



NSS Special Camp, 27th June -3rd July. 2024
at
Daodhara, Khamardwisa and Randhanipara villages of Baksa district, Assam
(along the Indo-Bhutan International Border)



Report submitted by-

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The first Special Camp of NSS Cell, Bhattadev University, Bajali was conducted at Daodhara, Khamardwisa and Randhanipara villages of Baksa district, Assam that are located along the Indo-Bhutan International Border. The villages are fringe village of the Manas National Park rich in tiger population and diverse flora and fauna. People of Bodo community mainly dominate the villages and negligible populations of Adivasi people were also found in the village of Daodhara. The religious composition of the villages is comprised of Hindus (Bathou) and Christianity. People speak Bodo language and Odhiya. The economic base of the villages is agrarian. The villages are situated in a scenic landscape on the foothills of the Lesser Himalayas and have a great potentiality for development of tourist spots.

The special camp has undertaken several awareness programs, socio-economic surveys and cultural exchange programs to aware the villagers on several aspects of the society. The program is also a modest attempt to introduce the NSS volunteers of Bhattadev University with the people resided in the aforementioned villages. A door-to-door survey was conducted to gather information on sources of livelihoods, their basic problems etc. The program was concluded with exchanging cultural ideas among the village people and the NSS volunteers.

Day 1- 27th June, 2024

The weeklong NSS Special Camp was inaugurated by Arindam Talukdar, Head of the Department of History, Bhattadev University, Bajali (Picture 1). He has ample of knowledge on tourism and engaged with MMES for 20 long years. In his inaugural speech, he discussed about the people engagement with protection of nature especially of the Manas National Park and he highlights how “poachers became protectors”. Here, he stated that many poachers of the fringe villages of the Manas National Park have become protectors after declaration of the forest as protected areas. Role of MMES and other nature lovers is noteworthy in this regard. The chief-guest of the inaugural session also highlights tourism as an alternative source of livelihood and tourism potentiality of the villages.

The president of the MMES – Mahendra Basumatary has also graced the inaugural session (Picture 2). MMES (Manas Maozigendri Eco-tourism Society) is a community-based society for conservation of nature and eco-tourism based in Khamardwisa village of Baksa district. He spoke about the formation of the MMES and their yearlong struggle to save the nature and the

Manas. In his speech, he gives insights on the rich biodiversity of the Manas National Park, numerical on various flora and fauna found therein. He also stated that earlier, source of livelihoods of the people residing on the fringe villages was derived from the Manas National Park. After the declaration of the forest as protected area, people learn to live with the rhythm of the forest without harming the forest, the nature. He also highlights the role of MMES in preserving the nature and promoting eco-tourism.

Mr. Joushrung Baro, Principal i/c, Koklabari Chapaguri College, Hazuwa also grace the inaugural program of the Special Camp (Picture 3). In his speech, he delivered an insightful knowledge on NSS- its historical background, its objectives, its role in capacity building, enhancement of leadership quality etc. He also highlights the role of the NSS volunteers during various natural disasters and other societal activities.

After the inaugural session, NSS volunteers of the Special Camp were taken for a Transact Walk to 2No. Koklabari village (Picture 4). During the transact walk, various crop-fields, rubber gardens, cultivated lands of jute, barren lands were observed. The pattern of settlement in the village is sparse. Bodo community people dominate the village and they mainly depend on agriculture, poultry farming, and animal husbandry as source of livelihoods. The village is located at the foothills of the Bhutan Himalayas and along the extreme periphery of the Manas National Park. During the transact walk a peculiar thing was observed in acquiring natural source of drinking water. Majority of people of the village drink water directly from a natural spring well (Picture 5). Only a few concrete structured houses were observed in the village. Several plots of lands were seen barren along the frontiers of the Manas, as such lands are not suitable for cultivation due to destruction cause by the wild animals especially by the elephants.

A rubber garden covering 10 *bighas* of land located near the Photha Dwiswa River was the ending point of the Transact Walk. The rubber garden has been established collectively by the youths of the Khamardwiswa and 2No. Koklabari village. Annually tons of rubber has been produced from this garden. Apart from commercial significance of the garden, this home to many bird species and animals. Thousands of elephants came to this rubber garden for breeding. Leopard, pigmy hog are also found. A rare bird species namely wall creeper is also found in this rubber garden (Picture 6).

Day 2- 28th June, 2024

On 28th of June, an interaction has done with the Gaon Pradhan of Daodhara village to collect various primary and secondary data about the village. A Transact Walk to Daodhara village has also been prepared (Picture 7). Daodhara village is located under the Thebormur Revenue Circle of Baksa district. The village Daodhara has 2323 population during 2022, of which, 1180 are female and 1143 are male population. It indicates that the village has a favorable sex ratio and from this, it can be assume that the women of the village enjoyed a better social status in the village. The village comprised of 358 households. Majority of population of the village comprised of Bodo community, a Scheduled Tribe of Assam and of Nepali and Adivasi community. Bodo community people follow Bathau and most of the Adivasi people believes and Christianity and Hinduism by the Nepali people.

Literacy rate of the village is more than 60%, but numbers of people pursuing higher education is less. There are six Anganawadi Kendras, three Lower Primary Schools and one Upper Primary school in the village. School dropout at secondary level is higher in the village. Poor economic condition and distance to the educational institutes are some of the causes for such dropouts and low enrolment ratio in higher educational institutions. Majority of people of the village i.e. 80% depends on agriculture to earn their source of income. They mostly practice organic farming. Animal husbandry mainly pig farming is practiced in the village. Only 10% working population of the village engaged in government and private jobs and the remaining 10% working population are engage in trade and commerce. A detail on occupational pattern of the village has been given in the following table.

Table 1: Occupational pattern of Daodhara village

Agriculture	80%
Trade and commerce	10%
Government and private jobs	10%
Teacher	7 person
Lecturer	1 person
Police and Defense	12 person
Forest Guard	4 person
Doctor	1 person
Corporate sector	5 person
MMES	4 person

Source: Field Investigation

People of the village usually avail health facilities from the PHC (Primary Healthcare Centre) located near the Daodhara market. To avail advanced health care facilities and during medical emergencies, they come to Pathsala Town located 32 km away from the village. People of the village are generally suffer from health issues like high BP (Blood Pressure), diabetes, high level of uric acid etc. People of the village drawn water supplied from the Jal Jeevan Mission for various domestic purposes.

Villagers of Daodhara Gaon are recipients of various governmental schemes. Almost every women of the village has received gas cylinders under Ujwala scheme, 70% households of the village has received government funded house under Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojna and 30% households has got *pucca* toilet under Swachh Bharat Abhiyan Scheme. But, the beneficiaries of Arunodoi is very low in the village. Almost all aged people of the village are receiving pension under Bridha Pension Achoni.

As per information collected from the Gaon Pradhan, people of the village are facing with many challenges such as lack of proper drinking water facility, inadequate medical facilities in the village, low employment opportunities, poor transport and communication network etc.

After the formal visit with the Gaon Pradhan, NSS volunteers were taken to Bhyuanpara Range of Manas National Park for a walk through the woods (Picture 8).

Day 3- 29th June, 2024

On 29th June, a door-to-door survey was organized at Daodhara village. Several groups of volunteers were made to collect in-depth information about the village people (Picture 9 & 10). A total of 38 households were surveyed on 29th June. Findings of the household survey will be discussed in the following sections:

Majority of people inhabited the village belongs to Bodo community. A marginal number of Nepali and Adivasi people were also found. The economic base of the village is relying upon agriculture. During the field investigation, it is being observed that poultry farming, piggery is widely practiced for commercial and subsistence purpose both. The paddy cultivation is generally done at subsistence level and majority of them holding 4-6 *bighas* of land. Most of the

farmers of the village used modern agricultural techniques like tractors for cultivation and they are receivers of PM Kisan schemes also. Most women of the village are engaged in weaving but, it is for their own use, it has potential to develop the handloom sector at commercial level.

The house structures of the village generally made up of clay and bamboo and RCC structured are of Assam Type houses. All the houses of the village have electricity connections. Majority of them are beneficiaries of various schemes provided by the government. Although water supply facility is available from the government's Jal Jeevan Achoni, it is yet to be working; many people are devoid of proper drinking water (Picture 11). People of the village usually go for private medical treatment, as doctors are not regularly available at their nearest PHC. Youths of the village take active participation in cleanliness and hygiene of the village; dustbins were seen along the roads of the village (Picture 12).

From the field observation conducted at Daodhara village, it can be summarized that, agriculture is the main source of livelihood of the people. Many households are facing the problem of inadequate drinking water, lack of better medical facilities and less developed transport and communication system (Picture 13). Skill enhancement programs can generate more employment opportunities in the village.

Day 5- 1st July, 2024

On 1st July, before going for collection of field data, an intense group discussion was happen among the NSS volunteers and two invited special guest of the day (Picture 14). One guest was Dr. Parag Barman, Director, Dean of Students' Welfare, Bhattadev University, Bajali. He speaks about the role of NS in capacity building, career enhancement and in daily life phenomena etc. Another guests was Dr. Upakul Mahanta, IQAC Coordinator, Bhattadev University, Bajali. He talks about the various procedures of data collection, how to get answers of how and why question during the field visits. He also focused on involvement of NSS volunteers from different fields of the university to view a phenomenon from a multi-disciplinary approach, which will obviously give a better solution to a problem or to creativity.

After the discussion session with the invited guests, volunteers were taken to Khamardwisa village for a socio-economic household survey. Khamardwisa village is located at the periphery

of the Manas National Park. Due to destruction of crops by wild animals lead to many cultivable land of the village barren. Long yards of rubber trees have been found in the village. Jute cultivation is also widely practiced. Apart from agriculture people of the village are also engaged in animal husbandry. Several women of the village are engaged in weaving but at subsistence level; only one surveyed household, weaving is done commercially; they sell weaved clothes to Bhutan (Picture 15). MMES, which was mentioned earlier was mentioned earlier is situated in this village. Many people of the village are engaged with this organization. A big plot of land containing about 30 *bigha* is under the MMES and this land is used for cultivation of betel nuts.

Khamardwisa village is totally inhabited by Bodo community people. Literacy rate among the surveyed households is almost 80%. Houses made up of clay and bamboos are widely found. All the households have electricity connectivity. There are less numbers of government aided schemes. Education, medical and transportation facilities are not much developed. The drinking water facility of several households of the village is not hygienic. People bring water from natural spring that remains uncovered and untreated.

Day 6- 2nd July, 2024

On 2nd July, two special guests from Bhattadev University has invited and plantation and cleanliness drive was conducted. The day 6th of the special camp was graced by the Registrar i/c of Bhattadev University, Bajali (Picture 16). He delivered an insightful lecture on role of NSS in society and building our nation. Jadav Ch. Basumatary, Associate Dean of Students' Welfare also graced the event by delivering a lecture on what programs can be done in NSS Bhattadev University Cell. Two volunteers of the NSS special camp namely, Johnmani Sarania and Niharika Ray briefed the programs and works that has conducted in the last 6 days of the special camp. After the lecture session, a plantation drive (Picture 17) was conducted at Khamardwisa village, where invited guests of the day were also take part along with the volunteers (Picture 18).

Day 7- 3rd July, 2024

Day 7 was the last day of the NSS Special camp, a cultural exchange program was organized between the NSS volunteers of Bhattadev University and indigenous community people

inhabiting the mentioned village. Mr. Raju Das, Assistant Professor, Department of Economics, Bhattadev University rejoiced the event with his beautiful voice (Picture 19). Several folk and contemporary songs were sung; Satriya dance (Picture 20), group dance and contemporary dance were performed by the NSS volunteers. The volunteers also performed a play on moral ethics. Jnangkham Basumatary, a child of 12 years from Khamardwisa village sings different Bodo language songs at the event (Picture 21). Several people of the village also attended the event.

The cultural exchange program was followed by a cleanliness drive organized at Khamardwisa village (Picture 22). NSS volunteers and some local people of the village actively participated in the event.

The first NSS Special Camp of Bhattadev University NSS Cell was mainly focused on collection of data about the to be adopted village for future enactment of various plans and for conducting various awareness and skill-enhancement programs. From this, it can be drawn that the people of the selected villages mainly suffer from lack of proper drinking water, inadequate education, medical and transportation facilities. Many youths of the villages are not skilled; skill enhancement programs may alleviate unemployment. An awareness program on advanced agricultural methods and techniques and fishery sector will enhance the sources of livelihoods of the people. The villages are located along the Indo-Bhutan border have a scenic beauty (Picture 23) which have great potentiality of development of tourism. Location near to the international border also prospers the village economy by cross-border trade.



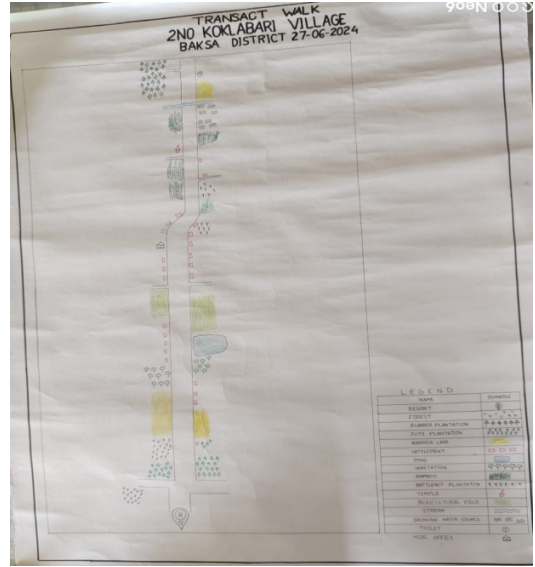
Picture 1



Picture 2



Picture 3



Picture 4



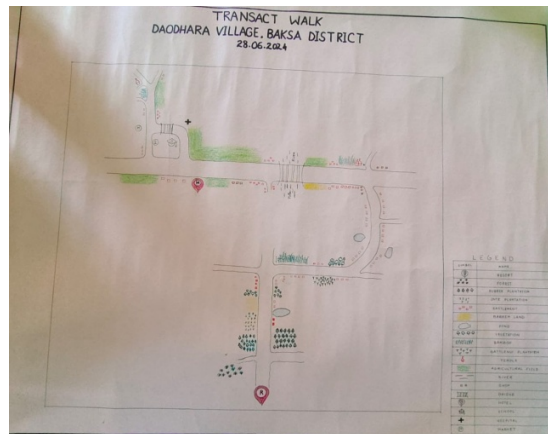
Picture 5



Picture 6



Picture 7



Picture 8



Picture 9



Picture 10



Picture 11



Picture 12



Picture 13



Picture 14



Picture 15



Picture 16



Picture 17



Picture 18



Picture 19



Picture 20



Picture 21



Picture 22



Picture 23