

**REPORT
ON
THE TRIBAL SITUATION IN CHANGING
ENVIRONMENT
A STUDY AMONG THE MISINGS OF DHEMAJI
AND LAKHIMPUR DISTRICTS OF ASSAM**

CONDUCTED BY

**ASSAM INSTITUTE OF RESEARCH
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JAWAHARNAGAR, GUWAHATI-22, ASSAM**

PREFACE

The Misings, the second largest plain tribe, first being the Bodo Kacharis, are a riverine tribe of Lakhimpur and Dhemaji districts of Assam living side by side with the non-Mising population. They have been able to preserve their traditional tribal characteristics in spite of the changes all around. These flood affected tribal people have had to bear unimaginable odds arising out of flood every year. Some even are required to shift to a new site, equally flood affected, leaving the ancestral village. They are backward in all respects, economically, socially and educationally. Infrastructural facilities are very inadequate. The agricultural fields remain inundated during summer season compelling the people to remain satisfied with some amount of Ahu paddy, mustard, and other winter crops. The economy is therefore on subsistence level leaving practically little for expenditure heads like health and nutrition, education and improvement of house etc.

The study makes an effort to pinpoint the problems faced by the Misings. The problems faced by the Misings who were compelled to shift their villages to new sites are multifarious. The first and foremost is the non availability of suitable agricultural land. The change of habitation brings with it the problem of adjustment in a new environment, social and physical.

After an in depth study of the selected Mising villages of two districts viz Lakhimpur and Dhemaji, certain conclusions have been drawn in respect of the changing trend of the socio-cultural life of the people. It has been noticed that the Misings are maintaining the traditional culture intact while accepting the modern way of life. The changes towards modernity do not in any way affect the core of their culture. But their economy needs an overhaul and something should be done urgently to solve the perennial flood problem and allied social disabilities.

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The difficult task of data collection and data processing was successfully carried out by eight Investigators. My special thanks to all of them for their contribution. I also, offer my thanks to Government Officials of various departments for facilitating the data collection.

Lastly, but not the least, credit goes to all the villages who cooperated with the Investigators ungrudgingly while collecting data.

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CHAPTER-1

Introduction

The Mising also known as Miris, were originally a hill tribe within the ranges of the Abor, Miri and Mishmi hill of the erstwhile NEFA (North East Frontier Agency) now known as Arunachal Pradesh. They came to the plains of the Brahmaputra Valley before settling the reign of the Ahom kings and since Subansiri. The exact date of their migration to the plains is still shrouded in conjecture as the Mising had no authentic records of their leaving the hill abode. However the legends and folk stories prevalent among them throw some light in respect of their migration. It is believed that they came down to the plains on the eve of the dissolution of the Chutiya dynasty.

Originally there was no such tribe as Miri. The plains tribe people now known as Mising inhabiting the riverine areas constituting the second largest group of scheduled tribe plains of Assam are kin group of the tribal people living in the Abor hills of Arunachal Pradesh. "The history of the Miris is essentially the history of the Misings, Minyongs, Pasi Padams and other hill tribes, who profess the cult of 'Miriu', worship Donyi (sun), Polo (moon) as their principal deities and call themselves 'Ami' or 'Tani' meaning man. (Pegu, Nomal Chandra – the Miris, Pg-2). Even today the Misings nostalgically refer to the hills in their folk songs as the hilly tracts of Arunachal Pradesh were once their primitive abode.

The Miris and the Abors maintained and are still maintaining close relation although they are separated by geographical and political demarcation. The Abors (now known as Adis) of Subansiri district of Arunachal Pradesh very often visit the Nishing villages to collect special beads who preserved the traditional item. Alexander Mackenzie wrote, "The Abors and the Miris coming no doubt originally from the same habitat are still so alike in all material respects as to warrant us in calling them earlier and late migration of the same tribe, the Abors as the last comers retaining more of their pristine savagery and hardihood, while the Miris have been to some extent influenced by free association with the plains and the settled habits of civilization. The Miris of the plains are here claimed by the Abors as their dependents and the runaway slaves and under the Assam Government the Miris acted as go

between of the Abors and the traders of Assam." (Mackenzie, Alexander, 1884 – The History of the North East Frontier of Bengal, p 33)

According to Sonaram Payeng, a Mising writer, the Miris came down to the plains as the Abors constantly oppressed them by committing theft, loot etc. Being thus humiliated the Miris left their hilly abode and came to the plains. In this migration the members of the Doley and Pegu clans left the hills while some families of other clans remained in their original place.

Thus it is seen that inter tribal relationship between the Abors (Adis) and the Mishing is still maintained. The Adis of Arunachal Pradesh call the plains Misings as 'Aying Biring' (plains brothers) while the plains Mishing call the Adis as 'Adi Biring' (hill brother). Both the Adis and Misings introduce themselves as descendants of 'Abotani', the inheritor of Donyi Polo. They also claim that they descended from the heaven (Regi Regam) in a golden ladder.

B.C. Allen has given us an account of the Miris in his 'Assam Districts Gazetteer.' "The Miris as they style themselves as Mising were originally settled in the hills to the north of Lakhimpur between the Dafla and the Abor territory. They are thought to be members of the Tibeto Burman family and Chutiya Miris claim kinship with the Chutiya. According to their own account they descended from the hills with the Chutiya when they first conquered Lakhimpur and retired again with them. into the mountain fastness when they were finally defeated by the Ahoms in the 16th century. On the advent of the British, the Miris again began to settle in the plains, a process which has been in steady progress ever since". (Allen, BC – 1906 – Assam District Gazetteers, Vol III, Lakhimpur, Pg-118)

The Misings do not like to introduce themselves as Miris which they think was given to them by the non Mising. According to them the term Miri is an incorrect pronunciation of the Mising word 'Mirui' – an ambiguous term denoting the socio-religious functions prevalent among the Adis, Pasi Minyongs, Padams and Galongs of Abor hills of NEFA now Arunachal Pradesh, as etymologically the word Miri bears out no meaning in Mishing language. Again the term by which the present day Misings prefer to call themselves has also no etymological affinity with the term 'Mirui' because 'Mi' means man and 'Shing' means water / river therefore Mishing means the ethnic group living by the side of water / river. The Misings are lovers of

riverside habitation, although they have to confront all the problems arising out of recurring flood every year.

They are mainly concentrated in the riverine areas of Lakhimpur, Dhemaji, Jorhat, Sivasagar, Sonitpur, Dibrugarh and Tinsukia districts of Assam. This colourful ethnic group living amidst the non tribal fellow Assamese people for centuries has been able to maintain its traditional socio-cultural traits unimpaired inspite of the changes that have taken in the socio-religious life of Assam.

As per 1971 census their population was 2, 59,551. As tribe wise data in 1991 and 2001 censuses are not available we have projected the population taking 1971 figures at 2 % growth rate and the present population (approx) stands at 5, 49,552 in 2001.

Regarding Percentage of literacy the Misings are lagging much behind. As per 1971 census (tribe wise Percentage of literacy in subsequent censuses has not been shown) their percentage of literacy was 18.20 when the state percentage of literacy was 28.72 (male 37.19% and female 19.27%).

The literacy rate over the decades has increased. As per 1991 census the state percentage of literacy was 52.89 which increased to 63.98 in 2001. Naturally the Mising percentage of literacy too has increased over the decades.

Being a riverine tribe the Mising has no option but to construct their houses in raised platform about 5 feet above ground. A typical Mising house is sometimes as much as 30 / 40 meters in length and contains 30/40 persons living in a hall without compartments. There may be a portico in the front portion where guests are entertained. Every Mising house has loom which is placed in the open place in front of the house or below the platform house. The fireplace 'Meram' is treated as sacred and outsiders are not allowed to go near the 'Meram'.

The bachelors' dormitory 'Morung' is an important institution of the Mising which is constructed in a central place of the village. The 'Morung' serves the purpose for annual 'Porag' and other major festivals. It is the venue of the meeting of the village elders (Kebang).

Their main occupation is a agriculture. Besides Ahu paddy they grow mustard, cotton, maize, sweet potatoes in their fields. The Mising observe certain

religious ceremonies connected with agriculture. A festive religious ceremony called Ali-Ai-Liyang is observed before sowing the Ahu seeds. 'Sarg Puja' is performed in the middle of the cultivation while 'Dabur Puja' is observed as a post harvesting socio religious festival. There is no joint ownership of land among them.

Rice is the staple food and they relish the Ahu rice produced locally. Meat and fish are taken when available Fowl and pork are their delicacies. The preserved fish known as 'Ngo San' has a great demand for entertaining guests. Tea is not very popular and the locally brewed rice beer (Apang) serves as a drink. Apang is an essential item in their socio-religious occasions.

The Mising are broadly divided into two sections namely Barogam and Dahgam. Every Mishing village has a 'Gam' or Gaonbura (headman) who is highly respected. Each of the two sections have member of clans which are exogamous. Among Dahgams there are clans like Maying, Chayang, Taye, Pamegam etc. and among the Barogams there are clans like Doley, Kutum, Pait, Patir etc.

The Mising prefer joint family system. They are patrilineal and descent in traced through the male line. After the death of father the property is divided equally among the sons.

Every Mising village has a 'Kebang' which can aptly be compared with a village Panchayat. The elderly villagers (male) constitute the Kebang. The gam presides over the Kebang.

Co-operative in the socio-religious affairs is a salient feature of the Mising society. There is an institution called 'Yame Mimbir' constituted by the young boys and girls. The institution offers help to the needy villagers.

Both formal and informal marriages are in vogue. The former is expensive and it is usually arranged by the parents of the couple. The informal or run away marriage does not entail any social stigma provided the clam exogamy rule is maintained.

The payment of bride price is known as 'Alig'. Formerly a Mithun or its equivalent of Rs. 100.00 or so was charged as bride price. Today the amount has been considerably minimized.

The Mising religion is based on the belief on supernaturalism and animism. They believe that spirits which they call 'Wie' are the guiding factors of their life. The spirits, if not worshipped cause sickness, misfortune and death. The 'Mibu' ar the village expert is the only person who can appease these spirits. Pigs, fowls, Apong etc. are offered in the name of the spirits. The Mibu has to observe some rules of diet and behaviour from early childhood.

The Misings prefer introduce themselves as Hindus and they are followers of the Bhakti cult – a doctrine having Mishing traditional belief. Vaisnavism and Tantricism mingled together.

They observe various festivals during a year according to their traditional pattern. 'Ali-Ai-Liyang' is the most important festival held every year on the first Wednesday of the month of Fagun. This spring dance festival in observed to mark the sowing of Ahu paddy seeds. Dance and feast continue for 2/3 days. Poro Apang and dried fish are essential for the fest.

'Porag' is another important festival which is held in the dormitory (Morung). On the appointed date, the Mibu conducts the prayer to Chedi Melo and Donyi Polo. Poro Apang and pork are essential items for the feast. For three days dancing and feasting continue surcharging the whole village with music and dance.

In the month of Bhada (August / September) they observe a festival called 'Amrok'. Food prepared out of harvested crop is offered to the ancestors.

The Mising are very rich in folk songs (Oi Nitams) and folk stories. The young boys and girls sing Oi Nitams during festivals.

Burial of the dead is the prevailing practice among them. Every village has a common burial ground. Tilani, Mahekia and Daha are the three tier purification ceremonies.

Changes:

'Change is the constant of culture'. The Mising, too, could not escape this truism and changes have crept in into the socio-cultural fabric of the society's socio-cultural environment. But while accepting the changes due care has been

taken to preserve the traditional core culture of the community, particularly in respect religious beliefs and practices, marriage customs, festivals, clan and kingship. Due to long association and cultural contact the Misings, particularly of Majuli sub division of Jorhat District, Vaisnavism (Mising style) has taken some root in the religious domain, but here again the new faith may be characterized as superfluous as certain traditional practices have been blended with Vaisnavism in a spirit of give and take. Animistic beliefs and Vaisnavism go side by side.

Due to large contact with the non Misings and due largely to economic pressure, the Misings are gradually entering into avocations, formerly forbidden by the society like selling fish, serving as day labourer in the houses of non Mising, using modern dresses in their homes offering tea, biscuits etc. to the guests instead of rice beer etc. The younger sections are searching jobs in private and public sectors. Due to openers of the Mising villages and extension of the infrastructural facilities to the interior most villagers as well as change of leadership from the 'Gams' to the Panchayat officials the old idea of simple unsophisticated Mising has undergone metamorphic changes.

Although the Misings co-exist with the recurring devastating floods through generations, the position, however changes with time necessitating many villagers to shift their hearth and home to another place. These new areas are characterized by inhospitable terrain pregnant with multifarious and socio-cultural hazards. Thus the abandonment of the traditional strong hold has unwholesome effect in the economy as well to the corporate life which is their characteristic feature.

Consumerism has penetrated into the hitherto contented Mising psyche leading to economic imbalance of the families. Due to flood sizable lands have been lost due to silting or erosion. Sali paddy lands are becoming scarce and the yield of Ahu paddy is diminishing.

In spite of all these negative factors, the Misings are maintaining their traditional character while incorporation changes where necessary. There is large scale unemployment among the educated youths. As the agricultural lands remain the same, these youths are finding difficult to busy themselves in the agricultural activities. The Self Help Group (SHG) can assist a fraction of these unemployed

youths in gainful jobs or business activities opportunities for starting income generating scheme are limited.

In this backdrop the present study proposes to throw some vital light into the problems of the Mishing in the changing situation.

Objective:

The Mishings are a riverine tribe living mainly in Dhemaji, Lakhimpur, Jorhat, Sivasagar and Sonitpur districts of Assam. Stray Mishing villages are also found in Dibrugarh, Tinsukia, Golaghat districts also. They are maintaining most of their traditional traits in respects of material culture, religious beliefs and practices, death and disposal of the dead and folkways. But over the decades due to openness of the Mishing villages and due largely to the inter community linkages, changes have crept in the socio-cultural pattern of the society. Besides due to recurring floods many villagers have had to leave their ancestral hearth and home and these displaced families have to face lot of problems in respect of land and other traditional behaviour. The environment problem is becoming more and more acute in recent times. The traditional corporate life is fast disappearing. Besides the educated unemployment is cutting at the vitals of Mishing social life. New leadership emerges replacing the traditional ones. Needs and aspirations of the younger sections are mounting and the subsistence economy can hardly meet the galloping demands.

Under this backdrop the Assam Institute of Research for Tribals and Scheduled Castes has undertaken a study to measure the socio-cultural and political changes of the Mishing in selected heavily Mishing concentrated districts viz. Dhemaji and Lakhimpur. The broad objectives of the study are –

1. To analyse the problems of the Mishing who have been displaced due to flood.
2. To study the changes in their way of life respect of social, economic and political changes.
3. To bring out the effects of changes in the way of life of the Mishings.
4. To suggest measures for a cohesive life style without effecting the core of the culture at the same time adapting to the changes.

Area of Study:

The study was conducted in the rural areas of Dhemaji and Lakhimpur districts of Assam.

Sampling:

For the present study from Dhemaji district, out of 822 households of 15 Mishing villages under Dhemaji, Sissiborgaon and Murkong selek Development Block, 450 households (55.74%) with a total population of 3028 (47.38%) out of 6391 have been taken as sample following random sampling procedure.

From Lakhimpur district, out of 1644 household 750 households (45.62%) with population of 6265 out of 12,471 was been taken as sample for the present study.

Following table shows the details.

TABLE - I

Showing name of district, development blocks, number of villages households and population

Name of District	Name of Development Block	Sl. No	Name of Villages	No. of House-holds	Population		Total
					Male	Female	
Dhemaji	Dhemaji	1	Dihiri Chapori	40	118	103	221
		2	Dihiri Mishing Gaon	40	140	131	271
		3	Amguri Dambuk	135	758	710	1468
	Sissiborgaon	4	Hingibeel	45	150	144	294
		5	No.2 Mechaki Tangani	150	758	710	1468
		6	Debera	48	137	118	255
	Murkongselek	7	Barang Krishnapur	35	115	97	212
		8	Telijan	50	186	174	333
		9	Kerkar	36	153	145	298
		10	No.2 Haripur	41	120	96	216
		11	Malbhog	47	163	149	312
		12	Munmuni Kutum Gaon	32	95	73	168
		13	Luhijan	60	283	213	496
		14	Jiadhal	23	86	99	185
		15	No.2 Piplguri	40	112	82	194
Total				822	3374	3017	6391

Name of District	Name of Development Block	Sl. No	Name of Villages	No. of House-holds	Population		Total
Lakhimpur	Bihpuria	1	Dhunabari	59	435	388	823
		2	Pavamukh Vekeli	55	232	200	432
		3	Aunibari No 1	45	68	55	123
		4	Aunibari No 2	39	130	117	247
		5	Kaniajan No 1	51	173	141	314
	Lakhimpur	6	Ghagar Kalakhwa	52	176	136	312
		7	3No Mahaija	35	103	108	211
		8	1 No Palashpara	43	326	325	651
		9	2 No Bamunijan	166	502	500	1002
		10	Palashpara Tamonerchuk	93	223	241	464
	Telahi	11	Bor Khamukh	195	801	703	1504
		12	Gamchuk	94	615	519	1134
		13	Singimari	52	341	351	692
		14	Na Ali Miri NC	121	805	755	1560
		15	Ghagormukh NC	56	271	260	531
	Ghilamara Block	16	Garakhaiachukukati	31	92	99	191
	Boginadi block	17	Kawaimari	46	141	121	262
		18	No 2 Kawaimari	42	93	71	164
		19	Bordobi Malowal	51	125	108	233
		20	No 2 Geraki	40	98	87	185
	Gunasuti block	21	karakani	41	92	77	169
		22	Tadang	52	81	104	185
		23	Bhimpara chapori	63	122	96	218
		24	Bhurbandha	65	214	196	410
		25	Chamardubi bihdia	57	245	209	454
TOTAL				1644	6504	5967	12471

10 displaced households out of 450 sampled households are taken in the sample to represent the study under reference.

Methodology:

Participant observation method was applied for collection of data. Eight Investigators were appointed for the job who visited the Mishing villages in the far flung areas of the districts and collected the data staying in the villages for 3 months and contacting the villagers personally. Two schedules one village schedule and one household schedule were prepared and questionnaire method was applied for eliciting information. After returning from the field, the Investigators were entrusted with the task of tabulation of the data. The report writing was completed during April, 2006.

CHAPTER – II (A)

Data Analysis: Dhemaji District.

The table No. 2 and 2 A below shows the number of sample households along with sample population of the surveyed villages of Dhemaji district.

TABLE – 2

Showing number of villages, number of households, Number of displaced families and population of the sample villages of Dhemaji district.

No. of households selected	% age	No. of displaced families	Names of villages selected	Population		
				Male	Female	Total
450	54.74	15	Dihiri Chapori	82	81	163
			Hingibeel No.2 Mechaki	107	116	223
			Tangani	115	119	234
			Borang Khisnapur	91	75	116
			Telijan	100	90	140
			Dihiri Mishing Gaon	114	91	205
			Debera-Jaidhal	119	96	215
			Galighat	86	99	185
			No.2 Pipalguri	112	82	194
			Amguri	109	95	204
			Kerbar	130	119	249
			No. 2 Haripur Mishing	116	112	228
			Malbhog	106	85	191
			Munmuni Kutum Gaon	100	93	193
			Luhijan Gaon	99	89	188
Total				1586	1442	3028

TABLE – 2 A

Showing names of displaced villages with nos. of households – Dhemaji district.

Sl. No.	Name of the Village	No. of Displaced Families
1	Telijan	35
2	2No. Mechaki Tengami	150
3	Hingibil	45
4	Dihiri Chapori	40
5	Telijan	14
6	Dihiri Mising Gaon	25
7	Amguri Dambuk	43
8	Jaidhal	62
9	Kerkar	0
10	No2 Pipalguri	15
11	Luhijan Gaon	0
12	No2 Horipur Mising	0
13	Munmuni Kutum Gaon	0
14	Malbhug	0
15	Debera	19
Total		448

The study included 450 households from 15 Mising villages of Dhemaji district covering a total population of 3028.

There are as many as 448 displaced families in the selected villages and the plight of these families have been described in the pages followed.

Topography

The general physical aspect of the Dhemaji district is both varied and picturesque. The level of the land is lower and there are innumerable beels and marshy areas. In the rainy season particularly during June, July and August much of the plains areas are covered with dense masses of grass and reeds. The low lying areas are heavily flooded by the river Brahmaputra and its tributaries and the flood water during summer season is a recurring phenomenon. On these tracts forest jungle does not grow and they are covered either with reeds and wild grass or rice cultivation. On and near these places are found habitations of the Misings. Thus in our present study 26.66% of the villages are found in low land, 06.66% in Marshy areas and 66.66% villages are located in plains areas.

TABLE – 3

Showing the topography of the selected villages of Dhemaji district

District	No. of Village	Topography			
		Plain	Marshy	Low lying	Forest
Dhemaji	15	10 (66.66%)	1 (06.66%)	4 (26.66%)	

Settlement Pattern

The Mising villages are established on the banks of rivers and they are affected by flood regularly. Thus the villages do not have by and large, a permanent character. Whenever suitable agricultural lands are traced, the Misings shift to that site. Thus we find as many as 60% of the sample villages as dispersed, 33.33% as isolated and only 6.66% as agglomerated. Table – 4.

TABLE – 4

Showing settlement pattern of sampled villages of Dhemaji district

District	No. of Village	Topography			
		Plain	Marshy	Low lying	Total
Dhemaji	15	1 (6.66%)	9 (60%)	5 (33.33%)	15 (100%)

Transport and Communication

As mentioned in the preceding paras, the district is badly affected by annual flood and the marshy character coupled with sandy nature of the soil hinder much in construction of roads. As regards motor-able road in the surveyed villages none of the villages has such facility within the village. Only 2 (13.33%) villages are getting such facility within 1 – 2 Kms from their villages while another 2 villages have such facility at a distance of 2 – 5 Kms from the villages. Five villages (33.33%) have to walk the distance of 5 to 10 Kms to get a motor-able road. The distance from 4 (26.66%) villages to the nearest motor-able road is above 15 Kms. Such is the state of affairs in the poor Mising villages in the days of globalization.

As regards transport station, Railway station, Block Office, Sub-Divisional Headquarters, none of the villages has such facilities within 2 Kms. As many as 6 (40%) villages have the transport station at a distance of more than 15 Kms. Likewise 7 (46.66%) villages out of 15 have to go to catch the train at a distance of more than 15 Kms. As regards nearness of the Block Office 10 (66.66%) out of 15 sampled villages have to go the office walking more than 15 Kms and above. The same situation prevails for 11 (73.33%) villages as the Sub-Divisional Headquarter lies at a distance of 15 Kms and above. Table No. – 5 shows the details in respect of transport and communication.

TABLE – 5

Transport and Communication Facilities in the Surveyed Villages of Dhemaji District.

District	No. of Village	Categories	Distance in Kms.										
			Within village	1-2	%age	2-5	%age	5-10	%age	10-15	%age	Above 15	%age
Dhemaji	15	Motor-able road		2	13.33	2	13.33	5	33.33	2	13.33	4	26.66
		Transport Station				2	13.33	5	33.33	2	13.33	6	40.00
		Railway Station						4	26.66	4	26.66	7	46.66
		Block Office						2	13.33	3	20.00	10	66.66
		Sub-Divisional Office						2	13.33	2	13.33	11	73.33

Even after implementation of the 10th Five Year Plan, the Mising of Dhemaji district is leading a sub human life. The most essential requirement of a decent life is considered as the development of roadways. All development activities particularly in most backward areas like Dhemaji Mishing villages, center round road improvement. In the instant study as many as 80% of the villages have no roads worth the name. These villagers use foot track in this twenty first century. Only 2 (13.33%) villages are lucky to have katcha fair weather roads while a lone village remains satisfied with a graveled road. The position is shown in the following table:

TABLE – 6

Showing District-wise Condition of the Road Linking the Villages under Survey in Dhemaji District.

Sl. No.	District	No. of Village	Category	Nos.	%age
1	Dhemaji	15	Foot tracks	12	80.00
			Katcha weather Motor-able roads	2	13.33
			Katcha all weather Motor-able roads		
			Graveled road	1	06.66
			Others (Boat)		

Mass communication:

As regards mass communication facilities, the position is not very discouraging particularly in respect of modern amenities like television, radio, telephone. There are as many as 328 radio (transistor) sets, 42 Nos. of TV sets in the surveyed villages. There villages are connected with telephones. But the literacy pursuits are sadly neglected as only one family has newspaper. Library is conspicuous by its absence in the villages. Following table shows the position of mass communication in the surveyed villages.

TABLE – 7

Showing mass Communication Facilities in the surveyed Villages of Dhemaji District

District	No. of Households	Category	Nos.
Dhemaji	15	T.V.	42
		Radio	328
		Newspaper	1
		Library	NIL
		Community Center	3
		Telephone	3

Civic Amenities:

Some of the civic facilities like post office, medical sub-centers, state dispensary and private doctor appeared to be within easy reach of one or two

villagers. The Post Office, Medical sub centers and state Dispensary is located within the village of 1 each village, while private doctor facility is available for 2 villages within the village. It is observed that veterinary dispensary is not within the village of any one. The nearest veterinary dispensary is located at a distance of 5 – 10 Kms for 8 villages. Similarly nearest hospital is located at a distance of 5 – 10 Kms for 2 villages, 10-15 Kms for 3 villages and 15 Kms at above for 10 villages. Nearest Telegraph office is located at a distance of 15 Kms and above for 11 villages, and only 2 each villages get such facilities at a distance of 5 – 10 and 10- 15 kms. The Table No. 8 shows the distance factor of the surveyed villages regarding civic amenities.

TABLE – 8

Showing Civic Facilities in the Surveyed Villages of Dhemaji District

Sl. No	Category	Distance in Km.											
		With in Village	%age	1-2	%age	2-5	%age	5-10	%age	10-15	%age	More than 15	%age
1	Post Office	1	6.66	2	13.13	3	20.00	6	40.00	3	20.00		
2	Telegraph Office							2	13.33	2	13.33	11	73.33
3	Medical Sub-Center	1	6.66	1	6.66	4	40.00	4	40.00	4	40.00	1	6.66
4	State Dispensary	1	6.66	1	6.66			2	13.33	3	20.00	8	53.33
5	Hospital							2	13.33	3	20.00	10	66.66
6	Veterinary Dispensary							8	66.66	2	13.33	5	33.33
7	Private Doctor	2	13.66	1	6.66	1	6.66	4	40.00	2	13.33	5	33.33

Education Facility:

Out of 15 villages under study 14 (93.33%) villages have LP Schools within the villages and only one (6.66%) village has the LP School at a distance of 2-5 Kms from the village Government have taken some steps to spread education in the rural areas and 13 (86.66%) village LP Schools are maintained by Government. Only 2(13.33%) villages have venture LP School.

As regards ME Schools, 12 (80%) villages have such schools within the village. One each village has ME School at a distance of 1-2 Kms, 2-5 Kms and

more than 15 Kms. ME School located at a distance of more than 15 Kms could hardly cater to the needs of the tribal children. ME School of 9 (60%) villages have been taken over by Government while the ME Schools of remaining 6 (40%) villages are venture ME Schools.

Three (20%) villages have HE School within the village. One (6.66%) has the HE School within 1-2 Kms from the village and six (40%) villages have such high educational facility within 2-5 Kms and another 3 (10%) villages have high school facility at a distance of 5-10 Kms from the villages. High school for 2 (13.33%) villages are located at a distance of more than 15 Kms. Government have provided aid to the high schools of 7 (46.66%) villages while the high schools of 8 (53.33%) villages are managed by the local villagers.

Higher secondary schools are not located either within village or within 1-2 Kms. Only 2 villages (13.33%) have such schools within 2-5 Kms. Another 7 (46.66%) villages have higher secondary school within 5-10 Kms, 4 (26.66%) villages within 10-15 Kms and 2(13.33) villages within more than 15 Kms. same is the position regarding college. Government has provided grants to 10 Nos. of Higher Secondary school while 5 HS School are run by local people. Details are shown in Table – 9.

TABLE – 9

Showing Educational Facilities in the Surveyed Villages of Dhemaji District.

Category	Distance in Km.															
	With in village	%age	1-2	%age	2-5	%age	5-10	%age	10-15	%age	Above 15	%age	Govt.	%age	Private	%age
Pre Primary LP	14	93.33			1	6.66							13	86.66	2	13.33
M.E.	12	80.00	1	6.66	1	6.66					1	6.66	9	60.00	6	40.00
H.E.	3	20.00	1	6.66	6	40.00	3	20.00			2	13.33	7	46.66	8	53.33
H.S.					2	13.33	7	46.66	4	26.66	2	13.33	10	66.66	5	33.33
College					2	13.33	7	46.66	4	26.66	2	13.33		NA		NA

Educational Status:

The educational status of the Mising is far from satisfactory. There are 465 (15.35%) illiterates which go against the declared policy of universal education. Even the figures of literates are not very encouraging. Those who are acquainted with 3 R's. are considered as literates and in the true sense they are not in a position to guide their children properly. The percentage is 23.55. The primary standard persons are also very few i.e. 20.14%. There are only 182 matriculates (6.01%) and 122 (4.02%) H.S. persons. The percentage of graduates is 1.25. The promising boys and girls are handicapped because of the distance factor to the higher educational center and lack of communication facilities. Besides the poor economy coupled with recurring flood and lack of educational atmosphere in the families stand as barriers for prosecuting higher studies. Thus over the decades there are only 2 male post graduates in the villages. The socio-economic constraints tell upon heavily on the promising youths for undergoing professional courses and this category too we have found only 1 male professional.

Considering the handicaps and socio cultural constraints, the level of education of the girl child is not very discouraging although much remains to be done. There are 84 female matriculates as against 98 male matriculates. But in the post graduate standard there is no female candidate. Similarly females are not found in the professional courses.

Significantly the illiterates among female are more (61.29%) in comparison with males (38-70%). The age old apathy to female education is not shaken off altogether. Details are shown in the following table.

TABLE – 10

Showing Educational Status of the Misings in the Surveyed Village of Dhemaji District.

Sl. No.	Level of Education	Male	Female	Total	%age to total population
1	Illiterate	180	285	465	15.35
2	Literate	500	213	713	23.55
3	L.P.	342	268	610	20.14
4	M.E.	143	101	244	08.05
5	H.E	222	172	394	13.01
6	Matriculate	98	84	182	06.01
7	H.S.	77	45	122	04.02
8	Graduate	28	10	38	01.25
9	P.G.	2	NIL	2	00.06
10	Professional	1	NIL	1	00.03
11	Too Young to Study	130	127	257	08.48
Total		1723	1305	3028	100

Drinking Water Source:

All the villagers use water from tube wells. There is no water supply from the authorities. There are 85 Nos. of tube-wells supplied by Government, 82 private tube-wells and 61 tube-wells supplied by various NGOs. Following table shows the drinking water sources in the surveyed villages.

TABLE – 11

Showing Drinking Water Sources in the Surveyed Villages of Dhemaji District.

No. of Village	Source	Govt.	Natural	Private	NGO
15	Pond	0	0	0	0
	Well	0	0	0	0
	River	0	0	0	0
	Tube-well	85	0	82	61
	Reservoir	0	0	0	0
	Water Supply	0	0	0	0

Land:

Altogether 4238 Bighas of cultivable lands are found in the surveyed villages accounting for 9.41 Bighas per household. Considering agriculture as the single source of livelihood of almost all the families 9.41 Bighas cultivable land seen to be insufficient.

As regards homestead land each family possesses 1.8 Bighas on average which in the rural standard seems to be partially sufficient.

There are 2343 uncultivable fallow lands in the surveyed villages which could be made economically viable provided Government comes in a big way to assist the villagers through mechanized farming. Table 12 below shows the land use pattern of the villages.

TABLE – 12

Showing Household Lands, Land under Cultivation, Homestead Land etc. of the Surveyed Villages of Dhemaji District.

No. of Village	Category				
	Area of cultivation / wet cultivation (in Bigha)	Area of Homestead (in Bigha)	Fallow land (in Bigha)	Area under non-mulberry cultivation (in Bigha)	Total area of land in possession (in Bigha)
15	4238	821	2343	0	7402

Majority of the households, 94 (20.88%) possess land in the range of 5-10 Bighas each followed by 82 (18.22%) house holds with 15-20 Bighas each. 71 (15.77%) households possess 0-5 Bighas each. There are only 22 (4.88%) households having lands 25-30 Bighas each while families having land above 30 Bighas each account for 31 (6.88%). Details are shown in Table – 13.

TABLE – 13

Land Holding Pattern of Households of the Surveyed Villages of Dhemaji District.

No. of Village	No. of Household holding land in Bigha							
	Level	0-5	5-10	10-15	15-20	20-25	25-30	Above 30
15	Nos.	71	94	81	82	69	22	31
	%age	15.77	20.88	18.00	18.22	15.33	04.88	06.88

There are 7 (1.55%) households without having homestead land and one can imagine the plight of such families. They are living on the mercy of the follow

villagers who possess at least 4-6 Bighas of land. 84 (18.66%) households have homestead land below 1 Bigha wach while majority 229 (52.88%) households possess homestead land measuring 1-2 Bighas each. Details are shown in Table – 14.

TABLE – 14

Homestead Land in the Surveyed Village of Dhemaji District

No. of Villages	Sample Household	Homestead Land in Bigha						
		Category	Below 1	1-2	2-4	4-6	More than 6	NIL
15	450	Nos.	84	229	109	21	0	7
		%age	18.66	50.88	24.22	04.66		01.55

Majority of the families, 197 (43.77) are marginal farmers, a phenomenon common the most of the rural communities. Small farmers having somewhat sound economic footing account for 38% while small-medium farmers are considerably less i.e., 72 (16%) households. There are only 10 (02.22%) families in the surveyed villages which could be categorized as medium farmers. Large farmers are not found among the villagers. Following table – 15 shows the position of farmer status among the villagers.

TABLE – 15

Showing the Position of the Farmer in the Surveyed Villages of Dhemaji District

No. of Villages	Sample Household	Category	No. of Farmers	%age
15	450	Marginal farmer	197	43.77
		Small farmer	171	07.38
		Small-Medium farmer	72	16.00
		Medium farmer	10	02.22
		Large farmer	0	

The Misings are riverine people and annual flood of the river Brahmaputra is a common feature in their villages. Not a year passed without causing severe damage to the farmers and often times agricultural lands are silted with sand leading cultivation impossible. Such family search new lands and in this process the economy is badly effected. In the present survey we found 160 families which lost land due to flood and erosion 7 families leased out the lands to meet the pressing demands of the household management and 16 families sold out the lands due to various reasons like to relieve from indebtedness, or due to unproductive character of the lands. Details are shown Table 16.

TABLE – 16

Showing Leasing / Lost / Sold out Land in the Surveyed Villages of Dhemaji District.

No. of Villages	Sample Household	No of Families Leased out Land	No of Families Leased in Land	No of Families Sold out Land	No of Families Lost Land due to Flood and Erosion
15	450	7	0	16	160

Fluctuation of land assets due to flood is common feature in the surveyed villages. In the present survey of 450 households the villagers possessed 2782 Bighas before flood which came down to 2396 Bighas after the flood. Table – 17

TABLE – 17

Land Assets before / after Flood in the surveyed villages of Dhemaji District

No of Villages	Sample Household	Land	
		Before Flood (in Bigha)	After Flood (in Bigha)
15	450	2782	2396

It is seen from the table 18 and table 19 that families having land below 3 Bighas prior to flood could increase their land after the flood. Perhaps these populations feeling shortage of land occupied silted or abandoned lands after flood. Thus from 70 Nos. (15.55%) of families of this category before flood the figure of families increased to 120 after the flood. Similarly the families in the next category

i.e., having 4-7 Bighas of land could increase the land after flood from 65 to 81 families. After effect of flood is vivid in case of families having lands 5-11 Bighas 12 to 15 Bighas, 24 to 27 Bighas, 28-31 Bighas and above 31 Bighas before the flood which decreased to 86 Bighas from 90 Bighas, 62 Bighas from 78 Bighas, 10 Bighas from 35 Bighas, 15 Bighas from 25 Bighas and 20 Bighas from 37 Bighas respectively. Details of landholding before and after flood have been shown below in Table – 18 and 19.

TABLE – 18

Showing the Land-hold of the Families Prior to Flood - Dhemaji District

No. of Household	Land in Bighas								
	Level	Below 3	4-7	8-11	12-15	16-19	20-23	24-27	28-31
15	Nos.	70	65	90	78	17	33	35	25
	%age	15.55	14.44	20.00	17.33	03.78	07.33	07.77	5.55

TABLE – 19

Showing the Landholding of the Families after Flood - Dhemaji District

No. of Household	Land in Bighas								
	Level	Below 3	4-7	8-11	12-15	16-19	20-23	24-27	28-31
15	Nos.	120	81	86	62	12	44	10	15
	%age	26.66	18.00	19.11	13.78	2.66	9.78	2.22	3.33

There are very few landless families in the sample families. But the pangs of suffering of those 7 (1.55%) landless families could not be underestimated. Due to various socio-cultural factors as well as topographical factors these families became landless. Out of 450 families as many as 443 (98.44%) have their own lands. Table – 20.

TABLE – 20

Showing the Land Tenure Pattern of the Sample Households – Dhemaji District.

No of Households	Land Owner	Landless	Tenants
450	443 (98.44%)	7 (01.55%)	NIL

The villagers produce Ahu crops more as the lands are suitable for Ahu crops. The production of Ahu crop is continuing as before i.e., Formerly 379 (84.22%) families produced Ahu crop as major crop and today the trend continues. Next important crop is Bao. Formerly 320 (71.11%) families produced Bao but at present 311 (69.11%) families are continuing the production of Bao crop. The lands in the Mising villages are not very suitable for Sali crop as the Sali crops are grown during July to September and the lands of Mising villages during this period remaining more or less in flood water. Formerly 171 (38%) families produced Sali crop, but today 168 (37.33%) families produce Sali crop. Mustard is widely grown in the char areas but in our present study only 31 (6.88%) families produced mustard. Formally 144 (32.00%) families grew mustard seeds. The production of Matokalai is done by 32 (7.11%) families against 55 (12.22%) families in earlier time. They also produce potatoes and in lesser quantities. The table below shows the principal crops of the sample villages.

TABLE – 21

Showing Household wise Principal Crops Grown in the Surveyed villages Dhemaji District.

No. of Household	Category	Present	%age	Earlier	%age
450	Bao	311	69.11	320	71.11
	Ahu	379	84.22	379	84.22
	Shali	168	37.33	171	38.00
	Mustard	31	06.88	144	32.00
	Matikali	32	07.11	55	12.22
	Gehu	0		11	02.44
	Motormah	29	06.44	28	06.22
	Potato	19	04.22	19	04.22

Traditionally the Misings preferred joint family system as the corporate members contributed towards production process. Those days the Mising villages were by and large closed villages. People led a contented life. Wants were limited. Educational institutions were practically non-existent. Today the entire socio-cultural milieu has undergone metamorphic changes. Education is expanding; T.V., radio, and other amusement items are entering in a large scale. Contact with non Mising is increasing. As a result earlier joint family system becomes casualty. Thus out of 450 households as many as 207 (46%) families have nuclear families. Only 140 (31.11%) families are maintaining the old joint families 103 (22.88%) families are

recently switching over to nuclear from joint family. Table No. 22 shows the type of family in the sample villages.

TABLE – 22

Showing Type of Family of the Surveyed Villages of Dhemaji District.

No. of Villages	No of Household	Type of Family	Nuclear	Joint	Joint earlier Nuclear now	Nuclear earlier Joint now	Other
15	450	No	207	140	103	0	0
		%age	46.00	31.11	22.88		

As regards marital status, 39.33% of the numbers are married and 58.65% unmarried in the surveyed villages. There are 53 (01.75%) widows and 8 (00.26%) widowers in the villages. Table –23

TABLE – 23

Showing Marital Status of the Sampled Villages of Dhemaji District

No. of Household		Married	Unmarried	Widow	Widower	Divorced	Separated
450	No.	1191	1776	53	8		
	%age	39.33	58.65	01.75	00.26		

Cultivation animal husbandry and fishing are the important occupation of the villagers. These are 854 persons in the cultivation sector, 270 in the animal husbandry sector and 19 persons in the fishing trade. Till a few decades back the Mishings could not think of eke out livelihood by serving as day labourers. But the reality compels them to search for such jobs and today there are 102 wage earners in the surveyed villages. Business was not in their blood nor do they possess the required skill. But today 28 persons all male, are starting petty trades in their villages. There are 7 persons in the firewood business. 13 male and 10 female persons are engaged in salaried jobs. As mentioned earlier hard reality bring 16 persons to unhealthy, if not antisocial, business of wine selling. 20 persons, 19 male and 1 female are self employed. There are 652 (342 male and 310 female) unemployed youths in the village and they are a frustrated lot. They cannot be engaged in cultivation as agricultural lands are depleting gradually over the years. Details are shown in Table 24.

TABLE – 24

Distribution of Persons as per their Occupation of the Surveyed Household of Dhemaji District.

No. of Villages	Type of occupation found in the village	Male	Female	Total
15	Cultivation	580	274	854
	Animal Husbandry	12	258	270
	Fishing	19	0	19
	Firewood	7	0	7
	Petty Trades	28	0	28
	Salaried Job	13	10	23
	Wage Earner	79	23	102
	Unemployed	342	310	652
	Weaving	0	70	70
	Housewife	0	52	52
	Rickshaw Puller	2	0	2
	Wine Seller	0	16	16
	Self employed (Carpentry, Machinery, Maid Servant, Tuition, Thatch Cutting etc.	19	1	20

Information was gathered regarding shift in occupational status of the villagers. Regarding cultivation there is only negligible variation from the previous to present. There were 651 persons engaged in cultivation previously but at present there are 694 persons doing cultivation. Tangible variation has not seen in respect of Animal Husbandry. Previously there were 296 persons in this sector, but now there are 275 persons engaged in Animal Husbandry. In Fishing, however the difference from previous to present is somewhat noticeable. From 34 the present figure came down to 19. There is drastic shifting in firewood selling. Previously the figure was 20 but at present only 7 persons is engaged in firewood business. There is marginal increase in self employment i.e., 43 to 44 at present. Some increase of salaried job holders is noticed. From 18 in previous time the present figure is 23. But there is a glaring variation in respect of marginal workers. Formerly there were only 67 persons

but today the number increased to 124. The number of unemployed shows some improvement from 792 to 765.

Details are shown in Table – 25.

TABLE – 25

Showing Shift in Occupational Status after Flood in the Surveyed Villages of Dhemaji District.

No. of Village	Type of Occupation found in villages	Previous Occupation	Present Occupation
25	Cultivation	651	649
	Animal Husbandry	296	275
	Fishing	34	19
	Firewood Selling	20	7
	Self Employment	43	44
	Salaried Job	18	23
	Marginal Workers	67	124
	Unemployed	792	765
	Weaving	73	75
	Wine Selling	18	20

Leaving aside old aged persons, minor and students, there are sizable unemployed youths in the villages who showed various causes for their unemployment. 184 youths showed lack of employment opportunity while the next higher number of unemployed youths 165 indicated lack of education. Flood is a great deterrent for the villagers in the overall economic backwardness. 130 youths mentioned flood as one of the causes for their unemployment. Economic backwardness is the root cause of unemployment as the progress of education, overall living standard source of information etc. largely depend upon the sound economic status of any community. 105 Nos. of unemployment persons showed this phenomenon as cause of unemployment. Only 50 youths indicated lack of awareness as cause of unemployment. Table – 26.

TABLE – 26

Showing the reason of unemployment in the surveyed villages of Dhemaji district.

No. of Villages	Reason of Unemployment	Number of Person
15	Lack of employment opportunity	184
	Lack of agricultural land	37
	Lack of awareness about economic opportunities	50
	Economic backwardness	105
	Unable to work due to flood	130
	Lack of education	165
	Any other (old age, minor, students)	733

Indebtedness is one of the major causes of tribe backwardness. Quite a good number of households take loans from Mahajans (money lenders) or from the rich fellow villagers to meet expenses of marriage of sons or daughters or death rites and the loan with interest becomes unmanageable leading to indebtedness over generations. In our present study 48 (10.67%) families indebted to village money lenders. Table – 27.

TABLE – 27

Showing Extent of indebtedness in the surveyed villages of Dhemaji District.

No of Household	No. of Indebted households	%age	No. of Households without Debt	%age
450	48	10.68	402	89.33

The overall economy of the villagers indicates on unhealthy status as a major portion of the population is dependent on the earnings of the few family members. Out of 3028 persons, 1547 (51.08%) are dependent and 1481 (48.91%) are earners. Unless the number of dependents is reduced the economy will not flourish. Table – 28.

TABLE – 28

Showing workers and non workers in the surveyed villages of Dhemaji District.

No. of Households	Total Members	No. of Dependents	%age	No. of Earners	%age
450	3028	1547	51.08	1481	48.91

The household monthly income of household from all sources is limited to Rs. 5000.00 or below and with that income the families have had a tough time to manage the families. As many as 98.88% of the families have monthly earning of below Rs. 5000.00 while a meager 5 (01.11%) families earn some what tolerable income per month amounting to Rs. 5000.00 – Rs. 10000.00.

TABLE – 29

Showing monthly income of the households – Dhemaji District.

No. of Households	Monthly Income					
	Below 5000.00	5000.00 to 10000.00	10000.00 to 15000.00	15000.00 to 20000.00	20000.00 to 30000.00	30000.00 to 40000.00
450	445	5	NIL	NIL	NIL	NIL
	98.88%	01.11%				

Pigs are reared in most of the families not only for consumption but for socio-religious occasion. Pork forms an essential item in their marriage feast. The same item is also used in the feasts of certain religious occasions. It is found that 136 Nos. of families have less than 2 pigs each while only 1 family possesses more than 6 pigs. As one matured pig fetches Rs. 400.00 to Rs. 500.00, many families are earning good income by selling pigs. Bullocks are essential for ploughing and the Mising plough their fields with bullocks and hoe as mechanized farming is yet to make headway. 56 families possess less than 2 bullocks each and during agricultural season they procure additional bullock / bullocks from fellow villagers on condition of repaying the hired amount in kinds (paddy or labour). 35 families have more than 6 bullocks.

Fowls are essential in the socio-religious occasion as well as daily consumption. Fowls are sacrificed before the deities and spirits. But ironically only 144 families are rearing fowls, 68 families have more than 6 fowls each, 38 families rear he buffaloes which are mainly used for ploughing and cart plying. 73 families are rearing goats for business as well as consumption purposes. Details are shown in table – 30.

TABLE – 30**Showing Livestock Position in the Surveyed Households of Dhemaji District.**

No. of Livestock	Category							
	Bullocks	He-goat	She-Goat	He-Bufferalo	She-Bufferalo	Pig	Duck	Fowl
Less than 2	56	32	18	14	0	136	5	2
2-4	62	12	7	11	0	66	8	12
4-6	45	3	1	9	0	17	33	32
More than 6	35	0	0	4	0	1	52	68

CHAPTER-II (B)
DATA ANALYSIS, LAKHIMPUR DISTRICT

For the study of 'Tribal situation in Changing Environment of the Mising of Lakhimpur district', 25 nos of Mising villages covering 750 households with a total population of 6265 (male 3291, female 2974) have been selected. The following table shows the members of villages, house households and names of the villages with population of the selected villages of Lakhimpur district.

TABLE-31

Showing number of villages, households and names of the surveyed villages with populations of Lakhimpur district.

No. of villages	No of household	Sl.No.of village	Names of villages	Population		
				Male	Female	Total
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
25	750	1.	Dhunabari	438	388	826
		2.	Pavamukh vekeli	233	200	433
		3.	Aunibari No.1	68	55	123
		4.	Aunibari No.2	130	117	247
		5.	Kaniajan No.1	173	141	314
		6.	Ghagar Kolakhoa	77	59	136
		7.	3 no.Mahaijan	70	71	141
		8.	1no Palashpara	91	87	178
		9.	2 no Bamunijan	72	79	151
		10.	PalashparaTamoner chuk	83	94	177
		11.	Kawoimari	96	74	170
		12.	No 2 Kawoimari	148	163	311
		13.	Korokani	57	43	100
		14.	Bordubi malowal	393	366	759
		15.	No 2 Gereki	58	41	99
		16.	Tadang	69	49	118
		17.	Bhimpara chapori	73	57	130
		18.	Bhurbandha	231	198	429
		19.	Garakhia chukukati	52	38	90
		20.	Chamardubi Bihdia	274	280	554
		21.	Borkhamukh	71	62	133
		22.	Gamchuk	89	85	174
		23.	Singimari	73	69	142
		24.	Na Ali duri NC	94	83	177
		25.	Ghagarmukh NC	78	75	153
			TOTAL	3291	2974	6265

The main thrust of the study was to find out the Mising tribe adjustment in the changing environment consequent upon displacement from the original villages due to flood. It was found that out of 750 families as many as 205 families were compelled to leave their hearth and house and settled in new inhospitable areas equally affected by flood. Following table (TABLE NO. 32) shows the members of displaced families along with their new habitations.

TABLE – 32

Showing displaced Mishing families along with their new habitations of Lakhimpur District:

No. of villages	No. of households	No. of displaced families	New sites after shifting from the original villages.
1	2	3	4
25	750	205 (27.33%)	Laluk, Bihpuria, Jonai, Chilapathar, Bilokh Sadiya, Dekapam, Laimekuri, Ghagar, Alisinga, Chagalikata, Dhakuakhana, Bhurbandha, Majuli, Puthimari, Panigaon, Haripur, Kahin Dower.

The villages under survey have been selected from six Mising inhabited Development Blocks which are shown in a tabular form below:

TABLE-33

Showing names of the villages with population under the jurisdiction of six Development Block of Lakhimpur District.

Sl.No.	Name of Blocks	Names of villages	Population		
			Male	Female	Total
1	2	3	4	5	6
1.	Bihpuria	1.Dhunabari	438	388	826
		2.Pavamukh Vekeli	233	200	433
		3. Aunibari No.1	68	55	123
		4. Aunibari No.2	130	117	247
		5. Kaniajan No.1	173	101	314

TABLE -34

Showing the topography of the selected villages of Lakhimpur District:

No of villages	Topography of the villages							
	Plain	P.C.	Marsh y	P.C.	Lowland	P.C.	Forest land	P.C.
25	9	36.00	2	8.00	13	52.00	1	4.00

Settlement pattern:

The characteristic feature of the Mising villages is that the people always prefer to construct their houses on the banks or near the banks of a river and they try to co-habit with the recurring floods. Thus the Mising villages, donot have, by and large, permanent character. Sometimes they are badly affected by heavy affected and the families are compelled to shift their villages. The old agglomerated character is gradually disappearing. In the present survey we find 56% agglomerated, 36% dispersed, 8% isolated villages among the sample villages of Lakhimpur district. Details are shown in the following table.

TABLE-35

Showing settlement pattern of the sample villages of Lakhimpur District

No of villages	Settlement Pattern								
	Agglo merat ed	P.C.	Dispers ed	P.C.	Isolated	P.C.	Others	P.C.	Total
25	14	56	9	36.00	2	8.00	-		25

Transport and communication:

Lakhimpur district is famous or rather infamous for annual flood causing untold miseries to the inhabitants. Communication is badly disrupted during rainy season. The sandy nature of the soil hinders much in construction of roads. The embankments could not rescue the people from the onslaught of the vagaries of flood water completely. However some improvements have definitely taken place and in the survey we find motorable rods in 7(28%) villages just within the villages. Five (20%) villages are getting transport facilities within 1-2 kms and 7 (28%) villages within 2-5 kms. The transport facilities for 5(20%) villages, however, are at a distance

TABLE -34

Showing the topography of the selected villages of Lakhimpur District:

No of villages	Topography of the villages							
	Plain	P.C.	Marsh y	P.C.	Lowland	P.C.	Forest land	P.C.
25	9	36.00	2	8.00	13	52.00	1	4.00

Settlement pattern:

The characteristic feature of the Mising villages is that the people always prefer to construct their houses on the banks or near the banks of a river and they try to co-habit with the recurring floods. Thus the Mising villages, donot have, by and large, permanent character. Sometimes they are badly affected by heavy affected and the families are compelled to shift their villages. The old agglomerated character is gradually disappearing. In the present survey we find 56% agglomerated, 36% dispersed, 8% isolated villages among the sample villages of Lakhimpur district. Details are shown in the following table.

TABLE-35

Showing settlement pattern of the sample villages of Lakhimpur District

No of villages	Settlement Pattern								
	Agglo merat ed	P.C.	Dispers ed	P.C.	Isolated	P.C.	Others	P.C.	Total
25	14	56	9	36.00	2	8.00	-		25

Transport and communication:

Lakhimpur district is famous or rather infamous for annual flood causing untold miseries to the inhabitants. Communication is badly disrupted during rainy season. The sandy nature of the soil hinders much in construction of roads. The embankments could not rescue the people from the onslaught of the vagaries of flood water completely. However some improvements have definitely taken place and in the survey we find motorable rods in 7(28%) villages just within the villages. Five (20%) villages are getting transport facilities within 1-2 kms and 7 (28%) villages within 2-5 kms. The transport facilities for 5(20%) villages, however, are at a distance

Road condition:

The road condition of the Mising villages is pitiable .56% of these riverine people of the district still use foot tracks to keep contact with the outside world. Another 24% of the villages have Katcha fair weather motorable roads. Only 16% of the villages have gravelled roads. Only 1 village appears to be 'lucky' enough to have katcha all weather motorable roads. If this is the sample of development over five decades of planning, then a day may come when the primitive character of the Misings will get upper hand over the backward status. Following table shows the condition of the roads linking the villages of the district.

TABLE-37**Showing condition of roads linking the villages of Lakhimpur District**

No. of villages	Category	Nos	P.C.
25	Foot tracks.	14	56.00
	Katcha fair weather motorable.	6	24.00
	Katcha all weather motorable.	1	4.00
	Gravelled others.	4	16.00

Mass communication:

As regards mass communication facilities, the position is not very discouraging particularly in respect of modern amenities like television, and radio. In the sample villages there are as many as 529 radio sets and 72 Television sets. Newspapers are found in 75 households each having at least a local daily. (although the dailies are available in their villages the following day of publication). Community centres are found in 23 villages while only one village has a Telephone. Following table shows the mass communication facilities in the surveyed villages of Lakhimpur district.

TABLE-38**Showing Mass communication facilities in the surveyed villages of Lakhimpur District**

No. of villages	Sl.No.	Category	P.C.
25	1.	Television	72
	2.	Radio	529
	3.	News paper	75
	4.	Library	-
	5.	Community centres	23
	6.	Telephone	1

Road condition:

The road condition of the Mising villages is pitiable .56% of these riverine people of the district still use foot tracks to keep contact with the outside world. Another 24% of the villages have Katcha fair weather motorable roads. Only 16% of the villages have gravelled roads. Only 1 village appears to be 'lucky' enough to have katcha all weather motorable roads. If this is the sample of development over five decades of planning, then a day may come when the primitive character of the Misings will get upper hand over the backward status. Following table shows the condition of the roads linking the villages of the district.

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25	1.	Television	72
	2.	Radio	529
	3.	News paper	75
	4.	Library	-
	5.	Community centres	23
	6.	Telephone	1

TABLE-39**Showing Civic Facilities in the Surveyed Villages of Lakhimpur District**

No of villages	Sl No	Category	Distance in Kms.													
			Withing	P.C.	1-2	P.c.	2-5	KM	5-10	P.C.	10-15	P.C	More 15	P.C		
25	1.	Post office	8	32.00	6	24.00	8	32.00	2	8.00	1	4.00				
	2.	Telegraph office					3	12.00	3	12.00	6	12.00	4.00	13	24.00	
	3.	Medical sub centre	1	4.00	3	12.00	3	12.00	6	24.00	12	48.00	-			
	4.	State Dispensary							2	8.00	8	32.00	15	6.00		
	5.	Hospital			1	4.00	3	12.00	2	8.00			19	76.00		
	6.	Vety. Dispensary			1	4.00	4	16.00	4	16.00	1	4.00	1	4.00	18	72.00
	7.	Private Doctor						4	16.00	3	12.00	11	44.00	7	28.00	

Educational facilities:

After independence it was the avowed policy of the Planners of the Five year Plans to provide L.P. Schools within easy reach of the small children so that the distance factor does not come in the way of the universal education. In the present study we have seen that 76% of the villages have L.P. schools within the villages while 16% villages have such schools within 1-2 kms and 8% villages within 2-5 kms. Most of the schools i.e. 68% are Govt. schools while 32% schools are managed by local authorities.

TABLE-39**Showing Civic Facilities in the Surveyed Villages of Lakhimpur District**

No of villages	SI No	Category	Distance in Kms.											
			Withing	P.C.	1-2	P.c.	2-5	KM	5-10	P.C.	10-15	P.C	More 15	P.C
25	1.	Post office	8	32.00	6	24.00	8	32.00	2	8.00	1	4.00		
	2.	Telegraph office					3	12.00	3	12.00	6	24.00	13	24.00
	3.	Medical sub centre	1	4.00	3	12.00	3	12.00	6	24.00	12	48.00	-	
	4.	State Dispensary							2	8.00	8	32.00	15	6.00
	5.	Hospital			1	4.00	3	12.00	2	8.00			19	76.00
	6.	Vety. Dispensary			1	4.00	4	16.00	1	4.00	1	4.00	18	72.00
	7.	Private Doctor					4	16.00	3	12.00	11	44.00	7	28.00

Educational facilities:

After independence it was the avowed policy of the Planners of the Five year Plans to provide L.P. Schools within easy reach of the small children so that the distance factor does not come in the way of the universal education. In the present study we have seen that 76% of the villages have L.P. schools within the villages while 16% villages have such schools within 1-2 kms and 8% villages within 2-5 kms. Most of the schools i.e. 68% are Govt. schools while 32% schools are managed by local authorities.

As regards M.E. Schools, 60% villages have M.E. Schools within the villages and 28% within 1-2 kms and 12% within 2-5 kms. Like the L.P. Schools, 68% schools are Govt. and 32% are private.

Seven (28%) villages have M.E. Schools within the villages and 15 (60%) villages have such facility at a distance of 1-2 kms and 3(12%) villages have a distance of 2-5 kms. The H.E. Schools of 17 (68%) villages are run by Govt. and 8 (32%) H.E.Schools are managed by local authorities Higher Secondary Schools are not located within easy reach of the students. Nine (36%) villages are located at a distance of above 15 kms from the Higher Secondary Schools while 12 (48%) villages have such facility at a distance of 5-10 kms. Three villages (12%) get H.S. facilities some what nearer (2-5) kms from the villages. While only one village has H.S. School within 1-2 kms. Ten H.S. Schools are Govt. and 15 private.

As regards college education 15(60%) villages have colleges at a distance of 10-15 kms and 5(20%) villages at above 15 kms. Four (16%) villages have such colleges at a distance of 2-5 kms. and only 1(4%) village gets college education facilities within 1-2 kms. Details are shown in the following table.

TABLE -40

Showing educational facilities in the surveyed villages of Lakhimpur district

No of villages	S. No	Category	Distance in km.										Type				
			Within vill.	P.C	1-2	P.C.	2-5	P.C.	5-10	P.C.	10-15	P.C.	Above 5	P.C.	Govt.	Venture	
25	1.	Pre primary / L.P	19	76	4	76.	2	8								17.68%	8.32%
	2.	M.E	15	60	7	28	3	12								17.68%	8.32%
	3.	H.E.	7	28	15	60.	3	12								17.68%	8.32%
	4.	Higher secondary			1	4	3	12.	1	4	2	8		9	36	10.40%	15.60%
	5.	College			1	4	4	16				15	60	5	20	.	.

Source of water:

The survey showed that majority of the people use tube wells as source of water. There are 82 Govt. tube wells and 58 private tube wells in the surveyed villages as against 28 Government well and 8 private wells. Pond, the traditional source of water, is losing ground owing to people's awareness of pollution in this source of water. Table below shows the drinking water sources of the surveyed villages.

Table-41**Showing Drinking Water Sources in the Surveyed Villages of Lakhimpur District.**

No. of villages	Sl. No	Source of water	Govt	P.C.	Natural	P.C.	Private	P.C.	NGO	P.C.
25	1.	Pond	-	-	-	-	3		-	
	2.	Well	28	-	-	-	8		-	
	3.	River	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
	4.	Tube well	82	-	-	-	58	-	-	-
	5.	Reservoir	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
	6.	Supply water	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-

Land:

Wet cultivation occupies 65.78% of the total land of the villages under survey (14376 Bighas) which is followed by fallow land with 20.50%. Homestead land occupies only 8.59% of the total land. Lands under mulberry cultivation account for 5.11% only. Table below shows the position of land in the surveyed villages.

TABLE-42.**Showing household land, land under cultivation, homestead land of the surveyed villages of Lakhimpur district.**

No. of villages	Category (In Bighas)				
	Area of wet cultivation	Homestead land	Fallow land	Area under mulberry cultivation	Total land possessed.
25	9457 65.78%	1236 8.59%	2948 20.50%	735 5.11%	14376

Majority of the families i.e. 268 (35.73%) nos, possess lands in the range of 5-10 Bighas each which is followed by 235 (31.33%) families having 0-5 Bighas lands each. 114 families (15.2%) possess 10-15 Bighas each while 65 (8.66%) families have source what higher portion of lands i.e. 15-20 Bighas each. The nos of families having 20-25 bighas each are 27 (3.6%). There are 13 (1.73%) families who are in possession of 25-30 Bighas of land each. The richer families having above 30 Bighas each constitute 28 nos (3.73%). It may be mentioned that the lands possessed by the Misings are mostly flood affected and silting is a common phenomenon in their lands leading to lesser productivity.

Details of land possessed by the households have been shown below:

TABLE-43

Showing land holding pattern of households of Lakhimpur District- in Bighas

No. of villages	No of household	0-5	PC	5-10	PC	10-15	PC	15-20	PC	20-25	PC
25	750	235	31.33	268	35.73	114	15.2	65	8.66	27	3.6
								25-30 13	PC 1.73	30 above 28	PC 3.73

As regards homestead land 413 (55.06%) households possess less than a bigha of land each. The families possessing lands 1.1-2 Bighas each are 168 (22.4%). Similarly there are 56 (7.46%) families each occupying 2.1-4 Bighas, 23 (3.06%) families each possessing 4-6 Bighas, 25 (3.33%) families each possessing more than 6 Bighas. Ironically 65 (8.66%) families do not possess homestead lands and these families live under the care of the benevolent fellow villagers. The following table shows the land holding pattern.

TABLE-44

Showing homestead land in the surveyed villages of Lakhimpur District

Sl. No	Name of dist.	No of villages	Sample household	Homestead land in Bigha					
				Below1	1.1-2	2.1-4	4.1-6	More than 6	Nil
1	Lakhimpur	25	750	413	168	56	23	25	65
				55.06%	22.4%	7.46	3.06%	3.33%	8.66%

Although traditionally the Misings are leading a life of cultivators over the decades, they are not in a position, by and large, to rise above the marginal farmers status as 43.6% remain as marginal farmers. Only 6.4% of the households are found to be medium farmers while the percentage of large farmer is a meagre 1.6. Details are shown in the table No.45.

TABLE-45

Showing farmers status in the surveyed villages of Lakhimpur District

Sl. No	Name of dist.	No of villages	Sample household	Category	No of farmers	P.C
1.	Lakhimpur	25	750	Marginal farmer	327	43.6%
				Small farmer	211	28.13%
				Small medium farmer	152	20.26
				Medium farmer	48	6.4
				Large farmer	12	1.6

The flood ravaged Mising population is gradually losing most of their agricultural lands. The study revealed that as many as 544(72.53%) households have lost valuable lands due to flood and erosion which is a recurring phenomenon. There are very few households, 65 nos (8.66%) which could leased out land and 132(17.6%) families had to lease in land. The percentage of households setting land is 1.2. Table No 16 shows the details.

TABLE-46

Table showing leasing/lost/sold out land in the surveyed villages of Lakhimpur District

Sl. No	Name of Dist.	No of villages	Sample household	No of families leased out land	No of families leased in land	No of families sold out land	No of families lost land due to flood and erosion
1.	Lakhimpur	25	750	65 8.66%	132 17.6%	9 1.2%	544 72.53%

As mentioned above the Misings are losing much of their valuable lands due to flood and erosion, the figures of land assets before and after flood testify to this finding. Before flood the total land of 750 families was 12747.7 Bighas which came down to 9464.1 Bighas after flood. Table-17 shows the position of land assets.

TABLE-47**Land Assets before / after Flood in the surveyed villages of Lakhimpur District**

Sl. No	Name of Dist.	No of villages	Sample household	LAND	
				Before flood (in bigha)	After flood (in bigha)
1.	Lakhimpur	25	750	12747.7	9464.1

Prior to floods there were 233(31.06%) households possessing lands below 3 Bighas each but after flood the figure of households having this amount of land increased to 276(36.8%). In the category 4-7 Bighas and 8-11 Bighas there were 132 and 169 households before floods respectively but after flood in the same category of lands there were 123 and 161 households respectively. Similarly 109 households had lands in the range of 12-15 Bighas before flood but after flood there were 102 families in that range. Figures of households in the range of 16-19 , 20-23, 24-27 and 28-31 Bighas before flood came down in the after flood period. Figures of households possessing more than 31 Bighas before flood, however, increased from 3.2.7. to 4% after flood. This last category of land holders perhaps had lands possessing in safer zones. Details of land holdings possessed by the families before and after flood are shown in Table 48 and 49.

TABLE-48.**Showing the landholding of the families prior to floods in the surveyed villages of Lakhimpur district**

Sl. No	Name of dist.	No of village	Sample household	Land (in Bigha)								
				Below 3	4-7	8-11	12-15	16-19	20-23	24-27	28-31	Above 31
1.	Lakhimpur	25	750	233 31.06%	132 17.06%	169 22.53%	109 14.53%	29 3.86%	25 3.33%	17 2.26%	12 1.6%	24 3.2%

TABLE-49.

Table showing the landholding of the families after floods in the surveyed villages of Lakhimpur district

Sl. No	Name of dist.	No of village	Sample household	Land (in Bigha)								
				Below 3	4-7	8-11	12-15	16-19	20-23	24-27	28-31	Above 31
1.	Lakhimpur	25	750	276 36.8%	123 16.4%	161 21.46%	102 13.6%	25 3.33%	17 2.26%	7 0.93%	9 1.2%	30 4.00%

The survey showed that 89.73% of the families owned land; 10.13% were landless and only 0.13% was tenant Table-20. shows the position.

TABLE-50

Showing land tenure pattern of the surveyed families of Lakhimpur district

Sl. No	Name of dist.	No of village	Sample household	Landowner	Landless	Tenants
1.	Lakhimpur	25	750	673 89.73%	76 10.13	1 0.13

It appeared from the data collected from the flood from areas inhabited by

Misings that Bao and Ahu paddy were grown in large quantities. The comparative data showed that 285 households had grown Bao paddy in the earlier period but at present 342 households produce Bao paddy. Similarly earlier 223 families grow Ahu paddy but the Ahu grower families increased to 249 at the time of survey. Sali paddy gets third preference as the transplantation of Sali paddy starts in the peak flood season. The lands are suitable for mustard crops. Formerly 361 families produced mustard but at present 431 households produce mustard. Mustard has a great demand in the wider market also and this crop is mainly grown for business purposes. The table No 51 shows the principal crops grown in the surveyed villages.

TABLE-51

Showing Household wise Principal Crops Grown in the Surveyed villages Lakhimpur District

Sl.No.	District	No of household	Category	Present	Earlier
1.	Lakhimpur	750	Bao	342	285
			Ahu	249	223
			Hali	175	154
			Mustard	431	361
			Matikalai	0	0
			Gehu	0	0
			Motormah /Pulse	46	81

The Misings are no longer sticking to the traditional joint family norm which was and to some extent is still prevalent as characteristic feature of the ethnic community. Thus we find 64.53% nuclear families against 20.8% joint families and 14.66% joint earlier but at present nuclear. Details are shown in the Table-52.

TABLE-52

Showing type of family of the surveyed house-holds of Lakhimpur district

Sl. No.	District	No of villages	No of household	Nuclear	Joint	Joint earlier nuclear now	Nuclear earlier joint now	Other
1.	Lakhimpur	25	750	484 64.53 %	156 20.8%	110 14.66 %		

There are 1256 married persons and 1083 unmarried persons in the studied villages. As widow remarriage is prevalent among these Misings, the number of widows are limited and the survey showed 74 widows in the villages: Widower are few and far between. Only 5 nos were traced in the villages.

TABLE-53

Showing marital status of sampled villages of Lakhimpur district

S. No	District	No of village	No of house hold	Unma rried	Married	Widow	Widower	Divo rced	Sep arated
1.	Lakhim pur	25	750	1083	1256	74	5	0	0

Majority of the villagers resort to cultivation and the figure is 988. Animal husbandry is mostly done by the women folk, 276 female against 3 male. Due to openness of the society, of late the Misings are entering into petty trades. Mostly male; 109 against 8 female, persons are engaged in such trades. There are only 70 persons having salaried jobs and out of these 11 are females. Formerly fishing was done for local consumption but today fishing is also practised for setting purposes. By tradition and custom, the Misings did not like to serve as labourers in the households, other than those belonging to their own people. But today the Misings are coming out in search of wage earning avenues. In the present study we find 123 male and 4 female wage earners. Even new jobs like rickshaw pulling are becoming popular among the unemployed half educated youths. There are 14 rickshaw pullers and all are male. Twelve Misings are engaged in self employment persons. Details are shown in the following table.

TABLE-54

Showing distribution of persons as per their occupation of the surveyed household in Lakhimpur District

Sl. No.	District	No of villages	Type of occupation found in the villages	TOTAL		
				Male	Female	Total
1.	Lakhimpur	25	Cultivator	924	64	988
			Animal husbandry	3	276	279
			Fishing	69	2	71
			Firewood	38	0	38
			Petty traders	109	8	117
			Salaried Job	59	11	70
			Wage earner	123	4	127
			Unemployed	178	199	377
			Weaving	0	27	27
			Housewife	0	634	634
			Rickshaw puller	14	0	14

It is seen that except in cultivation, upward trend has been noticed in all other occupational sectors while comparing previous and present occupational status of the informants. Thus from 1025 persons engaged in cultivation in former years the figure at present stands at 988. The figures of Animal Husbandry showed upward trend from 254 to 279, fishing 59 to 71, firewood seller 0 to 38, self employment 8 to 12, salaried job 43 to 70, and marginal workers 56 to 85.

The rise of unemployed from 321 to 377 tells to upon heavily on the socio-economic life of the Mising. The following table shows the shift in occupational status after flood.

TABLE-55

Showing Shift in Occupational Status after Flood in the Surveyed Villages of Lakhimpur District

Name of Dist.	No of villages	Type of occupation found in the villages	Previous occupation	Present occupation
Lakhimpur	25	Cultivation	1025	988
		Animal husbandry	254	279
		Fishing	59	71
		Fire wood seller	0	38
		Self employed in other sector	8	12
		Salaried job	43	70
		Marginal workers	56	85
		Unemployed	321	377

Data were collected to find out the indebtedness position of the Misings as their economy was and still is badly affected by flood. It has been noticed that 87.73% of the households are managing their households without debt. That is they are having two square meals and minimum expenses for education of children, health care, and daily requirements. Only 12.26% of the households have debts mostly with local tribal richer families. TABLE -56

TABLE-56

Showing extent of Indebtness in the flood affected villages of Lakhimpur district.

Sl.No	Name of the district	No of villages	Total no of household	Total no of households having debt	Total no of households without debt
1.	Lakhimpur	25	750	92 12.26%	658 87.73%

The Mising economy in the district is not at a sound footing as 40.57% dependents are required to be fed by 59.42 earners. The monthly income of the

households too is not enough as 96.13% have monthly income of below Rs.5000.00. Only 3.86% of the villagers have some good income in the range of Rs.5000.00 to Rs.10, 000.00. Table 57-58.

TABLE-57

Showing workers and non workers in the surveyed villages of Lakhimpur District.

Sl.No	Name of the district	No of villages	Total no of household	Total no of members	No of dependents	No of earners
1.	Lakhimpur	25	750	6265	2542 40.57%	3723 59.42%

TABLE-58

Showing monthly income of the households – Lakhimpur District.

Sl. No	Name of the Dist.	No of villages	Total household	Monthly income								
				Below 5000	5000-10000	1000-15000	15000-20000	20000-25000	25000-30000	30000-45000	45000-50000	
1.	Lakhi mpur	25	750	721 96.13 %	29 3.86 %							

Among the reasons for unemployment shown by the villagers, lack of education tops the list with 148 households. The education is expanding in the villages but the required educational attainment of present day science and technology of the young boys and girls was lacking and in the competitions of Mising boys and girls could not fulfil the present day demands of the employers. There are 131 households where employment is not found as the inhabitants are either children or old persons. Employment opportunities, particularly under Government, are very limited these days and 127 households referred to this reason for unemployment. Economic backwardness is the father of all evils regarding families all round development. The Misings suffered from this and 113 households showed reasons for this as one of the unemployment. There are other reasons like lack of awareness

(102 households), unable to work due to flood (77 households) lack of agricultural land (52 households) etc. Details are shown in the following table.

TABLE -59

Showing table the reasons of unemployment in the surveyed villages of Lakhimpur district.

Sl.No.	Name of Dist.	No of villages	Reason of unemployment	Number of person
1.	Lakhimpur	25	Lack of education	165
			Any other (old age, minor, students)	733
			Lack of employment opportunity	127
			Lack of agricultural land	52
			Lack of awareness about economic opportunities	102
			Economic backwardness	113
			Unable to work due to flood	77
			Lack of education	148
			Any other (old age)	131

Pigs play a significant role in the Mishing socio-cultural life. Pigs are reared not only for occasional consumption but for socio-religious occasions also. Pork forms an essential item in their feasts and festivals. It is found that 158 households have less than 2 pigs each and 228 households possess 2-4 pigs each. Only 25 households possess more than 6 pigs each. Pigs are good source of income as one natured pig fetches Rs.400.00 to Rs.500.00. Bullocks are essential for ploughing and almost every household possess a pair of bullocks. In the villages under survey 143 households possess less than 2 bullocks each. These families borrow bullocks from fellow villagers during agricultural season. As 235 nos of households possess 2-4 bullocks each while 78 households own more than 6 bullocks each. Buffaloes are the buffaloes which are used for ploughing the fields. Majority (94) of the households rear goats numbering less than 2 each. 50 nos of households have 2-4 goats each and 14 households have 4-6 goats each. Households possessing more than 6 goats each number only 5. Fowls are reared for consumption as well as for religious sacrifices. It is seen that as many as 321 households possess 4-6 fowls each and 241 households possess 2-4 fowls each. However the households having more than 6 fowls are very few i.e. only 96. The

Misings also rear ducks in small numbers. 45 households have ducks numbering 4-6 each followed by 39 household having 2-4 fowls each and 35 households possess more than 6 ducks each. The Table no 60 shows the details of the livestock position.

TABLE-60

Showing livestock position in the surveyed households in Lakhimpur District:

Sl. No	Dist.	No of livestock	Category							
			Cow/Bullocks	He-goat	She-goat	He-buffalo	She buffalo	Pig	Duck	Fowl
1.	Lakhimpur	Less than 2	143	90	4	35	5	158	12	5
		2-4	235	35	23	27	7	228	39	241
		4-6	92	11	3	0	0	58	45	321
		More than 6	78	1	4	0	0	25	35	96

Misings also rear ducks in small numbers. 45 households have ducks numbering 4-6 each followed by 39 household having 2-4 fowls each and 35 households possess more than 6 ducks each. The Table no 60 shows the details of the livestock position.

TABLE-60

Showing livestock position in the surveyed households in Lakhimpur District:

Sl. No	Dist.	No of livestock	Category							
			Cow/Bullocks	He-goat	She-goat	He-buffalo	She buffalo	Pig	Duck	Fowl
1.	Lakhimpur	Less than 2	143	90	4	35	5	158	12	5
		2-4	235	35	23	27	7	228	39	241
		4-6	92	11	3	0	0	58	45	321
		More than 6	78	1	4	0	0	25	35	96

CHAPTER-III

FINDINGS OF THE STUDY

The study entitled 'Tribal situation in changing environment' – A study of the Misings of Dhemaji and Lakhimpur district brings out certain salient features in respect of socio-cultural and economic life of the Misings of the said two districts. 'Change in the constant of culture' but the changes we have found among the Misings, particularly among the displaced Misings owing to flood and erosion, depict a life full of stress and strains as well as of abject poverty. Infra-structural facilities especially transport and communication in most of the villages is far from adequate. Modern life style, however, penetrates into the far flung Mising villages.

Dhemaji District:

The Misings of this district are badly affected by annual flood and flood erosion cut into the vitals of their economic life which has direct bearing on the socio-cultural life of the people. The dispersed character of their habitation (60%) coupled with isolation (33.33%) has made the authorities in an awkward position to chalk out developmental programmes. The topography is such that a major portion of the year remains under water affecting agricultural activities leading to lesser productivity. Silting of the flood water is an added discomfort. None of the villages have motorable roads within the villages. Only 2(13.33%) villages are getting such facility within 1-2 kms from the villages 20.6% of the villages have the motorable road beyond 15 kms. As regards transport station, railway station, block office and SDO (Civil)'s headquarter none of the villages has been able to get these within 2 kms. from their villages. 7(seven) villages out of 15 under survey have the railway station at a distance of more than 15 kms.

It is admitted that all development activities particularly in most backward areas, centre round improvement of road. In the instant study as many as 80% of the villages have no road worth the name. Only 2 (13.33%) villages are 'lucky' to have katcha fair weather roads.

Modern mass communication facilities like T.V. and Transistor radio sets are found. There are 3 telephone connections also. Out of 15 villages under

survey, one village each has post office, medical sub-centre, state dispensary within the village. Private Doctors are found in 2 villages.

Except one all the villages have L.P. schools within the villages. Twelve villages have M.E. schools and 3 villages have H.E. Schools within the villages. There are as many as 465 illiterates. Although there are quite a good number of matriculates (HSLC passed) and H.S. passed youths, the P.C. of graduates is only 1.25. The level of education of the girl child is not very discouraging as these are 84 female matriculates against 98 male matriculates. Similarly there are 10 graduates among females against 28 among males.

The villagers use water from ring wells for drinking purpose. There is no water supply.

On an average every households possesses 9.41 Bighas of agricultural land. But this appears too inadequate as the people produce only Ahu crops. Majority of the households possess homestead land in the range of 5-10 Bighas. Ironically there are 7 landless families in the surveyed villages. Like wise majority (43.77%) of the families are marginal farmers. Large farmers are not traced among the villagers. There are 38% small farmers. Large farmers are not found among the villagers.

The havoc caused by flood and erosion have had much negative effect on the Misings. As many as 160 families lost land due to flood and erosion and 16 families were compelled to sell land to the rich fellow villagers. It is found that lands of the villagers after flood diminished considerably. From 2782 Bighas of land before flood, the figure came down to 2396 Bighas after flood. On the individual count, however, a contrary picture is obtained. From 70 families having below 3 bighas each before flood, the figure increased to 120 families with similar amount of land after flood. This phenomenon happened because some families occupied lands left out by fellow villagers or new plots have been created by flood water. Similarly after flood 81 families increased their land. Before flood there were 65 families in the category 4-7 Bighas but after flood the number of such families increased to 81. But households holding land 24-27 Bighas and 28-31 bighas before flood, had to contend with lesser amount of land. In the former category there were 35 families before flood and after flood only 10 families had 24-27 Bighas. Similarly before flood

there were 25 families in the category 28-31 bighas and the figure of households came down to 15 after flood.

There are only 7(1.55%) landless families in the surveyed villages.

As regards cropping pattern, majority of the Mising families produce Bao and Ahu paddy and the pattern is seen even at present. Flood waters damage sali crops as the crop is grown during flood season. Cropping of mustard is increasing recently. Formerly 6.88% families produced mustard but at present the percentage of mustard growers increased to 32% of the families. Wheat is grown by 11 house holds at present and formerly none of the households produced wheat. The Misings generally donot like wheat and the product is mainly for market.

Traditionally the Misings preferred joint family system but of late the trend is changing and only 31.11 percent of the families prefer joint family against 46% nuclear type of family. Thus 22.88% families switched over to nuclear type.

Agriculture, animal husbandry and fishing are the important occupations of the villager. Due to economic pressure, the Misings today are entering into new source of earning like wage earning shop keeping, wine selling and such type of self employment. Job seekers in Government Departments and private establishments are also increasing .Young girls are also coming forward to accept jobs as 10 females are also found in salaried jobs.

There is no tangible variation at present in respect of traditional occupation which is cultivation. Not much variation is noticed in respect of animal husbandry too. Selling of fish was prohibited among the Misings but today very few limited persons are engaged in selling fish. Formerly selling of wine was unknown but since two or three decades back this business became popular and at present 20 persons have been located in this trade. In comparison with the former decades the marginal workers increased at present. The number of un-employed slightly decreased from 792 in previous time to 765 at present. Lack of employment opportunity, lack of education economic backwardness and lack of awareness were the reasons sanctioned by the un-employed youths.

Indebtedness is fast diminishing as 48(10.68%) households were found to be indebted.

The earner dependents ratio is sufficiently wide indicating an unhealthy economic status. As against 1481 earners there are 1547 dependents.

The monthly income of huge majority (98.88%) is below Rs.5000.00.

The villagers rear pigs not only for local consumption and socio religious occasions but also for commercial purposes as a natured pig fetches Rs.400.00 to Rs.500.00. Fowls are reared mainly for local consumption. Bullocks are found in almost all families as ploughing is done with the help of bullocks. Buffaloes, goats, ducks are reared by few families.

The above pen picture of the socio-economic life of the Mishings in the changing environment indicates that the Misings of the district in spite of adversities and odds arising out of flood and erosion are progressing with the changes of time. Government welfare measures are contributing towards this progress. But much remains to be done. If we compare the life style of the Misings in the pre independent period with that of present post independence period some metamorphic changes have occurred with regard to education, health, and material progress. But transport and communication requires immediate improvement and much of the ailment of the socio-cultural life of the people will be healed ensuring a good transport and communication network. Educated and half educated youths are becoming restive due to absence of suitable employment opportunities. Some income generating schemes may be formulated exclusively for the youths of the villages.

Lakhimpur District:

What we have shown in respect of topographical problems and devastations caused by recurring flood and erosion in case of Dhemaji district, by and large, same situation prevails in respect of Misings of Lakhimpur district too, as Dhemaji district has been carved out of the erstwhile Lakhimpur district. Here also out of 750 families under survey, 205 families were compelled to leave their hearth and home in search of suitable new sites which too, turned out to be equally inhospitable owing to flood and erosion. By traditions and customs, the Misings prefer to live in riverine areas and the problem arising out of flood has been faced over the generation. Further, dispersed character of the habitations and changing course of the rivers, stood in the way of undertaking infrastructural facilities.

In the district, transport and communication facilities are some what better as 28% Mising villages have motorable roads within the village and 20% villages are getting transport facilities within 1-2 kms. from the villages. The transport

station, railway stations, however, are located not within easy reach of all the villagers as the distance varies from 10-15 kms to above 15 kms for some of the villagers. Likewise the SDO (Civil)'s office is located at a distance of 15 kms.

As regards roads, 56% of the villages still depend upon foot tracks to keep contact with the outside world and the plight of these villagers during summer beggar description. Only one village appears to be lucky to get an all weather motorable road.

Modern gadgets like T.V. Radio, motorbike are entering glaringly in the Mising villages. There are 529 families having radio sets and 72 families have T.V. sets.

Except post offices (32%), medical sub-centres (4%), other civic communities are not available for the villagers within the villages. Majority (72%) of the villages get veterinary facilities at a distance of 15 kms. and above. Similarly private doctors are available at a distance of 10-15 kms for majority of the villages.

The L.P. school for all villages is the catchword of the Sarva Siksha Mission and these serve as the baseline of universal education. In the present study it is seen that only 76% of the villages have L.P. schools within the villages while 16% villages have L.P. schools within 1-2 kms and 8% within 2-5 kms. Only 68% schools are Government schools. All the schools of the backward Mising areas should have been managed by Government. As regards M.E. schools 60% villages have M.E. schools within the villages and 68% are Government schools. It is gratifying to learn that 28% villages have H.E. Schools within the villages. The Colleges however are located at a distance of 10-15 kms and above.

The villagers mostly depend upon tube wells for drinking water. Government have provided 58 nos. of tube wells to the villages. There is no pipe water facility in the villages.

The villagers resort to wet paddy cultivation (65.78%) majority of the families numbering 268 possess land in the range of 5-10 Bighas each. There are only 3.73% families possessing land above 30 Bighas. As regards homestead land majority (55.06%) of the families possess less than one bigha of land each. There are 65 (8.66%) families which are having no homestead lands and they live on grace of the richer families.

As many as 43.6% of the families are marginal farmers while the percentage of large farmer is 1.6 only.

As mentioned earlier flood causes havoc to the Misings leading to loss of agricultural lands. As many as 544 (72.53%) families have lost lands due to flood and erosion. Families leasing out land constitute 8.66% while 17.6% families leased in land. Only 1.2% households are found selling lands. Due to flood total land of the villagers reduced from 12747.7 Bighas prior to flood to 9464.1 after flood.

It was interesting to note that families having below 3 Bighas of land prior to flood increased the land after flood. Perhaps these poor families occupied lands newly created by flood. But this phenomenon is not noticed in case of land holders in the range of 16-19 Bigha, 20-23 Bighas, 24-27 Bighas and 28-31 Bighas. Richer families possessing more than 31 Bighas, however, increased their land in the post flood period. This happened because they took hold of abandoned lands of some of the flood affected villagers who shifted to other areas.

In the surveyed villages 10.13 families are having no lands while 0.13% is tenants.

Ahu and Bao are the major crops of the people followed by mustard seeds. Sali paddy is grown in a limited quantity as lands for Sali paddy remain under flood water most of the summer season.

Changes have been noticed in respect of family pattern. Formerly joint family was the prevailing practice of late there is a sharp tilt towards nuclear family (64.53%).

Almost all the eligible youths marry before the age of 28. There are very few widows (74 nos.) as widow remarriage is allowed by the society. Widowers are few and far between.

Besides helping man folk in agricultural activities the womenfolk busy themselves in weaving colourful clothes thereby contributing towards the family income. Animal husbandry is their responsibility. Of late the Mising youths are entering into trade and commerce. Quite a few are serving in various Government Departments and private companies. Some of the un-employed youths are serving as wage labourers, rickshaw pullers, wine sellers, fish sellers etc.

The number of un-employed youths increased from 321 in former period to 377 at present.

In spite of grinding poverty caused due to flood and erosion, the indebtedness is minimal (12.26%). Loans are taken from the rich fellow villagers with reasonable interest in kind (paddy) wage labour.

The economy is not improving due to the fact that 59.42 earners are required to maintain 40.57% dependents. The monthly income of the greater families (96.13%) to lies below Rs.5000.00 (on a rough estimate). Only 3.86% have good monthly income of Rs.5000.00 to Rs.10000.00. The villagers earn good income from pigs which are reared by all the households. Buffaloes, cows and bullocks, goats, ducks and fowl are reared by most of the villagers both for local consumption used for market.

The social situation in the changing environment among the Missing demonstrates a shift from tradition to modernity. They are eager to accept the changes so that they can march forward with the change of times. Education is expanding among the villagers. But flood still remains a hindrance for their overall development. Unless the flood and erosion is controlled, development in the expected line will not get the desired momentum.

CHAPTER-IV

ABSTRACTS FROM CASE STUDY – DHEMAJI AND LAKHIMPUR DISTRICTS

Haripur Mishing Village (Bhalukaguri), Bahir Jonai Gaon Panchayat.

Established in 1977, after great earthquake of 1950, this flood affected village lies at a far jenny area of Jonai Sub-Division. The nearest motorable road is 16 Kms away. The villagers use foot track to reach the motor-able road. The villagers eke out their livelihood from cultivation and almost every year flood water damages the crops leaving sizable villagers to earn income by wage earner jobs, petty traders, milkmen, firewood seller etc. The womenfolk, besides assisting their men folk in agricultural activities, weave clothes; take care of the poultries and other household activities. Piggery and poultry rearing provides financial relief to the village. It was found that due to non availability of timely guidance many poultries and pigs die due to unknown diseases.

The Panchayat is assisting the villagers by sanctioning a community center, 6 houses under Indira Awas Yojana and C I sheets to four houses.

There is no medical sub-center or veterinary dispensary in the village. The people depend upon the 13 Nos. of tube-well supplied by Government and during flood these tub-wells are sub-merged polluting the water. The people suffer from various water borne diseases.

The village is deprived of modern infrastructure facilities. However to protect the people from recurring flood, the National food for work 2005 has been launched.

There is a an L.P. School in the village but most of the students leave the school after 2/3 years as the guardian are not in a position to meet the educational expenses. No Govt. grant is received by the school. Besides some poor families, prefer to send their daughters to the towns to work as maids in the houses of richer persons.

The village deserves special affection from the authorities for quicker development so that the villagers can cope up with the changing socio-economic and political situation surrounding them.

Malbhog Village

Situated at a distance of 9 Km. from the nearest motor-able road under the jurisdiction of Sile Panchayat the Malbhog village, in spite of the pleasure and plenty, the name indicates, is a very backward village with a total population of 100. The village was established in 1979 after the great earthquake of 1950 and consequent unprecedented flood. Even today in their new site the jury of flood causes untold misery. The NRP road is constructed under 1980 scheme to protect the villagers.

There is one L.P. School in the village. Other infrastructural facilities are conspicuous by their absence. Of late the Panchayat constructs a community hall and sanction is ascended to 4 Nos. Indira Awas Yojana houses in the village.

Main source of earning is cultivation. Almost every year paddy crops are destroyed by flood water. Some people earn some money by selling pigs and poultries and locally brewed rice beer (Apong). Some of the parents prefer to send the daughter to serve as maids in towns, thereby earning some money few running the households.

Safe drinking water is not available. Most of the villages use water from the Brahmaputra and the Sille rivers. The tube wells are sub-merged during flood season.

The people are maintaining their traditional tribe characteristics, although some superfluous changes are noticed in respect of items of material culture like dress, household items (cup plates, chairs and table, umbrellas, cosmetics, bicycles, watches etc.)

Debera Village

It is a revenue village situated in remote areas of Sissi Borgaon Block of Dhemaji district. It is an isolated village as the people are required to walk 16 Km. to reach motor-able road. Flood waters of the rivers of Brahmaoutra and Deberjan cause untold misery to the people. The erosion of Brahmaputra divested the

community hall, L.P. school and the panchayat office. The ME school is also threatened by erosion.

The village was once of agriculturally self sufficient village but of late the flood waters damaged their agricultural lands. In spite of odds the villagers produce Ahu and Bao crops which they relish most. Mustard and some winter crops are also grown. The piggeries and poultries provide additional sources of income. The womenfolk are expert weavers and they contribute largely towards stabilizing the family income. Besides they assist the men-folk in agricultural activities.

The village is getting such relief from flood very recently when the E&D Department strengthened the embankment under the Bogibeel project.

Although there are 4 MA and 4 BA passed students in the village, employment position is discouraging. Only one gets an employment in a far away place.

Medical and Veterinary facilities are in adequate as the people have to walk 9 Kms. to get such facilities. Modern life style is entering into this far flung village as the village has 3 sets TV and 6 sets of Radios. There is no newspaper or telephone in the village.

Dihiri Chapori, Hingibeel, Mechaki Tangani, Borong Telijan, Borong Krishnapur Villages

It is said that the Misings are born in flood, live in flood and die in flood. The above villages, once booming with rich agricultural products, now live a miserable life due to recurring flood. They, however still produce Ahu, Bao mustard and some winter vegetables in their fields major portions of which are silted. They are in the subsistence level of economy.

The education facilities like LP and ME Schools are found in these villages and students in these schools are increasing.

The women folk are expert weavers and they contribute with their mite to the family income.

Communication facilities are totally inadequate in most of the villages. As regards health care, modern facilities are not easily available. Diseases like

Diarrhea, Malaria, Jaundice, and Dysentery are common and as first aid the people approach the local medicine men.

Tube-wells are there but not sufficient to cater to the needs of the villagers. Dependence on river water is still noticed.

The people are struggling hard to live a life of subsistence level. Some are switching over to past time income sources like wage earner, fish seller, petty traders, milk vendors etc.

They are maintaining their traditional culture intact while accepting certain items of modern culture. TV, Radio, Motor Bike are found in some households. Similarly the young boys and girls are attracted towards modern dresses. NGOs like RBC, World Vision are doing social work among the Mishings. But still there is long way to go to remove the socio economic backwardness.

Munmuni Kutum Gaon

The village is situated within the jurisdiction of Gali Sikari Gaon Panchayat. It is established only in 2000 AD after flood waters caused irreparable damage to their agricultural lands. It is an isolated village situated at a distance of 22 Kms. from the nearest motor-able road. With a population of 168, the villagers are leading a life of uncertainty as the fury of the river Brahmaputra looms large on them.

Agriculture is the primary source of income. But the income from this source is quite insufficient to meet day to day expenditure. Almost every house holds brews rice beer for local consumption as well as for sale. Piggery, poultry, fisheries are started as source of additional income. The women folk contribute towards family income by weaving clothes.

The lone LP School caters to the primary educational needs of the children. Due to poverty, most of the children leave school midway.

The local Gali Panchayat does some work for the benefit of the villagers. Four houses under IAY have been constructed in the village.

Transport and communication is in a very bad shape. The villagers use foot track to go to the nearest motor-able road. There are no Medical Veterinary facilities in the village.

Tub-wells are found in the villages but during summer these are submerged by flood water. Water borne diseases are common in the village.

Unless some scientific and pragmatic measures for flood control are taken, the condition of the villagers will never be improved.

The people are maintaining there traditional culture infect although modern items like Radio, Watches, Dress, Household items like Cop plates etc. are seen in the village.

Dihiri Mishing Gaon (Dihiri Panitola)

Like the entire Mising villages, the Dihiri Mishing Gaon is badly affected by flood waters of Jiadhal river. The 1983-93 flood cause extensive damage to the village. The temporary porcupine built by bamboo could not control the jury of the river of late a platform is being constructed to give relief to the people during flood. The total population of the village is 271 (as per Statistical Department – Dhemaji).

This revenue village was established in 1950-51. They came to the present site from Subansiri, Abonori after the great flood of 1950. It is a mixed village as the Bodos and Sonowal are also sharing lands with the Mising in the village.

There is only one LP School with 200 students. The students aspiring for ME, HE standards are required to walk about 5 – 7 Kms to reach the nearest ME/HE School. During flood they use boat for this purpose. Despite this handicap the village can boast of 12 graduates and 4 post graduate, one MBBS and 4 Govt. employees. There is no provision for safe drinking water. Tube-well is there but these remain un-serviced during flood.

They are mostly cultivators but due to sandy nature of the soil the output is mearge. Most of the families do not have the annual requirement of paddy. Many are engaged as daily labourer. Some of the families send their small children to serve as maids is the urban centers. The woman folk weave clothes and they contribute with their mite for family income. Piggery and poultry trades are practiced by a few.

There are no medical sub centers or veterinary sub center in or near the village. Due to lack of Medicare, the people spend a lot of amount to carry the

patients to the Medical sub center. Diseases like Malaria, Typhoid, Dysentery, and Jaundice are common in the village.

Modern way of life is penetrating into this far-flung Mising village. There are 4 sets of TV and 12 Radio sets. Besides modern dresses are popular among the youths.

The local youths organizes VDP and GSB (Gaon Surakshya Bahini) and they are trying to remove certain bad habits like selling of wine and playing cards from the village.

But definite steps should be taken to stop flood waters as the people always remain under threat of shifting.

Luhijan Village

Situated within the jurisdiction of Luhijan Gaon Panchayat, the village is predominantly inhabited by Mising tribe. It was established in 1964. The Mising came to this village from Diljan Gaon under Dibrugarh district where they were badly affected by flood of the river Brahmaputra. The total population is 496.

Communication and transport system are in a bad shape. The villagers have to walk 8 Kms to reach motor-able road.

The village is fortunate enough to have one LP and ME one venture HE School. Other infrastructural facilities are totally inadequate. There are no medical or veterinary sub centers. Diseases like Malaria, Jaundice, and Dysentery are common in the village.

Drinking water is not supplied by pipe laying rather wells have been provided which remain unserviceable during flood.

Agriculture is only means of livelihood. Pigs and poultries are reared for consumption as well as for selling. Rice beer is also sold secretly. A sizable section earns money as wage earner. Besides children are send to the town to serve as maids. The women folk weave clothes and they earn some money by selling clothes.

The village has a Namghar and a community hall. The traditional Murong Okum (dormitory community hall) is also found in the village.

Dihiri, Debera, Pipalguri, Jiadhal, Amguri Village

All these villages are mostly inhabited by the Misings. Once these village had plenty of agricultural lands but after the great earthquake of 1950, the place and plenty vanished as their fields are continuously silted by post flood. Since primary source of their livelihood was and still as agriculture and animal husbandry the havoc caused by flood and erosion made the people beggar like. To add fuel to fire the flood of 2000 AD caused great devastation. Education of children of greatly hampered. Roads in the village are non existent. There is not even an LP School. The children have to walk 6/7 Kms. to go the educational centers. But in-spite of the odds there are many graduates, post graduates, Govt. employees and few technical students also.

Tub-wells are found in all the villages. Once pipe water project was undertaken in Dihiri Mishing Gaom but now the pipe are covered with sandy soil. During summer the tub-wells are submerged and there is acute shortage of drinking water. As a result the people suffer from water borne diseases.

There is no impact of Panchayat Raj system. NGOs like RVC, world Vision are doing social work in the villages.

There is great scope of improving the economy as the people are expert pig and poultry rearers. The womenfolk can be used to weave 'Ere', 'Gasor', 'Patali', 'Gamocha' for commercial purposes. The Mishing of these villages are eager to accept the changes that are happening all around. But first and foremost the flood should be controlled.

Jia Dhal (Gali Ghat)

Jiadhal is situated under the jurisdiction of Murkung selek Jonai Development Block. The village was shifted to the present site because of heavy flood of the river Brahmaputra. But flood water chases them even in this site. The village is wholly inhabited by the Misings coming from Dhakuakhana, Majuli, Jorhat and Sissi.

As regards transport facilities, one has to take a boat to reach the village. Nearest motor-able road lies at a distance of 9-10 Kms. During summer season one can not go to the village which remains practically under water.

Infrastructural facilities are conspicuous by their absence. People face great difficulties during emergencies when a patient has to be carried to the nearest motor-able road for vehicle. Medical sub centers, Veterinary sub centers etc. are not found in the village. Except a few IAY houses no infrastructure is noticed.

Besides cultivation, the villagers engage themselves in wage earning, fish selling, piggery and poultry keeping etc. The poorer families send their daughters to serve as maids in the houses of urban dwellers.

Serious efforts should be made to extend infrastructural facilities in this island village bereft of the modern amenities. But first and foremost job is surely to control flood.

No.2 Peepalguri (Borong)

The village is situated under the jurisdiction of the Laimekuri Gaon Panchayat of Dhemaji district. Originally the Mishing established the village at Dhakuakhana and Gohpur but due to flood of the river Brahmaputra, the village was shifted to the present site some 30-35 years ago. There are a few Boro families also in the village.

Agriculture is the main source of income. But due to flood, the villagers are living on subsistence level. The fields are silted and most of the lands became unsuitable for paddy cultivation. As a subsidiary source of income the people rear pigs, poultries, goats etc. The womenfolk earn some income from their weaving some of the people are engaged in daily wage earning, thatch cutting and fish business. Animal husbandry fetches good earning. It is seen that other income sources like business is not popular among them. Lack of awareness and contact with outside is the main reason for non diversification. Besides most of the people do not possess sufficient agricultural land and bullocks. Bullocks are hired during agricultural reason.

Infrastructure facilities are at a very low key. Practically there is no road, no medical sub center or veterinary dispensary. The literacy rate is very low as

the villagers spend most of the time in search of some pecuniary gain. There is not even an LP School within the village. The nearest LP School lies at a distance of 2 Kms. The compulsory education for 6-14 years children is a non starter. Less said is better about higher education.

The condition of drinking water is totally inadequate as the tube-wells are submerged during flood season. They use polluted water with the result that water borne diseases are very common. Besides flood water brings diseases for the cattle.

In spite of the negative surrounding the people are maintaining their traditional customs.

It is therefore suggested that serious efforts should be made to control flood as flood water creates havoc every year and the economy of the people is going from bad to worse.

Amguri Dambuk Village

Amguri Dambuk though a flood affected village is comparatively having better civic facilities compared to other flood affected villages surveyed. It is a revenue village situated under Sisi Borgaon villages of Dhemaji district. The village is known to have settled in the year 1960's i.e., some 45 years back. The entire population has migrated to this area from a place called Bhalukguri due to flood. It is said that the river Brahmaputra now flows over their earlier village Bhalukguri. Though they had shifted to this village due to flood they still could not escape from the water of flood. Since 8-10 years they had been constantly affected by the flood of the Brahmaputra. Brahmaputra being located a few 100 meters away it is likely that they be disturbed by it. But this year they are relieving a sigh of relief due to the strong embankment built on the side of the river especially due to the Bogi beel project that is under construction.

The demography is entirely consisted of Mising peoples. The total population is 1468. Their chief occupation is known to be cultivation, but due to perennial effect of the flood and the loss of land they are not getting satisfactory agricultural products, in comparison with the earlier return they could get through agriculture. They abundantly grow mustard, rice, matikalai, potato, peas and rice

products like Ahu, Shali and Bao. But in the recent years they could cultivate only Ahu & Bao. As such almost the entire population have to resort to marginal work i.e., wage earning, piggery & poultry etc. Of course due to the Bogibeel project the people there have the scope of engagement in various works with the company like petty contracts, boulder supply and many more other ways of engagement. So to say, though they do not have a strong economy they can at least survive hand to mouth with the help of the project for the time being.

They have a good transport facility. The service road being a few yards away they do not face much of transport problem. Buses, Trekkers, Jeeps, Auto ply through out the day. They have katcha all weather motor-able roads within their village. As such we can say that they have a satisfying transport facility.

Dispensaries of Medical sub centers are also located just 2 Kms. Away & hence they do not have much medical problem. Of-course during & after flood they are often attacked by various diseases like Malaria, diarrhea and dysentery.

They have 1 LP School within their village, High School is two Km. away & Secondary School is located a distance of 6 Kms. Away. In spite of the facilities the literacy rate is not to the expectation. They have just 3 graduates & one salaried job holder. In such a condition we can say that they are not in a position to cope up with the changing environment.

So, certain measures should be chalked out so as make them aware of the importance of education, awareness' about economy & various economic opportunities so that they can change themselves & equip with the changing environment.

Dhunabari village:

The study area represents an extremely vulnerable section of river flood plain of Lakhimpur district. The village is inhabitant by Mising tribe. According to the villagers due to availability of 'Dhuna' tree the village is known as 'Dhunabari'. The area is thickly populated and it was previously famous for high agriculture productivity. But now- a -days the activities of the people is affected by the destructiveness of flood in different ways. The people are mainly agriculturists who are now living in a pitiable state after every year flood. The heavy erosion and flood

greatly affects the socio-economic condition as well as the social environment of the area. The study area covering Dhunabari village were flooded by 'Ranganadi' and 'subasiri' river in a moderate intensity during every monsoon, but in the year 1989, 1991, and 1998 the resident population had to face some great flood which led to severe set back in their economic as well as social life. Apart from the devastation of the crops, large scale sand deposition has transformed vast plot of land into desert and one cannot think of raising any crop in this field. As flood damages the crops and other planted trees people of this village are greatly disappointed in respect of cultivation. About 90% of the villagers are solely depended on agriculture. As agriculture is not been able to give them sufficient earning, the people of the village are now works as a daily wage earners. Few of them have pigs and hens to keep their families alive. The womenfolk are engaging themselves in weaving.

The sanitation system of the village has become poor. Only 2 to 3 families have pit latrines. As the sanitation is in bad shape during flood it results in epidemics. Under the above circumstances the resident populations of the area obviously become very frusted. Still the people of this village have been trying to "Live with floods".

As the existing flood control measures of Govt, like construction of embankment, spurs have not been found effective at the desired level, the people therefore undertake some individual traditional measures to prevent and control the flood as far as possible. Their houses are built with raised bamboo floor about 7ft above the ground. It is seen that there are three raised platforms made by the people to keep their cattle. Most of the houses have small boat to be utilized during floods. Though the ravages of flood in this area have forced people to other favorable places, yet they are trying to adjust to their new environment.

Aunibari No1, Pavemukh Vekuli, Aunibari No2:

The village Aunibari No 1 is a remote village situated in Lakhimpur district. The village 'Pavemukh vekuli' derieved its name from the reserved forest 'Pava' as it is situated near it.

The villagers of these three villages are living in a pitiable state due to floods. This village is not well protected from floods. The flood water of Ranganadi and Subansiri river greatly affect the cultivable land. Due to the floods every year, large

scale crops get devastated. The cultivable lands are destroyed due to sand deposition result from the floods occurring there year after year.

The communication system of these villages is very poor. The only means of communication is by boat. The medical and educational facility of these villages is not up to the mark. As the flood relief measures adopted by the govt are inadequate, the people of these villages have their own indigenous measures. They put bamboo barbs in the river to check the flow speed of the river water. They also observe Puja to seek the blessings of the deities to save them from natural disasters. Dabur Puja is one such religious occasion.

The village deserves special attention from the Government for quicker development so that the villagers can cope up with the changing socio-economic and political situation surrounding them.

CHAPTER-V

CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTIONS

The study on Tribal situation in changing environment with reference to the Mising of Dhemaji and Lakhimpur districts of Assam pin pointed certain basic problems of the Misings, a riverine plains tribe of Assam. Originally a hill tribe, the Misings of the two districts are living in the riverine areas of the river Brahmaputra and its tributaries since centuries back. Traditionally they are lovers of riverside habitation and till 1950 (the great earthquake of August 1950) they had a peaceful life. The earthquake of 1950 brought untold miseries to the people and the problems of flood and erosion became a recurring feature compelling most of the villages to change village sites. The agricultural lands have been silted. The flood waters have had negative effect on the cultivation and they were compelled to produce only Bao and Ahu paddy along with mustard. The economy is badly shattered. However after Independence the popular Government chalked out schemes for all round development of the tribal communities under the Tribal Sub Plan. Various Development Departments worked in tender to bring the backward tribal areas in the level of developed areas.

The study indicated a growth in vital sectors like education, health, animal husbandry, agriculture, employment, transport and communication, mass communication, civic amenities etc. The balance of development, however, is not equal for all the Mising villages as the peculiar riverine topography stands as a barrier for equitable development. For instance in certain villages of both the districts, medical sub-centres are located within the village but for some other villages the nearest medical sub- centre is located at a distance beyond 15 kms. and above. Similarly M.E. Schools, H.E.Schools are found within the villages in certain villages but, the same educational institutions are located at a distance 5-10 kms, 10-15 kms and above 15 kms for some other villages.

The distance factor would have been neglected by the villagers had the transport and communication facilities in most of the villages showed some improvement. The study showed that a few villages of far flung areas of both the districts depend upon foot tracks and fair weather katcha roads. For some of the

villages, the nearest motorable road lies at a distance of 5-10 or 10-15 kms. Unless some urgent steps are taken in this regard the overall backwardness of the Misings will remain.

The greatest handicap for development activities is the annual flood of the river Brahmaputra and the tributaries like the Subansiri, Ranganadi, Ghagar Dikrong etc. Generations after generations the Mising are bearing the untold miseries caused by flood and erosion. The embankments could not give relief as sizable Mising villages of both the districts have had to shift the villages to new sites which are also not immune from the flood. The after effect of flood to the people equally causes distress in the form of diseases like Malaria, Typhoid, Dysentery, Jaundice etc. Besides during flood season the tube wells and ring wells, which are the only source of drinking water, are submerged the people have no other alternative and have to take the polluted water. Pipe water is a distance dream of the villagers.

The study indicated however some superfluous material progress. A good number of families of both Dhemaji and Lakhimpur district possess radio sets, and T.Vs. High School and College going boys and girls are increasing along with the increase of unemployment. The families are showing much eagerness to educate them. The villagers, particularly youths are going selves. For example in Dhemaji there are 84 female matriculates against for self employment by resorting to petty trades in 98 male matriculates. Grocery, wine selling, fish selling etc. employment in Government and private sectors is limited to a few lucky youths including girls.

Another glaring phenomenon of the changing Mising socio-cultural life is the switching over to nuclear type of family. The Mising traditionally practised joint family system but of late individualism is growing at a faster rate. The traditional cohesive character is noticed during festivals and such other occasions.

The people are losing valuable agricultural lands every year and the villagers having less than 3 Bighas are the worst sufferers. There are landless Mising people in both the districts, although the number is not very high. Thus majority of the families both in Dhemaji and lakhimpur are marginal farmers. Most of the families having lands below 3 Bighas and 4-7 Bighas lose lands after flood.

The Mising are expert weavers and they contribute with their mite towards the income of the families by weaving colorful clothes not only for themselves but for all the members of a family. They also remain in charge of cattle, poultries and pigs. Pigs have much commercial value also.

Large majority of the households are without any debt in both the districts.

The overall economy of the Mising remains in the subsistence level mainly due to large dependent numbers in each family in comparison with the earners. The unemployed youths are mounting year after year and the reasons they mentioned are economic backwardness, lack of higher education, lack of employment opportunity, lack of awareness, living standard, and lack of information.

In fine the Misings of both Dhemaji and Lakhimpur districts are badly affected by flood and erosion which factor alone contributes towards overall backwardness of the tribal populations. Due to silting of the river Brahmaputra, they are losing valuable agricultural lands year after year and the out put in the residual lands is also decreasing. Pressure on land is increasing but due to non availability of suitable agricultural lands most of the villagers are in great difficulty. Land less villagers, which is anachronism par excellence in the land of plenty, is noted. As above we suggest the following for early implementation in the Mising inhabited areas of Dhemaji and Lakhimpur.

Suggestion:

1. Embankments in the Mishing areas may be strengthened.
2. High lands should be created enabling the villagers for shelter during flood season.
3. Considering the difficult terrain, L.P. schools should be within the villages.
4. Medical sub centres, veterinary dispensaries should be within the village or $\frac{1}{2}$ kms from the villages
5. A scheme of rehabilitation of the land less villagers (land lost due to erosion or silting) may be chalked out.
6. NGOs may be sponsored /financed to establish weaver's co-operative as the Mising colourful clothes (particularly Mekhela) have a flourishing market.

7. Similarly the marshy areas have full potentiality for a viable fish business which could be tapped. Besides that will ease the unemployment problem to some extent.
8. First priority should be given to construct at least gravelled roads linking the villages to the nearest motorable roads/bus station.
9. Rural health worker's visit to the flood affected villages during and after flood should be enforced as most of the villagers suffer from post flood epidemics and the medical sub centres are located at a considerable distance.
10. Non availability of drinking water (particularly during flood) is the main problem as the ring wells and tube wells are submerged. At least two tube wells in each village should be bored in selected high lands.
11. The areas inhabited by the Misings are suitable for mustard crop and in fact they are growing mustard seeds in large quantities. Due to lack of sufficient marketing. Co-operation the villagers are not getting good returns for their labour marketing co-operatives should be strengthened under the guidance of Panchayat authorities. Here the traditional youth organization, Mimer yami should be involved.
12. Among the Mising educated boys and girls are increasing and they are considered mostly additional work force in the cultivation process. These persons prefer jobs and in absence they are seeking after self employment opportunities. To ease the problem of educated un-employment opportunities may be created by providing soft loans for starting individual trades.

**GOVERNMENT OF ASSAM
ASSAM INSTITUTE OF RESEARCH FOR TRIBALS AND SCHEDULED CASTES:
JAWAHARNAGAR, N.H.37.GUWAHATI-781022**

**TRIBAL SITUATION IN CHANGING ENVIRONMENT-
A STUDY AMONG THE MISING OF LAKHIMPUR AND DHEMAJI DISTRICT**

VILLAGE SCHEDULE

1. Name of the informant:
2. Age:
3. sex
4. education:
5. occupation

1. A. GENERAL INFORMATION

1. Name of the village:
2. Police Station:
3. Block:
4. Sub-division:
5. District:
6. Total No. of Household:
7. Population:
(a) Male: (b) Female:

**B. Topography
(Plain, marshy, low land)**

**C. Settlement Pattern:
(Agglomerated, Dispersed, Isolated, others)**

D. Total No. Of Households:

E. Is the village located under Forest area? Yes/No

If yes, for how many years are they staying there?

F. Is there any family who has been shifted to this village from other village?

Y/N

If yes, state the number of families?

Name the villages from where they have shifted.

2. TRANSPORT AND COMMUNICATION FACILITIES

- A. Distance of the village from-**
- (a) Nearest motor able road.....
 - (b) Nearest transport station.....
 - (c) Nearest railway station.....
 - (d) Block Office
 - (e) Sub- divisional Headquarter.....

- B. Condition of the road to the village-
- (a) Foot tract.....
 - (b) 'Katcha' fair weather motor able road.....
 - (c) 'Katcha' all weather motor able road.....
 - (d) Graveled road.....
 - (e) Others (specify).....

- C. Mode of conveyance:
- (a) Motor bus
 - (b) Boat
 - (c) Trekker/ small vehicles
 - (d) Others (specify)

- D. Other means of mass communication available:
- (a) Television
 - (b) Radio
 - (c) Newspaper
 - (d) Telephonic facility
 - (e) Community centre

3. CIVIC AND EDUCATIONAL FACILITIES:

- A. Distance of the village under study, in Kms from:
- (a) Nearest Post Office.....
 - (b) Nearest Telegraph office.....
 - (c) Nearest Medical sub center.....
 - (d) Nearest state Dispensary.....
 - (e) Nearest Hospital.....
 - (f) Nearest Veterinary Dispensary/ medical.....
 - (g) Nearest private medical practioner.....

(If the above mentioned facilities are available within the village itself, mention it clearly)

4. Educational facilities

School/Institution	Distance from the village	Total no of boys attending	Total no of girls attending	remarks
Primary school				
Lower Primary school				
High school				
High secondary/ college				

5. No of Drop outs of students:

- (i) No of male dropout.....
- (ii) No of female dropout.....
- (iii) Reason of drop out:

6. Source of Drinking water:

Source	Number	Privately/owned/ govt agencies	Distance from village proper
A) Pond			
B) Well			
C) River			
D) Tube well			
E) Reservoir			
F) water supply scheme			

7. ELECTRICITY

(i) Whether the village is having electricity facility? Yes/No

(ii) If yes, totals nos. of households having electricity facilities....

8. What are the activities village people engage other than agriculture?

9. FLOOD RELATED MEASURES:

(i) What are the measures taken by the people of the village before flood?
(Please take details of both traditional and Govt. measures)

(ii) What are the measures taken by the village community and Governmental agencies after flood?

(iii) Do the village have facilities of raised platform? Yes/No

Date:

Collected By:

Supervised by:

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HOUSE HOLD SCHEDULE

1. Serial No:
2. Name of the Investigator:
3. Date of Investigation:
4. Name of the Respondent:
5. Age of the respondent:
6. **General Information:**
 - (a) District:
 - (b) Panchayat:
 - (c) Sub-division and circle:
7. **Demographic Data:**
 01. Tribe
Sub tribe:
 02. Marital Status
 - (a) Unmarried (b) Married (c) Widow/ Widower
 - (d) Divorced (e) Separated
 03. Type of family:
 - (a) Nuclear (b) Joint family (c) Joint earlier nuclear now
 - (d) Nuclear earlier joint now (e) any other, Please specify
8. **ECONOMIC DATA**
 - (a) Land Tenure status
 01. Landowner
 02. Tenant
 03. Landless
 - (b) Details of land possessed (in acres)
 - Total land possessed:
 - Total Homestead land:
 - Total area of land under cultivation/Wet cultivation:
 - Total area under non-mulberry/eri / other cultivation:

- Fallow land:
- No of tress and its name:
- Any other (PI specify):

(c) Land and assets before/ after flood (Duration last 5 years)

Before

After

Patta Land (in acres)

Non- Patta land (in acres)

(d) For how long you have been staying in this village?

If shifted to this village from other place, state the reason for shifting.

10. Any land leased out, mortgaged, sold or lost? Yes/no

If yes, Please specify reason for it.

Area of Land	Type of land	Whether leased out	To whom

Area of Land	Type of land	Whether sold	To whom

Area of Land	Type of land	Whether lost	To whom

11. Source of water:

- Well – Open/Protected
- Tube well
- Supply
- River

12. Livestock details:

No	Production	Income
Cattle		
Goats/pigs		
Poultry/bird		

13. Total no of earning members of family:

14. Total no of dependent members of family:

15. Are there any unemployed members in the family? Yes/ No.
(a) If yes, how many?

- Male
- Female

(b) State the reason of their unemployment:

1. Lack of employment opportunity
2. Lack of agricultural land
3. Lack of education
4. Lack of awareness about economic opportunities
5. Economic backwardness.
6. Unable to work due to flood or its consequences

16. Crop pattern

17. (a) Is the production decreasing? Yes/ No

If yes, reason for decreasing production-

(b) Do you have any agricultural products surplus for sell during last year?
Yes/NO

If yes, where do you usually sell your surplus produces?

- (i) In the market (ii) in the village (iii) to the middlemen,
(iv) To marketing societies/co-operative societies.

(c) What are the problems you face in cultivation?

(d) Do you receive any agricultural inputs from any source during the last year?
Yes/No

If yes, give details:

18. Do flood affect you in practicing cultivation? Yes/No

If yes,

a) How flood affects cultivation?

b) What are the measures you take to protect your field?

d) Do flood affect your livelihood? Yes/No

If yes,

Are you / your family engaging in non-farming activities to earn a living?
Yes/No

If yes,

a) What type of job,

b) What are the problems you face while searching for other means of livelihood?

19. Are you or your family member have taken loan (institutional/non-institutional) or borrowed money from any source during last one year? Yes/ No

If yes,

a) State the reason for taking such loan?

b) What is the rate of interest?

SPECIFIED QUESTIONS ON FLOOD:

20. For how many months in a year you are affected by floods?

21. Is the frequency of the flood increasing year by year? Yes/no

22. What are the problems you face due to floods?
(Take information on health, sanitation, food supply, drinking water and raised platform etc)

23. What are the pre- flood measures you adopt to save yourself, your family and livestock from floods?

24. Do you receive any Govt. measures to protect you from floods? Yes/No
If yes, what are the measures?

25. Did you lose any land in flood? Yes/No
If yes, how many acres?

26. Did you receive any compensation from any source? Yes/no

If yes, from whom you received compensation-

How much did you receive compensation?

27. What are the common diseases your family suffers after flood?

Data collected by:

Date:

Supervised by: