PART - III

CHAPTER - 10

DIFFICULTIES EXPRESSED BY THE PEOPLE OF STUDY DISTRICT

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10.1 PROBLEMS OF THE VILLAGER'S:

People's Participation in the development programmes is the primary objective of all the rural development programmes as well as agricultural development, so far launched till today. The development without involvement of people is a fruitless tree standing in the garden. The large scale creation of programmes and agencies will not solve any problem unless and until people come forward for active participation in it. The best thing for the agencies is to motivate and persuade the rural masses to accept the new principles, policies and plans. No doubt it is a complex task because of complex social structure of rural society. Nevertheless, gradual transformation of rural society is only possible, when the agencies would be able to bring an awareness among the people about the innovatory programmes. Hence, cooperation and co-ordination between the agencies and the people are utmost essential to make a dent of rural lethargy. So far the countryside, the village people are suffering from various complex problems of chronic diseases. Hence, implementation of rural development programme without due consideration of their difficulties will make them dubious rather than ambitious.

Therefore, this chapter will make an assessment of village's people problems in participating the development programmes. These problems are collected by means of personal contract with the household heads and their views would be reviewed by summarising all their expressions in the following paras.
All problems of the surveyed villages are not heterogeneous. Some of them are common for all the villages. Even than during the survey, they were asked to enumerate the problems of their villages and own and their replies were noted down by the researcher.

10.2 GENERAL PROBLEMS OF THE VILLAGER’S:

1. Ignorance about the different development programmes.
2. They donot know, who are the agencies and how to approach them.
3. Most of all agencies are situated in urban areas.
4. Poor extension services.
5. Capital deficiencies.
6. Insufficient credit facilities and institutions.
7. Agriculture is a game of betting due to natural calamities.
8. Landless is the major problems for 11 households.
10. Upland and lowland.
11. Large fragmentation of land.
13. Lack of irrigation facilities.
15. High cost of modern inputs and lack of technological knowledge.
16. Pre-dominance of tiny farmers.
17. Plant diseases.
18. No grazing and pasture land for rearing the animals.
19. Little commercial farming.
20. Large use of traditional practice for farm output.
21. Low farm income.
22. Absence of subsidiary occupation.
23. Existence of surplus labour.
25. Poor diet and bad health.
26. Low wage rate.
27. Large practice of liquor.
28. Problem of pure drinking water.
29. No fishery and little output of meat and eggs.
30. Lack of medical facilities at nearest distance.
32. Katcha road and thatched huts.
33. Poor communication.
34. No existence of rural market.
35. Absence of higher educational, Technical institution.
36. Prevalance of contractor economy.
37. Poor qualities of village leaders and representative.
38. Absence of employment opportunities.
39. Little knowledge about the different methods of family planning.
40. Unhygienic surrounding as a result of no latrines and mud during the rainy seasons.
41. Absence of community centers.
42. Poor qualities of domestic animal, Practices of wooden plough and traditional varieties.
43. Increasing pressure of disguised unemployment on agriculture.
44. Little attention to the poor people except political gain.
45. Low importance of saving and small savings.
46. Lack of training facilities to the village people in different aspects.
47. Absence of proper education.
48. Absence of planning how to invest and where to invest.
49. Problem of language, because most of the agency use the English language.
50. Absence of Business mind/Commercial mind/Trade mind/Banking mind, etc.

10.3 AGRICULTURE:

Do you practise the modern Agricultural Practices from Block as well as Banks, from self help?

TABLE NO: -10.1

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sl. No.</th>
<th>Questions</th>
<th>Improved seeds</th>
<th>Chemical fertiliser</th>
<th>Improved implements</th>
<th>Agricultural Demonstration</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Not heard</td>
<td>11 Nos</td>
<td>11 Nos</td>
<td>11 Nos</td>
<td>1 Nos</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Heard</td>
<td>180 Nos</td>
<td>180 Nos</td>
<td>180 Nos</td>
<td>180 Nos</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Heard and interested</td>
<td>160 Nos</td>
<td>160 Nos</td>
<td>160 Nos</td>
<td>160 Nos</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Heard and not interested</td>
<td>25 Nos</td>
<td>25 Nos</td>
<td>25 Nos</td>
<td>25 Nos</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Heard and interested and also tried</td>
<td>180 Nos</td>
<td>180 Nos</td>
<td>180 Nos</td>
<td>180 Nos</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Heard, interested and tried and adopted</td>
<td>100 Nos</td>
<td>100 Nos</td>
<td>100 Nos</td>
<td>100 Nos</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Heard, Interested but given up</td>
<td>50 Nos</td>
<td>50 Nos</td>
<td>50 Nos</td>
<td>50 Nos</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>No Answer</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

From the above table -10.1 it is clear and found that only 180 household, heads knew about the modern agricultural practices. The remaining 11 households heads said that they did not know about the improved means. Because, they have no land for
agricultural practices. Out of 180 heads 160 heads expressed that they were interested to take the modern practices. On the other hand 25 heads expressed their inability for taking up due to scarcity of resources for purchasing the modern implements and means. Moreover, they have small land holdings which were not viable to practice the above means.

During the survey, 180 households heads revealed that they were interested and tried, 100 heads said they were interested, tried and adopted and 50 household heads, interested, tried but given up. The reason for given up was that there was no irrigation facilities as well as they had not received the timely supply of modern agricultural means.

Those people, who has expressed of modern agricultural practices, they strongly criticised the concern agencies regarding the supply of inputs. Firstly, the inputs are to supply in subsidy rate. But many people did not know what is the meaning of subsidy and what is the price of the inputs. As such whatever the price charged by the Agents, they had to pay for it.

Secondly, the inputs were supplied not sufficiently and also timely. Due to short supply of inputs, the influential persons took the privilege and poor peasants had no alternative except adhering the old method.

Thirdly, those who received the fertilizers, they did not know the proper procedure to be used. The agricultural demonstration was not held in the remote areas.

Fourthly, the backwardness of communication system had prevented the agriculturist to contact the change agents who generally resides in urban areas.
Fifthly, there are 35 households who live in tea hagan land, 10 households in government land and 8 households in forest land. Their disadvantages were that they had no received the patta for the land occupied, and thereby they could not think for improved means.

The leasing in on share cropping was continued in the sample areas. These people who have surplus land without labour and livestock had given the land on adhiared system. There are 10 households who cultivated on adhiared basis and 13 households who kept their land on mortgaging. They said that neither the government nor the elected representative had taken any initiative to solve their problems.

The problem of fallow land due to hilly topography as well as waterlogging was the big problem to their peasants who have surplus land without resources. This type of land could not be utilized for production purposes unless and until the proper irrigation and drain system is developed.

Another, burning problem of the forest villages was the wild lives. The wildlives like, Elephant, Buffaloes and Monkeys were coming to the agricultural field and damaging the crops which were sowing near the forest areas. Although complain was lodged to the forest department, but, no appropriate measures had been taken to prevent it.

Except, few, all the people had been cultivating by their own people. Only 55 households heads revealed that they were cultivated by hired labour. As a result of this, those peasants who cultivated by their own labour, they had to employ their growing children in the agricultural activities, which hampered in taking their education. The talented children could not attend the
school as they had to busy in agricultural fields. The local youth unless very poor did not work as hired labour in other fields.

Generally, the traditional single cropping pattern was most popular among the villages. The only 45 household had been taking up the double cropping pattern. The reason behind the single cropping was that the underground was not fit for all the seasons. As there was no proper irrigation system and sufficient fertilizers, they could not change the cropping pattern, on the other hand, Where there was irrigation facilities, the small landlords could not avail the chance because they had to bear the cost of connection from main source to their fields.

The crops were frequently attacked by pests. The agencies did not come to the villages to educate them how to apply the pesticides, More over the pesticides were also not available in attacking time.

Agricultural credit is a nucleus of the system of farm operation. * I. The less mobilisation of credit requirement has caused the under nourishment of agricultural nucleus. The sample households failed to take up the agricultural output as business due to low investment in agricultural sector. Whenever help received from institutional on non-institutional sector was not sufficient for higher investment. As such, they had to force to take help from private money lenders who exploited them severely.

Although, the block has financed under integrated rural development programme for creation of assets, nevertheless, the amount of loan was so negligible that it was worthless investment for creating a permanent assets.

* I. Sethi, A.D. : Indian Farming Conditions 1970 P.76
For example, one scheduled caste household head received Rs. 5,000 for agricultural production. He had no bullock and labour to carry out the activities. He said that, for purchasing a pair of bullock of good qualities, it is required Rs 10,000 to 15,000. Moreover, he had to purchase the inputs with the same way. As such, as there was no alternatives he utilised this type of help for another purpose.

The iron plough was not at all viable because of hard structure of the soil and low qualities of local bullocks. The soil of the river shore is very clay and on the other hand, the soil of the upland is very hard. Likewise, the river shore is very fertile. It does not require the fertilizer. But in case of upland, it is requires both fertilizers and irrigation facilities. As such, as there is no proper facilities, the agriculture is highly dependence on natural rains. It result a low yield rate per bighas which was generally 6 to 10 mounds.

10.4 DEPOSIT, WITHDRAWAL AND LOAN:

Due to under development of rural banking services, the rural people have been suffering from many problems. They have to run to the urban areas for any kind of transactions in the bank which is major cause of less savings. In the chapter 6, Table-2 shows the distance of the selected villages from their respective bank branches where most of villages has been getting more trouble for their banking transactions due to long distance from bank branches like 13 Kms, 12Kms, 10Kms etc. There are some agents for collection of money to deposit in the bank but some times these agents cheated the poor villagers by unfair means.
The procedure of loan is also so lengthy that they have no time to spare more days. Besides, it is a common process that without gratifications, they hardly get any type of loan. Sometimes, the borrower will have to pay a percentage of loan amount like 2 per cent, 5 per cent, up to 10 and 15 per cent to the field officers and other concerned bank officials for their disbursement of loan. The poor villagers cannot spare this money for their financial hardship. On the other hand the loan burden including interest comes to the borrowers only.

In case of direct loan, they have to keep their land and property as security. But these persons who have no land and other property, how they can avail loan for starting some village industries or any other farming activities.

10.5 ATTITUDES TOWARDS BORROWING:

A related issue that has to be examined in this connection is the farmers’ attitude towards borrowings. It is generally believed that a farmer may not avail himself of loan like those of banks, if he entertains pseudo-prestige and/or wrong conceptions. To capture these the following seven questions are canvassed, for each farmers a, b, & c are used as pseudo prestige leaning and the remaining as the indicators of the entertainment of wrong conceptions.

(a) To be in a debt is bad;
(b) Debt often brings down social prestige;
(c) Debt discourages the habit of thrift;
(d) Debt forms a habit;
(e) Debt leads to obligations;
(f) Debt induces the family members to misutilise funds;
(g) Debt leads to indiscriminate and lavish spending.
In a very strict sense, these questions need not be administered on the borrowing participants like the present ones. Its usefulness, however, is justified on the ground that a participant farmer may be entertaining pseudo prestige but left with no option than going in for bank credit because of the non-availability of other outlets. If such is the situation a participant farmer may not be able to reap the fruits of bank facilities, if an alternative source is accessible.

Along with the conversation, the farmers being borrowers of banks are asked details with respect to their impressions about bank financing in terms of factors such as the involved procedures, adequacy or financial scales, rate of interest, recovery periodicity, etc. The specific statements that have been canvassed for this purpose are:

(a) The bank borrowing procedures are too complicated;
(b) The interest charges are very high;
(c) The repayment periodicity is too short/inconvenient;
(d) The borrowing demands some malpractices; and
(e) The borrowing demands flattering of the officials.

Farmers' responses to these are recorded only after ensuring that each one of the queries is clearly understood by the respondents.

10.6 VILLAGE INDUSTRIFS (ARTISANS):

In the olden days, the present district was famous for blacksmithy, flourished. About this place William Robinson said that "The only iron works of any extent now carried on in Assam these near Dirgong and Kacharihat." 2.

* 2. William Robinson : A Descriptive Account of Assam Page 35
However, it is pertinent to note down that the present, there is no any cottage industries like blacksmithy, earthen potteries, weaving, bell-metal works cane and bamboo works in the sample areas. Some of the houses have been making-up such industries for their own needs not for business purposes.

The reasons for not taking-up as explained by them that they have no capital for the development of such industries. Besides, there is no ready market to sale their products immediately. Due to under-development of infrastructures, non-availability of raw-materials and staff competition of market, they could not develop their industries.

Generally, in Assamese societies, the following services viz, barbers, washerman, sweepers, and not prevalent. As such, there was total absence of such kinds of job in rural areas. Moreover, they preferred the services instead of business. The district industry centre failed to create any awareness in the rural areas.

10.7 CONCLUSION:

A few people expressed that they understood the changed nature of the development programme. But frequent consultations about their difficulties were not held or nobody came to their village to consult with them for implementing the development programme which were the main causes of less participation of the people.

The majority people did not know the object and contents of the development programmes. As such, they simply, felt that they have no role to play in this matter. Besides they did not know whom to approach and how to proceed for any help at first. The
general belief were that the government should have come forward and give them help.

The Gram Sevaks, who are the main charged agents in the rural areas, did not visit the villages regularly to give them prior information. But in this respect, the village people also not attentive the Gram Sevaks as he has no monetary power except only advices. Because of this, the village level workers, hesitated to expresss their views to all the villagers.

The respondents had opined that as all the offices are situated in the urban areas, it was very difficult to contact the officials to express their problems in needful time such as "Customers Talk" arranged by the Bankers.

Almost all the people mentioned that the officials were not sound and prompt in rendering their services to villagers. Maximum formalities has to be observed for taking any helps from the agencies side which was very difficult job at the time of busy season. Sometimes, the bureaucratic behaviours of the officials had imposed some ambiguous experience which make them afraid off the officials.

Although, the traditional distance between the development departments and the common people had been considerably reduced, nevertheless sometimes in absence of Panchayati workers the authoritarian character of administration has also been increasing day by day. To make the rural development programme as well as agricultural development programme to be successful, the proper co-ordination and co-operation between the villagers and agencies is inevitable.