

CHAPTER - II

Profile of the Study Area Goalpara District of Assam

**LIVELIHOOD SUSTAINABILITY OF RURAL WOMEN THROUGH
LIVESTOCK ENTERPRISES - AN ANALYTICAL STUDY IN
GOALPARA DISTRICT OF ASSAM**

CHAPTER- II

PROFILE OF THE STUDY AREA GOALPARA DISTRICT OF ASSAM

2.1. STUDY AREA: GOALPARA DISTRICT OF ASSAM

The present Goalpara district is situated in the western part of Assam where the mighty Brahmaputra following all along thorough its northern bordering from east to west while the southern part is surrounded by the foot hills of Meghalaya. In the eastern side, there is Kamrup district and Dhubri district its west.

2.2. HISTORICAL BACKGROUND OF GOALPARA DISTRICT

Goalpara district is endowed with vast natural resources, natural beauty and archeological treasures for attraction of tourist. About the name of Goalpara, various versions could be recorded. Many scholars opened that the name is associated with the term *Gwali* or Goal meaning 'Milkmen'. It could be known the during the reign of the Devakings of Assam, was under the administration of a Deputy named, Iswara Ghosha who influenced by Budhism became over generous to his subject granted a plot of land to a Brahmin of the then *Gwalitippika* district (which presumably included a portion of Goalpara district. There is a belief that the name, Goalpara is probably derived from *Gowalitippika* which literally means *Gwali* village, he milkmen's village (*Census of India 1961*).

Another version also believed that many Goals (milkmen) who settled in the riverine areas near to the confluence of the Manas river with the Brahmaputra settled with their cattle on the *char* areas and a colony of milkmen was popularly known as *Goaltuli*. It is said that the name Goalpara is a corrupt form of the term *Goaltuli*. However, the district was named after the present Goalpara town which was the first head quarter of the district (*Goalpara district Gazettiers, Guwahati, Assam, 1979*).

The ancient history of Goalpara was the History of *Kamrupa* and in the pre-history time, the Goalpara district was an integral part of the once extensive kingdom of *pragjotisha* mentioned in the *Ramayana* and the *Mahabharata*.

Looking back to the early history of Goalpara, no authentic and systematic records could be available with respect to the period of the past, if the erstwhile Goalpara was a separate political entity under its own rulers. However, the history of the kingdom, presently from about 12th century BC and is by and large a matter of fragmented tradition subsequently it was included under the *Kamata* kingdom and then was annexed with under the partner of Koch kingdom.

Bhuyan (1965) recorded that in 1658, the Ahoms occupied Goalpara and remained under their control for three years but were compelled to retreat before Mirjumla's Army and from that time onwards the entire erstwhile Goalpara district formed a part of the Muslim dominions with the rest of Bengal till it was ended to the British Administration in 1765.

When Assam was ceded to the British in 1826, Goalpara was annexed to the Assam Valley Division and the administration was placed under the hands of the commissioner and judicial commissioner of Assam. In 1905 after partition of Bengal it became the part of Eastern Bengal and finally in 1912, the erstwhile Goalpara district was permanently transferred to Assam.

In the occupied areas, the Mughals introduced settlements and revenue system and during that period *Zemindary* system took root and continued till the abolition of *Zemindary* system in 1957 (Assam State Acquisition of Zamindaris Act, 1951). The system was prevailing in the erstwhile Goalpara district and it had a far-reaching impact on the Socio-economic and cultural life of the inhabitants of this western part of Assam.

On the first July, 1983 two districts were split from Goalpara: Dhubri and Kokrajhar. On the 29th Sept/1989 Bongaigaon district was created from parts of Goalpara and Kokrajhar.

2.3. GEOGRAPHICAL FEATURES AND AGRO-ECOLOGY OF GOALPARA DISTRICT

The erstwhile Goalpara district with the district head quarter at Dhubri was divided to create the present districts, namely Goalpara, Dhubri, Kokrajhar, Bongaigaon,

Chirang and South Salmara Mankachar. The head quarter of the present Goalpara district is connected from the state capital by the NH-37 and NF Railways.

The Geographical area of the district is 1824 sq km. The geographical location is in between latitude 25°53'-26°30' North and longitude 90°7'-91°5' east. The topography of the district is uneven partly by the hilly areas boarding the areas of Meghalaya and the remaining areas are plains. The district lies in the lower Brahmaputra valley agro-climate zone of Assam. The main rivers of the district are Dudhnoi, Krishnai, Jinary and Jinjiram. The areas near river Brahmaputra are low lying which become flood affected during rainy season. The climate of the district is humid and subtropical. The average temperature ranges from 33°C during July to august and 7°C during winter and minimum 7°C in winter. The relative humidity ranges from 78 percent to 95 percent (*Source: Official website of Goalpara district, 2016 and PLP NABARD, Goalpara district 2016-17.*)

The average rainfall is 2169 mm and number of rainy days is 95/year. The highest rainfall was recorded 420 mm in the year 2002. About 80 percent rainfall is due to south west monsoon.

The soil of the district is mainly clay loam to sandy loam in the riverine areas and in the hilly areas are mostly red and laterite soils is available. The P^H of the soil ranges from 6-7. The district experiences flood of moderate to severe intensity during monsoon. Low laying areas of the river Brahmaputra and its tributaries and also the beels are highly prone to flood. Out of total 1824 sq. km area of the district 958.14 sq.km areas are flood affected. Out of the total 32, 538 hectares of crop area, 18, 269 hectares are affected by flood.

While 36,503 hectares (20 percent) area of the district is under forest coverage, the net crop area is 83,502 hectares (45.76 percent) is crop area and barren and uncultivable land is 32,819 hectares (17.98 percent). The irrigated agricultural land is only 36.44 percent. Out of the total gross crop area of 1,39,448 hectares (76.42 percent), 18.269 hactre are flood affected. The cropping intensity is 167 percent.

Map -1. Political Map of Goalpara District



(Source: Department of Agriculture, Govt. of Assam, Goalpara)

2.4. ADMINISTRATIVE FEATURE

The district is having two subdivisions namely, Goalpara and Lakhipur and Goalpara is the district head quarter and subdivision head quarter. It has five revenue areas, eight development blocks, eight Anchalik Panchayats, eighty-one Gram Panchayats, one Zilla Parishad and 829 nos of villages. Out of which there are 761 inhabited villages *(Source: Official website of Goalpara district, 2016 and PLP NABARD, Goalpara district 2016-17).*

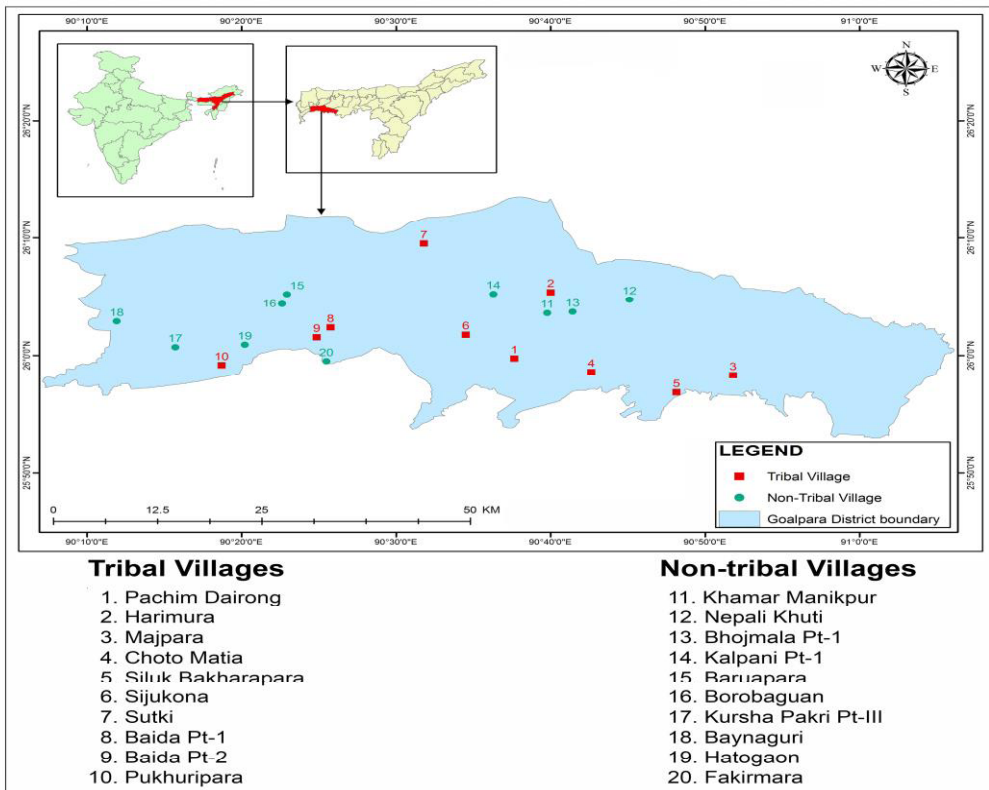
Under the 6th schedule of the constitution of India for the welfare of the Rabha tribes, Rabha Hasong Autonomous council was created in the district. With the inclusion of the areas predominantly with Rabha tribe.

Map -2. Map of Goalpara District showing Development Blocks



(Source: Department of Agriculture, Govt. of Assam, Goalpara)

Map -3. Map of Goalpara District showing tribal and non-tribal villages



(Source: Aaranyak, Beltola Guwahati)

2.5. DEMOGRAPHIC PATTERN OF GOALPARA DISTRICT

As per the human population census report (2011) in the country, the total population is 1008183 as per the 2011 census of which 870121 (86.31%) in rural areas and 138062 (13.69%) in urban areas, the total literate people 563577 (67.37%) out of which male constituted 304302 (71.46%) and female 259275 (63.13%). The population density per square km in 553 out of the total schedule caste population 45094 (4.47%) male 22999 (51%) and female 22095 (49%). White out of the total tribal population 231570 (22.97%) male 116013 (50.10%) and female 115557 (49.90%).

In accordance with the schedule castes and schedule tribes under (Amendment Act, 1976), there are 29 schedule tribes are in Assam. Excluding the autonomous districts, there are 14 schedule tribes in the state of Assam. While in the autonomous districts, 15 tribal groups out of which 37 nos of kuki sub-tribes are there. The tribal peoples in Goalpara districts are mainly the Rabhas, the Bodos, the Hajongs and the Garos.

2.6. DEMOGRAPHY OF ASSAM

As per the human population census report 2011, the total population of the state is 31205576 numbers of which 159 lakhs are male and 152 lakhs are female which expresses a decadal growth rate of 16.33 percent while national average decadal growth rate was 17.64 percent during the period between 2001-2011. Further out of total population 86 percent live in rural areas while more 14 percent live in the urban areas. The density of population in the state is 382 nos. per sq.km which is observed to be higher than the national average of 382 nos. per sq. km. On the other hand, sex ratio in the state is 959 female per 1000 male, which is higher than the national average of 940 per 1000 males. The literacy rate of the state is 73.18 percent which was close to national average of 74.04 percent. The percentage of schedule tribe population was 12.4 percent and that of schedule caste population was 7.12 percent.

2.7 ECONOMY OF GOALPARA DISTRICT

The economy of this district is predominantly agriculture based. and more than 80 percent of the population earn their livelihood from agriculture and allied sectors like

Animal Husbandry practices, Fisheries, Horticulture, Sericulture farming and other farming system approaches. 18.34 percent of the population is directly engaged in agriculture related activities as cultivator (12.22 percent) and as agricultural labourers 6.12 percent and the farmers are basically small holders (*Source: Annual Credit Plan, 2019-20, Goalpara District*).

Agro-forestry is the unique practice in the district. The major cash crops are arecanut and banana. Rice, jute, green gram, black gram wheat are the major agricultural produce, where banana, jackfruits, arecanut and rabi vegetables are the horticultural produces. Arecanut orchard and Rubber orchard are practiced in many places of the district.

Livestock rearing and poultry farming are the major source of income and livelihood of the small holders and almost every rural house keep livestock and poultry as subsidiary source of income. Besides under different govt., sponsored schemes like dairy entrepreneurship development schemes of NABARD, Piggery and poultry farming scheme under NABARD, National Livestock Mission, National Rural Livelihood mission, State rural livelihood mission, Kisan credit cards (KCC) and also under various financial institution and banks and agencies, unemployment youth and also other agriculture practices. women had started farming practices on livestock and poultry as commercial venture. In the district many SHG, Joint liability groups of women are also started livestock and poultry enterprises commercially. Earlier from 2003 also through the SGSY scheme women SHGs and JLGs sponsored through banks, NABARDs and other financial institutions have shown excellent participation and generated income through livestock and poultry farming, along with other agricultural activities. Besides these priority sectors in agriculture and allied activities the non-farm sectors in different areas have also contributed largely to upgrade the economy of the district. The contribution of the district to the GDP is 6,450 per capita.

2.8. IDENTIFICATION OF AGRO ECO-SITUATIONS (AES)

With a view to addressing the addressing problems of the farming community of district especially for the resource rich and resource poor farmers and other disadvantage groups, strategic research and extension plans (SREP) of the district was prepared on the

year 2006 and by applying the modalities of in the SREP, besides considering the problems and operation opportunities of difference farming system and farming system approaches prevailing in the district.

Based on the soil type rainfall, topography and farming system, the district has been divided into five different Agro ecological situations for extending the productions and productivity through different farming system of Agriculture and allied activities.

The five identified agro eco-situation (AES) are:

- i. Foot hills old mountain valley alluvial.
- ii. Flood free old riverine alluvial middle plains.
- iii. Flood prone recent riverine alluvial plains
- iv. Hill and Hillocks.
- v. Char lands.

(Source: SREP, ATMA Goalpara district, 2006)

2.9. Land utilization and irrigation facilities :

The total land area utilized is reported the 182400 hacter. The total area not available for cultivation is 22221 hactre while permanent pasture and grazing land is 3576 hactre, and net sown area is 7882 hactre. The total gross cropped area and area cultivated more than once are 106342 hactre and 27520 hactre respectively. Cropping intensity (GCA/NSA) of the utilized land for cultivation is 146 percent. *(Source: PLP, NABARD Goalpara District 2019-20)*

2.10. Village level Infrastructures related to health and sanitation :

Out of 706 villages electrified, a total of 150 villages are having agriculture power supply. A Total no of villages 675 and 375 are having post offices and banking facilities. As per available reports in the district there are 660 villages having primary schools, 699 villages having portable water supply and 375 villages are connected with paved approach roads.

In connection with health care facilities there are 17 nos of PHE, 192 nos of primary health sub center, 22 dispensaries and 2250 nos of Anganwadi centers are in the district. *(Source: PLP, NABARD Goalpara District 2016-17 and 2019-20)*

2.11. INFRASTRUCTURES AND SUPPORT SERVICES IN AGRICULTURE, STORAGE FACILITIES, TRANSPORT AND MARKETING

In the district there are 80 nos of agro service centers and 03 soil testing centers, 31 nos of plantation nurseries, 80 nos of Farmers Club and 01 no of Krishi Vigyan Kendra (KVK) for extension of agriculture related technical services.

A total length of 267 kilometer of pucca road and 45-kilometer length of railway line are presently available in the district for transportation facilities. In connection with the facilities for agricultural marketing 22 nos. of rural/urban/mandi/hatt, 15 nos. of Godown, 01 no of cold storage with cold storage capacity 5000Mt are available in the district. *(Source: PLP, NABARD Goalpara District 2016-17)*

2.12. HOUSEHOLD, HOUSEHOLD AMENITIES

Out of total households 146000 nos. a total of 133000 rural households and 36000 BPL households respectively are available in the district.

As per the available sources, 32000 nos. of brick households/ concrete households/ stone households, 75000 households are having the sources of drinking water facilities, while 52500 households are having access to banking facilities. *(Source: PLP, NABARD Goalpara District 2019-20)*

2.13. WORKERS PROFILE

In the district, out of a total 128000 nos. of total cultivators, 85000 nos. are small/ marginal farmers, 37000 agricultural laborers, 7000 nos. are engaged in household industries, 2000 nos. are engaged in agricultural allied activities. While the figure of other workers are recorded to be 23000 nos. *(Source: PLP, NABARD Goalpara District 2019-20)*.

2.14. AGRO PROCESSING UNIT, SERICULTURE AND FISHERIES SECTORS

There are 18 nos. of food processing unit, 03 nos. of fruit processing unit, 10 nos. of spices unit and 01 no of animal food processing unit are operating in this district.

Sericulture activity is undertaken by rural people since the historical days in the district and the activity has been considered as part of socio-culture life of Assamese society. Eri, Muga and Mulberry silk have been widely used by the people of Assam and North Eastern States and its popularity has also gained momentum within and outside the country for its uniqueness of the products. The sericulture activity is being taken up by the rural people as a source of earning additional income besides fulfilling their domestic consumption.

Sericulture is an important activity in the district. The activity provides additional income to a large number of tribal and indigenous population in the district. As per the district sericulture department, there are 5815 Eri rearers, 2135 Muga rears and 530 numbers of Mulberry rears in the district.

While with respect to fisheries Goalpara district is endowed with vast and diverse fisheries resources. There are 13360 nos. ponds/tanks both private with culture and private without culture. There are 07 nos. of Govt. owned tanks/ponds and 140 nos. of community tanks, 19 nos. of registered rivers, 43 nos. of unregistered bell and 07 nos. of registered bells are in the districts. *(Source: PLP, NABARD Goalpara District 2016-17)*

2.15. EXTENSION REFORMS IN AGRICULTURE AND ALLIED SECTORS

Agriculture Technology management Agency (ATMA) is a model of Extension Services being implemented in the districts to bring reforms in agricultures extension for raising production and productivity of different commodities. Besides the institutional infrastructure facilities of different allied sectorial departments though linkage with the banks and other financial institutions have provided loans and credit facilities under NABAARD, SGSY and KCC Schemes. Many Self-Help Groups (SHG) and Joint Liability Groups (JLG) are also formed, especially women groups sponsoring key economic activities on agriculture, animal husbandry, fishery and also other non-farm sector related activities.

To establish integrate and promotion of processing of horticulture products, technology mission for integrated development of Horticulture also launched National Food Security Mission (NFSM), a 100 percent Central Govt. sponsored scheme having its three components, Govt. of India had identified this district for increasing production potentialities, creation of employment opportunities and increase farm level economy. The food security mission aims to have physical social and economic access to sufficient, safe and nutritious foods to much the dietary needs and food preferences for an active and healthy life in the district along with the rest of the country.

2.16. INFRASTRUCTURES AND SUPPORT SERVICES IN LIVESTOCK SECTOR

Livestock sector in the district is one of the major components of farming system for economic development and generation of employment in the district of Goalpara. Huge potentialities are laying for sustainable rural livelihood from livestock enterprises with the available resources and support services.

Govt. infrastructure facilities and technical guidance are provided for extending health care facilities, increase of production and reproduction from livestock resources, marketing of livestock products and employment opportunities both in rural and urban areas of the district. However, in the rural areas enormous scope and potentialities are observed for creation of employment opportunities among the unemployed youth

Departmental infrastructures facilities include 01 no veterinary hospital, 15 nos. state veterinary dispensaries, 14 nos. First Aid centers, 03 nos. sub centers, 01 district poultry farm, 01no pig breeding farm, 01 no regional fodder seed production farm, 01 no disease diagnostic laboratory and 11 nos. of artificial insemination center (*Source: AH & Vety. Deptt. Govt. of Assam, Goalpara, 2015*).

2.17. LIVESTOCK RESOURCES AND LIVESTOCK PRODUCTS IN THE DISTRICT

Livestock resources in the district are both indigenious and cross breed population of animals. Small livestock and poultry populations in the district are major source of nutrition and food security and also earning sources of rural families,

especially for the women. As per the 20th livestock census report of 2019, *Lakhimi* and CB cattle population 3,26,054 nos., buffaloes (*Luit* and other breeds) 8,516 nos, indigenous sheep 22,265 nos, goat 98,524 nos, and pigs (Indigenous and Crossbred) 48,804 nos, poultry population in both hybrid commercial and desi poultry in the 19th livestock census (2012) were 9,93,207 nos. and reports of 20th livestock census (2019) in respect of poultry are not available.

From the available reports of A H & Vety. Dept. Govt. of Assam (2017-18), total milk, meat and egg production in the district were recorded 194.92 lakhs liters, 1484.83 tones and 175.68 lakh nos. respectively indicating a major share of protein food supplement in the diet of the inhabitants of the district and also having the scope for earning income, particularly for the under privileged families in the district.

In our discussion, besides giving brief description of the district, a brief picture of agriculture and related areas with special emphasis on livestock sector were given as the research topic is on the sustainable livelihood of rural women through livestock enterprises in Goalpara district. For conducting studies on livestock sectors and participation of farming communities in this sector, side by side an over view of interdisciplinary sectoral involvement like agriculture and other related developmental areas are generally involved for making comparative studies and drawing conclusion. Therefore, and overview in the above areas have been brought in the study.