nepali. As a major Indian language, Nepali is included by

Assam State Secondary Board, Assam Higher Secondary Council and Gauhati University in their HSCL, higher secondary and graduation level respectively, in some junior basic and higher secondary schools and colleges, Nepali teachers and lecturers are also appointed. In these institutions, Nepali and literature are taught. There are also speakers of Tai languages in Assam. A total of six Tai language were spoken in Assam, although two are now extinct. Tai Phake Tai Aiton Khamti Khamyang (critically endangered) Ahom (extinct) Turung (extinct). The Tai Ahom language (brought by Sukaphaa and his followers), is no longer a spoken language today, but is receiving increased attention for research after centuries of long care and preservation by the Bailungs (traditional priests). There are also small groups of people speaking Manipuri, Khasi, Garo, Hmar, Kuki, Zeme Naga etc. in different parts. Bengali is the official language in Barak Valley and the widely spoken language there is Sylheti, a dialect of Bengali. Bengali is also largely spoken in the western districts of Dhubri, BARPETA and Goalpara. On the 19th of May, 1961, 11 persons were killed by police firing in Silchar in Cachar, Barak Valley, when they were protesting the state government's decision to make Assamese the official language in all parts of the state. The day is observed as 'Bhasha Shaheed Diwas' in Barak Valley every year. Santali or Santhali is also spoken widely by the tribal population in the tea garden districts of Assam. These people who were initially brought as tea estate labourers by the British to Assam have now made it their home state. Bishnupriya Manipuri language is also spoken by a small minority of people in Barak Valley. Some of the other languages spoken in Assam are Missing, Rabha and Karbi.

Distribution of Language

		Persons	Males	Females
Assamese	Total	12,958,088	6,725,043	6,233,045
	Rural	11,794,053	6,097,264	5,696,789
	Urban	1,164,035	627,779	536,256
Bengali	Total	4,856,532	2,516,540	2,339,992
	Rural	4,024,917	2,081,540	1,943,377
	Urban	831,615	435,000	396,615
Gujarati	Total	5,484	2,907	2,577
	Rural	4,695	2,470	2,225
	Urban	789	437	352
Hindi	Total	1,035,474	592,468	443,006
	Rural	705,443	389,988	315,455
	Urban	330,031	202,480	127,551
Kannada	Total	565	387	178
	Rural	293	230	63
	Urban	272	157	115

		Persons	Males	Females
Kashmiri	Total	88	66	22
	Rural	52	44	8
	Urban	36	22	14
Konkani	Total	609	318	291
	Rural	569	307	262
	Urban	40	11	29
Malayalam	Total	3,575	2,136	1,439
	Rural	1,257	803	454
	Urban	2,318	1,333	985
Manipuri	Total	126,987	62,755	64,232
	Rural	112,111	54,661	57,450
	Urban	14,876	8,094	6,782
Marathi	Total	1,533	1,095	438
	Rural	718	577	141
	Urban	815	518	297
Nepali	Total	432,519	226,463	206,056
	Rural	394,523	205,781	188,742
	Urban	37,996	20,682	17,314
Oriya	Total	140,782	72,986	67,796
	Rural	136,281	70,374	65,907
	Urban	4,501	2,612	1,889
Punjabi	Total	14,289	8,096	6,193
	Rural	3,101	1,850	1,251
	Urban	11,188	6,246	4,942
Sanskrit	Total	7	4	3
	Rural	1	1	-
	Urban	6	3	3
Sindhi	Total	852	462	390
	Rural	576	302	274
	Urban	276	160	116
Tamil	Total	1,770	1,175	595
	Rural	696	494	202
	Urban	1,074	681	393
Telugu	Total	22,816	12,268	10,548
	Rural	11,679	6,240	5,439
	Urban	11,137	6,028	5,109
Urdu	Total	3,935	2,423	1,512
	Rural	2,095	1,243	852
	Urban	1,840	1,180	660
Adi	Total	2,316	1,210	1,106
	Rural	2,218	1,160	1,058
	Urban	98	50	48
Anal	Total	2	-	2
	Rural	2	-	2
	Urban	-	-	-
Angami	Total	74	53	21
	Rural	39	34	5
	Urban	35	19	16
Ao	Total	856	417	439
	Rural	692	340	352
	Urban	164	77	87
Arabic/Arbi	Total	497	267	230
	Rural	401	216	185
	Urban	96	51	45
Bhili/Bhilodi	Total	137	74	63
	Rural	137	74	63
	Urban	-	-	-
Bhotia	Total	108	40	68
	Rural	94	34	60

		<i>Persons</i>	<i>Males</i>	<i>Females</i>			<i>Persons</i>	<i>Males</i>	<i>Females</i>
Bhumij	Urban	14	6	8	Kisan	Rural	168	81	87
	Total	871	455	416		Urban	-	-	-
	Rural	849	443	406		Total	1,136	589	547
Bishnupuriya	Urban	22	12	10	Koch	Rural	1,136	589	547
	Total	39,370	19,513	19,857		Urban	-	-	-
	Rural	38,161	18,829	19,332		Total	7,205	3,596	3,609
Bodo/Boro	Urban	1,209	684	525	Koda/Kora	Rural	7,027	3,499	3,528
	Total	1,184,569	599,636	584,933		Urban	178	97	81
	Rural	1,163,310	588,178	575,132		Total	73	33	40
Chakhesang	Urban	21,259	11,458	9,801	Konda	Rural	73	33	40
	Total	3	2	1		Urban	-	-	-
	Rural	-	-	-		Total	97	59	38
Coorgi/Kodagu	Urban	3	2	1	Konyak	Rural	91	56	35
	Total	1	1	-		Urban	6	3	3
	Rural	1	1	-		Total	7	3	4
Deori	Urban	-	-	-	Koya	Rural	2	2	-
	Total	15,955	8,058	7,897		Urban	5	1	4
	Rural	15,667	7,911	7,756		Total	333	176	157
Dimasa	Urban	288	147	141	Kuki	Rural	328	173	155
	Total	84,654	43,252	41,402		Urban	5	3	2
	Rural	80,088	40,707	39,381		Total	15,209	8,020	7,189
Dogri	Urban	4,566	2,545	2,021	Kurukh/Oraon	Rural	12,546	6,627	5,919
	Total	132	101	31		Urban	2,663	1,393	1,270
	Rural	98	78	20		Total	54,202	27,806	26,396
English	Urban	34	23	11	Lalung	Rural	53,491	27,424	26,067
	Total	461	260	201		Urban	711	382	329
	Rural	153	93	60		Total	32,633	16,442	16,191
Gangte	Urban	308	167	141	Lepcha	Rural	31,557	15,883	15,674
	Total	78	47	31		Urban	1,076	559	517
	Rural	15	9	6		Total	2	1	1
Garo	Urban	63	38	25	Limbu	Rural	-	-	-
	Total	114,779	58,216	56,563		Urban	2	1	1
	Rural	113,250	57,426	55,824		Total	619	300	319
Gondi	Urban	1,529	790	739	Lotha	Rural	611	298	313
	Total	2,971	1,596	1,375		Urban	8	2	6
	Rural	2,926	1,571	1,355		Total	1,326	686	640
Halam	Urban	45	25	20	Lushai/Mizo	Rural	1,307	669	638
	Total	3,978	2,006	1,972		Urban	19	17	2
	Rural	3,970	2,004	1,966		Total	2,719	1,416	1,303
Hmar	Urban	8	2	6	Mao	Rural	1,307	682	625
	Total	19,054	9,894	9,160		Urban	1,412	734	678
	Rural	15,849	8,177	7,672		Total	14	12	2
Ho	Urban	3,205	1,717	1,488	Miri/Mishing	Rural	1	1	-
	Total	679	335	344		Urban	13	11	2
	Rural	679	335	344		Total	381,562	194,797	186,765
Kabui	Urban	-	-	-	Mishmi	Rural	379,537	193,606	185,931
	Total	946	479	467		Urban	2,025	1,191	834
	Rural	942	475	467		Total	2	1	1
Karbi/Mikir	Urban	4	4	-	Mogh	Rural	-	-	-
	Total	355,032	181,776	173,256		Urban	2	1	1
	Rural	331,355	169,222	162,133		Total	40	19	21
Kharia	Urban	23,677	12,554	11,123	Monpa	Rural	35	16	19
	Total	5,955	3,081	2,874		Urban	5	3	2
	Rural	5,903	3,041	2,862		Total	24	21	3
Khasi	Urban	52	40	12	Munda	Rural	-	-	-
	Total	29,384	15,007	14,377		Urban	24	21	3
	Rural	28,252	14,491	13,761		Total	75,420	38,815	36,605
Khond/Kondh	Urban	1,132	516	616		Rural	74,802	38,404	36,398
	Total	168	81	87		Urban	618	411	207

		Persons	Males	Females
Mundari	Total	14,223	7,405	6,818
	Rural	13,968	7,244	6,724
	Urban	255	161	94
Nissi/Dafla	Total	1,450	788	662
	Rural	1,159	604	555
	Urban	291	184	107
Nocte	Total	341	176	165
	Rural	301	156	145
	Urban	40	20	20
Paite	Total	141	67	74
	Rural	110	51	59
	Urban	31	16	15
Parji	Total	266	141	125
	Rural	265	140	125
	Urban	1	1	-
Rabha	Total	112,424	56,835	55,589
	Rural	111,554	56,349	55,205
	Urban	870	486	384
Rengma	Total	4,679	2,444	2,235
	Rural	3,529	1,836	1,693
	Urban	1,150	608	542
Santali	Total	135,905	70,491	65,414
	Rural	135,116	70,071	65,045
	Urban	789	420	369
Savara	Total	2,927	1,545	1,382
	Rural	2,518	1,337	1,181
	Urban	409	208	201
Sema	Total	13,836	7,093	6,743
	Rural	13,821	7,087	6,734
	Urban	15	6	9
Sherpa	Total	47	25	22
	Rural	35	20	15
	Urban	12	5	7
Tangkhul	Total	111	58	53
	Rural	66	37	29
	Urban	45	21	24
Tangsa	Total	2,515	1,320	1,195
	Rural	2,504	1,312	1,192
	Urban	11	8	3
Thado	Total	3,714	1,918	1,796
	Rural	3,692	1,905	1,787
	Urban	22	13	9
Tibetan	Total	619	312	307
	Rural	604	302	302
	Urban	15	10	5
Total Of Other Languages	Total	53,167	27,638	25,529
	Rural	50,014	25,883	24,131
	Urban	3,153	1,755	1,398
Tripuri	Total	12,965	6,703	6,262
	Rural	12,807	6,600	6,207
	Urban	158	103	55
Vaiphei	Total	519	272	247
	Rural	374	192	182
	Urban	145	80	65
Wancho	Total	26	12	14
	Rural	23	11	12
	Urban	3	1	2
Yimchungre	Total	1,347	739	608
	Rural	1,347	739	608
	Urban	-	-	-

		Persons	Males	Females
Zeliang	Total	1	1	-
	Rural	-	-	-
	Urban	1	1	-
Zemi	Total	11,541	5,765	5,776
	Rural	10,590	5,224	5,366
	Urban	951	541	410

Drinking Water

Distribution of Household by Sources of Drinking Water

		Total	Rural	Urban
INDIA				
Tap	Total	70,448,827	33,583,755	36,865,072
	Within Premises	39,966,085	13,289,645	26,676,440
	Near Premises	24,998,605	16,908,647	8,089,958
	Away	5,484,137	3,385,463	2,098,674
Hand-pump	Total	68,456,319	59,736,874	8,719,445
	Within Premises	21,332,741	16,899,373	4,433,368
	Near Premises	36,605,076	33,442,465	3,162,611
	Away	10,518,502	9,395,036	1,123,466
Tube-well	Total	10,676,594	7,930,488	2,746,106
	Within Premises	3,138,814	1,583,518	1,555,296
	Near Premises	4,794,142	4,065,129	729,013
	Away	2,743,638	2,281,841	461,797
Well	Total	34,873,103	30,732,819	4,140,284
	Within Premises	9,961,068	7,618,694	2,342,374
	Near Premises	15,650,450	14,555,796	1,094,654
	Away	9,261,585	8,558,329	703,256
Tank, Pond, etc.	Total	1,936,671	1,769,496	167,175
	Within Premises	268,380	233,258	35,122
	Near Premises	860,293	798,155	62,138
	Away	807,998	738,083	69,915
River, Canal	Total	1,943,863	1,840,868	102,995
	Within Premises	0	0	0
	Near Premises	829,904	778,200	51,704
	Away	1,113,959	1,062,668	51,291
Spring	Total	1,415,997	1,283,098	132,899
	Within Premises	0	0	0
	Near Premises	614,404	539,449	74,955
	Away	801,593	743,649	57,944
Any other	Total	2,212,561	1,394,161	818,400
	Within Premises	136,181	74,259	61,922
	Near Premises	759,396	472,891	286,505
	Away	1,316,984	847,011	469,973

		Total	Rural	Urban
ASSAM				
Tap	Total	454,292	229,607	224,685
	Within Premises	204,934	46,513	158,421
	Near Premises	178,583	134,527	44,056
	Away	70,775	48,567	22,208
Hand-pump	Total	2,201,471	1,956,620	244,851
	Within Premises	958,641	804,854	153,787
	Near Premises	863,347	786,917	76,430
	Away	379,483	364,849	14,634
Tube-well	Total	244,379	210,679	33,700
	Within Premises	92,434	70,389	22,045
	Near Premises	102,221	93,330	8,891
	Away	49,724	46,960	2,764
Well	Total	1,316,626	1,140,916	175,710
	Within Premises	499,761	389,705	110,056
	Near Premises	489,181	442,660	46,521
	Away	327,684	308,551	19,133
Tank, Pond, etc.	Total	344,992	332,966	12,026
	Within Premises	110,302	104,685	5,617
	Near Premises	170,999	166,440	4,559
River, Canal	Total	256,813	248,897	7,916
	Within Premises	0	0	0
	Near Premises	120,146	116,072	4,074
Spring	Total	67,154	58,728	8,426
	Within Premises	0	0	0
	Near Premises	22,323	19,891	2,432
Any other	Total	49,631	41,760	7,871
	Within Premises	3,798	2,114	1,684
	Near Premises	10,808	9,569	1,239
	Away	35,025	30,077	4,948

Electricity

The major power stations are Chandrapur Thermal Project, Namrup Thermal Project and a few Mobile Gas Tuubine Units along with a mini hydro-electric project. Revitalising the Thermal Power Station of Bongaigaon and the on-going Kafri-Langpi Project will boost the power supply in the State.

Distribution of workers

Total Population, Total Workers, Main Workers, Marginal Workers and Non-Workers—India, States

India/State	Total Rural Urban	Persons Males Females	Total population	
INDIA	Total	Persons	1,025,251,059	
		Males	530,422,415	
	Rural	Persons	740,255,371	
		Males	380,438,194	
	Urban	Persons	284,995,688	
		Males	149,984,221	
Assam	Total	Persons	26,638,407	
		Males	13,787,799	
	Rural	Persons	23,248,994	
		Males	11,983,157	
	Urban	Persons	3,389,413	
		Males	1,804,642	
		Females	1,584,771	
	Total workers	Main workers	Marginal workers	Non-workers
	402,512,190	313,173,394	89,338,796	622,738,869
	275,463,736	240,520,672	34,943,064	254,958,679
	127,048,454	72,652,722	54,395,732	367,780,190
	310,655,339	229,672,348	80,982,991	429,600,032
	199,199,602	169,333,233	29,866,369	181,238,592
	111,455,737	60,339,115	51,116,622	248,361,440
	91,856,851	83,501,046	8,355,805	193,138,837
	76,264,134	71,187,439	5,076,695	73,720,087
	15,592,717	12,313,607	3,279,110	119,418,750
	9,557,064	7,083,046	2,474,018	17,081,343
	6,884,451	5,839,050	1,045,401	6,903,348
	2,672,613	1,243,996	1,428,617	10,177,995
	8,473,127	6,078,938	2,394,189	14,775,867
	5,963,601	4,968,101	995,500	6,019,556
	2,509,526	1,110,837	1,398,689	8,756,311
	1,083,937	1,004,108	79,829	2,305,476
	920,850	870,949	49,901	883,792
	163,087	133,159	29,928	1,421,684

Total Workers (Main + Marginal) and their Categories—India, States

India/State / Cultivators	Total Rural Urban	Persons Males Females	Total workers (Main + Marginal)	
INDIA	Total	Persons	402,512,190	
		Males	275,463,736	
		Females	127,048,454	
	Rural	Persons	310,655,339	
		Males	199,199,602	
		Females	111,455,737	
Urban	Persons	91,856,851		
	Males	76,264,134		
	Females	15,592,717		
Assam	Total	Persons	9,557,064	
		Males	6,884,451	
		Females	2,672,613	
	Rural	Persons	8,473,127	
		Males	5,963,601	
		Females	2,509,526	
	Urban	Persons	1,083,937	
		Males	920,850	
		Females	163,087	
	Cultivators	Agricultural Labourers	Household Industry workers	Other Workers
	127,628,287	107,447,725	16,395,870	151,040,308
	86,328,447	57,354,281	8,312,191	123,468,817
	41,299,840	50,093,444	8,083,679	27,571,491
	124,682,055	103,122,189	11,709,533	71,141,562
	84,046,644	54,749,291	5,642,112	54,761,555
	40,635,411	48,372,898	6,067,421	16,380,007
	2,946,232	4,325,536	4,686,337	79,898,746
	2,281,803	2,604,990	2,670,079	68,707,262
	64,429	1,720,546	2,016,258	11,191,484
	3,741,912	1,289,902	328,541	4,196,709
	2,661,619	849,434	117,647	3,255,751
	1,080,293	440,468	210,894	940,958
	3,722,180	1,280,776	300,014	3,170,157
	2,645,554	843,146	100,794	2,374,107
	1,076,626	437,630	199,220	796,050
	19,732	9,126	28,527	1,026,552
	16,065	6,288	16,853	881,644
	3,667	2,838	11,674	144,908

Fairs and Festivals

Ambuvaci Fair : Once a year, as the sky is threatened with monsoon rains, the *Ambuvaci* fair is celebrated at the Kamakhya temple; its spring-board is religion. As a ceremony, it is less colourful and expressive as compared to the buoyant joy of life. But the inner impulse of ritualistic devotion that actuates it, is deeper. Once a year, it is believed that in the "first part of the month of *Asadha*" Mother Earth becomes "impure"; this impurity is the same as the impurity of

women due to menses. It lasts as in the human world for three days, and the temple doors are closed from outside view during these days. No pilgrim is allowed inside the temple during this period when Mother Earth is in predicament. The temple doors are flung open on the fourth day, and the pilgrims, gathered for the occasion, are allowed a *darshan* (sight) of the cave in which the primordial symbol of the Mother lies sculptured on a stone-bed. The *Devi Bhagavad* has it thus: "In the first part of the month of *Asadha*, the Goddess wrapped in folds of cloths should be concealed in the secret chamber during the three days of *Ambuvaci*".

Bas Puja or Madan-Kam Puja : This festival is an ancient spring festival known as Madanotsava, but how Madan or Kamdev, the god of love, came to be symbolized by bamboos is difficult to explain. Madan again seems to have blended with Krishna.

Certain groups of people in the erstwhile Goalpara district are seen to perform the Bas (Bans) Puja ceremony at the Madan-Chaturdasi time in March-April. The ceremony continues from three to five days. Two stout bamboos are ceremonially cut, trimmed and washed and wrapped in cloth. The longer one, about twenty-nine feet in length, considered to be the male, is wrapped in white cloth and the shorter one, about twenty-four feet, is the female and wrapped in red cloth. Only male members take part in the ceremonial activity, but women and children attend the function.

Bhatheli Festival : Bhatheli festival is celebrated in the first week of Magh (January-February) from all-over Assam which attract people of different community.

The chief feature of Bhatheli is the planting of two green bamboos in a field. On the fixed date in the morning, young men after taking a cleansing bath, cut two bamboos. These are cleaned and washed, then decorated with coloured cloths and chowries. The bamboos are then ceremonially planted in the midst of a din made by beating of drums, clashing of cymbals and blowing of conches. The higher of the bamboo is known as the male *para* (pigeon) or bridegroom *para*, the other being the bride *para*. These are planted close. A little away a small hut with a roofing of banana leaves is made. This is known as Bhatheli-ghar and some eatables and coins are placed in it. The throne on which the idol of Vishnu-Krishna is kept is sometimes brought out in a procession and kept in a part of the field. The fair that grows up around the bamboos attracts traders with sweets, handicrafts, traditional claymade toys and even locally produced lentils, spices, etc.

Towards evening, young lads strike the Bhatheli-ghar and cry:— Bhatheli is over, Bhatheli is over! They share the eatables and also exchange of money. Thus, in certain areas the breakers of the Bhatheli-ghar come from another village, resulting in a sort of mock fight between them and the local youths.

Bihu Festival : The *Bihus* are predominantly a nature festival. The people of Assam, bred in ancient peasant-traditions, observe a sort of almost primitive devotion to nature. It manifests itself in the popular festivals described as the *Bihus*; they commemorate the changes of seasons. There are three *Bihus*: the *Bohag*, the *Magh* and the *Kati*, celebrated at different periods and cycles of the year and nature. The *Magh Bihu* is celebrated in the middle of winter, after the harvest is collected, with bonfires, social gatherings and feasts. It is often described by English writers as the Harvest Home. This *Bihu* shows powerful influences of the hills that surround the Brahmaputra Valley. In fact, of the social life, ancient art, song, dance and music all grew out of social gatherings by the fireside. Besides giving protection from the onslaughts of winter, the fire was necessary for self-protection of the primitive man against wild animals that roamed here and there.

During the *Magh Bihu*, the bonfire is a conspicuous feature of the rural landscape; after the harvest is collected, the earth is empty and barren, and the bonfires lend colour to this bleak landscape. It announces a lissome note of fulfilment in the life of the peasant, who collects harvest, and, ends the season of labour in the fields. The later Aryan migrants added elements of devotional ritualism to this non-Aryan festival of innocent joy and nature with the thin mists of winter weaving a network across its brown face.

The *Kati Bihu* is the most insignificant of the three nature-festivals in point of colour and ceremony. It synchronizes with the time when the green shoots put forth the initial blossoms in the fields. Light *i.e.* earthen lamps, are burnt on the occasion at the foot of a *tulsi* plant, and thus the goddess of prosperity is propitiated.

During the festival of *Kati Bihu*, the household of the family sing the following song at the altar of "Tulsi Plant":

*Hey Ram Ram Ram Tulashin Nisha Saha Pawhu chare
Toaki Dekhi Ram-Chandnoi sar Dhenu Maare. Hey Ram Hey
Ram Hey Ram.*

The *Bohag Bihu*, most popular and colourful of the three, is celebrated with the advent of the Assamese new year which synchronizes with mid-April, when nature,

like a young woman, open into light, beauty and colour.

Boi Sagu : Boi Sagu is the spring time festival observed by the Boro-Kachari tribals of lower Assam. Sindney Endle an English Missionary described the festival:

"Among the Darrang Kacharis this festival lasts for seven days, during which little or no work is done, the whole period being given up to merrymaking, dancing, feasting, etc. As is the practice among their Hindu neighbours, on the opening day all cattle are taken to the nearest river or tank, and there formally bathed, and afterwards sprinkled with a preparation compounded of rice-beer, tomatoes [aubergine], and turmeric. The horns are smeared with oil, ashes, and pounded rice flour are applied in patches to the bodies of the cattle. This duty discharged, the people abandon themselves to sheer merriment, the younger folk especially giving themselves to dancing, singing, etc. The verses sung at these festivals seem for the most part to be little better than mere meaningless jingle-jangle rhymes, made up on the spur of the moment, though occasionally some of them give an insight into the peculiar humour of the Kachari character and temperament".

Chomangnan : Chomangnan is the festival observed among the people of Karbi tribe, who dwell mostly in the Karbi Anglong district. Though influenced by Hinduism and they believe in a Supreme Being, they are happy with their traditional dress, dance, music, and folklore. Their traditional gods and goddesses, are more significant than Hindu gods and goddesses but the amusing fact is that they have their own version of the Ramayana story, known as *Sabin Alun*, a sort of folk epic.

Deul Fair—Hajo : Hajo is well-known for its temple of Hayagriva-Madhava, situated on a hillock as well as for Poamakka, another hillock on which is situated the *dargah* of Ghiasuddin Auliya. The town is about 20 kms. to the north-west of Guwahati. Though the presiding deity of the Hajo temple is the 'Horse-necked' Madhava or Vishnu, the deul festival is known as Govinda Deul. The stone idol of Madhava is not possible to move and another idol, known as movable Madhava, is brought out to the Daula-griha, a brick temple, where the deity stays for three days. Beginning from the full-moon night of Phagun the usual rituals, including Meshadaha or Deul Fair—Hajo : Hajo is well-known for its temple of Hayagriva-Madhava, situated on a hillock as well as for Poamakka, another hillock on which is situated the *dargah* of Ghiasuddin Auliya. The town is

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Deul Festival : The Deul of Barpeta is associated with Krishna or Vishnu worship and the Pan-Indian Holi has been Vaishnavised here, but the many Deul festivals that are popular in Darrang and eastern Kamrup, though associated with a core of Vishnu worship, have grown out of the Bhatheli type of festivals where the bamboo plays a role. The Deul of Darrang has been considered to be a transformation of Bhatheli, made popular because of the patronage of the local kings. The amusing fact is that it is performed in some villages or other every day of the month of Bohag. Sometimes there is first the worship of Vishnu with homa, then only the throne of God is taken out to the Bhatheli ground. Deul is basically a puja and a fair held in the spring.

Deuri Bisu : The Deuris are the tribals who dwell in Lakhimpur district of Assam. Like other Assamees they also observe Bisu festival. But their Bisu (Bihu) does not necessarily synchronize with the Visuva Samkranti: it starts on a Wednesday. These people once ruled in the Sadiya area on the north bank of the Brahmaputra and their state was Kundil (Kundin), which is recalled in their songs. Though excitement of the festival starts in Chot or Chaitra, the formal ceremony begins only when prayers are offered to Kundi-Mama or Hara-Gauri at the Gosanial or shrine. They sacrifice fowls and swine to Kundi-Mama. The dance and music starts at the shrine.

Their songs recall their days in Kundil or Sadiya, somewhat like this: On the Sadiya kingdom there are four temples of our goddess. We bow to them. The first rays of the sun fall in Sadiya. It is a pleasant and level

land. There are various kinds of trees and shrubs there. Rukmini, daughter of king Bhishmaka was born there. Krishna came and carried off Rukmini.....

Doul Festival : Doul is the Assamees name of popular festival Holi. In fact, Holi in Assam has undergone a transformation, in particular in Vaishnavite centres. The Holi festival at Barpeta, one of the most important of centre, covers several days and attracts a lot of people. It is called Doul, continues from three to five days and only the last day is Holi proper, also known there as Phakua. The idol of Sri Krishna is brought out of the *Keertan-ghar* or large chapel on the first day amidst hymn-singing, ululation, bursting of crackers and playing of drums and cymbals. In the evening the Gosain (idol) is taken seven times round a *Bhela-ghar* or specially prepared fire. This *Bhela-ghar* is normally a feature of the winter festival Magh Bihu (about this later). After this the Gosain is placed on the Doul, a pyramid like mound with steps. This is followed by theatrical performances. The next day people gather from all parts and pay homage to the Gosain with coloured and perfumed powder, sandal, etc. The visitors are given shelter and food by local residents of Barpeta and this act is taken as an act of merit.

Durga Puja Festival : The Durga Puja is an autumnal festival of great joy and gay abandon; it is abundantly rich in its festival values and colourful activities.

The Puja held in September-October creates an ideal atmosphere for celebrations. The Puja brings hopes and faith to the life of the people. It does not matter how they take it.

Ghiyasuddin Auliya Urs : Urs at the dargah of Poamakka at Hajo celebrates the death anniversary of the Sufi saint Ghiyasuddin Auliya.

This Urs is one of the most important festivals for the Muslims of Assam. Pilgrims from every part of India gather at the shrine at the time of the Urs. The festival begins from the first day of Magh (January-February) and continues up to the month of Bohag. The full-moon day in the month of Magh is known as Purna Urs.

Guru Teg Bahadur Birth Day : Assam is more concerned with the commemoration of the birthday of the ninth Sikh guru Teg Bahadur. When Raja Ramsimha was despatched by Emperor Aurangzeb to conquer Assam the Mughal general met Teg Bahadur at Dhaka in Bengal and persuaded him to accompany the former. The large army as well as the guru reached Dhubri (in western Assam) in February, 1669. There was

a tradition that even Guru Nanak had visited Dhubri. In order to keep the memory of Nanak alive Teg Bahadur requested the soldiers of Ramsimha to carry a shieldful of earth each to a place and raise there a mound, a Gurdwara was built there and many Sikhs following Ramsimha stopped at Dhubri and did not return home. The Gurudwara Teg Bahadur Sahibji reminds one of a moment in Assam's history.

Dhubri remains a sacred spot for Sikhs and annually Guru Teg Bahadur is remembered with reverence and associated with meetings and prayers. Some thousands of Sikhs have also settled near Chaparmukh in the Nagaon district. These people live like the usual Assamese peasants, accepting local occupations, local food-habits and local dresses. They have, of course, retained their traditional faith and remember their Gurus.

It is said that Teg Bahadur made an attempt to bring about peace between the government of Assam and Ramsimha, but there had to be a series of naval battles of Saraighat near Guwahati. The guru was ruthlessly tortured to death by Aurangzeb a few years after his return from Assam.

Kati Bihu Festival : Kati Bihu, held in the autumn, (October-November) is a festival of agricultural significance. It has no public significance. In the family yard a light is put at the foot of the Tulasi plant and women and children sing:

Ligang : Ligang is the springtime festival observed by the Mising Tribals of Assam. The Misings, formerly known as Miris and ethnically akin to the Adis of Arunachal Pradesh, are found along the banks of the Subansiri, the Bharali and the Brahmaputra. They have their springtime seed-sowing ceremony known as Ali-ai-ligang, or Ligang for short. Mising starts their cultivations during the winter, on the fertile sandbanks thrown up by the rivers, but they observe the Ligang festival in the first week of Phagun, several weeks before Bohag Bihu. They start on a Wednesday, associated with the goddess of Rice and considered to be auspicious. The festival includes traditional singing and dancing.

Magh Bihu or Maghar Domahi Festival : Magh Bihu is the post-harvest winter festival, held in the month of Magh (January-February). Celebrated in lower Assam the term Bihu is not that popular as the term Domahi (Damhi), meaning the junction of two months. So it is Maghar Domahi in Lower Assam and it is the festival of feasting. If Bohag Bihu, is described as Rangali

Bihu or the Cheering Bihu, Magh Bihu is known as Bhogali Bihu or the Bihu of Enjoyment.

Magh Sainjra or Magh Bihu : Magh Sainjra festival which is popularly known as Magh Bihu is the main festival of the Kachari tribals settled in the North Cachar Hill district. The Kachari tribals are known as Dimasas.

Moho-Ho : Moho-ho is a folk festival popular in Lower Assam. This festival is communally named—the mosquito driving festival.

It is observed in the evening of the full-moon in Aghon (October). Mosquitoes are a pest in humid Assam and bands of cowherds, tribal or non-tribal, take sticks in hands and start visiting households in order to ceremonially drive away the insects.

The Pasati or Paseti : The Pasati is a major festival of Khatara Satra. It was a domestic function performed for the welfare of a son on the fifth day of his birth and a festival associated with God Krishna. On this day, the mother has a cleansing bath, smears the baby with turmeric-mixed water and allows it to be held by other women. On this day astrological calculations are made about the future of the child and a name given to it. **Womenfolk** The Pasati or Paseti : The Pasati is a major festival of Khatara Satra. It was a domestic function performed for the welfare of a son on the fifth day of his birth and a festival associated with God Krishna. On this day, the mother has a cleansing bath, smears the baby with turmeric-mixed water and allows it to be held by other women. On this day astrological calculations are made about the future of the child and a name given to it.

The cowherd King Nanda performed the Pasati or fifth day rites for the welfare of Krishna without the knowledge of King Kamsa, who wanted to slay any child born to his sister Yasoda.

Rabha Baikhu : The Rabha is a tribe dwelling mostly in the Gopalpur district and south-west of Assam. Rabhas have retained their tribal traditions and observed their festivals.

Baikhu is main springtime festival which is held in the month of Jeth (May-June). Preparation is made for the festival of Baikhu after the first showers have fallen for the welfare of children and crops. Rabhas also have a system of bathing the cattle like Bohag Bihu and also pray for their ancestors.

Rasa Mela Festival : Rasa Mela festival is quite popular amongst the Vaishnavites in Assam. The ritualistic part is not so important as the exhibition of

clay figures illustrating the various episodes in the life of Krishna. Sometimes figures depicting current life are also added. This is an inducement to artistic activity.

At Nalbari, in Lower Assam arrangements are also made for theatrical performances. The festival goes on for several days and there are thousands of visitors.

Sankardeva Festival : The birth and death anniversaries of Sankardeva guru are occasions for festivals, either localized or of a public character. The festivals in honour of Sankardeva are celebrated with meetings, processions and cultural functions. Vaishnavism is the dominant religion of Assam and the state is dotted with Satras or Vaisnavite establishments. These Satras, at least the larger ones, have retained the tradition of dance, music and drama initiated as a means of propaganda by Sankardeva and his associates in the fifteenth-sixteenth century.

Sivaratri Fair : The Sivaratri fair at Guwahati is associated with the Siva temple on Umanand, an island on the Brahmaputra, close to the city, while the one at Sibsagar is held by the Muktinath temple on the bank of the large tank, originally known as Sivasagar, *sagar* being an outsize tank.

Sivaratri occasions a few fairs in certain places of Assam, for instance, at Tezpur, Dhubri, Sibsagar and near Dhekiajuli at Singari.

Suknanni Oja Pali : The word *Suknanni* is said to be a contraction of the name Sukavi Narayandev who is the author of a *Padma-Puran* in Assamese, dealing with the tussle between the Saiva merchant Chando or Suknanni Oja Pali : The word *Suknanni* is said to be a contraction of the name Sukavi Narayandev who is the author of a *Padma-Puran* in Assamese, dealing with the tussle between the Saiva merchant Chando or Chandradhar and the Snake goddess Manasa or Padma. Many people in the Darrang, Kamrup and Goalpara districts observe Puja, some as an annual family affair and others as a public festival, usually in the rainy season, not necessarily on the Naga-Panchami day as in Gujarat. Manasa puja is popularly known as Mare or Marai puja. Marai puja continues for three or more days, but a shorter version of just one or two days known as Rang Puja. The Suknanni type of Oja is closely associated with the worship of the Snake goddess. Chandradhar and the Snake goddess Manasa or Padma. Many people in the Darrang, Kamrup and Goalpara districts observe Puja, some as an annual family affair and others as a public festival, usually in the rainy season, not necessarily on the Naga-Panchami

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Tiwa Jon-Bil Fair : The people of Marigaon district, in the central part of Assam, organize certain fairs in the spring season. Most of these have a Vaishnavite colour, the idol of God being brought out to an open place, there being music of a religious nature, all accompanied, of course, by merriment and a market of local produce. Such a fair is a one day affair. But there is a larger Mela of the Tiwas (Lalungs) known as the Jon-bil fair, which follows Magh Bihu and is held on the first Friday after the Uruka or eve of Magh Bihu. It is held near a marshy lake known as Jon-bil and not far from Jagiroad. It lasts for two or three days. The Gobha Raja, the most respected citizen of the area, and the scion of an old ruling family, arrives with his officials and under his supervision there is communal fishing in the lake. At the same time contributions are raised for the management of the ensuing fair. The Raja is offered a share of the fish caught.

Tusu Puja : Tusu Puja is the festival observed by the Tea Garden labourers in Assam. Since the tea plantation occupies an important place in the Assam agriculture, they have been in Assam for about a century and a half and have accepted this land as their own. *Kols*, *Mundas*, *Kharias*, *Santals* and other groups were included into the gardens by agents of the Sahibs to work as labourers. Their life was hard and many of them died of disease and neglect. Things are much better now and some of the youths have come up with the aid of education.

The conglomeration of people have retained their old festivals like Sarhul, Karam Puja, Tusu Puja, at the same time adopting also some local beliefs and customs. Some of the pan-Indian festivals like Holi, Diwali, Durga Puja, and even Manasa Puja popular in western Assam, they do not ignore. Like the Assamese, the garden labourers observe Magh Bihu by setting fire to the *meji* or Bhelaghar and eating cakes, *chira*, curds, etc. This Magh Bihu coincides with their Tusu Parab. Tusu is identified with goddesses like Kali, Sita, Durga, and even Savitri who managed to get back her husband from the god of death.

Abbreviations

BCM	: Billion Cubic Meter	NH	: National Highway
C	: Flood Control	O.G.	: Outgrowth
C.D. Block	: Community Development Block	PG	: Gravity
CB	: Buttress	R	: Purposes
ER	: Rockfill	S	: Water Supply Recreational
G.P	: Gram Panchayat	SC	: Scheduled Caste
GDP	: Gross Domestic Product	SH	: State Highway
H	: Hydro-electric	Sqs. Kms	: Square Kilometers
HAM	: Hectare Meter	ST	: Scheduled Tribes
HQ	: Headquarters	TE	: Earth
I	: Irrigation	UC	: Under Construction
L	: Uncontrolled Spillway	UE	: Universalisation of Elementary Education
MCM	: Million Cubic Meter	VA	: Arch
MM	: Millimeter	V	: Controlled Spillway
MV	: Multi Arch	WRP	: Work Participation Rate
N	: Navigation		
NA	: Not Available		