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**CASTE, CLASS AND COMMONS: A STUDY IN NAGAON
DISTRICT OF ASSAM**

BY

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PREFACE

This report, *Caste, Class and Commons: A Study in Nagaon District of Assam*, is a small sociological study of a multi-caste village. The study was sponsored by the Indian Council for Social Science Research, New Delhi.

The objective of the study was to understand the intersectionalities of caste, class and commons. How at different stage various dimensions of power play its significant role in accessing such resources which are 'unowned' or 'commonly owned' in the village. Over the years there has been a lot of shift in using and accessing such resources. The study focuses on bringing out the nuances in such shifts between use and access of such resources in the village across people. Through this exercise it is hoped that the government will be able to come up with appropriate policies for conserving and saving the commons for greater good.

The data for the study was collected through a questionnaire (annexure I), that was circulated across 120 randomly selected respondents in the village. This was supplemented by observation, interviews, focus group discussions with the respondents and key informants like the village headman, satra officials, and various self help groups (guts) in the village.

Apart from these available literature on commons was being studied and reviewed for the report. We also ran through various reports and news paper articles on the same to have a better understanding on the same.

The study therefore, is not an exhaustive study on caste, class and commons but clearly outlines the ways in which their relationship works in the village. The study also outlines some of the major concerns involved is use and access of the same and what are the ways through which they can be addressed.

It is generally viewed that caste does not play a daunting role in everyday life of the people in Assam and therefore, there has not been too many studies on the same, however, the present study indicates that caste and class play an important role in the daily lives of the villagers.

The study, even if it has been done on a small scale indicates that with time there are changes in peoples attitude towards the use and access of the common property resources in the village which deserve much attention from the state.

Caste, class and commons share an intrinsic relationship across India. An individual's caste position in the social hierarchy acts as a reflection of his/ her class position. The intersectionality of caste and class has pushed its weight around individuals command to access and control such common property resources over the years. While, the common property resources are the 'spaces' which are not individually owned, an individual's position in the social hierarchy places him/her in a better position to negotiate and exercise their control over such resources.

While several reforms during the British and post British era has had its influence on village society and its economy in India. Like the land reforms which have had its daunting influence on the agrarian relations of village's. Acts like Land Ceiling which aimed at equal distribution of land across class, caste, and community, however, could not usher in much help. In reality such efforts remained far from being pro people. Thus apart from land people had to depend on the other available resources in the village which could be easily accessed by people across any socio-economic barriers. In this regard the common property resources (CPRs) in and around the village became the most useful alternative resource for generating income, however, over the year's people's access to such resources have declined. Various developmental initiatives and ecological factors have brought about shifts in the use and access of such space. While people across all caste groups were affected by such shifts the people from the lower caste suffered the most. At this juncture the study becomes significant as the village under study apart from being a multi caste village is also numerically dominated by the lower castes. Thus, the study focuses on the intricate relationship between use and control of the commons, various dimensions of power vis-à-vis use of commons in the village. The study also focuses

on the inter caste relationships and how such spaces act as sites of mutual dependence and conflict at times.

The report is divided into five different chapters, the first provides a brief overview of literature, issues, objectives and methodology of the study, the second gives an account of the field, the third and the fourth chapter brings up the issues of caste-class and commons in the village. Finally the last chapter wraps up the study and puts forth the conclusion along with the recommendations for the stakeholders.

We sincerely believe that this small and brief study will help its stakeholders, especially the state to understand the crisis that people often face in negotiating their everyday issues. Improve their understanding of issues and formulate suitable interventions to address them.

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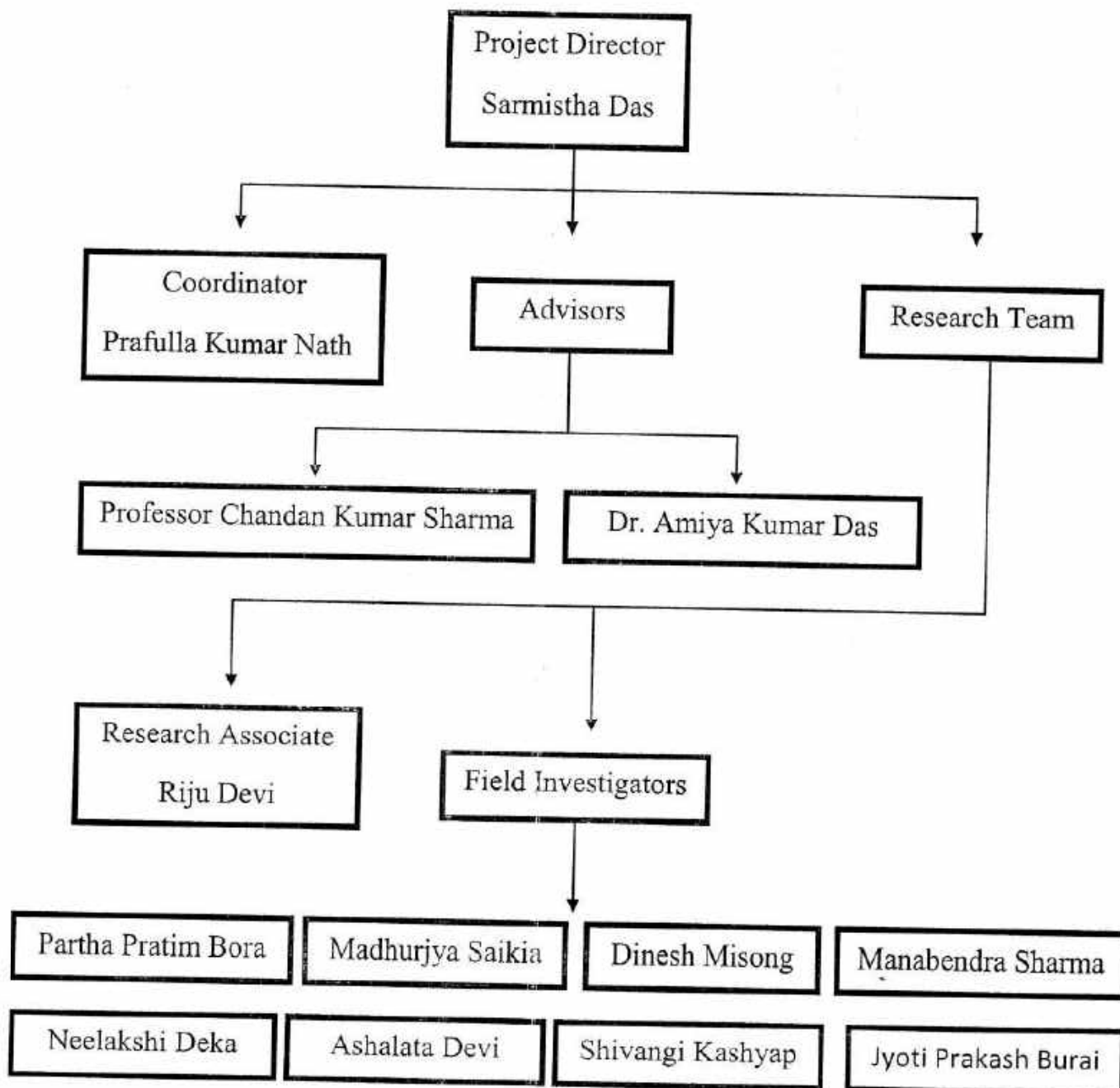
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There are many people who have contributed and helped us immensely to prepare the report at different stages directly and indirectly. We are thankful to various government officials who have helped us procure various government data at different stages. We must mention the people from Dakhinpat Satra village who have been cooperative, patient throughout the fieldwork and helped the investigators collect much of the information.

Prof. Chandan Sharma, Department of Sociology, Tezpur University for his valuable inputs at every stage of the writing the report. Dr. Prafulla Nath, tribal Studies Centre, Assam University, Diphu, and Dr. Amiya Kumar Das, Department of Sociology, Tezpur University for their inputs. We have to put on record the following students who have worked with us at various stages Shivangi Kaushik, Jyoti Prakash Baurai, Manabendra Sharam, Madhurjya Saikia, Neelakshi Deka, Ashalata Devi. The report would not have been complete without the sincere efforts of Riju Devi, Research Associate. We appreciate much of their help, support throughout the fieldwork.

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PROJECT TEAM



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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1. BACK GROUND

The aim of the study was to understand various dimensions of power in relation to the use of commons in a multi caste village in Nagaon District of Assam. The ways in which caste, class and commons are interconnected reflecting the social structure and the rhythm of the village. Thus, the study looked at different forms of inequality and the practices in which such inequalities were negotiated in the village.

The study was conducted in a village called Dakhinpat satra, in the Nagaon district of central Assam. It falls under the Nagaon Sadar LAC and is under Dakhinpat Panchayat. The village is part of one of the largest districts in central Assam. Spread across one of the most fertile river beds in Brahmaputra valley the village has extremely fertile alluvial soil. The study was conducted in three phases. The initial months i.e. the first phase was spent reviewing relevant literature, and visiting libraries across the state. A pilot study of the area was followed for an overview of the village and to understand the structure of the different caste groups living there. In the second phase of the study, an intensive study of the area and its agrarian structure was carried out through field work of the village Dakhinpat satra. In the third phase, Focus Group Discussions (FGDs) were conducted as there were few questions that were yet to be answered.

2. RESEARCH QUESTIONS

Some of the important research questions that the study reflects upon are:

- To understand the various dimensions of power in relation to the use of common property resources in the village.

- To study the dynamics of social relations across different caste groups. To find if the commons act as a unifying factor between different castes groups in the village?
- What kind of transformations can be witnessed in the traditional relationship between the people and the use of commons in the village?
- What are the reasons behind this transformation if any?
- What is the position of the *satra* as well as the state in this transformation?

3. METHODS OF DATA COLLECTION

The work was based on both primary and secondary sources. The secondary literature included books, journals, articles published in periodicals and so on. While major data was collected through fieldwork a lot of emphasis was also given on oral narratives.

4. SOME OF THE KEY FINDINGS

- The village administratively is a single revenue village. But socially the village is divided into three residential pockets based on caste. The Dakhinpat pocket of the village was comprised of the schedule castes (*Kaibarta*) while Satra Suk had mix caste groups including *Brahmin, Kalita and Koch*, and the third pocket *Besimari* was again scheduled caste dominated pocket.
- These residential pockets were also confined to their respective sacred spaces besides the main satra. The villagers maintain a highly religious life surrounding their everyday activities. They are members of the sacred spaces which are called *naamghars* (place of communal worship) and the satra (neo-vaishnavite monastery). There are five naamghars and a satra (neo-vaishnavite monastery) in the village.
- While the satra predates the naamghars in the village, all of them together contribute to the religious life of the villagers. For long the satra acted as the nerve centre, fountain head of most decisions in the village (including

people's access to agricultural land and common spaces). The primary source of income and livelihood of the people in the village has been agriculture. Paddy is an important crop apart from which other cash crops like jute, sesame, mustard, pulses, sugar cane, etc. are also grown.

- Since agriculture dominated the economy of the village, rearing of cattle was a common practice across the households. The cattle's needed land for grazing which were common spaces in the village.
- The village commons included mostly the wetlands, however, it also included the grazing grounds like *Borfhakuli* and *Kaliathan*, three *Duba* (a shallow body of water) named *Bhularam Baba Duba*, *Naloni Duba* and *Gossain Duba*, two *Dubi* (a long, narrow trench of water) *Hanmari* and *Pokimori*, three *Beels* (a lake-like wetland with static water) named *Afutali*, *Naobhaghi*, *Singimari*. Due to the preponderance of wet lands and the availability of fishes, most of marginalized castes in the village were engaged in fishing as a supplementary source of income.
- On the one hand the *satra* with its universal philosophies attracted the villagers to take *saran* (take refuge under the *satra* also as over a period of time, the *satra* became a repository, storehouse of power as it had controlled (de facto) all land and common spaces in the village. People could access land only through the *satra*). On the other, land reform measures followed by religious mobilization among the lower castes have gradually started withering the traditional hegemony of the *satra*.
- The agrarian economy of the village like most of the villages across India was at the crossroads. There were two processes happening simultaneously, on the one hand there was a growing disinterest for agriculture and on the other there were increasing cases of unemployment in the village. The youths often

site lack of agricultural incentives and irrigation as the primary reasons generating disinterest for agriculture.

- The grazing grounds in the village *Borfhakuli* and *Kaliathan*, today are open and also included in the common pool of resources in the village but remains unused. The villagers narrate vicious agricultural cycle in the village. Lack of agricultural initiatives from the state including the lack of irrigational facilities has created much disinterest amongst the youth for agriculture.
- The ones who continue agriculture have started using mechanised methods of agriculture. Hence, there has been a decline in the usage of animals in agriculture which has reduced rearing of agricultural animals. There begins the crisis on the one hand while mechanised process have hastened agriculture on the other it has unsettled the human bonds which were established through practices like *pal pata* (in which a member from each family would take the cattle of his neighbours along with his own for grazing.
- The practice was done in rotation and followed by every family. Such systems among the villagers upheld the spirit of belongingness to the village) it worked in two ways: it helped in uniting the people as such practices strengthened the bonds across caste groups, further it also reaffirmed the bonds of camaraderie in the village, it also helped the villagers, in managing man power crisis in the village.
- The villagers narrate that the wet lands were rich reserves of fish. Therefore, fishing traditionally added to the alternative income and livelihood in the village. The grazing grounds were used for rearing of the animals. While fishing was limited to certain castes, the grazing grounds were open for all.
- Over the years many changes have erupted in negotiating these spaces. Out of which two significant changes include disappearance of the wet lands and

intrusion of state through various process of controlling such spaces. The wet lands in the village have either dried up or have been buried with junk washed down by rain water. For instance, the Gossain *duba* and the *naobhangi beel* have completely dried today. Kolong (which acted as a life line of the people), has also shrunk due to its blocked constructed at Hatimuria (Dhing) which blocked the flow of water from river Bramhaputra into the river.

- The urban wastes thrown in the river has further added to the crisis of the villagers, as it finally leads to the disappearance of aquatic life. People's access over the river has also been snapped over the years. Today the river has been leased by the state and direct access of people to the river Kolong has to be routed through the lessee. It is the lessee (who irrespective of the caste comes from the upper classes) who controls the river now which traditionally did not use to be under anybody's control.

5. RECCOMENDATION AND SUGGESTION

- One also needs to critically examine the role of state. Lack of government initiatives in management of the common spaces (in terms of people's access to these resources) needs to be relooked. Apart from occasional cleaning drives of some common spaces, not much has been initiated by the Government for the restoring such spaces. The government also doesn't interfere into the matters of the satra and its management of the common spaces under its disposal. However, the district authority attends the auctioning, as well as regulates the process through the local self government.
- Hence, it can be concluded that most of the wet lands apart from the river kolong, have become part of the collective memory in the village as they have dried up. The elders in the village often narrate their experiences in terms of

accessing such spaces and the different ways in which such spaces were named after the famous personalities in the village and how such lore's were passed on across generations in the village becoming a part of village identity.

- Apart from the physical deformation, leasing out of such spaces has created much catastrophe amongst the people in terms of accessing the resources. Individual ownership of such spaces has broken the essence of belongings. Moreover, there are no drives and initiatives from the state to clear and preserve such spaces. The river like the other water bodies in the village has shrunk and the pollutants being carried by the river further adds to the crisis. Thus, while commons remain a part of the collective identity of the village its loss has not been compensated.

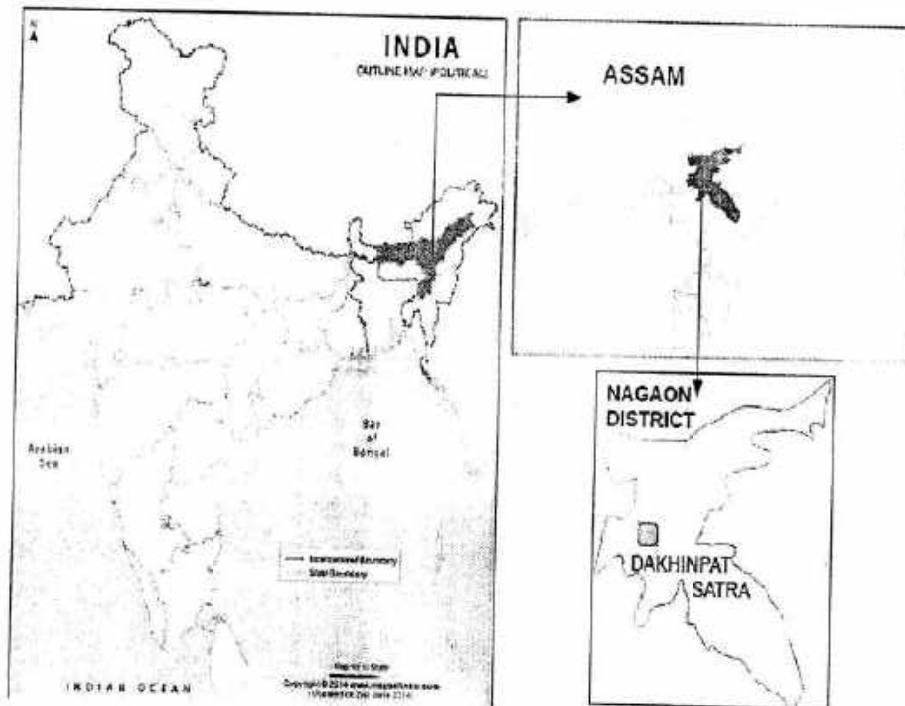
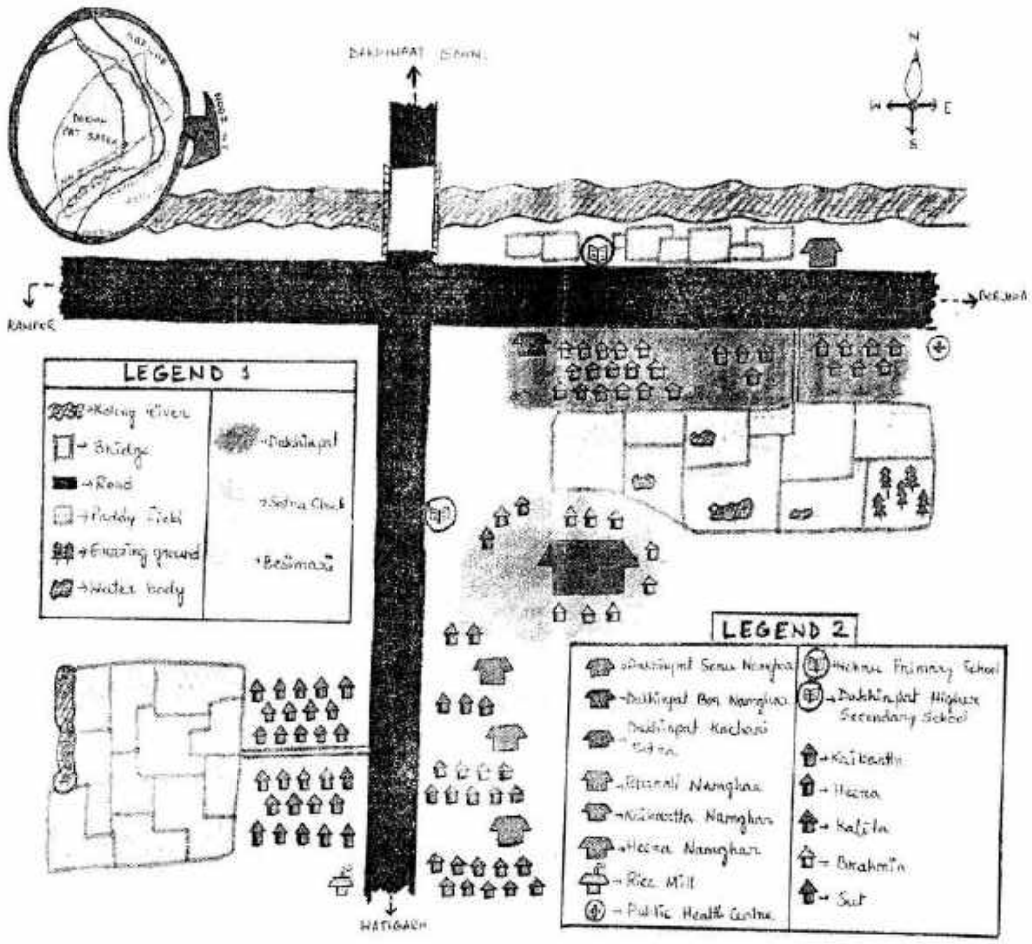


Image of Dakhinpat Satra Village in Nagaon, Maps of India



Social Map of Dakhinpat Satra Village

INTRODUCTION

1.1 The background

Caste, class and commons share an intrinsic relationship across India. An individual's caste position in the social hierarchy acts as a reflection of his/ her class position. Over the years the intersectionalities of caste and class have pushed its weight around individuals command to access and control such common property resources. While the common property resources are the 'spaces' which are not individually owned, an individual's position in the social hierarchy places him/her in a better position to negotiate and exercise their control over such resources. Several reforms during the British and post British era have had its influence on village society and its economy in India. Like the land reforms which have had its daunting influence on the agrarian relations of villages. Acts like Land Ceiling which aimed at equal distribution of land across class, caste, and community, however, could not usher in much help. In reality, such efforts remained far from being pro people. Thus apart from land people had to depend on the other available resources in the village which could be easily accessed by people across any socio-economic barriers. In this regard, the common property resources (CPRs) in and around the village became the most useful alternative resource for generating income. However, over the years people's access to such resources have declined. Various developmental initiatives and ecological factors have brought about shifts in the use and access of such spaces. While people across all caste groups were affected by such shifts, the people from the lower caste suffered the most. At this juncture, the study becomes significant as the village under study apart from being a

multi caste village is also numerically dominated by the lower castes. Thus, the study focuses on the intricate relationship between use and control of the commons, the various dimensions of power vis-à-vis use of commons in the village. The study also focuses on the inter caste relationships and how such spaces act as sites of mutual dependence and conflict at times.

Jodha points out, "In the context of Indian villages the commons include community pastures, community forests, waste lands, common dumping and threshing grounds, watershed drainages, village ponds, rivers, rivulets as well as their banks and beds" (Jodha 1990, 65). In developing countries such as India, these resources act as important contributors to the sustenance of livelihood of the village communities. In many cases they even become the base for people's employment, income generation and asset accumulation. The Indian sub-continent is home to several tribes and caste groups that not only have an economical but emotional relation with the commons. They not only depend on nature for sources of livelihood, but many tribal communities also worship nature. Hence, there is a nuanced relationship between the individuals and the common resources found across India.

At different historical junctures there was a rupture in this nuanced relationship. Various state interventions through different state policies like the Forest Acts brought in by the British administration brought significant change across the life of those who were dependent on these resources. The Indian Forest Act, 1927, that overrode the customary rights and forest management systems by declaring forests state property was implemented. The same model was subsequently built into the Wild Life Protection Act in 1972, with similar consequences (Handique, 2004). The newly formed state also was determined on fulfilling its own interests along with the interest of the capitalists, industrialists and big farmers. The self-interest of the powerful and influential as well as new market opportunities began to treat commons as wastelands in order to serve their purpose of commoditizing and privatizing the natural resources. Such profit

centered agendas of a capitalist system as well as the state has so far been successful in appropriating commons.

In Assam, introduction of plantation economy with tea brought in many changes. The British administration intended to impose its strategy of deriving maximum out of its land. To encourage tea plantation the colonial rule provided revenue-free land to the planters. Guha (2006) by calling the colonial state as the 'Planter's Raj', tries to argue that, the nature of the colonial administration in Assam was parallel to the tea planters' interests. The gardens were established in the common grounds through the settlement of wastelands. One important reason was to strengthen their surveillance on the use of land. This disrupted the interaction between the individuals and the community owned resources as land that were once available for all came under the ownership of the State. Sharma (2010) in one of his articles explains how the introduction of tea plantations in Assam in the early part of the 19th century appropriated the cultivable fallow lands and seized village commons or community forests. In order to bring the forest areas under the authoritarian management of the state as well to restrict the usage of resources, acts like the Assam Forest (Amendment) Act of 1931 were passed. Handique (2004) explained that this Act dealt with the control over forests and wastelands which were not the property of the Government.

The evolution of land relation and land holdings in Assam during the different historical periods also witnessed various uprisings and outbreaks, due to the exploitation of the tenants. This evolution led to various changes in the definition as well as use and appropriation of commons throughout the region. As Guha (1966) puts it, the land economy of Assam prior to the colonial rule was a semi-tribal and semi-feudal. The Ahoms introduced the *Paik* system (corvee labour) under which, each *paik* (person who rendered the services) received 2.66 acres of land in lieu of his services. However, these were nontransferable and the maximum resources like agricultural land were owned by the community itself. So, there was no concept of individual ownership of

property. Karna explains "The Ahoms reclaimed marshes through collective efforts and made them suitable for rice cultivation. All such lands became community lands and were distributed amongst various families. Such a communal pattern of land ownership became the basis of the entire Ahom state" (Karna 2004, 19). The people during this period were exempted from regular tax with the priests, nobles and officials receiving revenue free land.

The colonial period with its brisk transformations appears extremely harsh as compared to the Ahom period. It tried to disrupt the earlier equations of dependence. The colonizers initiated alterations under their self-assumed idea that the local people were in need of proper guidance due to their lack of capital as well as motivation. Their idea was to impose heavy tax on the natives which would make cultivation unfeasible and difficult for them. But one of the most significant development during this period as explained by M.N. Karna (2004) was the implementation of the Assam Land and Revenue Regulation, 1886. Under law all decennial lessees as well as those paying revenue for past ten years directly to the state were given heritable and transferable ownership rights over their lands. This led to the concept of individual ownership of land in Assam.

With this backdrop the study explores the intersectionality of caste, class and commons. The study has been conducted within the period of March 2014 to December 2015 in three phases. The initial months i.e. the first phase was spent reviewing relevant literature, and visiting libraries across the state. A pilot study of the area was also conducted to have an overview of the village and to understand the socio- demographic structure of the different caste groups living there. In the second semester i.e. the second phase of the study, an intensive study of the area and its agrarian structure was carried out through field work of the village Dakhinpat. In the third phase, Focus Group Discussions (FGDs) were conducted as there were few questions that were yet to be answered. FGDs made it easier to interact across different groups, especially the women, who were mute most of the times during the survey.

The study was conducted in a village called Dakhinpat, which is part of Nagaon district in central Assam. It falls under the Nagaon Sadar LAC and is under Dakhinpat Panchayat. The village is part of one of the largest districts in central Assam. Spread across one of the most fertile river beds in Brahmaputra valley with extremely fertile and alluvial soil this area has had a long agrarian history.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

Over the years there has been a decline in the usage of commons across villages in India. In the context of this village too the study is not an exception to the same. The study engages in understanding the various reasons for such shifts. Dealing with the underlying themes of caste, class and commons the study traces how caste system operates vis-à-vis social inequality and distribution of power in the village in terms of accessing the commons. The study also focuses on the alternative means of livelihood generation and flow of cash from non-agricultural sources and its contribution to the shift in the traditional caste and class relationship in the village.

1.3 Significance of the Study

Post- independence the Indian state in its move to eradicate the prevailing social inequalities had introduced several reforms. As most inequalities surrounded distribution of land the state initiated measures on reform and redistribution of land across communities and castes. An influence of the same can also be seen in the village under study. Such measures have not only influenced the village social structure but have also influenced its economic relationships and its agrarian relation. But these measures couldn't remove the social inequalities and the ones at the bottom of the social ladder had to depend on alternative sources which also included the common property resources to supplement their income. But the nature of CPRs over the years has

changed, due to various factors. The study is significant as the village is a multi-caste village numerically dominated by the lower castes who traditionally dependent on such resources. The study tries to understand the various forms of inequality in terms of use and access to these resources.

1.4 Concepts

The term 'caste' has been one of the most discussed and debated concepts in sociology. Sometimes it implies a small and more or less localized group; while at times the same word is used to refer to a collection of such groups. Beteille defines caste as "a small and named group of persons characterized by endogamy, hereditary membership and a specific style of life which sometimes includes the pursuits by traditions of a particular occupation and is usually associated with a more or less distinct ritual status in a hierarchical system, based on concepts of purity and pollution" (Beteille 1996, 46). Another important sociologist who has done extensive work on the Indian caste system, M.N Srinivas went on to explain how the general classification of '*varna*' fails to understand the regional specificities of various sub caste groups. He also explains how despite the general observation of the higher castes being rich and lower caste being poor, there are cases in which principally economic or political considerations also stand as a marker of stratification (Gupta, 2011). Similar kind of complexity is reflected in the field of study too where there has been a shift of traditional assumptions.

To understand class as a type of stratification, the theories developed by Karl Marx and Max Weber form the basis of most sociological analysis. According to Marx, a social class is a group of people who stand in a common relationship to the means of production-the means by which they gain a livelihood (Giddens, 2010). According to Weber (2011), social stratification is not simply a matter of class but is shaped by two further aspects- status and power. Class, thus, can be defined as a large scale grouping

of people who share common economic resources which strongly influence the type of lifestyle they are able to lead. He explained that class situation is determined by the life chances provided with the possession of goods and services. Status situation on the other hand is determined by specific positive or negative estimation of social honour and prestige.

Hardin in his influential article, '*The Tragedy of Commons*' (1968) defines commons as un-owned or commonly-held pool resources that are free or not allocated by markets. Hence, ensuring open access across barriers of caste, class and gender has always made them open and easily accessible for all. The Common Property Resources (CPRs) are community assets that provide livelihood to their dependents. They include land used for cultivation and grazing, forests for collection of food, fodder, herbs and fuel, waste lands, rivers, ponds and other community assets for those who use it. This definition of CPR however has undergone changes over the years. And the intervention of the state through new models of development as well as changes across social space makes CPRs a very important and interesting area of debate and discussion.

1.5 Survey of Literature

G.S. Ghurye in his book, *Caste and Race in India* (1969), states the six important features of the caste system: i) Segmental division of society, ii) Hierarchy, iii) Restriction on feeding and sexual intercourse, iv) Civil and religious disabilities and privileges of the different sections, v) lack of unrestricted choice of occupation, vi) Restriction on marriage. (Ghurye 1969). Knowledge of the caste system leads to the understanding of the contemporary Hindu society and provides us an insight to the society that practices it. However, the significant regional differences cannot be ignored. There are several sub castes specific to different linguistic areas of the country. The varna is only a broad categorization into which the various sub castes can be placed (Srinivas 1966). One of the recent and important understandings of the

complexities of the Indian caste system has been made by Dipankar Gupta. Gupta (2011) explains that Indian society is considered as the most stratified society not only because of the caste system but also due to economic inequality and extreme poverty. Another recent development in the study of the caste system has been made by Surinder S. Jodhka. Jodhka (2014) emphasizes on the problematic understanding of the caste in modern discourses. On having worked extensively on the states of northern part of India, he calls for a new explanation of caste relations on the conceptual level. Just like Srinivas, Jodhka too appeals that caste should be studied in context to its regional settings and not just from the pan-national vantage point.

Caste has undergone significant changes in different societies at different points of time. It is significant therefore to site the works of Scholars like Srinivas who have discussed about changes in the caste system among different communities. Srinivas, in order to explain such social changes have formulated the idea of sanskritisation and westernisation. M.N. Srinivas defines sanskritization as "The process by which a 'low' Hindu caste, or other group, changes its customs, ritual, ideology and way of life in direction of a high and frequently 'twice-born caste'" (Srinivas 1966, 6).

Besides the universal ordering of the caste system based on the varna, there are regional variations in terms of sub-castes within a community. Depending on that, the dominant caste within the community also varies from region to region based on their numerical strength and property appropriation. M.N. Srinivas states, "For a caste to be dominant, it should own a sizeable amount of arable land locally available, have strength of numbers and occupy a high place in the local hierarchy" (ibid.10). Srinivas further states that a village may have more than one dominant caste which again is subject to vary in different times (ibid). This study also will try to find what are the dominant castes in the area of study and what are the factors leading to their dominance and what sustains this dominance.

Most of the theories of caste depict it as a hierarchical order but there are others who are concerned with the ideological and ritual descriptions of caste, based on the

concepts of purity and impurity. Some view the phenomenon of caste as recent colonial manufacture, while few see it as an ancient indigenous category (Quigly 2003).

According to Weber (2011), class, status groups and party are necessary to understand the society. Power according to him may rest on variety of bases. Economically conditioned power is not the only form of power. He discarded the view of Marx that power comes only from the ownership of economic sources. He defines class in the terms of market situation. It is purely an economic phenomenon. According to him class situation is determined by the life chances provided with the possession of goods and services, just like Marx. He also says that property or the lack of property is category of class situation. Status situation on the other hand is determined by specific positive or negative estimation of social honour and prestige. Status Groups are influenced by material ownership, by class, but this are not the only ways. It is based on consumption and not production. In situations like caste, Status Groups maintain exclusivity in terms of conventions, rituals, etc and on the basis of this exclusivity, they maintain their honour. Against the view of Marx that, communal action can lead to solidarity, Weber believed that communal action can be initiated by Status groups. Status Groups can become the ground of communal action. In contrast to class, Status Groups are normally communities having 'in-group' feelings. According to Weber, if a group is oriented towards social power, it can be called a party. They are affected by class and status relations or in some cases neither. But usually, they represent the mix of both. Any group influencing communal action in its favour in any situation and having the decision making power may be called a party according to Weber.

Andre Beteille (1967), in his book *Caste, Class and Power*, explores the understanding of power relation in an Indian village structure through an intensive study in a village called, 'Sripuram' of Tanjore district in South India. Through his study he tries to throw some light on the process of modernization by examining how different aspects of social life are being detached from the traditional structure. And how a closed kind of system gave way to a relatively an open one. Regarding the concept of power relation and

distribution of power, he concentrates mainly on the political aspect and its relation to social stratification. The tripartite of Caste, class and power as mentioned by Andre Beteille is clearly visible in terms of understanding the ways in which land has been used as a medium of showcasing command in the village.

In this village, beginning of Vaishavism as a strong advocate of Hinduism and slow percolation of inequality cannot go unnoticed when we look at the settlement pattern of the village. The impact of development and the 'top heavy', 'capital-intensive' model of Nehru as reflected by Gail Omvet (understanding caste from Buddha to Ambedkar) and its limiting force upon the poor and the lower caste people to come up as one homogeneous unit and fight, speaks about the volumes of inequality and hierarchy which were generated in post colonial India are well reflected in the village. Battle for commons and supremacy of caste cannot go unnoticed when we speak of caste dominance. Percolation of Hinduism also called for inequity of women on the basis of occupational choices.

Literature present on agrarian structures in Assam present a unique pattern of landholding as mentioned by Guha (1977) and Karna (2006). This categorisation of land holdings also reflect the caste and class affiliation of the members(holding land) present in the village. There is also a strong history of peasant uprisings in the region vehemently opposing the social hierarchy. Same factors are also ingrained in the structure of villages in this region, also negating the dictatorship of certain classes. The impact on the use of 'commons' including the 'beels'¹ and the ' common gazing grounds' occupy the central piece in understanding the synergy of class-caste.

However, the new emerging capitalist class is not purely based on agriculture. The change from shifting cultivation to wet rice cultivation and the consequent changes in the economy and control of State remains as some of the interesting point to ponder.

The term 'commons' was popularised by Garrett Hardin in his influential article, *The Tragedy of Commons*' (1968) where he examined the relation of population to

¹ A lake like wetland with static water

resources, and suggested that population must be brought under control. Hardin employed a key metaphor, the 'Tragedy of the Commons' to reason why, the application of Adam Smith's *laissez-faire* doctrine of the *invisible hand* is flawed. To support this he explained, when a resource is held "in common," with many people having "ownership" and access to it, self-interested "rational" actor will choose to increase their exploitation of the resource as they receive the full benefit of the increase, with the costs remaining equal among all users. Hardin with his model of the Tragedy of Commons, although compelling, tends to generalize from a flawed historical case study. Historical commons were by no means open to all and therefore subject to unavoidable destructions. Historically communities managed their commons. There however have been transformations in the process of their management.

The Agrarian revolution in Europe encouraged people to grow crops that served as fodder for the domestic animals. The rough pasture hence was no longer needed and thus, the common was either turned into fields or cultivated more intensively as pastureland. This led to the enclosure of these lands. The practice of grazing animals in the forests abandoned and the forests were privatised and turned into sources of timber production. The modern transformation in agrarian systems such as multiple crops, seeds, fences and other technical equipments required capital investment. Thus the farmers and lords with substantial holdings were benefitted in the process of change in the mode of production while small holders had no other option but to stick to traditional ways of farming. This led to conflict around enclosures between the lords and big farmers on one side and the small holders on the other. Due to the enclosure, the small holders could not use the common for their cattle nor could they farm for themselves. This led to the formation of a group that had to work as labourer on the farms of those who had benefitted from the enclosure. The consequences of the enclosure differed throughout Europe according to different property regime as well as property rights developed in different ways (Zückert, 2012).

South East Asia, specially the Indian sub-continent is home to several tribes and caste groups that not only have an economical but emotional relation with the commons. Its

central purpose is not only the use or administration of the resources but also sustenance that includes people's culture, social systems and identity. Since the people are engaged with the CPRs, they form an attachment with these resources making them an integral part of their lives. Most tribes as well as caste groups have customary laws and rules on how to manage and use these resources as well as their protection and benefit-sharing. Apart from depending on the nature for sources of livelihood, many tribal communities worship nature. In the book 'In the Belly of The River: Tribal Conflicts over Development in the Narmada Valley' (2011), Amita Baviskar (2011) explains how the Bhilala community is connected to nature and how their ceremonies show profound respect to nature.

1.6 Major Research Questions

Some of the important research questions that the study reflects upon are:

- To understand the various dimensions of power in relation to the use of common property resources in the village.
- To study the dynamics of social relations across different caste groups. To find if the commons act as a unifying factor between different castes groups in the village?
- What kind of transformations can be witnessed in the traditional relationship between the people and the use of commons in the village?
- What are the reasons behind this transformation if any?
- What is the position of the satra as well as the state in this transformation?

1.7 Aim and Objectives

The aim of the study is to understand the various dimensions of power in relation to the use of common property resources (CPRS) in a village of Nagaon district of Assam. The area under study is Dakhinpat Satra village, which falls under the Nagaon sadar LAC.

The study primarily focuses on the issue of caste, class and commons and the interrelationship between the three and dependence of people across different caste groups over these resources, their relationship with the use of common spaces in the village.

The important objectives of the project are-

- To understand the various dimensions of power in relation to the use of common property resources in the village.
- To study the dynamics of social relations across different caste groups. To find if, the commons act as a unifying factor between different castes groups in the village?
- What kind of transformations can be witnessed in the traditional relationship between the people and the use of commons in the village?
- What are the reasons behind this transformation? If any.
- What is the position of the satra as well as the state in this transformation?

1.8 Methodology

The study is qualitative and exploratory. The data has been collected from both primary and secondary sources. The secondary sources include reviews of relevant literatures, books, journals and magazines, newspapers, research and survey conducted by various organizations, published and unpublished articles, government records.

Primary sources mainly included data collected through field study. Also oral narratives form an important aspect of the study. For the survey out of 350 households in the village, a total of 100 were selected as a sample size. However before selection of sample households, the village under study was stratified first. The households in the village were grouped into three strata in terms of caste; such as, General, OBC and SC. It was made sure that the 100 samples had an equal representation.

The techniques that were incorporated in the study are,

- A) Interview schedule (unstructured). Purposive sampling technique was employed to conduct household survey.
- B) Focus Group discussion (FGD).
- C) Observation as a technique was also used to have a better understanding of the Field.

Although all the techniques mentioned above were followed, flexibility in terms of data collection was maintained where necessary. During the course of field work certain difficulties could not be avoided; such as, convincing the people to have a conversation. Most of them took the data collectors to be representatives of the government and hence kept on asking for financial assistance. Therefore the field workers had to extend the interviews for longer hours to make the people understand about the work being done. Many were curious enough to ask what their profit would be in the entire process, which was a good thing as they were getting involved due to the interest. Another difficulty faced was convincing the women to speak around the male head of the family. However we overcame this difficulty by arranging for FGD of the self-help groups of womenfolk of the village where they were more comfortable in speaking.

A BRIEF PROFILE OF DAKHINPAT

2.1 Village Profile

- The village Dakhinpat Satra is located in the Nagaon district of central Assam. In popular parlance the village is also referred as Dakhinpat. Therefore, both Dakhinpat and Dakhinpat Satra are used concurrently in the local idiom. The village falls under the Nagaon Sadar LAC and is under the Dakhinpat Panchayat. The village is part of one of the largest districts in central Assam and is situated at around 12 KMs. from Nagaon town. The distance from the nearest town makes the village easily accessible for all. Thus, for the villagers it was easy to commute from the town to the village on a regular basis. Spread across one of the most fertile river beds in Brahmaputra valley Kolong, the area is extremely fertile. The area is also surrounded by rich alluvial soil. The larger area is also rich in its agrarian history. The mighty river Brahmaputra flows along the northern periphery of the district. Apart from Kolong there are other tributaries like Kopili, Hariya which ultimately drain into the mighty Brahmaputra.
- Historically, people across different racial groups have migrated into the district from different parts and have merged into the social fabric of the district. This has resulted in a process of assimilation and acculturation of people across different communities in Nagaon. The district is known not only across the state but also across the country because, of its rich history of religious assimilation. The famous Neo-Vaishnavite saint of the 15th century Shankardev is not only a

part of the rich history of the Nagaon district but, his ideologies are embedded in the everyday life of the people.

- The village under study is a small village with a total of 347 families from different castes. According to the Population Census 2011, the Dakhinpat Satra village has a population of 1524 of which 761 are males while 763 females. Average Sex Ratio of Dakhinpat village is 1003 which is higher than Assam state average of 958. Child Sex Ratio for the Dakhinpat as per census is 1288, higher than Assam average of 962.
- Dakhinpat Satra is a revenue village. But the village is socially divided into three residential units, Dakhinpat and Dakhinpat Satra Suk and Besimari. A total of 120 households within the area were selected randomly for the study. The nearest market for the respondents is Dakhinpat Chariali. Apart from this the villagers also are seen to be engaged with the Phuloguri Haat which is at a distance of 7-8 kms from the village. The nearest Primary Health Centre at Borjoha, borders two villages of Dakhinpat Satra and Borjoha and also is being shared across many nearby villages. The health centre acts as a common point connecting many villagers from the nearby areas. Considering the size and population density, the government health care service providers in the village or that area are not adequate. In terms of educational facilities too, the infrastructure for primary education is sound, but the same for high and higher education is poor. There is only one Higher Secondary school and one Junior Arts colleges in the village besides four Anganwadi centres. The Dakhinpaat chariali has a post office, an ultra Small Branch of State Bank of India (SBI), Branch of Gramin Vikash Bank and a State Bank of India ATM.
- The social organization of the village is based on the caste groups of the villagers. The village being dominated by the Hindus is multi caste. The Hindus in the village are divided into several castes. Making the village extremely diverse

in terms of its caste. The village has Brahmins, Kalitas², Sut, Kaibartas³. The Kaibartas are further divided into the Jaluwas and Haluwas. The former being engaged in fishing and the later being engaged in both fishing and agriculture. While the village is dominated by the Kaibartas, due to the predominance of the satra the upper castes especially the Brahmins had a superior role in the major decisions of the village. However, the traditional social organization of the village has been challenged today. Local self governance, lower castes assertions have led to a disruption in the traditional social organisation of the village.

- The literacy rate and the level of education are some of the basic indicators of the state of development achieved by any society. Higher levels of education lead to a greater awareness and also contributes in improvement of economic and social state of affairs. It acts as a social medium for several development efforts, be it population control, health, hygiene, environmental degradation control, employment of the weaker sections of the society. Dakhinpat village has higher literacy rate in comparison to the state of Assam. In 2011, literacy rate of Dakhinpat village was 90.78 % compared to 72.19 % of Assam. In Dakhinpat Male literacy stands at 93.59 % while female literacy rate was 87.92 % (census, 2011).
- The dominant religion of the village is Hinduism of which a sizeable section in the village follows Neo-Vaishnavism⁴. Religious life of the villager's center around the *naamghars*⁵ and the satra. There are five *naamghars* and one satra⁶ named Sri Sri Jadavrai Dakhinpat Kachari Satra established in 1795 in the village. As most of the villagers are followers of Neo-Vaishnavism, these religious institutions hold an important role in the functioning of the village.

² A middle caste in Assam.

³ A Schedule caste in Assam.

⁴ A social reform movement of the 12th century founded by Srimanta Shankardev.

⁵ A place of worship in Assam. Naamghar does not only revolve around religious activities but also act as a common place for several other social activities representing the rhythm of village life.

⁶ Vaishnava Monastery.

- Fertile soil has contributed and enhanced the agrarian economy of the village. The village has had a long tradition of growing different crops throughout the year in the village. The villagers over the years have been cultivating several crop varieties in the village.
- Paddy is the primary crop apart from which other cash crops like jute, sesame, mustard, pulses, sugar cane, etc. were also grown, however, today there is a fall in the production of cash crops like sugarcane and mustard. Lack of labour and scientific rigor in the process of agricultural production has led the villagers to move out of agriculture.
- The primary source of income for the villagers is agriculture. But today some of the youths in the village have come up with their own small business like rearing of pigs and poultry farms. Out of 120 households, 41 households rely on agriculture as their primary source of income (excluding adhi). As the people are engaged in agriculture, the rearing of cattle is common in most of the households. Apart from these share cropping has been a common practice in the village. Most of the villagers were engaged in this practice.
- Live-stock rearing provides supplementary income to a large number of rural households. Poultry farming and Piggery as discussed are also being adopted by the villagers as an alternative source of income. The river Kolong as well as the other water bodies like *beels*, *doobas*⁷ and *doobis*⁸ and other low lying swamps act as the natural breeding places for large variety of fishes. The easy availability and abundance of fish provides an alternative source of income to the villagers. Most of the people engaged in fishing belonged to the lower castes. Fishing was traditionally a common practice in the village. Apart from these some of the

⁷ A shallow body of water.

⁸ A long, narrow trench of water.

villagers also work in the service sector they are engaged in jobs like teaching, defense, etc.

- With problems like unemployment, unequal distribution of resources, lack of opportunities, ignorance of the government, etc there is a new emerging trend in the village. Most of the youths from the village are moving out of the rural spaces to cities. Their increasing disinterest in agriculture works as a fuel to this pattern of migration. Especially those from the lower castes who have less agricultural land. They claim that it doesn't benefit them much as they have to depend on traditional methods of agriculture. 26 households, have members who have migrated outside the village for different purposes. For private jobs, 14 men have migrated for company's security guard posts. They work in Gujarat and Hyderabad. 1 female has migrated to Guwahati to work as a physiotherapist. Another has migrated to Sivsagar to work in a weaving industry. 6 men have gone to the defense services and 5 people have gone out of the village for other job positions.
- Since fishing has been a common practice in the village. The Common Property Resources (CPRs) found in the village played a very significant role. The CPRs found in the village include one river named Kolong, two grazing grounds named Borfhakuli and Kaliathan, three dooba named Bhularam Baba dooba, Noloni dooba and Gohain dooba, two doobi named Hanmari and Pokimori, three beels Afutali, Naobhaghi, Singimari. In this village, the caste differences as well as the existence of the satra makes the usage of the CPRs their access challenging. All these resources not only supplement the sustenance of the villagers but also hold an important place in the history of the village. They are an integral part of the legends and folklore of the village community. For example, legend has it that there was a *Gossain*⁹ who used to serve at the satra

⁹ The abbot at the neo-vaishnavite monastery.

and was called '*Pogola (mad) Gossain*'. After his death, the dooba that is situated along the border of the satra was named after him. Another story claims that the *Bhularam Baba* dooba is named after one person called Bhularam Das.

- Socio-economic activities in the village also act as an important indicator of overall development of the village. It was found from the collected data that there are several Self Help Groups (SHGs) the village. While these groups undertake a range of activities the SHGs of women are mostly engaged in fund raising, very few have taken up economically diverse initiatives. Only a few have registered themselves in the bank and have valid accounts. The SHGs which are registered belongs to the upper caste women and are also better organized. It could be because the women from the upper castes are relatively educated which enhances their ability to understand the formal proceedings required for the functioning of a financial organisation. It was observed that the membership of SHGs is restricted to their caste affiliation. However, in comparison to the self-help groups of men, women limit themselves mostly to the concept of 'loan on interest'. Although women organizations are active in the sample villages, the overall scenario of the women community is quite dismal. Perhaps low level of literacy, lower age at marriage; other social and religious factors are some of the bottlenecks coming in the way of overall development of rural women.

2.2 Caste Profile of the Village

- As discussed, Dakhinpat Satra is a multi-caste village. Although it is one revenue village, it is socially divided into three residential pockets based on caste affiliation of different groups. The pocket which is called Dakhinpat is entirely populated by the Schedule Castes (SCs). Satra Suk on the other hand has a mix population with Brahmin, Bharali, and Koch. The third pocket Besimari is a

scheduled caste dominated pocket with a population of Kaibarta and Hira. Demographically, Dakhinpat village is dominated by the Scheduled Castes. Out of the 120 households surveyed, 90 belong to the schedule caste category. The Kaibartas are further divided into jaluwa and halua. Other than that, there are 10 General, 14 OBC households.

Caste	Number of Households
Scheduled Caste(Kaibarta and Hira)	261
Brahmin	26
Kalita	16
OBC (Sut and Koch)	44
Total	347

- These residential pockets also have their own sacred spaces. While there are no rules on use and access of all religious spaces in the village. Each residential area is confined to its own place of worship. Hence, apart from the satra which determined the identity of the village people were affiliated to various religious institutions. The satra is situated in Dakhinpat Chariali, apart from the satra there are five naamghars in the village. Initially, the satra was the only religious institution in the village that also served as a community place for the villagers. Social rhythm of the village revolved around the activities of the satra. The villagers fondly remember the activities during holi, *bhado maati*¹⁰. However, over the years the villagers started withdrawing themselves from the satra. Many villagers specially the ones from the lower castes assert that they could access but were not completely welcomed by the upper castes villagers to participate in the activities of the satra. Few Kaibarta men who wanted to meet and seek the

¹⁰ The auspicious month in the Assamese calendar.

blessings of the Satradhikar¹¹ were humiliated by the upper men in the village. This led to a lower caste assertion in the village towards the end of 20th century. Such assertions over the years have pushed the lower castes away from the hold of the satra and they broke away from the traditional hegemony of the satra.

- This gave birth to different naamghars in the village. The first one to be establishment was the *Bor* (big) naamghar in the Dakhinpat (populated entirely by SC) area of the village. However, this newly created naamghar too broke down into the establishment of one more naamghar known as *Soru* (small) naamghar. Apart from these, there are three naamghars; Bharali naamghar, Kaibarta naamghar and Hira naamghar in the Satra Suk area of the village.

2.3 The Satra

- One of the popular narratives in the village suggests that the village was formed as a result of religious proselytization and establishment of the satra. For them the history of the village is embedded in the history of the satra. As the narrative goes, the village was formed as a result of land donation to the satra by *Kachari*¹² king. The villagers speak that the process of land donation took place in the 18th century. Since then the social and religious life of the village revolved around the satra. The satra being the hub of Neo-Vaishnavism attracted people to take *saran*¹³. Thus, many people came under the shield of the Neo-Vaishnavism through this process.
- Thus, the entire village came under the safe haven of the satra. The satra had access to land and all the water bodies in the village. Thus, if one had to access any part of land or the water bodies in the village, he had to become a part of

¹¹ The abbot of the satra.

¹² Kachari kingdom was a powerful kingdom in medieval Assam.

¹³ Religious refuge under the satra.

the satra first. The satra traditionally had 621 bighas of agricultural land. This made the satra a storehouse of power. People could access the land only through the satra. As M.N. Karna (2004) puts it, after the adoption of Hinduism by the Ahom kings, the donation of land for religious purposes became popular. The British rulers with all their impositions of land laws, however, did not intervene with the religious institutions.

- Thus, people from different caste groups started settling in the village surrounding the satra. Such groups had their respective work vis-à-vis the satra. This resulted in the formation of distinct residential pockets in the village. As a result, the village became a multi-caste village. The rules and notions of purity and pollution started governing the everyday activities of people in the village. Dumont (2011), explains how in the caste system, the distinction between status and power focuses on the hierarchical principle represented by the opposition between the pure and impure. In the village for example, the Brahmins were not allowed to touch the plough or engage in fishing. Therefore, the Brahmins had to depend on other caste groups for such activities. These caste groups were those who did not have any access to land and therefore were ready to do any kind of work in order to add to their supplementary sources of income. Therefore, the marginalized caste groups participated in these activities.
- However, such practices could not continue for long. Introduction of Land Ceiling Act, post-independence brought about a lot of change in the pattern of landholding across India. According to the Act, the state identified and took possession of surplus land occupied and re-distributed it among the landless. This left the satra with only 50 bighas of agricultural land which is known as *Khatopathar*¹⁴. This also disrupted the traditional hegemony and hierarchy of the satra in the village. Since, the satra no longer continued to be the sole

¹⁴ Agricultural land in the village under the satra.

landholder in the village. While the rest of the agricultural land in the village was being redistributed the percentage of distribution among the groups remained unequal and skewed. While, the upper castes continued to exercise its dominance in terms of landholding the satra continued to be the biggest landholder in the village.

Apart from the satra the following are the other landholders in the village:

Category of holder	SC	Others	OBC
Landless (people without land)	40	Nil	Nil
Marginal (0.05-1 hectare of land)	Nil	61	Nil
Very-Very Marginal (below 8Kathas/2 Bighas)	369	47	48
Very Marginal (above 16 Kathas/ 4 Bighas)	46	15	9
Small (below 1-2 hectare of land)	2	1	
Total	415+40	62	57

- The above table indicates the categories of landholders. They can be broadly classified into three categories: Landless, Marginal and Small. Most of the villages come under the category of Marginal, however, this category is further subdivided into Very-Very Marginal and Very Marginal.
- Further the table indicates that apart from the satra which still retains the 50 bighas of land. The rest of the village does not have a single big landowner in the village. While there are 3 small landowners found in the village, the rest of the villagers belong to the category of marginal landholders. The village also has 40 landless families which belong to the Scheduled Castes, these landless families apart from working as sharecroppers in different households also rely on the satra land. While on the one hand the domination of satra has declined on the other it continued its influence on such cases.

- As the Satradhikar did not reside in the village he adopted a system of governance in the satra in his absence. This led to the formation of a committee called the *Satra Porisalona Samity*¹⁵. This committee consisted of the members of upper castes. The satra even today is surrounded by the families of upper caste who live in straight lines surrounding the satra also known as *hat*¹⁶. They take complete care and responsibility in the management of the satra. Hence, it has been easier for the upper castes to access the resources that come under the satra. For example, the *Bhularam Baba Duba* although on Government land, revenue collected from it went to the satra.
- In the further years, the intervention of the state and its several policies has penetrated into the structural rigidity of the satra thus bringing several changes in the village life. This is to be discussed in detail in the next chapters.

¹⁵ A committee that administered the satra in the absence of the Satradhikar.

¹⁶ the residential settlement surrounding the satra

CASTE AND CLASS RELATIONS

3.1 Caste Profile

- As discussed the village Dakhinpat Satra is heterogeneous in terms of its caste composition. Apart from being a single revenue village, it is further divided into three residential pockets based on the association of the villagers to each caste group. The part Dakhinpat is entirely populated by the Schedule Castes. While Satra Suk on the other hand has mix caste categories like the *Brahmin*, *Bharali*, *Koch*, and so on, the third pocket Besimari, is a scheduled caste dominated pocket with a population of Kaibartas and Hira. Demographically, Dakhinpat Satra village is mostly populated by the SCs. As per the electoral roll of 2011 there are a total of 331 households in the village. Out of which 261 households in the village belong to the schedule caste category including the Kaibarta and the Hira. The Kaibartas are further divided into jaluwa and halua. Other than that, there are 26 Brahmin (middle caste) households and 44 OBC (Koch and Sut) households.
- Interestingly the residents in these pockets or *chuks* (as they are popularly called) are also confined to their spatially located sacred spaces. This interdependence of the people with their religious spaces is reflected in the relationship shared between the members and the religious institutions. Apart from the satra (that is situated in Dakhinpat Chariali) there are five Naamghars in the village. Traditionally the satra was the fountainhead of all socio-religious

activities in the village it also provided a community space to the villagers. The villagers would often sit together and discuss many important issues of the village in the satra premises.

- Culturally too the satra acted as catalyst and united people (mostly the youths from the village) through *bhaonas*¹⁷. This continued for long, however, there were several occasions when the people especially from the lower castes felt some kind of humiliation while participating in the activities of the satra. Some of our respondents claim that the discriminations were never direct, they were always subtle and at times it was difficult to differentiate between discrimination and the dos and don'ts of the satra. They further add that in one of the annual visits of the satradhikar few Kaibarta men were not allowed to offer their tithe to the satradhikar by the upper caste men.
- Thus began the conflict between the upper and the lower castes in the village. Thus the two major changes towards the middle of 20th century affected the social organization of the village. One being the land reform measures introduced by the state ensured that the ceiling surplus land in the village gets redistributed. This made the satra loose most of its land thus, losing its traditional command over land and people. Secondly, the growing discontent amongst the lower castes also led to the call for organizing of religious congregations under the aegis of Ila Ram Das. This led to the complete disruption of the traditional power structure and the formation of alternative religious spaces in the village. Such movements led to the withering of traditional hegemony of the satra in the village.
- The collapse of the traditional power structure (satra) in the village led to the formation of alternative spaces of religious congregation by the lower castes for

¹⁷ A form of a one act play introduced by the neo-vaishnavite saint Shri Shankar Dev.

continuing their community life. This marked the beginning of several naamghars in the village. The first naamghar to be established in the village was the Bor naamghar in the Dakhinpat (a complete SC area) residential pocket of the village. However, this naamghar too broke and there came a new naamghar known as Soru naamghar. Apart from these, in the Satra Suk of the village there are three naamghars; Bharali naamghar, Koch naamghar and Hira naamghar.

- The spatial division of village Dakhinpat is based on the majority of a particular caste group residing in that area. These caste groups are also affiliated to the religious spaces (naamghars) associated with their caste identity. For instance, the Brahmins, Suts, Kaibartas and Hira all have their respective places of worship. Division of the village into different residential pockets on the basis of caste confirms that the notions of purity and pollution play an important role in the social organization of the village. In spite of adhering to the same principles of Neo-Vaishnavism the village continues to maintain its differences.
- The caste factor also plays a crucial role in terms of engaging people at different levels inside the premises of Dakhinpat satra. Many village elderly from Dakhinpat speak their participation in the satra has been minimal due to their less involvement in most of the matters of the satra. Hence, the institution of caste plays a very crucial role in terms of social organization of the village and the participation of the villagers in the everyday activities of the satra. However, it is difficult to understand the influence of class in their everyday lives unlike caste it is rather discrete hence, could not be easily understood. The village has an equal representation of the services groups across castes for instance, one can find services holders, businessmen, and farmers in almost all the caste groups. But, when it comes to ownership of land, the SCs had minimum access to agricultural land. This made them rely on alternative sources of income. Many engaged in fishing also worked as daily wage labour, sharecroppers, and so on.

3.2 Caste and Class Relations

- Since its inception the village could not be studied without the satra. The satra played an important role in the everyday life of the villagers. Its presence in the village is embedded in most of activities surrounding the socio-economic and cultural life in the village. As a popular narrative goes, the village was formed as land donated to the satra by the Kachari king. Since then the social and religious life of the village revolved around the satra. The satra from the beginning acted as a hub of Neo-Vaishnavism and as an institution the satra attracted the villagers to be a part of its religious activities one could become a part of it only by taking saran.
- Another reason for the villagers to come under the fold of satra was due to their access to the agricultural land under satras possession. The satra traditionally had 621 bighas of land. This made the satra the storehouse of power and the largest landowner in the village. As it had all the land in the village under its possession. One could have an access to it only on accounts of their conversion to neo-vaishnavism. As M.N. Karna (2004) puts it, after the adoption of Hinduism by the Ahom kings, they started donating land for religious purposes. This became a very popular. The British rulers with all their impositions of land laws, however, did not intervene with the religious institutions.
- Traditionally, the satra with all its land the people in the village were directly dependent on the religious institution. Such land included the common spaces which included the beels, dubas, and dubis as discussed in the previous chapters. Therefore, an individual's conversion to Neo-Vaishnavism not only gives them access to land but also to the rest of the resources.

- Being a multi-caste village the rules of caste purity and pollution restricted the activities of the people according to their caste. Dumont (2011), explains how in the caste system, the distinction between status and power focuses on the hierarchical principle represented by the opposition between the pure and impure. The Brahmins for instance were not allowed to touch the plough or engage in fishing. Therefore, the Brahmins had to depend on other castes below them in the ritual caste hierarchy for such activities. Incidentally such caste groups were those who did not have any access to land and therefore were engaged in a range of activities to increase their supplementary income.
- However, post-independence, with the introduction of Land Ceiling Act, there was tremendous change in pattern of landholding in the village. According to the Act, the state identified and took possession of ceiling surplus land in each household and re-distributed it among the landless. This left the satra with only 50 bighas of agricultural land which is known as Khatopathar. This disrupted the traditional hierarchy of the village. However, the upper castes with a strong social capital contained to exercise their dominance in terms of accessing the satra land.
- The Dakhinpat Jadavrai satra was a branch of Dakhinpat satra which is located at Majuli in the present Majuli district of Assam. The satradhikar was not a permanent resident in the village. He would come annually collect the tithe and would go back to Majuli. In his absence, the satradhikar appointed few officials, a new system of governance to administer the activities of the satra. This led to the formation of a committee called the Satra Porisalona Samity. This committee consisted of the members of upper castes (who were familiar and had a strong presence in the satra). Eventually this group of people due to their access over most resources in the village also belonged to the upper classes in the village.

- This group had a say in the activities of the satra essentially belonged to the upper castes, lived surrounding the satra in *hati*. Most decisions on management of the satra were taken by the members residing in the *hati*. Therefore, in the absence of the *satradhikar* the upper castes were the ones who would take care of the activities of the satra. It has been easier for the upper castes to access the resources that come under the satra. For example, the Bhularam Baba Duba although on Government land, revenue collected from it went to the satra.

3.3 Caste and Class Relationships Today

- The village in many ways has had the essential features of a caste Hindu village, however, there were many changes as discussed which directly or indirectly contributed to the gradual change and transformation of caste structure in the village. As discussed above, the lower caste assertion in order to break away from the hegemony of the satra vis-à-vis the upper caste stands testimony to this fact. The establishment of different *naamghars* to cater to the specific needs of particular caste groups has created a separation in the village.
- Today apart from the caste based distinctions in the village there also is a strong presence of class. Traditionally the upper castes with their social capital also belonged to the upper class. However, there is a split in such watertight regimentation today.
- The idea of honour and self identity has urged the lower castes to withdraw themselves from their traditional jobs. Also there is a group amongst the lower castes who are becoming the shield to their lower caste brethren in the village. With the notion of shame associated with their traditional jobs the lower castes have started looking for alternative means of livelihood generation. This has therefore made them less dependent on the common resources on which they

were completely dependent earlier. Women specially, throughout various historical setting have had a very important relationship with CPRs. Bina Agarwal (1989), explains how women, especially in rural and poor households had the additional responsibility of providing subsistence to the family in the context of which the CPRs proved to be an important source of livelihood. However the traditional bond between women and CPRs has undergone a lot of changes. The lower caste women in the village unlike yesteryears today consider bathing in the open or washing clothes in the river as embarrassing. Also, they no longer provide services as maids in the upper caste houses or work in their paddy fields as *ruwoni/daoni*¹⁸.

- Further intervention of the state, however, also has been contributing to safeguarding the interests of the lower caste groups today. Starting from the introduction of the Land Ceiling Act to various welfare schemes such as, subsidized ration for BPL households, Job cards, houses under Indira Awaas Yojana, etc, the state has penetrated in to the social and economic life of the village. Apart from the assertion, the whole idea of Adult Franchise (specially local self government) gave a lot of power to the marginalized groups. This political assertion has given the marginalized castes a chance and scope to come out and take part in the village affairs actively. Today, there are two women from the SC group who have become members of the local Panchayat. Also, with the introduction of reservation system as a part of positive discrimination the lower caste groups now have options to seek such facilities.
- In the area of study, the administrative as well as ritual profile of the satra is mostly associated with the upper caste groups. Traditionally they were the ones who had an easier access to the commons that are under the satra. It therefore was under the jurisdiction of the upper caste on how to make use of the

¹⁸ One who plants the rice saplings and harvest them respectively.

commons. However, in the recent times, the strong hold of the satra is being questioned. Also new 'avatars' of caste have created consciousness, the notions of honour and shame is being coupled with occupations of the lower castes are an example of the same. Therefore, to emancipate themselves from this shame, they try to abstain from their traditional forms of services towards the upper castes. Apart from this, the disinterest of the younger generation from agriculture and other land related sources of income have given rise to the trend of migration to cities.

- Today one finds a new class from the lower castes emerging as powerful challenging the traditional power equations in the village. This class today owns fisheries, has secured government jobs, and is educated just like their immediate reference group. But, still there continues to be a class within the lower castes which is completely dependent on the new upper class lower castes. Thus, on the one hand we can say that the traditional authority has withered but on the other new binaries have started.

CASTE, CLASS AND COMMONS

4.1 Common Property Resources and the villagers

- Common Property Resources (CPRs) have always been an essential part of the everyday lives of people across Indian villages. Commons are resources, most often land, and wetlands which are 'un owned' or commonly owned by people across castes and communities. Hence, CPRs can be called community assets that provide livelihood to those who depend on it. They may include land for cultivation and grazing, forests for collection of food, fodder, herbs and fuel, waste lands, rivers, ponds and other community assets. Such resources are open and accessible for all who use it. These resources were commonly owned and used by all across boundaries of caste, class and community. The village under study too had a pool of such common resources. Such resources included the water bodies, pasture land, government land, etc. The CPRs in the village include: the river Kolong, two grazing grounds named Borfhakuli and Kaliathan, three dooba's named Bhularam Baba dooba, Noloni dooba and Gossain dooba, two doobi's named Hanmari and Pokimori, three beel's, Afutali, Naobhaghi, Singimari. Such resources not only supplement the sustenance of the villagers but also hold an important place in the collective memory of the people in the village.

- The CPRs perform several important functions in terms of contributing to the socio-economic life of the people in the village. The CPRs help people in generating income, employment and asset accumulation. Further the CPRs help the rural communities by contributing to the production and consumption needs in several ways. In Dakhinpat Satra village people across caste groups depended on the CPRs, however, the nature and extent While the the SCs especially those belonging to the Kaibarta (fishing) community depend largely on the river Kolong as well as other water bodies to make a living out of fishing. Along with the Hiras (SC), the Kaibartas have very less or no land at their disposal as compared to the upper caste groups. Hence, the CPRs are an important source of alternative income generation. Apart from fishing in the river, beels and other water bodies, the people also make use of the grazing ground in the village. Although the Borfhakuli grazing ground is a property of the Government, the villagers use it without having to pay any taxes. Since the grazing ground is at a distance from the village, the people have come up with *Paal*¹⁹ system in which a member from one family takes the cattle of his neighbours along with his own for grazing. Such practices are small ways through which the villagers uphold their spirit of community living while using the commons.
- The identified Common Property Resources in and around the village as mentioned by the villagers have not retained its original form. The reasons are many various ecological and human challenges have disrupted the use and access of these spaces. Many of the CPRs today are not in function or in use. Those that are, have been appropriated to an extent by some people who have strong economic status as claimed by some villagers. However, not much income or economic stability is generated from the CPRs in the village. It is generally

¹⁹ System in which a member from one family takes the cattle of his neighbours along with his own for grazing and this system is practiced in rotation among families in the village.

seen that the economically backward or the landless mostly depend on the CPRs. With the degradation of such resources the poor have no other option but to engage in daily wage labour. The SCs with maximum density in the village, minimum land, have confirmed that today they do not depend on any of the CPRs for any kind of income generation. Apart from occasional fishing in the river/*beels* and taking cattle to the grazing fields for fodder, not much is derived out of the CPRs by the common people.

4.2 Commons, Caste and the Satra

- The satra has been the fountain head of all major socioeconomic and political decisions in the lives of the villages since its formation in the 18th century. The satra had a proselytizing effect. Villagers became a part of the satra by taking sharan. The satra became a major storehouse of power as it controlled all the 621 bighas of agricultural land which made the people in the village directly dependent on the satra. Thus, in order to participate in the agricultural cycle the villagers had to come under the fold of satra. The 621 bighas of land included the common spaces like the beels, dubas, and dubis. While the satra had direct control over the agricultural land which is called Khatopathar, the individual accesses to the common property resources were open for all. An individual's access to agricultural land was subjected to his/her membership to the satra. Therefore, an individual had to convert to Neo-Vaishnavism.
- The village being multi-caste has strict rules on caste and notions of purity and pollution. Such restriction limits the activities of people according to their caste. The Brahmins for example, did not touch the plough or engage in fishing. Therefore, the Brahmins had to depend on other caste groups for such activities. On the other hand, the groups on which the Brahmins were dependent did not

have much land and had to engage in supplementary sources of income generation.

- While on the one hand, the satra did not exercise any authority in individual's usage of the common property resources on the other, there were spaces over which the satra exercised its power and control. For instance, the satra had exercised its control over the *Pukhuri*²⁰ which was under the jurisdiction of satra. Today, however, it does not retain its original shape as it dries out completely in the winters and also has become unclean and polluted. In addition, the Bhularam Baba duba although on Government land, contributes the revenue collected from it to the satra. It is managed by the Satra Porichalona Samity body which looks after the minor and major decisions of the satra in the absence of the satradhikar, mostly comprised of the upper caste. The decisions on who will use the duba for how long were taken by the members of this committee. The villagers maintain a highly religious life which surrounds their everyday life. As discussed the satra predominate the religious life in the village and the rules of purity and pollution restricts few castes from entering and accessing most resources in the village.
- The villagers uphold the spatial boundaries in the village on the basis of their caste affiliations. Hence, the areas where the upper castes resided did not welcome the groups which were at the margins of the caste hierarchy. The land and other resources which were traditionally being controlled by the satra were also de facto in the hands of the upper castes who exercised their control over the distribution of the same. Hence, the satra directly or indirectly exercised its power over land and other resources in the village.

²⁰ Pond.

4.3 Common Property Resources and Women

- Like most villages across India women in Dakhinpat Satra too were dependent on the common property resources of the village. The women engaged at different levels with such resources. For instance, most women in the village depended on the water bodies for potable water, washing clothes and bathing. Women also accessed the CPRs of the village especially the wetlands for fishing. They would at times go for collective fishing and would sell the produce in the nearby market. Such acts not only empowered the women but also supplemented the families economic output. Apart from the water bodies some women in the village were also engaged in collection of fuel and fodder from the grazing reserve. Today, however, in many ways such relationships have changed. Primarily, dawn of modernity; self-consciousnesses and degradation of the CPR are some of the major causes for the withdrawal of women from such sites. Almost every household in the village today has basic cooking facilities like LPG cylinders, kerosene stove etc. Also the awareness of clean drinking water amongst the villagers has led most of the households in the village to restrict themselves to their own wells and hand pumps. Therefore, women no longer have to depend on the river or other water bodies.
- Interestingly, the notions caste and the questions of purity and pollution restrict women's mobility. In case of a Hindu woman, the idea of caste emerges as an important pre cursor determining her everyday activities. More specifically, caste, imparts a special character to the process of growing up of a woman in Indian society. Traditionally, the women belonging to the lower caste groups have been accessing the CPRs extensively due to their poor economic condition. Today even the women belonging to the Kaibarta (fishing) caste group also no longer engage themselves in any such activities. Neither do they engage in any market transactions. However, there are a few cases in which women do engage in fishing but the community spirit involved in the act is no longer seen amongst

them. The women in the village unlike earlier times consider bathing in the open or washing clothes by the river rather embarrassing.

- Today the men in the village across castes have started drawing parallels between masculinity, honor and women's economic contribution in the family. Traditionally upper caste men would consider it to be a shame on their patriarchal honour to let their women work outside their home. Today such trends, however, are being followed by the lower caste groups too. In order to acquire a higher social status the men try to restrict the freedom that a woman enjoyed.
- The presence of the satra in the village adds another dimension to the weakening of the inter relationship between women and the CPRs. As mentioned above, the satra holds de facto ownership to some of the CPRs in the village like some of the fisheries and agricultural land. The satra in some way or the other restricts the mobility of the people in the village. For instance, as discussed the satra determines the use and access of the CPRs by the lower caste, the women too come under the indirect control of the satra. The socio-religious practices of the satra along with the ideals of pollution and purity tries to control women. Women are seen unfit and incapable of handling the public spaces. Hence, women do not have any say in the administration of the religious institutions. This exempts the women from being able to influence the CPRs under the satra.

4.4 Common Property Resources today

- Today, unfortunately CPRs are in dire strait. They face serious ecological and social challenges. The CPRs are shrinking in terms of area, declining in productivity and lack in management. In this context, a vicious cycle of poverty

has begun in the villages. The depletion of CPR is an important indicator of the existing poverty of rural areas.

- In Dakshinpat Satra, today there is a decline in the size of individual land holdings. Those who have sizeable agricultural land are now shifting for mechanized methods of agriculture. They are no longer using animals to plough the land as they traditionally used to do. This has led to a decrease in the use of animal as well as the traditional methods of agriculture. People today use tractors rather than depending on the *haluwa*²¹ which is more feasible and faster. The abandonment of traditional methods has also led to decrease in the usage of the common spaces. For example, the Borfakuli grazing ground, where people traditionally used to practice the *paal* system (as discussed) is hardly in practice as the numbers of cattle has decreased.
- However, apart from all these changes, there are people who are still engaged in fishing as an alternative source of livelihood generation. But due of the ecological changes in Assam the landscape and topography of the region has changed completely. The valley witnessed changes in the land due to massive ecological destructions. The devastating earthquakes of 1897 and 1950 have brought about immense changes affecting the forests, the flow of the river as well as the ground elevations. Moreover, periodic floods followed by massive erosion have been a regular problem of the area (Sharma et al, 2012). Also, the people in the village earlier used to have direct access to the river Kolong but it has now come under the control of a lessee. It is the lessee who controls the river now which traditionally did not use to be under anybody's control.
- The idea of honour and self identity has pushed the lower castes from their traditional occupations like fishing which they used to engage in. Because of the

²¹A person who usually ploughs the paddy field.

idea of 'shame' associated with the kind of jobs the lower caste people engage in, they have now started looking for alternative means of livelihood. This has therefore, forced them to move out of the traditional resources of livelihood in the village.

- The village has also witnessed a decline in income due to the degradation of CPR. This has led to a scarcity of livelihood 'choices' for those who traditionally depended on the CPR. In the village, some water bodies have ceased to be function. Some have been buried with junk washed down by rain water and some have dried out. For example, the Dakhinpat Satra *Pukhuri* becomes completely dry during the winters. The river Kolong too has shrunk due to the dam constructed in Hatimuria (Dhing) as it blocked the flow of water from *Bramhaputra* into the river. The river today has become a pale shadow of its original self. This has adversely affected the pisciculture further adding to the crisis of the people who were dependent on the river for income. Also the garbage and other wastes thrown in the river in the town of Nagaon, it has become unclean and polluted. This has led to the decline in the use of the river in the everyday activities of the villagers. The CPR enables the poor people to survive in the villages even with little or no land. With such resources being exhausted or turned into private property, people no longer have any access to these resources.

4.5 Common Property Resources and the State

- Along with the satra the role of the state also is very crucial in determining the pattern of the usage of the CPRs in the village. Since the formation of the village can be seen as a result of the setting up of the satra, it was the satra that had de facto controlled all land in the village. And since it was the upper caste groups that were associated with the religious as well as the administrative

responsibilities of the satra, it was the upper castes that had the access to land and other resources. However, with the introduction of the Land Ceiling Acts by the independent India there was a change in land distribution pattern of the village. According to the Act, the state redistributed the surplus land among the landless who mostly comprised of the scheduled castes. Although this step by the state brought in a major reformation, the satra continued to be the major landholder in the village with 50 bighas of agricultural land under its control. Therefore, on the one hand the landless families in the village could access a few bighas of land on the other, the major chunk of the agricultural land remained with the satra. The upper castes due to their affiliation with the Satra Porichalona Samity continued to exercise their power and influence over the decisions of land distribution in the village.

- Further, intervention of the state has pushed people away from accessing the CPRs for livelihood generation in the village. Starting from the introduction of the Land Ceiling Act to various welfare schemes such as, subsidized ration for BPL households, Job cards, houses under Indira Awaas Yojana, Bridha Pension (Pension plan for senior citizens), etc. the state has penetrated in to the social and economic life of the village. Apart from the assertion, the whole idea of Adult Franchise (specially local self government) gave a lot of power to the marginalized groups. This political assertion has given the marginalized caste groups a chance and scope to come out and take part in the village affairs actively. Today, there are two women from the SC group who have become members of the local Panchayat. But, inspite of the efforts of the government to break the traditional power structure in the village the hegemony of certain castes in the decision making continued.
- The role of the government as a harbinger of change needs to be questioned. The state has not contributed enough in the management of the CPRs in the village nor has it employed any proper mechanism to check if the CPRs are being

appropriated by the influential people by restricting its access by the poor. Apart from funding occasional cleaning exercise of some CPRs not much has been initiated by the Government for the restoration of the CPRs. The government also doesn't interfere into the matters of the satra and its management of the CPRs under its disposal. However, the district authority attends the auctioning of certain CPRs as well as regulates the process of auctioning through the local self government.

- The villagers complain that the Government as an agent has not done enough to maintain the management of the CPRs in the village nor has it employed any proper mechanism to check if the CPRs are being appropriated by the rich restricting the access of the poor. *Apart from* funding occasional cleaning exercise of some CPRs not much has been initiated by the Government for the restoration of the CPRs. The Government also doesn't interfere into the matters of the satra and its management of the CPRs under its disposal. Although, the auctioning of tenders for the beels takes place in the presence of the Additional District Commissioner, he/she does not advocate for the permission of the poor (lower castes) or the women to access these resources. No awareness from the side of the Government has been created among the women on ways to harness income from the available CPRs in the village individually or through SGHs.

CONCLUSION AND POLICY IMPLICATIONS

Conclusion

Assam historically has been a rural, agrarian society. As discussed the traditional society did not have any concept of individual ownership of land. All land were communally owned and distributed. But gradually with state intervention in various forms the definition of land ownership kept changing. For instance, the emergence of the British rule, and the introduction Forest Policies and tea-plantation, led to a complete change of the economy of the state. Further intervention by the independent state in the form of various developmental projects changed the traditional ways in which the people engaged with CPRs.

In the area of study, the administrative as well as ritual profile of the satra is mostly associated with the upper caste groups. Traditionally it is they who had the command over the decisions of satra. The commons therefore were under the jurisdiction of the upper caste that had the power to take the decision on how to make use of the commons. However, in the recent times, the strong hold of the satra has been questioned. The village poses as a living example of resistance by the lower caste groups in terms of the domination of the satra which can be understood from their withdrawal from the satra and setting up of different naamghars. Also with new forms of caste avatars creating consciousness, the concept of honour and shame has been associated with different occupations that the lower caste groups were traditionally associated with. Therefore, to emancipate themselves from this shame, they try to

abstain from their traditional forms of services towards the upper castes. Apart from this, the disinterest of the younger generation from agriculture and other land related sources of income have given rise to the trend of migration to cities.

The CPRs also are facing serious crisis. Some of the common problems include shrinkage in their area, decline in productivity and failure in proper management to name a few. These has led to a decline in the generation of products as well as income due to the degradation leading to scarcity and creating livelihood problems for those who depend on the CPR. This has again brought about a change in the way people in the village used to associate with these resources.

Policy Implications

After completing the field research, we can draw on certain conclusions on how the government can initiate policy which would provide an alternative to the problems of people in the village.

Although there have been several attempts by the government, it is often seen that there is a significant gap between research knowledge and current policy and practice. One out of many reasons for this gap could be the non accessibility of the research findings of a particular study for the policy makers. To bridge this gap, policy and practice should always be research based and informed by the field evidence. This process relates to the interaction between the social realities and helps in the production of knowledge and its application. Availability of well researched reports on such areas will provide the government with field based knowledge helping them to map the problems and formulate solutions for the same.

In the field, the problems faced by the people revolve around the unequal access of CPRs owing to the caste based unequal power structure of the village. Also the gradual decline of the CPRs in and around the village contributes to the plight of the people

with very less or no agricultural land as well as lack of alternative sources of livelihood. Moreover, the idea of shame associated with the act of fishing as practiced traditionally by the lower caste groups has led to the decline in fishing as a source of income.

Therefore, a suggestion can be made for the establishment of co-operatives under which fishing as a source of income can be revived. This could be backed by workshops and training programmes on fishing. This would bring in a universal dimension to the act of fishing and would dissociate it from the idea of shame. Also, it will help in establishing fishing as a skill and not only as a supplementary source of income. More people from the village irrespective of their caste affiliation will be encouraged to take up fishing as a source of livelihood.

With the decline of interest in agriculture and agricultural practices many in the village, specially the youth have started to migrate to cities around the country in search of alternatives. This process too is not permanent and sustainable as many of such youths come back to the village within a few months only to stay unemployed for more days to come. Therefore, assistance in agriculture also would provide sustenance in form of livelihood option. Proper policies to support agriculture will encourage them to engage in agriculture and guarantee them of a safe return from their investment. Irrigation facilities through government drives, agricultural loans, agricultural insurance, agricultural raw requirements like seed and fertilizers on subsidised cost can revive the interest in agriculture.

Lack of initiatives by the government adds to further decline of CPRs, there should be efforts to preserve and maintain the various resources which supplement the livelihood of many. Cleanliness drives of the beels and other water bodies should be done on frequent basis and proper maintenance should be kept. Also a check should be made before taking any action involving these resources. For example, the dam built on the river Kolong has contributed to the shrinkage of the river thus blocking the flow to the various smaller water bodies in and around the village. Also the pollution in the river Kolong has led to decline in its usage. The garbage thrown at it in the town carries all

of it to the village making it dirty. Government should therefore initiate certain cleanliness drives in the river and should also make strict laws to stop the dumping of garbage into the river.

In order to revive the importance as well as usage of the CPRs, the efforts of the state should be more participatory in nature. The initiatives taken for the village should involve the people so that a sense of community feeling remains among the villagers. The village Panchayat can be entrusted with more responsibilities in this regard. The members of the Panchayat should make regular attempts several drives for the maintenance of these resources.

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ANNEXURE I

Research Questions

a) Social relations and the pattern of use of commons in the village:

1. Are the people aware of the common property resources in the village?
2. Do they have access to them? If yes, what kind?
3. Who decides for the maintenance of these resources in the village?
4. Do the people generate part or whole of their income through such resources?
5. To what extent do these resources help in sustenance of their livelihood?
6. How are the common property resources helping in the development of the village?
7. Do they think that the common property resources are gradually decreasing? If so, then why?
8. Is there any developmental project in the village?
9. If so what kinds of development projects have taken place in the village?
10. Have such development projects devoured the available common property resources in the village?
11. In what way have the people, relying on such resources been affected due to such projects?
12. What has the Government done to compensate for the loss of these people?
13. How far such compensations have benefited the people in generating alternative livelihood pattern?
14. What kinds of steps are taken for the preservation of the commons?
15. Do the commons act as a unifying factor between different castes groups in the village? If yes, in what way?

b) Land:

1. What kind of importance does land hold in the life and livelihood of the people of the village?
2. In what way does this importance differ across caste and class?

Or

Which are the groups that mostly depend on land?

3. What kind of land relation characterizes the village?
4. What positions do the different caste groups occupy in this relation?
5. What kind of position do women have in this relation?
6. In this land relation what stand do the religious institutions have?
7. What kind of security do women have in terms of land ownership?

c) Market as an economic and social institution:

1. Is there a market in the village?
2. Where this market is spatially located?
3. Can this market be seen as a social institution? If so, how/why?
4. What kind of access do the people from different castes group have in the structure of the village market?
5. How women vis-à-vis men participate in the market?
6. What kind of place do the products of the commons of the village have, in the economic exchange in the local as well as nearby markets?
7. Was there any relationship between market and the commons in the village traditionally?
8. What kind of relationship do they have now?

d) Religious change and its impact upon the nexus of caste and class:

1. What kind of importance religion has in the public realm of the village?
2. How has the importance of religion changed over time in the village?

3. Does everyone in the village across castes have access to the same religious institutions?
4. How far has the hold of religion been able to determine the continuum between caste and class?
5. Do such institutions allow public participation of women in them?
6. Are there any commons in the area that come under the jurisdiction of the religious institutions?
7. Who decides for these commons in the name of the religious institutions?
8. What kinds of social changes have contributed to the change in religion in the village?

e) Migration:

1. Has there been migration of people from the village to nearby cities and towns?
2. Who are the ones to migrate?
3. What are the caste and class groups among which such trend of migration is evident?
4. In what way can the depletion of common property resources be a reason for such out migration?
5. Can the process of migration be seen among the women of the village?
6. What are the reasons for this process among the women?
7. What kinds of jobs/opportunities do they seek in the nearby towns and cities?

f) Role of women in decision making and participation in livelihood:

1. What is the position of women in terms of power relations in the village across different caste groups?
2. What is the contribution of the women in the generation of the family income?
3. How do they represent themselves in the class system?

4. What kind of relationship can be traced between their position in the class system and their economic vulnerability?
5. How far has the Panchayati Raj institutions been able to encourage women's participation in village politics?
6. What kind of attitude do women of the village have towards the importance of formal education?
7. What is the condition of health care facilities in the village/ specially for pregnant women/ mothers?
8. Do they receive all the facilities provided by government schemes?
9. Are there any women's organizations in the village if so how far are they functional/active?
10. What kind of economic as well as non economic initiatives are taken by these organizations?
11. Whether such organizations have membership that cuts across caste and class.
12. If such organizations are not open to different castes, in what way are they different?
13. In what different ways can women of the village have access to the utilization of the common property resources?
14. What kind of role do they play in farming in the family?
15. Are there any alternative options of employment for the women/ what kind?
16. Whether their expenditure covers the needs of the family or their personal needs?

ANEXURE II

Interview Schedule

[Section 1] Descriptive Identification	
1. Name of the Head of the Household	
2. Name of the informant with Telephone number	

[Section 2] Identification of Household		
Item No.	Item	Code
1.	Religion	
2.	Social category of the household	

Codes for Section 2

Item no. 1. Religion; Hindu - 1, Muslim - 2, Others - 3

Item no. 2. Social Category of the Household: SC - 1, ST - 2, OBC - 3, MOBC - 4, General - 5

[Section 2A] Household Member Details (Use extra Sheet if necessary)

Mem ID	Name	Sex	Relation with Head of HH	Age #		Marital Status	If married , years of married life	Highest education level	No. of years of formal education	Work/usu al activity status
				Y	M					
1										
2										
3										
4										
5										
6										
7										
8										

Relation: Self = 0, Spouse - 1, Child - 2, Spouse of married child -3, Parent - 4, Grandparent - 5, Grand-child - 6, Brother/sister - 7, In-laws - 8, Other relatives - 9, Servant/Employee - 10, Others - 11.

Marital Status: Married - 1, Unmarried - 2, Divorced/separated - 3, Widowed - 4.

Educational Level: Not literate - 01, without formal schooling - 02, below primary - 03, primary - 04, middle -05, secondary - 06, higher secondary - 07, diploma/certificate (ITI etc.) - 08, graduate (general) - 10, post-graduate & above (general) - 11,

technical/professional degree (medical, engineering, law, etc) – 12, still studying – 13, Not applicable – 14.

Activity: Agriculture and allied – 1, Agricultural labourer – 2, daily wage earner – 3, Housewife – 4, Petty Business/self-employed – 5, Trade/business – 6, salaried service (regular) – 7, salaried but casual – 8, student – 9, Pensioners – 10, Not applicable – 11, Seeking/ available for work – 12, others – 13.

[Section 2B] Household Assets (Provide actual number of assets in possession, put 0 if No)									
1	Traditional Plough		10	Bicycle		Do you own the following?			Yes – 1
2	Bullock Cart		11	Phone/Mobile					
3	Tractor		12	Refrigerator					No - 2
4	Power Tiller		13	TV		1	Savings bank a/c		
5	Pump Set/sprayer		14	Radio		2	Fixed Deposits		
7	Commercial Vehicle		16	Handloom		4	Life Insurances		
8	Two Wheeler vehicle		17	Computer/Lap top		5	Crop Insurances		
9	Four wheeler vehicle								

[Section 2C] Housing and Housing Amenities			
1	Ownership of house (Own – 1, Rent/hired – 2, Govt. provided – 3, others – 4)	5	Whether water from major source sufficient all seasons. (Yes – 1, No – 2, can't say – 3)
2	Ownership of homestead land (individual -1, community – 2)	6	Source of cooking fuel (LPG – 1, Kerosene -2, Gobar gas – 3, Charcoal/Dung – 4, Firewood – 5, Others – 6)
3	Type of house (Kutcha -1, Semi-pucca – 2, Pucca – 3)	7	Distance to the major source of drinking water? **
4	Major source of drinking water.*	8	Whether house is electrified (Yes – 1, No – 2)

Codes:

* Drinking water: tap/piped water – 1, tube well/ hand pumps – 2, well-protected – 3, well-unprotected – 4, tank/pond (reserved for drinking – 5, other tank/pond – 6, river/canal/lake – 7, spring – 8, others – 9

** Distance: within dwelling – 1, outside dwelling but within the premises – 2, outside premises: less than 0.2 km – 3, 0.2 to 0.5 km – 4, 0.5 to 1.0 km – 5, 1.0 to 5 km – 6, 5 km or more – 7.

[Section 3] Social relations and the pattern of use of commons in the village:

1. Are there any resources in the village that belongs to no one personally/'commons'?
- Yes () No () Can't say ()

2. What are these resources?.....
.....

3. Are they used equally by all caste groups in the village? ----- Yes ()
No () Can't say ()

4. Do you have any access to them? If yes, then what kind?
.....
.....

5. Do you generate income from these resources? ----- Yes () No ()
Can't say ()

6. Are they sustainable/ enough to support the family?
.....
.....

7. Do you have any role in the decision making process for the maintenance of these resources? --- Yes () No () Don't Know ()

8. Is there any caste group that has more power over these resources? If yes, which one.

.....
.....

9. Is there any caste group that depends on these resources mostly? If yes, which one.

.....
.....

10. Are these Common Property Resources (CPR) utilized for the overall development/use of the village? If yes, then what kind.

.....
.....

11. Do you think that the CPRs are gradually decreasing? If so, then why.

.....
.....

12. How does it affect you?

.....
.....

13. Has there been any development project in the village? ----- Yes ()
No () Don't Know ()

a) If yes, what

kind.....
.....

b) Do you think such projects have exhausted the CPRs? ----- Yes ()
No () Don't Know ()

c) Which group of people do you think are mostly affected by such projects?

.....
.....

d) In what way are they affected?

.....
.....

e) Has the government provided any compensation? ----- Yes ()
No () Don't Know ()

f) Do such compensations help the people to generate alternative sources of
income? If yes, what kind?

.....
.....

12. Have the villagers initiated any kind of steps for the preservation of the
CPRs? If yes what kind?

.....
.....

[Section 4] Land and livelihood:

1. How much land do you have?

.....
.....

2. Do you have agricultural land of your own? If yes then, how much.

.....
.....

3. Do you rely on land alone for livelihood? ----- Yes () No ()

4. With the amount of land you own, is the produce enough to sustain your family throughout the year? ----- Yes () No ()

a) If not then, what are the alternative means of income generation?

.....
.....

5. Which caste group do you think has highest amount of land at their disposition?

.....
.....

6. According to you, which caste group in the village mostly depends on land?

.....
.....

7. What is your source of agricultural labour? ----- Share cropping ()
Adhi () Sukti ()

8. Who are these labours and where do they come from?

.....
.....

9. Has such trend led to the settlement of people from outside in the village?

.....
.....

10. How does it affect you?

.....
.....

11. Do the religious institutions of the village have any special land rights? If yes then, what?

.....
.....

12. What are the major crops grown?

.....
.....

13. Do you grow any cash crops? If yes, what kind.

.....
.....

14. Alternative forms of livelihood in the village, if any.

.....
.....
15. What do you think are the reasons for shift from agriculture to other forms of livelihood?

.....
.....

[Section 6] : Market as an economic and social institution:

1. Which is the nearest market?

.....
.....

2. What kind of market is it? - ----- Daily () Weekly () By weekly () Others ()

3. In what way do you participate in the market? ----- Buyer () Seller () Both ()

4. What kinds of products do you sell?

.....
.....

5. Do you depend on the CPRs for the appropriation of these products?

.....
.....

6. Which community/caste owns much of the share of the market area in the village?

.....
.....

7. Is there any specific caste group that occupies most of the area in the market? If yes, than which.

.....
.....

8. Do you see the market as a social institution? (in terms of inter caste interaction) ----- Yes () No () Can't say ()

9. Do the women of your family participate in the market for selling? -----
Yes () No ()

[Section- 7] :Political structure:

1. Do you participate in the Panchayati Raj institution (PRI)? At what level?

.....
.....

2. Are you aware about the Gram Sabha meetings? ----- Yes () No ()

3. Do you attend them on regular basis? ----- Yes () No ()

4. Are you satisfied with the work of the local self govt. in your area? -----
Yes () No ()
5. Is there any caste group that is more powerful in representing themselves in the PRI? If yes, then which?
.....
.....
6. What do you think is the reason behind their political power?
.....
.....
7. Do you think being in power helps them to appropriate the other resources of the village? ----- Yes () No ()

[Section- 8] : Religious change and its impact upon the nexus of caste and class:

1. How important is religion in your family?
.....
.....
2. Do you think the importance has changed overtime? ----- Yes () No ()
Can't say ()
3. If there has been any change, then what kind?
.....
.....

4. How many religious institutions are there in the village?

.....
.....

5. How are they different from each other?

.....
.....

6. Are you a part of the religious institutions of the village? ----- Yes ()
No ()

7. At what level do you participate?

.....
.....

8. What kind of access do you have to these institutions? Is it similar across all caste groups?

.....
.....

9. What is the organizational structure of the institution?

.....
.....

10. Are you satisfied with it? If No, why. ----- Yes () No ()

.....
.....

11. How frequently do you visit these institutions? ----- Everyday () Weekly
() Occasionally ()

12. Do these institutions allow women to participate? ----- Yes () No ()

If yes, at what
level.....
.....

13. Is women part of the organizational structure? If yes, in what way? ----- Yes ()
No ()

.....
.....

14. Are there any CPRs that belong to these institutions? -----Yes () No ()

15. Who decides for the use of these CPRs on behalf of the institution?

.....
.....

[Section 5] : Migration and its implications:

1. Has any member of your family migrated to nearby town/city? If yes then, who.

-----Yes () No () (if yes, provide member ID)
.....
.....

a) What is the reason of migration? ----- Work () Education () any
other ()

b) What kind of work has he/she taken up in the city?

.....
.....

c) Do they send money regularly? If so, how much? -----Yes () No ()

.....

d) Are they connected with the family/ visit frequently?

.....
.....

e) Who provided financial support during the process of migration?

.....
.....

2. Has there been any migration of women as agricultural labour?

.....
.....

3. Who are they and where do they come from?

.....

4. Do you think the depletion of CPRs in the village forces people depending on them out to cities?

- Yes () No () Can't say ()

[Section- 8] : Role of women in decision making and participation in livelihood:

To be asked to the women of the family.

1. Do you contribute to the family income? ----- Yes () No ()
)
2. If yes, then in what ways?
.....
.....
3. Do women in your family get a share of the family property in legal terms? ---
----- Yes () No ()
4. Do you feel economically vulnerable? ----- Yes () No ()
5. Are the women in the family encouraged for education? ----- Yes ()
No ()
6. Are you aware about the reservations of seats in the Panchayati Raj
institutions in the village? -- Yes () No () Can't say ()
7. On the whole, would you say your health is: ----- (Excellent – 1, Good – 1,
Poor – 3)
8. Are you aware of the following schemes - (Majani – 1, Mamoni – 2, JSSK – 3,
RSBY – 4, JSY – 5)? ----- Yes () No ()

9. Have they in any way benefitted you? ----- Yes () No () Can't say ()

10. Are you satisfied with these schemes? ----- Yes () No () Can't say ()

11. Are there any women organizations in the village? --- Yes () No (), if yes, what kind?

.....
.....

12. Are you a member of any such organization? ----- Yes () No ()

13. What kind of economic as well as non economic initiatives are taken by these organizations?

.....
.....

14. Do you think they are helpful? ----- Yes () No () Can't say ()

15. Beyond household work, what kind of work do you engage in?

.....
.....

16. In what ways do you utilize the CPRs?

.....
.....

ANEXURE III

Focus Group discussions

1. Youth group:
 - What kind of facilities are there in the village for students/ adolescenc?
 - Whether they are satisfied.
 - What else according to them can be done?
 - Are their families supportive enough in terms of their education/ what are the options available?
 - What are their aims and aspirations?
 - What kind of jobs are they interested in and would like to pursue in the future.
 - Are they engaged in any form of labour/work? What kind.
 - Do they plan to migrate in the cities for work in the future?
 - What is their status of higher education/ qualification?
 - What kind of jobs/work are they basically engaged in?
 - Are there any youth clubs/ organizations in the village?
 - What kind of recreational and constructive activities are carried out by them.
 - What are the commons they know about in their village?
 - What are their uses as they have seen?
 - Has the youth as a group been able to make use of the commons in and around the village in generating some sort of income?

2. Adult group:
 - What are the sources of livelihood of the people?
 - Whether they have been benefitted from any govt. schemes.

- What has the govt. done to tackle the problem of unemployment in the village?
- Whether the youth have been able to appropriate such schemes.
- Whether those were beneficial in sustaining their livelihood.
- In what way are the available common property resources being used?
- What is their present importance and what is being done to restore them?
- How are they managed?
- In terms of access to such resources, what is the stand of different caste groups across the village?
- Whether the decline of CPRs has led to the migration of people from the village.
- What kinds of works are taken up by those who migrate?
- Have some CPRs been converted to personal business sources.(fishery)
- Is there some caste group that organizes the CPRs on behalf of the rest of the village?

3. Elderly group:

- Do they still work?
- How secured and prepared are they for their old age?
- Do they avail the bridha pension/any other govt. schemes?
- What kind of common health issues do they suffer from?
- Are they going through proper medical treatment?
- How do they meet with the cost of the treatment?
- Who do they live with?
- What kind of recreational activities are they engaged in?
- What kind of role do they play in the village?
- What was the use the use of common property resources in their times?
- How has it changed over time?
- What are the factors behind their change/decline?
- How has the ownership over the CPRs changed?

- How has the caste/class scenario transformed over the years?

4. Gram Panchayat:

- What is the awareness of people regarding the local self government?
- Awareness of the women in the village regarding the reservation of seats in the Panchayat.
- Frequency of the Gram Sabha meetings/ attendance of the villagers.
- The kind of works done by the local self government for the overall development of the village?
- Issues regarding the Common Property Resources in the village and its maintenance.
- Whether the involvement of the villagers in the local self government cuts across caste and class.

5. Women Self-help groups:

- Numbers of women's self help groups in the village.
- The kind of economic and non economic initiatives taken by these organizations.
- How far are they beneficial for them?
- Do they play any important role in the empowerment of women of the village?
- Has such groups helped the women to be economically independent?
- Have any of such groups used any common property resources for income generation?
- What kind of role do these organizations play in the overall development of the village?
- The question of caste component in the formation of such organizations.
- What kind of future planning do they have regarding their organizations?
- How do women participate in agriculture? At what level.
- What kind of relationship do they have with the commons?

- On an individual level, how do the women of the village use the commons?
 - Whether they take part in fishing, animal rearing and how are commons used in this purpose.
6. People in Charge of the Religious Institutions:
- The extent of involvement of villagers in the religious functions.
 - The reason behind the different religious institutions (naamghars) in the village catering to the needs of different caste groups.
 - Any other kinds of activities apart from religious activities carried out by the institutions.
 - Agricultural/ non-agricultural/ CPR under the religious institutions if any.
 - Whether all the members of the institutions are equal in terms of decision making.
 - The role of women in the institutions.



भारतीय सामाजिक विज्ञान अनुसंधान परिषद्

(मानव संसाधन विकास मंत्रालय)

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Revathy Vishwanath
Assistant Director, Rp

F.No. 02/32/2013-14/RP

Date: 23.10.2017

To Whomsoever It May Concern

It is stated that that Dr. Sarmistha Das, Assistant Professor, Department of Sociology, Tezpur University, Naapam, Tezpur, Assam-784028 has applied for the Research project entitled "**Caste, Class and Commons: A Study in Nagaon District of Assam**". The project report is submitted to ICSSR and the project has been successfully completed.

(Revathy Vishwanath)

Dr. Sarmistha Das
Assistant Professor
Dept. of Sociology
Tezpur University,
Naapam, Tezpur,
Assam-784028

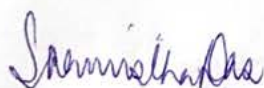
FORMS
GFR 19-A
 [See Rule 212 (1)]
Form of Utilization Certificate

Sl. No.	Letter No. And date	Amount	Certified that out of Rs. 5,50,000.00 (Rupees Five Lac and Fifty Thousand only) of grants-in-aid sanctioned and released Rs. 5,08,750.00 during the year 2014-16 in favour of Registrar, Tezpur university, Napaam, Assam under to ICSSR Letter No. given in the margin and <u>Rs Nil</u> on account of unspent balance of the previous year, a sum of Rs 5,08,750.00 (Rupees Five Lac Eight Thousand Seven Hundred and Fifty only) has been utilized for the purpose of ICSSR funded Research Project entitled 'Caste, Class and Commons: A Study in Nagaon District of Assam' for which it was sanctioned leaving an unspent balance of <u>Rs. Nil</u> as on 18.01.2017.
1.	F. No. 02/32/2013- 14/RPR/SC Dtd. 28.12.2013	5,50,000.00	
	Total	5,50,000.00	

Certified that I have satisfied myself that the conditions on which the grant-in-aid was sanctioned have been duly fulfilled/are being fulfilled and that I have exercised the following checks to see that the money was actually utilized for the purpose for which it was sanctioned.

Kinds of checks exercised:

1. Cash Book
2. Leisure Book
3. Stock Registrar
4. Annual Account verified and checked by C & AG.



Sarmistha Das


 Finance Officer
 Tezpur University
 12.17


 Registrar
 Registrar
 Tezpur University

For SURAJIT CHAKRABORTY & CO.
 CHARTERED ACCOUNTANTS


 CA, SURAJIT CHAKRABORTY
 (Proprietor)
 Membership No. - 305054
 8.2.2017

Certified by the C.A.

Audited Statement of AccountsMajor Project Entitled: Caste, Class and Commons: A study in Nagaon District of Assam.


Expenditure Head	Percentage Allocation to total Budget of the Study	Actual Value as per the Study	Actual Expenditure	Unspent Balance Return to ICSSR
Full Time Research Staff Part-time Assistance /Hiring charges	Not exceeding 50%	2,75,000	3,23,097	-48,097
Fieldwork Cost (Travel/Logistics/Lodging-Boarding etc.) Source (Materials/Software/Data Base etc.)	Not less than 37.5%	2,06,250	1,28,530	77,720
Contingency	5%	27,500	22,804	4,696
Institutional Overheads	7.5%	41,250	34,319	6,931
Total	100	5,50,000	5,08,750	41,250 (yet to receive as final installment)


Note:


- Total Fund Sanctioned : Rs. 5,50,000/-


- 1st Installment : Rs. 2,20,000/-- Actual expenditure within period under review (1/01/2014 --31/07/2014) : **Rs. 88,233/-**- 2nd Installment : Rs. 1,23,750/-- Actual expenditure within period under review (01/08/2014 -31/01/2015) : **Rs. 1,46,410/-**


- 3 rd Installment	: Rs. 1,23,750/-
- Actual expenditure within period under review (01/02/2015-31/07/2015)	: Rs. 1,55,674/-
- Actual expenditure within period under review (01/08/2015-30/11/2015)	: Rs. 77,183/-
- 4 th Installment	: Rs. 41,250/-
- Actual expenditure within period under review (01/12/2015-31/12/2016)	: Rs. 41,250/-
- Total Fund Released	: 2,20,000+1,23,750+1,23,750+41,250 = 5,08,750/-
- Actual expenditure up to 10th January 2017	: 88,233+1,46,410+1,55,674+77,183+41,250 = 5,08,750/-
- Fund Available for Expenditure	: 5,08,750- 5,08,750 = 0.


Sarmistha Das
Project Director


4.2.17
Finance Officer
Tezpur University
Tezpur University


Registrar
Tezpur University
Tezpur University

For SURAJIT CHAKRABORTY & CO.
CHARTERED ACCOUNTANTS

CA. SURAJIT CHAKRABORTY
(Proprietor)
Membership No. - 305054
8.2.2017
Certified by the C.A.

Annexure B: Statement of Expenditure Incurred during the Period: (1st December 2015- 20th January 2017)

ICSSR Sponsored Project: 'Caste, Class and Commons: A study in Nagaon District of Assam';

(Registration No. DoRD/Sociology/SD/20-186

Sl. No.	Item	Amount approved in accordance with the sanction order	Expenditure incurred before the beginning of the period under review (up to 30 th November, 2015)	Expenditure incurred during the period under review (01/12/15-18/01/17)	Total expenditure at the end of the period under review (up to 18 th January 2017)	Balance of the grant still available
1.	Research Associate (RA), Part-time Assistance /Hiring Charges.	2,75,000/-	2,99,635/-	23,462/-	32,3,097/-	-48,097/-
2	Travel: Fieldwork/Hiring Vehicles (Library Visit of RA + Pilot Study) Data Processing, Fieldwork (travel/lodging/boarding etc. source materials/software/data base etc.) Equipments: Laptop & Printer	2,06,250/-	1,28,530/-	nil	1,28,530/-	77,720/-
3	Contingency Expenses	27,500/-	13,554/-	9,250/-	22,804/-	4,696/-
4	Overhead Charges/ Institutional Charges	41,250/-	25,781/-	8,538/-	34,319/-	6,931/-
5	Total	5,50,000/-	4,67,500/-	41,250/-	5,08,750/-	41,250/- (yet to receive as final installment)

Note:

- Total Fund Sanctioned


: Rs. 5,50,000/-

- 1st Installment

: Rs. 2,20,000/-


- Actual expenditure within period under review (1/01/2014 --31/07/2014)

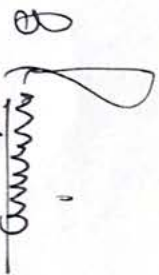
: **Rs. 88,233/-**


 Finance Officer
 Tezpur University

- 2 nd Installment	: Rs. 1,23,750/-
- Actual expenditure within period under review (01/08/2014 –31/01/2015)	: Rs. 1,46,410/-
- 3 rd Installment	: Rs. 1,23,750/-
- Actual expenditure within period under review (01/02/2015-31/07/2015)	: Rs. 1,55,674/-
- Actual expenditure within period under review (01/08/2015-30/11/2015)	: Rs. 77,183/-
- 4 th Installment	: Rs. 41,250/-
- Actual expenditure within period under review (01/12/2015-31/12/2016)	: Rs. 41,250/-
- Total Fund Released	: 2,20,000+1,23,750+1,23,750+41,250 = 5,08,750/-
- Actual expenditure up to 18 th January, 2017	: 88,233+1,46,410+1,55,674+77,183+41,250 = 5,08,750/-
<u>- Fund Available for Expenditure</u>	: 5,08,750- 5,08,750 = 0.

Certified that the expenditure of the scheme has been incurred in accordance with the budget approved by the Indian Council of Social Science Research, New Delhi.


Sarmistha Das


4.2.17
Finance Officer
Tezpur University


Registrar
Tezpur University