



Agricultural Practices And Sustainability Among The Char Inhabitants Of Sipajhar Development Block Of Darrang District, Assam

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ABSTRACT

The fabric of agricultural activities in India reflects the spectrum of socio-economic variation of different socio-cultural groups. In the other words the agricultural scenario reflects the intense physical heterogeneity across the socio-economic aspect. Agriculture is the main occupation of the majority of population in Darrang district. The farmers of the district rely heavily on agriculture for their livelihood. Basically the Char areas of Darrang district are highly rich in the agricultural sector. Mainly winter crops are practiced in the Char areas of Darrang district. There is also devoted to study about the sustainable development in the Char areas. The intrinsic meaning of sustainable development implies the ethical imperative of equity within and between generation, which goes beyond the mere satisfaction of basic human needs. Sustainable development of region is solely dependent on conservation, management and judicious use of natural resources of the region. The char areas of Sipajhar development block of Darrang district are far lagging behind so for the development is concerned. The tremendous population pressure in the Char areas on arable land may be considered as one of the most important aspect of sustainable development issue.

Keeping this point of view, the researcher considers it important to undertake an analytical study on ‘Agricultural practices and Sustainability Among the Char Inhabitants of Sipajhar Development Block of Darrang district, Assam.’

Key words: Agriculture, Char,darrang, development,inhabitants, sustainable.

Introduction:

Agriculture has an enormous environmental food print. Agriculture is the art and science of cultivating the soil, growing crops and raising livestock. And also it a rechanneling of energy of human planting and animal consumption. Agriculture is the back bone of economy in Darrang district. About 85% of the population is engaged in agriculture and allied activities. They took it as their main occupation. The diverse topography and unique agro-climatic conditions of the region has made it very conducive for growing various types of agricultural and horticultural crops.

Sustainable development is the development that meets the need of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs. Sustainable development is one aspect of the larger issue of development of human society today. According to UNDP in its Human Development Report (1991) is “development that improves health care, education and social well being.” Basically the sustainable development requires meeting the basic needs of all and providing opportunity to satisfy their aspirations for a better future life. Sustainable agriculture is farming in sustainable ways, which means meeting society’s food and textile present needs, without compromising the ability of future generation\’s to meet their needs. The study area comprises mainly the agricultural pattern and sustainability of Char areas of Sipajhar development block of Darrang district.

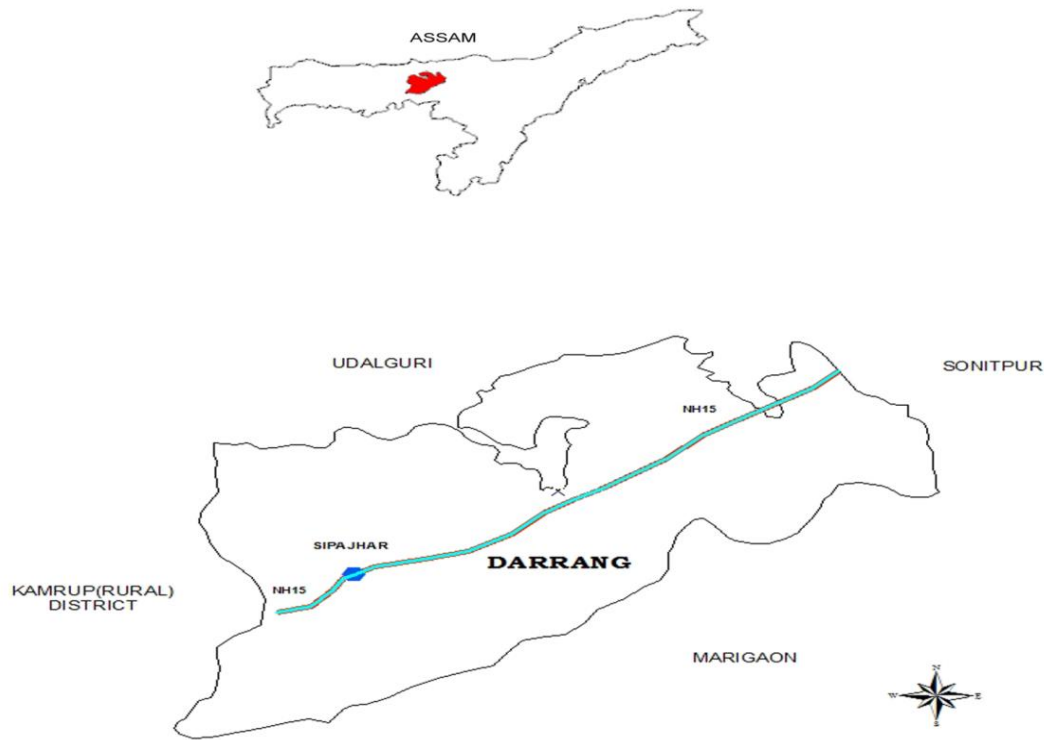
Study Area:

The district of Darrang was created with effort from July 1983 by converting the erstwhile sub-division of Mangaldai. The name Darrang was derived from the Bodo word Douranga, which means ‘*Lilabhumi*’ (Playground) of Gods. According to scholar Late Dineswar Sarma, the word Darrang came from *Dawrang* which means ‘Gateway’, as there was direct entry to Bhutan and from there to Nepal, China etc. Gradually this was known as Darrang consisted of a large area. The district is divided into six community development blocks namely Sipajhar Development block, Dalgaon_Sialmari Development block, Pub Mangaldai Development Block, Pachim Mangaldai Development Block, Kalaigaon Development block and Khairabari Development block. In this our study area covered the Sipajhar Development Block.

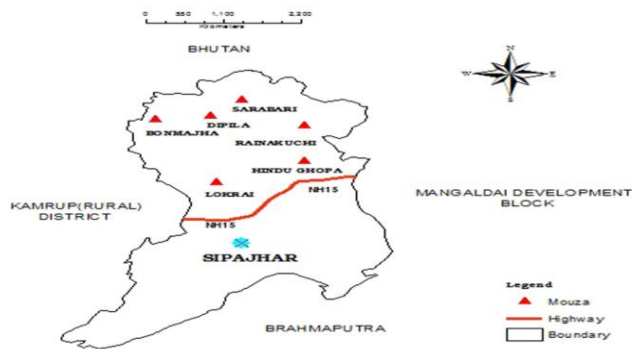
The word “Sipajhar” is derived from two terms the ‘Sipha’ referring to an ancient river passing through this area and the ‘Jhar’ to the woods grown on the bank of the river and eventually which come to known as Sipajhar. The area is extend latitudinally from 26°12’42” to 26°32’25” and longitudinally from 91°44’49” to 91°57’18”. It is located in the middle part of the Brahmaputra valley of and is surrounded by river Saktola in the east, Barnadi in the west, Mangaldai-Majikushi Road in the north and the mighty Brahmaputra river in the south. The study area of this paper is focused on char areas of sipjhar development block comprising the villages Dhalpur-1, Dhalpur-2, Dhalpur-3, Fuhuratali, kurua gaon, Bheni chapari and kirakata Chapari. These villages are predominantly inhabited by non indigenous people muslims and by some hindu refugees, while the built up region lying to the north of char areas is largely inhabited by the indigenous non tribal group who are the non tribal hindu and muslim.

STUDY AREA LOCATION MAP

0 1.5 3 6 9 12
Kilometers



THE STUDY AREA SIPAJHAR DEVELOPMENT BLOCK OF DARRANG DISTRICT



Objectives of the study:

The researchers have designed to study the problem under the following objectives—

1. To study about the agricultural pattern of the study area
2. To analyse the sustainable agriculture among the Char inhabitants of the study area

Methodology of the study:

The data for the present study have been collected through intensive field work which were carried out in the study area in several ways. The data for proposed study includes both primary and secondary data. Undertaking field work, library work was undertaken primarily in departmental library of the Gauhati University. The secondary source materials were also collected from census records, Char development office of Darrang District, land revenue reports, settlement group reports and other documents. The field data are collected through the questionnaire.

Result and Discussion:

Agriculture is the main occupation of 90% of the total population in the district. Out of total geographical area, 52.72% is devoted to agricultural activities. The kinds of crops cultivated and the amount of land used for agriculture is not uniform in all parts of the district. Darrang district like its counterparts in Assam produces a variety of crops such as food crops, fibre crops, oil seeds, pulses, fruits, vegetables, sugarcane, tobacco, tea, and spices. The Sipajhar development block is popularly known as 'rice bowl' of the district where 95% of the total population is engaged in farming activities.

The char is a sandy island of small size located along river bank of with in a stream course. Major portion of char chapari residents are East Bengal rooted those were brought to Assam during the British era for cultivate the wetland by direct patronizing the Government. There are six char village under the Sipajhar development block named Dhalpur-1, Dhalpur-2, Dhalpur-3, Bheni chapari,, phuhuratali and kirakata. They used some different methods in agricultural practices. The char areas of Sipajhar development block are not suitable for summer cultivation like rice crops because of flood. Some of the people are practices the Bodo rice in summer season. Basically the people char areas are cultivate the winter crops like different types of vegetables like, cabbage, brinjal, potato, chili, lentil, blackgram and Ahu rice, jute, Maize etc. In this study, it is found that the farmers of Char areas in Sipajhar development block are want to practice the maize cultivation instead of jute. Because they found that the maize cultivation is more fruitful instead of jute. And also they are interested to practices the Bodo paddy instead of Ahu paddy. Mainly the surveyed char village are inhabited by the Muslim immigrant origin. Agriculture is the main occupation of these people. For the economic development of the district the char area of Sipajhar development block are play an important role. They are very hard working people in agricultural sector and now they are engaged in different sectors of activities. The surveyed village people are engaged mainly

cultivate the maize cultivation, jute cultivation and different types of vegetables. Some people of this village are cultivate the crops only for their own self. And some are practice it is a commercial purpose

Efficiency of agricultural operation depends to a large extent on the possession and size of landholding of the peasants. The size of landholding and the size of farm decide the degree of risk that a farm operator may bear. According to the census of 2011 the total char village are 134, total land area is 28368 hectre and the agricultural land 20350 hectre which is the 10% of the total agricultural land of the district. About the 10% of land are covered by the different types of agriculture. They practices different types of agriculture in their land. Namely, Seeds crops, fibre crops, oil seeds, different types of vegetables are practices in these village. Basically in the char villages of Sipajhar development block are cultivate the maize, jute, mastered oil seeds, vegetables. In this study, it is found that, now a days, the people of the area are cultivate the maize instead of jute because of benefits of maize is very high. From the following table focused a picture of land use pattern of Char areas of Sipajhar development block.

(Area In hectares)

Block Name	Total area	Non-Agricultural land	Barren land	Permanent pasture and grazing land	Current fellow land	Net area sown	Total cropped area
Sipajhar	9777.2	93.2	5658.3	401.4	555.2	2933.2	1060

Source: District Census HandBook, 2011

The fruitfulness of the char areas technical system of agriculture is the well utilization of the land. In the period of rainfall the char areas lands are not suitable for the any kind of crops because the flood problem in this area. On the other time it is full of any kind of crops are practice in the area. The farmers of the area is very much conscious to used the land in a proper way. They use the modern techniques to get more production. The farmer of the char areas are very much interest to use the land under area shown more than one crop. They sold out their agricultural production into the near weekly market to Rupohi chowk, Bardoulguri and to the Sipajhar. In this study we have selected five village to understood the actual picture of agricultural production. These village are namely Dhalpur 1, Dhalpur 2, Dhalpur 3, Phuhuratali and Vehni Chapari.

The agricultural production and productivity varies spatially and temporally with the variation of physical, socio-economic and technological factors (Jasbir Singh, 1979). In Darrang district, the population has been increasing at faster rate and so there has been need of more food crops to feed them. For this the both food

and commercial crops should be increased. In the Sipajhar development block the char dwellers are very hardworking people in the agricultural field. To know the actual picture of agricultural practices among the Char dwellers of Sipajhar development block, the study has been made in 5 representative villages of the block. They produced different type of crops like different type of rice, vegetables, pulses, oilseeds, maize, wheat, jute etc. In the study it is seen that the people of the block are interested to cultivate the maize instead of Jute, because of the benefits of maize. In the following

shows the production of major crops in the selected villages of the block.

Block Name	Total No. of Selected village	Total Crop Area	Production of major Crops (in quintal)									
			Winter rice	Summer rice	Autumn rice	Maize	Wheat	Pulses	Rape & mustard	Veg etables	Jute	Potato
Sipajhar	5	421.75	7042.1	1531.42	468.24	1011.21	4.23	344.01	424.45	1234	324	324.49

From the above table it is cleared that all varieties of crops are cultivated in this block. The rice production is very high which is 7042.1 quintal among the other crops. Actually this block is very famous for rice production. So it is called as 'Rice Bowl' area of the district.

The people of the Char areas are not very active to protect their environment. They have not the sufficient knowledge, how to manage their surrounding. But due to the increase of tendency to learning among the Char inhabitants and increase of modern technology the char dwellers are very alert for sustain their environment. From the field observation followings are found among the dwellers.

1. In the study area only a few number of people are know about the environmental problem and pollution. But they have no any idea about to protect these problem.
2. Maximum People have no idea about the sustainability or sustainable development. From the study it is seen that only 10% people are aware about the sustainability.
3. The economy of the study area is dependable on agriculture.
4. The farmer used traditional method in their agricultural field but the farmer used the chemical fertilizers in improper way which is the bad sign to the environment.

5. The irrigation facilities are not well developed in the study area.
6. Although the people of the study area have no any knowledge about environmental education but they perform eco-friendly life with the natural environmental. Because of the traditional knowledge that the nature is the main livelihood of the people.
7. In the study area the electricity is not available. Maximum people are used the traditional kerosene lamp. But in the village Dhalpur 3 the solar light is available through the BPL.
8. From the field observation it is seen that the people of the study area are used the galvanized sheet of their house as wall. It is because of frequent flood in their areas.
9. The transport system is very backward in the study area. They used boat, bullock cart as their communication.
10. For sustainable development the people of the Char areas of Sipajhar development block are not aware. But they do some great work to protect their environment. For instant, they used maize plant and leaves for their domestic animal as their food. And also they used the dry leaves like as fuel for cooking. From the field study it is also seen that the people of the Char area are very active to manage their agricultural field. They used organic fertilizers in their agricultural field, like cow dung. But no doubt they also used the chemical fertilizers in agricultural field because of commercial purpose.
11. They also used the raw cow dung to covered with bamboo or other wooden stick and will it to dry. And than after it used as their fuel for domestic used instead of LPG.
12. Deforestation is very less in the study area.

After evaluating the agricultural practices and the sustainable life picture of the study area, some suggestions are implement to promote the sustainable life to sustainable development.

1. Create an eco-friendly environment to developed a sound river based livelihood of the area.
2. The environmental education should be introduced which help to giving the knowledge of sustainable development.
3. Encourage to a forestation to protect the environment.
4. And also encourage to used the products which are locally available resources.
5. To create an environment to used the organic fertilizers ion their agricultural field.
6. To forward a lesson how they lived a hygienic life.
7. The communication system should be introduced which help the people to connect with urban areas.

Conclusion:

Agriculture is the main occupation of these people but some of the people of these village primarily depend on the age old agriculture in an uncertain climate which forces majority of the people to live below the poverty line. Many of them are now engaged in other works instead of agriculture like rickshaw or thela pulling and daily wage labour in construction of building and road making in the urban areas. And also these area are severely affected by the flood every year and there is also lack of communication and transportation facilities. For this they used country boats and steamers, carts drawn by bullocks are the main means of transportation. Although the contribution of these three village of Sipjhar development block in to the economic condition of Darrang district is very high. Because they are main source to managed the agricultural side of the district. They are very hardworking people in agricultural field. So that we are very lucky to say that the Darrang district is world famous for the different types of vegetables.

The degradation of environment caused great concern and there is a big question that what will be next? All environmental problems associated with development have raised several questions regarding the nature of development which has given to the concept of sustainable development. There is also a need to use the traditional wisdom of those people who live close to earth and close to the nature.

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