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RESEARCH ARTICLE

Panchayat and Rural Development A Case study of Amguri under Siva sager district, Assam, India

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Abstract

Gram Panchayat is considered to be an effective mechanism for the development of rural areas as well as for the up-gradation of rural population. Under the study area, the Bhuyanhat Gram Panchayat of Amguri Development block provides various schemes for rural upliftment, such as Pradhan Mantri Gram Sadak Yojana (PMGSY), Indira Awas Yojana (IAY) etc. but these schemes are still unable to uplift the village with present rate of growing population. Again at the same time, various schemes for the upliftment of rural population, such as National Rural Employment Guarantee act (NREGA), National Old Age Pension Scheme, National Family Beneficiaries scheme and Annapurna Scheme are able to cover only a small mass of population. Apart from these the study area has lack of all other supporting schemes for rural development, such as Rajiv Gandhi Gramin Vidyutikaran Yojana, Training of Rural Youth for Self Employment and Total sanitation scheme.

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Introduction

The 73rd amendment of the Indian constitution (1992) is the landmark of Panchayat Raj institution in India, which curved out the third tier of Indian political system. While panchayat have become the backbone of Indian villages for ages and they had mainly performed the role of imparting justice. Earlier there were only two tiers- the union govt and the state govt. now we have the third tier-the panchayat at village, block and district level.

In Assam the Panchayat Raj Act was passed in 1948 right after the independence and before the new constitution became operative. In the year 1959, a new act was enacted in Assam in pursuance of Balwant Rai Mehta committee on Panchayat raj. The act provided for the three tiers Panchayat Raj in Assam-(1) Gaon panchayat, (2) Anchalik panchayat at block level and (3) Mahkuma parishad at sub divisional level. Another act was passed in 1972 replacing the act of 1959. This Act was enacted with an idea of introducing two tier of Panchayat Raj in Assam by abolition of Anchalik panchayat. Mahkuma parishad and Gaon panchayat with the jurisdiction of larger areas were under the two tier system. But the provision under Assam Panchayat act 1972 was not adequate to provide sound infrastructure relating to rural development and reconstruction. Therefore another Act was provided with sole objective of rural development.

The important feature was restoration of Anchalik Panchayat with the purpose of reversion of three tier of Panchayati Raj system. Again in the view of 73rd amendment Act 1992 it was necessary to amend laws relating to panchayat in Assam. Therefore new Panchayat was formed by the government of Assam which is effect from 5th May 1994. According to this act, three tiers Panchayat will be in operation in the state and Mahkuma Parishad will only be replaced by Zila parishad.

Study Area

The Amguri is the sub-division of Sivsager district, located in the south western corner of the district, in between the longitude 94 degree 20 minute east – 94 degree 40 minute east, and latitude 26 degree 40 minute north- 27 degree north(Map-1). The average altitude of Amguri is 103 meter from msl. The Amguri block consists of 10 numbers of

panchayat such as Amguri, Boruahali, Bhuyanhat, Borahbari, Borbam, Borsila, Lalimchapori, Namtiali, Namtydol, and Penger.

The study area consist of 8 villages (10 wards) under Bhuyanhat Gram Panchayat such as Chowdang Gaon, Sonowal Gaon, Bhuyanhat, Bhuyannhat Shakha Shatra, Changmai, Khanikor Gaon,Chorai muria,Deodhai gaon,Dhunia gaon, Deuri chuk gaon,Kathalbari,Maj gaon, Hiloidari gaon,Japi hojia gaon and Rai dongia gaon..The total populations of the villages' are 7650 out of male 3808 and female 3842, schedule caste is 100. About 1500 people are living below the poverty line. And the total no of households of the villages are 1488.

Aims and objectives

The basic aim of the study is to highlight the role of Gram Panchayat in the development of villages.

Objectives

- To study the role of Panchayat in the development of villages.
- To highlight the role of Panchayat in the upliftment of rural population.

Methodology

The article has been prepared through the data collected from the office of the Panchayat and data are also added on the basis of personal observation of the study area. Along with the secondary data collected from the books and journals.

Result and discussion:

1). Role of panchayat in the upliftment of villages

Under the Bhuyanhat Gram Panchayat, following Schemes are implemented for the development of rural areas in Amguri. Such as PMGSY (Pradhan Mantri Gram Sadak Yojana),Indira Awas Yojana(IAY), National Rural Water Supply Scheme(NRWS) etc.

1. (a). The Pradhan Mantri Gram Sadak Yojana primarily aims to provide all weather access roads in the rural areas. Under this scheme several gravel and brick road have been constructed in the villages under Bhuyanhat Gram Panchayat since 2003. Such as the construction of Dhunia gaon path,Chorai muria gaon connecting Road,Jhanji Dhodar Ali connecting Road, NH 61 and Aawnati Shakha Shatra connecting Road,etc with a Total expenditure of 803000 (total length 4.50 km) in between 2003-2008.

In between the year 2008-2013, some more villages were provided gravel roads such, Sorai muria gaon to Maj gaon connecting road, Gohain Chuk to Barbheti connecting Road, Karchowa to Kathalbari connecting Road,Jaluk gaon to Napaam gaon connecting Road and a Brick Road connecting Aawnati shakha shatra to NH 61, with a total length of 10.05 km and expenditure of 3486536.Fig-1

Year	Village/road name	Nature of road constructed	Length in meter	Estimated cost
2003	Dhunia gaon path	Gravel road	450	151500
2005	Sorai murai path	Gravel road	660	210000
2006	Jhanji-Dhodar ali	Gravel road	3000	340000
2007	Aawnati shakha path	Gravel road	390	101500
2008	Jaluk to napam goan road	Gravel road	1455	500036
2009	NH-61 to Aawnati shatra	Brick road	400	540000
2010	Karchowa to Kathalbari	Gravel road	3350	880000
2011	Sorai muria to Maj gaon	Gravel road	2300	771000
2012	Borbheti to Gohain chuk	Gravel road	2545	795500

Fig-1, Source-Collected by researcher

The Jhanji Amguri national Highway 61 have been improved with plantation of jackfruit trees in the road sides with a total length of 5.3 km and an expenditure of 550715 in 2012-13. The Bhuyanhat Gram Panchayat also implemented work on water conservation such as digging and cleaning of Bhuyanhat Gram pond and Puroni gaon pond with an expenditure of 361105 in the year 2012.

1. (b). IAY (Indira Awas Yojana) is the sole program that deals with housing for the people living below poverty line (BPL). Since 2003, about 80 household were provided pukka shelters with galvanized sheet roof and brick wall with a total expenditure of 3763100, in Bhuyanhat, Jaluk gaon, Sorai muria gaon, and Maj gaon (Fig-2).

Year	No of shelters provided	Cost per shelter	Total expenditure
2008	3	40200	120600
2009	4	45000	180000
2010	19	45000	855000
2011	23	48000	1104000
2012	31	48500	1503500
	80		3763100

Fig-2, Source-Collected by Researcher

In the Amguri Development block, a total 222 numbers of beneficiaries have received shelters in all the Panchayats under the scheme of IAY in the year 2012-13. the numbers of shelters received by Panchayats under the Amguri development block are mentioned in the Fig-3.

Name of the Panchayat	No of beneficiaries received shelter(2012-13)
Amguri	15
Buruah ali	19
Bhuyanaht	31
Borahai bari	26
Borsila	17
Lalaim chapori	38
Namti ali	12
Nantydol	29
Borbam	18
Pengera	17
Total	222

Fig – 3, Source- Collected by the researcher

1. (c). Accelerated Rural Water Supply Scheme (ARWS)-Under this scheme rural area are provided with necessary drinking Water facilities, such as provision of community tube wells and Government Water supply etc. under this scheme all the villeges under Bhuyanahat Gram Panchayat were provided two numbers of community tube wells with a total expenditure of 48000 in the year 2012.

2. Role of panchayat in the development of rural population

2 .(a).MGNREGA (Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act) the basic objectives of this scheme is to provide employment to the rural mass living below poverty line by providing them the job Cards. Under the Bhuyanhat Gram Panchayat (BGP) about 936 people (290 households) were provided job cards for employment and they were provided a sum of 136 per head/per day wage rate. In the year 2010-11 about 60 people were provided wage for a period of one month for gravelling and earth work of Kothalbari Road, which incurred an expenditure of 244800 for giving wage to the labors. Where as in 2011-12, 36 people were get engaged for the construction of Sorai muria- Maj gaon connecting Road, with a period of 40 days and an expenditure of 195840 on labor. Again in the 2012-13, about 110 people were provided wage for a period of 80 days for the improvement of Borbheti-Gohain Chuk connecting road, Karchowa- Kathalbari road, Jaluk Gaon- Napam gaon connecting road, and Jhanji Dhodar ali connecting road. Which incurred an expenditure of 1196800 on labour (fig-4)?

Year	Period of work	No of labor employed	Expenditure on labor
2010-11	30	60	244800
2011-12	40	36	195840
2012-13	80	110	1196800
Total	150	206	1637440

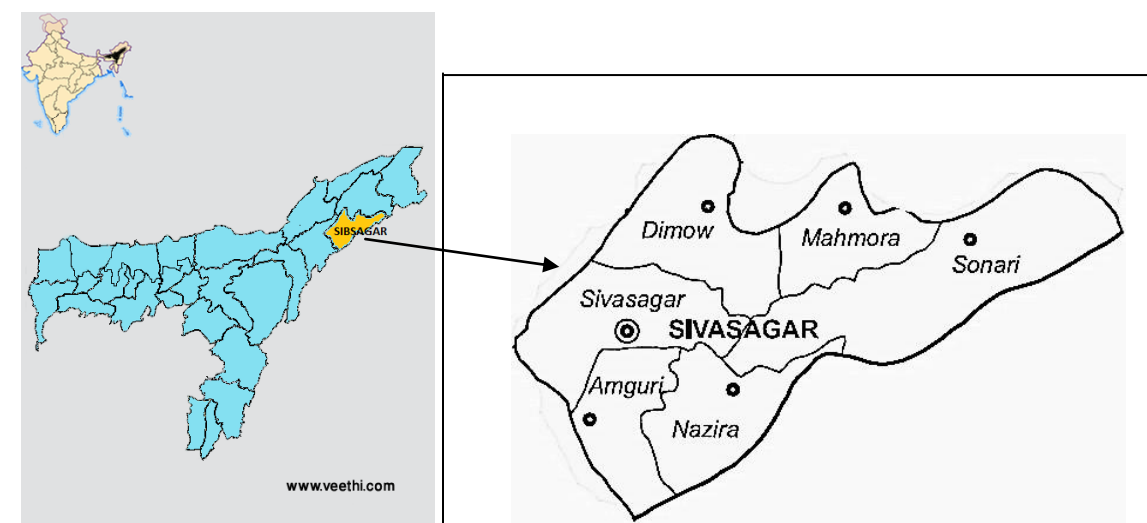
Fig-4, Source-Collected by the researcher

2. (b).National Social Assistance Programs (NSAP)-it is a welfare program of the government of India started in the year 1998. It is introduced to provide assistance to the citizens, in case of unemployment, old age, widow, sickness and physically handicapped persons, in accordance to the economic capacity and development. Under this programs following scheme are implemented in Amguri.

2. (c).IBS (Individual Beneficiary Scheme)- under this scheme the people living below poverty line are provided with a fixed sum for one time for the development of agriculture(mainly horticulture).under this scheme 16 beneficiaries received a total amount of 335600 in the year 2012-13. 10 people received 23000 / per head, and 6 person received 17600 / per head.

2. (d).IGNWPS (Indira Gandhi National Widow Pension Scheme)- this scheme facilities an amount of 300/per month for the widows in between 40-59 years of age and living below the poverty line. At present 15 numbers of beneficiaries received the scheme under Bhuyanhat Gram Panchayat.

Map of the Study Area



Map-1, source-www.veethi.com

2.(e).Indira Gandhi National Old Age Pension Scheme(IGNOAPS)- The Old Age Pension scheme is also provided to 190 beneficiaries(Below poverty line) under which, the people above 80 year of age receives Rs 500 per head/monthly, and people between 65-80 years of age receives an amount of Rs 300 per head/per month. A total 208 numbers of beneficiaries received the scheme under the Bhuyanhat Gram Panchayat. The number of beneficiaries received Old age pension scheme in all the villages under Bhuyanhat Gram Panchayat area listed below. (Fig-5)

Name of the villages	No of beneficiaries of IGNOAPS(2012-13)
Chaudang gaon	4
Bhuyanhat Nam loguan	3
Changmai gaon	32
Khanikar	1
Bhuyanhat shakha satra	4
Sunuwal gaon	10
Choraimuria	5
Bhuya gaon	25

Khamun gaon	1
Dhunia gaon	2
Deuri chuk gaon	41
Kamarchuwa gaon	39
Ali chuk deodhari	6
Maj ggoan	9
Raidongia gaon	1
Japi hojia	17
Hatimura gaon	9
Total	208

Fig-5, Source- Collected by the researcher

2. (f).IGNDPS (Indira Gandhi National Disability pension Scheme) - . The Gram panchayat also provided a sum of Rs 1200 /monthly for the physically handicapped people. At present six people has been benefited by this scheme under the Bhuyanhat Gram Panchayat.

2. (g).NBFS (National Family Beneficiaries scheme) this scheme is provided to 10 numbers of families living below the poverty line (BPL) with a fixed sum of 20000 for once. The grant is provided in the situation of the death of primary Breadwinner, in between the age of 18-64 years.

2. (h).Annapurna Scheme- with effect from the year 2000, the scheme is providing free ration to the people living below poverty line. This scheme is applicable to the families which are not covered by NOAPS (National Old Age Pension Scheme). At present about 410 families are provided 10 kg of rice/ per month free of cost.

Conclusion

It is evident from the above discussion that, the Gram Panchayat is an effective mechanism for the socio economic development of the rural areas since 1992.but despite the above facts Gram Panchayat is still unable to solve, all the socio economic drawbacks of the economically weaker and disadvantageous society. It can be analyzed from the data shown above that, the only 80 households were provided the facilities of permanent shelters under the IAY (Indira Awas Yojana), but still more than 300 households need to avail the facilities of permanent shelter from the Gram Panchayat. Again the beneficiaries under Old Age Pension, Indira Gandhi Disability Pension Scheme, and Widow Pension Scheme are too limited, in accordance to the demand. There is absence of other worthwhile schemes for rural development, such as Rajiv Gandhi Gramin Vidyutikaran Yojana, Total Sanitation Scheme; Training of Rural youth for self employment etc. which is also considered to be effective schemes for the up gradation of rural areas.

Again the Annapurna scheme and NFBS (National Family Beneficiaries Scheme) provided to fewer number of families (living below poverty line) than the existing requirement. Along with the Schemes under NREGA are able to provide only few days of employment to the rural masses, in against the 100 days employment. It is also unable to improve all the road of the villages under the Bhuyanhat Gram Panchayat. It has been estimated that, only 14.55km of road have been improved with Graveling and Earth work, out of the total length of 31.06km. Again only a distance of 400 meter of road has been constructed with bricks out of the total road constructed since 2003.Apart form these water provision as introduced by Gram Panchayat water supply scheme could not cater the demand of rural population.

So we conclude from the above discussion that, the existing facilities provided under Bhuyanhat Gram Panchayat to the development of rural areas should be redesign, in accordance to the demand of the society. And it is possible only, when the existing mechanism of Gram Panchayat would be enlarged, so as to include the people entire region and access the need of entire community.

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