

## **“Problems of Rural Farmer: A Case Study Based on the Lowphulabori Village under the Raha Block Development Area of Nagaon District, Assam”**

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**Abstract:** Rural farmers account for the greater part of the population of any developing country such as India. Government of the developing countries have major responsibility for ensuring that there is adequate rural development in their various communities and local governments which would lead to effective and efficient agricultural system, that will not only supply food and animal protein but also foster the utilization of natural resources in a sustainable manner. When the rural farmers lack access to knowledge and information that would help them achieve maximum agricultural yield, they will not only grope in the dark but will be driven to the urban centers in search of formal employment.

In Assam over 70 percent of the state's population relies on agriculture as farmers, as agricultural labours or both for their livelihood. In terms of the state domestic product (SDP), the agriculture sector contributed over 19 per cent of the state income in 2010-11. We all know that majority of the people of Assam live in villages as farmer. Therefore, it is necessary to find out the problems of rural farmers and to solve their problems, like poverty, lack of knowledge about modern technology, illiteracy, lack of knowledge about market demandable agricultural commodities, irrigation system, flood, drought etc. The present study attempts to investigate the problems of rural farmers of the study area. For this both primary and secondary data have been used. Thirty (30) S.T. villagers from Lawphulabori village were the sample of the study and they were selected through random sampling method from the study area. For collecting data, a self prepared tool/questionnaire and interview was used by investigators and analysis the data. The finding of the study reveals that there are so many problems among the rural farmers of the Lowphulabori village.

**Key words:** Rural farmers, developing country, problems of rural farmer, Lowphulabori village, S.T. people.

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### **I. Introduction**

Rural farmer or farmers are those who live in rural areas and fully depend on agriculture and its allied activities for their survival. But the Problems of rural farmer are a major barrier in economic development of a rural economy of a country like India where around 85 per cent people are lived in rural sector. Therefore governments of developing countries have a major responsibility of ensuring that there is adequate rural development in their various communities and local governments which would lead to effective and efficient agricultural system that will not supply food and animal protein but also foster the utilization of natural resources in a sustainable manner (CGIAR, 1995). When the rural farmer lack access to knowledge and information that would help them achieve maximum agricultural yield, they are not only grope in dark but are driven to the urban centers in search of formal employment, as the only option for survival (Munyua, 2000; Blait, 1996) pointed out that the least expensive input for improved rural agricultural development is adequate access to knowledge and information in areas of new agricultural technology, early warning systems( drought, pests, diseases etc), improved seedlings, fertilizer, credit market prices etc. There have been short-comings of traditional print and library methods (Van and Fortier, 2000) of providing such agricultural information to rural farmers who are generally illiterate and relatively remote from sources of information.

In Assam around 60% of the state's population relies on agriculture as farmers or as agricultural labour. But almost all the farmers faces many problems like poverty, lack of knowledge about modern technology, illiteracy etc. In my study area i.e; Lowphulabori village under the Raha Block Development Area of Nagaon District of Assam, agricultural labours is pertaining to  $\frac{3}{4}$  of the total labour force. Agricultural labour and farmers in this area still remain serfdom or slavery system. Their income, standard of living, social status is very low. Increase the number of rural farmer in this study area due to increasing the size population, decline of cottage and village industries, evictions of small farmers, uneconomic holdings, growing indebtedness, deforestation, growth of capitalist farming etc. As a result the farmer of this area faces many problems such as poverty, lack of knowledge, about modern technology, lack of knowledge about market demandable agricultural commodities, irrigation system flood, drought etc.

### **1.1 Objectives**

- (1) To know the income and productivity of the farmers.
- (2) To know the status of farm mechanisation in the surveyed villages.
- (3) To know the effect of family size and educational status of the rural farmers.
- (4) Impact of natural hazard on rural farmers' productivity.

## **II. Methodology**

The present study is basically an empirical one where both primary and secondary data have been used. For primary data, Thirty (30) farmers were randomly selected from the surveyed village. For collecting data, two forms of instruments (questionnaire and interview schedule) were used. A part of the questionnaire required the rural farmer's respondents to supply the necessary information and other pertaining to their socio-economic characteristics. Section B part of the questionnaire contained the core questions that were raised for study. Each research question raised for the study had specific question under it. For secondary data, various topic related books, internet, research publication, news papers etc. are used.

## **III. Rationale Of The Study**

Rural farmers account for the greater part of the population of any developing country such as India specially Assam. Government of developing countries have major responsibility of ensuring that there is adequate rural development in various communities and also local governments which would lead to effective and efficient agricultural systems that will not only supply food and animal protein but also foster the utilization of natural resources in a sustainable manner (CGIAR, 1995). When the rural farmers lack access to knowledge and information that would not help them achieve maximum agricultural yield. Therefore study about the problems of rural farmer is very important nowadays. Besides, in India, agriculture is the largest sector of economic activity. It provides not only food and raw materials but also employment to a very large proportion of the population. Being a domestic sector, the improvement or changes in the national output depend on the output in agriculture. For the same reason, it has to provide the capital required for its own development and make available surplus for national income.

Besides, population has been increasing at a rapid rate, leading to increase in demand for food and other consumer goods, many of which have an agriculture base. There is a legitimate aspiration in rural areas to improve their standards of living and to share the fruits of development. It highlights the significance of agricultural development as well as the improvements of rural farmer.

Agriculture has a dominant role in the Indian economy contributing nearly 14 percent of the national income, providing employment to about 70 percent of the working population and accounting for a sizeable share of the country's foreign exchange earnings. Agriculture provides the food grains to feed the large population 76.1 crores of this country. Besides it provides fodder for an equally large cattle population. It is also the supplier of raw material to many industries. Thus, the very economic structure of India rests upon agriculture. Therefore, it is necessary to study about the rural farmer's problem of India. In India, agriculture as well as rural farmer also contributes in national income, employment, foreign exchange resources, capital formation, etc.

In Assam a majority of state's population, almost 90 percent of an estimated 33.4 million in 2001, live in rural areas where the mainstay of business is production agriculture. In terms of the domestic production (SPD), the agriculture sector contributed over 40 percent of the state income in 2000-01.

According to the Agricultural Census, 2005-06 there were 27.5 lakh operational holdings in Assam covering an operated area of 30.49 lakh hectares of land compared to 27.1 lakh operational holdings covering an operated area of about 31.1 lakh hectares of land in 2000-01. The average size of land holding per household was only 1.11 hectars during same time compared to an average size of 1.15 hectars in 2000-01.

Assam is far behind in the use of modern agricultural technology to improve its agricultural productivity compared to the rest of the country. For example, the agricultural productivity index for Assam was 201 in 2010-11 compared to 179 in India. Another problem of land fragmentation is the hidden unemployment or underemployment which understates the true employment level in the states.

Assam produces both food and cash crops. The principal food crops produced in the state are rice (paddy), maize, pulses, potato, wheat etc, while the principal cash crops are tea, jute, oilseeds, sugarcane, cotton and tobacco. Although rice is the most impotent and staple crop in Assam, its productivity has not increased only due to the problems of rural farmers. Tea is the most important cash crop in Assam and the state is well known world-wide for its tea. The total land area under tea cultivation was estimated at over 229000 hectars in last decade employing an average of over half-a-million people per day. In addition, a considerable number of Assam's population depends on secondary and tertiary sectors related to the tea industry. However, the exploitation of both precious land and labours by the tea companies, most of which are either foreign-owned or owned by Indian conglomerates is well-documented.

Continuing to rely on the seasonal monsoon for the necessary water for cultivation is the characteristics of farming in Assam. As a result, potential exists for sever crop failure and consequent economic disaster. To avert such possible catastrophe, it will be necessary to equip the state with irrigation facilities as well as to solve the rural farmer.

In the study area i, e; Lawphulabori village under the Raha Block Development area of Nagaon District, is very important to study on agricultural labour problem. The total population of this village is 792 out of which 80 percent population depend on agriculture activities. Growing population, in faster rate in this village creates land problem. In this village 50 percent labour are landless agriculture labour, landless and marginal labour increasing due to growing of population, river erosion, poor economic condition, poverty etc. Government employment policy has no better work in this village, labours in this village are unorganized, and no wage policy implemented in the village, farmers is low social status. Land are concentrated few farmers only, most of holding is less than one hectors, so agricultural labour problems arises in the village, as a result farmers problems are increasing day by day. Therefore it is necessary to study about the problems of farmer’s in this village and give solution of their problems so that they can develop their economic conditions which help in National Income.

#### IV. Condition Of Rural Farmers In The Study Area

The Lowphulabori village is situated under the Raha Block Development of Nagaon districts. It is 12 kms in the North-West direction of Raha town. The total area of the Lowphulabori village is one and half square kilometer. The total population of the village is about 792. In this village 70 percent population are ST (Tiwa) and 30 percent are belonging to other communities. The climatic condition of the surveyed village is almost same with Nagaon districts. The average temperature of the village is 38°c and average temperature in winter is 12° to 13° c. The amount of average annual rainfall ranges between 90 cm to 120 cm and rainy season is long about 60 days. The surveyed village is mainly under alluvial soil because it is flood affected area by tributary Kolong.

Generally the economic condition of rural farmers depends on many factors viz. level of productivity, rate of literacy, knowledge of new machineries, use of new inputs, farm size, family size, flood and drought in the previous year etc. In table 1 we found that the entire variable except specification 6 is positively related with the farmer’s income. In other words, if level of education, farm size, productivity, consumption of fertilizer and pesticide increase the level of income of farmers also increase and vice versa. All the above mention specifications are also statistically significant in 1-10 per cent level. From this analysis we came to know that the condition of rural farmers in the study area is worst due to their poor condition of survival, their low literacy rate, poor knowledge of mechanisation, inadequate use of new inputs, etc. The degrees of explanatory power in all specification are acceptable.

**Table 1: Regression of Farmers Income on Different Factors**

Specification no	Regression of Farmers income on	Variable	Coefficient	T value	Level of significant	Degree of explanatory power
1	Educational status	Constant	21.14	2.35	1	R <sup>2</sup> =0.039
		coefficient	10.01	0.89	5	Adj R <sup>2</sup> =0.035
2	Farm size	Constant	33.85	0.39	5	R <sup>2</sup> =0.534
		Coefficient	49.36	3.02	1	Adj R <sup>2</sup> =0.476
3	Productivity	Constant	135.42	0.73	10	R <sup>2</sup> =0.200
		coefficient	27.68	1.42	5	Adj R <sup>2</sup> =0.100
4	Fertilizer	Constant	239.3	6.60	1	R <sup>2</sup> =0.36
		coefficient	0.33	2.12	5	Adj R <sup>2</sup> =0.28
5	Pesticide	Constant	252.0	6.49	1	R <sup>2</sup> =0.223
		coefficient	0.48	1.51	10	Adj R <sup>2</sup> =0.100
6	Natural calamities*	Constant	378.0	5.24	1	R <sup>2</sup> =0.204
		coefficient	-115.5	1.43	5	Adj R <sup>2</sup> =0.200

\*for natural calamities we take Dummy variable for estimation, Source: Primary survey, 2014

But specification 6 revealed that the farmer’s income and the effects of floods in the surveyed area is negatively related. One percent increment of flood can decrease the farmer’s income by 115 rupee. In our study village, flood is continues phenomenon over the year. Moreover, there is an interesting findings getting in the surveyed village incorporating the family size (Fz) of the farming households. According to this specification (7) there is a positive relation between the farmers income and the family size, if size of family increase the income level also increase and vice versa. The specification is significant in one per cent level.

$$In = 266.26 + 32.7 Fz \dots \dots \dots (7)$$

(1.91)    (0.14)

R<sup>2</sup> = 0.032    adjusted R<sup>2</sup> = 0.029

It is revealed in equation 7 that one additional person can contribute to the annual income by 3270 rupees in a farming year. In other words the large family has a positive effect on farmer's income or farmer's economic condition is concern.

### **V. Conclusion And Policy Prescription**

On the basis of the above study we can say that the chronic poverty, illiteracy, lack of mechanisation, scarcity of HYV inputs, lack of capital formation, flood and drought, poor agricultural marketing facilities, lack of knowledge about demandable crops or more appropriately the absence of commercialization of agriculture sector are the main problems of the rural farmers. To overcome the highlighting problems the government should take possible steps such as generating employment opportunity for farmers in the off farming period, spread essential education to all rural areas, providing training among the rural farmers in order to know the use of machinery, providing adequate agricultural bank loan system, supply of HYV seeds through Agricultural Department, taking possible flood control measure, establishing well agriculture market system, etc.

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