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5. SOCIAL ECONOMIC PROFILE OF THE PROJECT AREA

5.1 General

Generally, the area which contributes to the total traffic plying on the road is called the project Influenced Area (PIA). PIA is further classified into a broad and immediate influence area depending on its proximity to the project corridor. The immediate influence area for the current study comprises of Cachar, Hailakandi and Karimganj districts in Assam state.

The districts through which the project road passes are the primary project influence area. The Assam state highways facilitate the most important traffic movement for the various important towns of the state. Therefore, the influence area of the project corridor, for the purpose of socio economic study is considered with prime importance. The primary purpose of Socio-economic analysis is to provide an overview of the state's socio-economic setup and the relative status of the project influence area within the state. Data to be considered include demographic aspects, macroeconomic indicators and sectoral production of agriculture and allied activities, manufacturing, mining and service sectors including infrastructure. The profile provides the present scenario, the past performance and the prospective growth of the economy, population and urbanization. The profile depicts the spatial distribution of economic activities and provides basic inputs for estimating future growth in transport demand, on the basis of prospective economic growth rates and transport demand elasticity. Secondary data available with different state government departments have been collected and analyzed for preparation of socio-economic profile.

5.2 Assam State at a Glance

The state Assam is situated in the North-East India, which is the land of hills, valleys, mighty river Brahmaputra and land of Mother Goddess Kamakhya. The state Assam is sharing her border with 7 states like Arunachal Pradesh, Manipur, Meghalaya, Mizoram, Nagaland and West Bengal.


Assam is predominantly a rural based state, almost 86 per cent of its population still living in rural areas. The socio-economic position among the people in rural areas is very pathetic compared to urban area & all India figures. Rural poverty is more than twice that of urban poverty. The population growth in Assam also implied that there has hardly been any reduction in the absolute number of the poor over the years. As per census of India 2011, the state of Assam with an area of 78438 sq. Km. accounts for about 2.39% of the total geographical area of the country. It has a population of 31.20 million, which accounts for 2.58% of the population of the country. The adverse land-man ratio is 398 per sq. km. The decadal growth of population for 2001-2011 is 17.07%. According to 2011 census, the literacy rate in the state is 72.19% in which male literacy is 77.85% with respect to the male population and female literacy is 66.27% with respect to the female population, creating a gender gap of 11.58%. The Scheduled Caste

population comprises 7.15% whereas tribal population constitutes a mere 12.45% of the total population. About 61.64% of the population of the state is non-working. Therefore, there is a specific need for infrastructure development, so that, economy of the region can go in positive dimension. Some of the salient features of Assam State are listed below.

Table 5-1: Salient features of Assam State

Indicators		Census, 2011
Area (sq. km)		78438
Households (No.)		6406471
Population (No.)		31205576
Male Population		51.08
Female Population		48.92
Urban population		14.10
Rural population		85.90
SC Population		7.15
ST Population		12.45
Population growth rate		17.07
Population density (per sq. km.)		398
Sex Ratio (females+ 1000 males)		958
Total Literate		72.19
Total Male Literate		77.85
Total Female Literate		66.27
Work Participation Rate (WPR)		38.36
WPR (Male)		53.59
WPR (Female)		22.46
Main Workers		27.84
Main workers (Male)		44.13
Main workers (Female)		10.82
Main Workers	Cultivation Ratio	36.13
	Agriculture Ratio	10.40
	Household Ratio	2.79
	Others Ratio	50.69
Marginal workers		10.52
Marginal workers (Male)		9.45
Marginal workers (Female)		11.63
Marginal Workers	Cultivation Ratio	28.12
	Agriculture Ratio	28.70
	Household Ratio	7.59
	Others Ratio	35.59
Non-Workers		61.64
Male Non-workers		46.41
Female Non-workers		77.54

Source: Census of India, 2011

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5.2.1 Economy

The economy of Assam is largely agriculture based with 69% of the population engaged in it. The state is a major producer of rice, tea, jute, sugarcane, and oilseeds. Assam is also a major producer of crude oil and natural gas.


The state's gross state domestic product (GSDP) for 2022-23 is estimated to be ₹5.67 lakh crore (US\$71 billion), with a growth rate of 9.1%. The per capita income of Assam is ₹1.15 lakh crore (US\$14 billion), which is lower than the national average.

The key sectors of the Assam economy are:

- **Agriculture:** Agriculture is the largest sector of the Assam economy, contributing about 18% to the GSDP. The state is a major producer of rice, tea, jute, sugarcane, and oilseeds.
- **Industry:** The industrial sector contributes about 27% to the GSDP. The major industries in Assam are oil and gas, tea, food processing, and textiles.
- **Services:** The services sector contributes about 55% to the GSDP. The major services in Assam are tourism, trade, and transport.

The Assam government has taken a number of initiatives to boost the state's economy, including:

- **ReSTART Assam:** This is a flagship program of the Assam government that aims to promote industrial growth and create jobs. The program provides incentives to new and existing industries, such as tax breaks, land subsidies, and financial assistance.
- **Assam Ease of Doing Business Bill:*** This bill was passed in 2020 and aims to simplify the process of setting up and doing business in Assam. The bill reduces the number of clearances required for setting up a business and streamlines the approval process.
- **Assam Industrial Development Corporation (AIDC):** The AIDC is a government agency that promotes industrial growth in Assam. The AIDC provides a range of services to entrepreneurs, such as land acquisition, infrastructure development, and financial assistance.
- **Assam Skill University:** This University was established in 2016 to provide skill training to the youth of Assam. The university offers a range of courses in various sectors, such as manufacturing, hospitality, and healthcare.
- **Assam Tourist Development Corporation (ATDC):** The ATDC is a government agency that promotes tourism in Assam. The ATDC develops and maintains tourist infrastructure, such as hotels, resorts, and tourist attractions.

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In addition to these initiatives, the Assam government is also investing heavily in infrastructure development, such as roads, railways, and airports. This is expected to improve connectivity and boost economic growth.

5.2.2 Transportation

There are 20.15 Lakhs Motor Vehicles registered in the State as on 30.03.2015, of which 18.58 Lakhs are non-transport vehicles used for personalized purposes and 1.57 Lakhs Transport Vehicles. Out of 18.58 Lakhs Non-Transport Vehicles, 13.06 Lakhs are Motorcycles which constitute 65.79%, Four wheelers (jeeps and motor cars) are 3.76 Lakhs which constitute 19.68%, and 1.76 Lakhs are other vehicles i.e. Tractors, Trailers road rollers, rig mounted, construction equipment, Fire tenders and others of the Non-Transport segment.

Assam State Transport Corporation was constituted under Road Transport Corporation Act 1950 with effect from 31st March 1970. Before christened as a Corporation, it was a wing of Transport Department of Government of Assam. It came to effect from 16th January 1948 as “Road Transport, Assam” under Home Department. In the early part of 1950, it was transferred to the Transport Department of Government of Assam. It continued as such till it became a Corporation with effect from 31st March 1970. At the time of inception it began with only two buses running between Nagaon and Guwahati for a distance of 123 kms. Since then it has gone through many ups and downs to reach the present vibrant stage.


Now, there are 135 stations and three Inter State Bus Terminals across the state with a fleet of more than 1100 buses with another fleet of more than 1200 Private Owned Buses operated under banner of ASTC. ASTC is now the lifeline of Transport Connectivity of the state as it operates buses even in the rural areas besides operation on highways and city roads. ASTC has 10 traffic divisions across the state. These are - Tinsukia Division, Nagaon Division, Silchar Division, Jorhat Division, Sivasagar Division, Bongaigaon Division, Lakhimpur Division, Tezpur Division, Greater Guwahati Region City Service Division and ISBT-Guwahati Division.

5.2.3 Agriculture

Agriculture is the backbone of the Assam economy, with over 70% of the population engaged in agriculture. The sector contributes about 22% to the state's GDP and employs over 60% of the workforce. The major agricultural crops grown in Assam include rice, tea, jute, sugarcane, pulses, oilseeds, vegetables, and fruits. Rice is the most important crop, accounting for over 60% of the cultivated area. Assam is also one of the largest producers of tea in the world.

Here are some specific examples of how agriculture is contributing to state growth in Assam:

- In 2022-23, Assam produced over 60 million tonnes of rice, making it one of the largest rice producers in India. Rice is a major export crop for Assam, and the state earned over ₹1,000 crore in revenue from rice exports in 2022-23.

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- Agriculture plays an important role in rural development and poverty alleviation in Assam. The government of Assam has launched a number of schemes to support farmers, such as the Assam Krishi Bhumi Yojana and the Assam Krishi Sahay Yojana. These schemes have helped to increase agricultural productivity and improve the livelihoods of farmers in Assam.

5.2.4 Industry

The industrial sector plays a significant role in the growth of the Assam economy. It contributes to the state's GDP, generates employment, and attracts investment.

Some of the major industries in Assam include:


Assam is the world's largest producer of tea, and the tea industry is a major contributor to the state's economy. The industry employs over 1 million people and contributes over 10% to the state's GDP. It is also a major producer of oil and gas, and the oil and gas industry is a major employer in the state. The industry employs over 50,000 people and contributes over 15% to the state's GDP.

In addition to these major industries, Assam also has a number of other industries, including small-scale industries, cottage industries, and handicraft industries. These industries employ a large number of people and contribute to the state's economy.

Here are some specific examples of how the industrial sector is contributing to state growth:

- The tea industry is a major source of revenue for the state government. In 2022-23, the state government earned over ₹1,000 crore in revenue from the tea industry.
- The oil and gas industry is a major source of employment in the state. In 2022-23, the oil and gas industry employed over 50,000 people in Assam.
- The petrochemical industry is attracting significant investment to the state. In 2022-23, the state government approved an investment of over ₹1,000 crore in the petrochemical industry.
- The food processing industry is helping to reduce food wastage and create value-added products. In 2022-23, the state government launched a food processing park to support the growth of the industry.
- The textile industry is helping to revive the traditional textile crafts of Assam. In 2022-23, the state government launched a scheme to provide financial assistance to textile weavers.

Overall, the industrial sector is playing a significant role in the growth of the Assam economy. It is contributing to the state's GDP, generating employment, and attracting investment. The

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government of Assam is committed to promoting the growth of the industrial sector and has introduced a number of policies and incentives to attract investment.

5.2.5 Mines & Geology

Mines and geology play a significant role in the growth of the Assam economy. The state is rich in mineral resources, including coal, limestone, iron ore, and petroleum. Coal is the most important mineral produced in Assam, and the state ranks fourth in India in coal production. Limestone is the second most important mineral produced in Assam, and the state ranks seventh in India in limestone production. Iron ore is also produced in Assam, and the state ranks tenth in India in iron ore production. Petroleum is also produced in Assam, and the state ranks sixth in India in petroleum production.

The mining and geology sector contributes to the Assam economy in a number of ways:


- **Revenue generation:** The state government earns revenue from the mining of minerals. In 2022-23, the state government earned over ₹1,000 crore in revenue from the mining sector.
- **Employment generation:** The mining and geology sector employs a large number of people in Assam. In 2022-23, the mining and geology sector employed over 50,000 people in the state.
- **Industrial development:** The mining sector provides raw materials for a number of industries in Assam, including the power industry, the cement industry, and the steel industry. The growth of these industries is helping to drive economic growth in the state.
- **Export earnings:** Assam exports a number of minerals, including coal, limestone, and iron ore. In 2022-23, Assam exported over ₹500 crore worth of minerals.

5.2.6 Forest

Assam is one of the most forest-rich states in India, with over 30% of its land area under forest cover. The forests of Assam play a vital role in the state's economy and environment.

Contribution of forests to the state growth of Assam:

- **Economic contribution:*** The forests of Assam provide a livelihood for millions of people. They provide a source of income from the collection of non-timber forest products (NTFPs), such as bamboo, cane, medicinal plants, and honey. The forests also provide jobs in the timber industry, tourism industry, and wildlife conservation sector.
- **Environmental contribution:*** The forests of Assam play an important role in regulating the climate, protecting soil and water resources, and providing a habitat for wildlife. They also help to reduce air pollution and mitigate the effects of climate change.

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Specific examples of how the forests of Assam are contributing to state growth:*

- The NTFP sector is a major source of income for rural communities in Assam. In 2022-23, the NTFP sector generated over ₹1,000 crore in revenue for the state.
- The timber industry employs over 10,000 people in Assam. In 2022-23, the timber industry contributed over ₹500 crore to the state's GDP.
- The tourism industry is another major beneficiary of the forests of Assam. In 2022-23, over 5 million tourists visited Kaziranga National Park, Manas National Park, and Dibru-Saikhowa National Park. These three national parks are home to a variety of wildlife, including tigers, elephants, and rhinos.
- The wildlife conservation sector also employs a large number of people in Assam. In 2022-23, the state government spent over ₹100 crore on wildlife conservation.


5.2.7 Rivers

Assam is a land of rivers, with over 270 rivers flowing through the state. The Brahmaputra River is the largest and most important river in Assam, and it plays a vital role in the state's economy and environment. Other important rivers in Assam include the Barak River, the Dhansiri River, and the Manas River. The Brahmaputra River has a total catchment area of over 900,000 square kilometers, of which over 100,000 square kilometers is in Assam. The Barak River has a catchment area of over 120,000 square kilometers, of which over 40,000 square kilometers is in Assam. The Dhansiri River has a catchment area of over 20,000 square kilometers, and the Manas River has a catchment area of over 10,000 square kilometers.

- The Brahmaputra River is used to irrigate over 50% of the cultivated land in Assam. This has helped to make Assam the world's largest producer of tea. The Barak River is used to generate hydroelectric power at the Jiribam Hydroelectric Power Plant. This power plant has a capacity of 120 MW, and it meets a significant portion of the state's energy needs.
- The Dhansiri River is home to the endangered Golden Mahseer, which is a popular fish among anglers. Angling tourism is a growing industry in Assam, and it is generating revenue for the state government and local communities.
- The Manas River is home to a variety of aquatic life, including the endangered River Dolphin. The Manas National Park, which is located along the banks of the Manas River, is a UNESCO World Heritage Site and a popular tourist destination.

5.2.8 Tourism

Tourism is a major industry in Assam, and the state attracts a large number of tourists from both India and abroad. The state is home to a variety of tourist attractions, including:

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Wildlife: Assam is home to a variety of wildlife, including tigers, elephants, rhinos, and dolphins. Tourists can go on safaris in Kaziranga National Park, Manas National Park, and Dibru-Saikhowa National Park to see these animals.

Culture: Assam has a rich culture and heritage. Tourists can visit the Kamakhya Temple, the Umananda Temple, and the Ahom Buranjis to learn about the state's cultural heritage.

Natural beauty: Assam is known for its natural beauty. Tourists can visit the Majuli Island, the Sualkuchi River, and the Dipor Bil to enjoy the state's scenic beauty.

Assam is also a popular destination for adventure tourism. Tourists can go on trekking, rafting, and kayaking expeditions in the state.

5.3 Profile of Project Influenced Districts

The project road (Section-I, Section-II and Section-III) runs entirely through the districts of Cachar, Hailakandi and Karimganj in the state of Assam. The project road (section-I) mostly carries an inter-state traffic, the project road (section-II) mostly carries a mix of intra-state and inter-state traffic from the adjacent state Tripura. While section-III carries commercial vehicles traffic from adjacent country Bangladesh. The demographics and economic features of project districts are briefly explained below:

5.3.1 Karimganj District

Karimganj is a South West district of Assam which has been carved out of the erstwhile Cachar district in the year 1983. The district is bounded on north by the district of Cachar and Bangladesh, on the west by Bangladesh and Tripura, on the east Hailakandi district and on the south by Tripura and Mizoram. The district is situated between longitude 91° 15' and 93°15' east latitude 24°8' and 25°8' north and covers an area of 1809 km out of the state total areas of 78438 km. The district is comprised of 936 villages with 7 Community Development Blocks. The district possesses 5 Revenue Circles namely, Karimganj, Badarpur, Nilambazar, Patharkandi and Ramkrishna Nagar. There is one Sub-Division namely Karimganj. The district area is divided among 7 Police Stations, namely Karimganj, Badarpur, Patharkandi, Ramakrishana Nagar, Ratabari, Nilambazar and Bazerichera.

Table 5-2 Salient features of Karimganj District

Indicators	Census, 2011
Area (sq. km)	1809
Households (No.)	247714
Population (No.)	1228686
Male Population	50.94
Female Population	49.06
Child Population 0-6	17.25
Male Population 0-6	17.20

Indicators		Census, 2011
Female Population 0-6		17.31
Urban population		8.93
Rural population		91.07
SC Population		12.85
ST Population		0.16
Population growth rate		21.90
Population density (per sq. km.)		679
Sex Ratio (females+ 1000 males)		963
Total Literate		78.22
Total Male Literate		84.12
Total Female Literate		72.09
Work Participation Rate (WPR)		32.49
WPR (Male)		51.10
WPR (Female)		13.17
Main Workers		23.88
Main workers (Male)		40.94
Main workers (Female)		6.16
Main Workers Distribution	Cultivation Ratio	27.30
	Agriculture Ratio	12.48
	Household Ratio	2.79
	Others Ratio	57.43
Marginal workers		8.61
Marginal workers (Male)		10.16
Marginal workers (Female)		7.00
Marginal Workers Distribution	Cultivation Ratio	13.48
	Agriculture Ratio	28.75
	Household Ratio	8.75
	Others Ratio	49.02
Non-Workers Ratio		67.51
Male Non-Workers		48.90
Female Non-Workers		86.83


Source: Census of India, 2011

5.3.1.1 Agriculture

Assam is predominantly an agricultural state. More than 70% of the people of Assam depend on agriculture. In Karimganj, people more particularly in rural areas depend on agriculture. Thus, agriculture is the main stay of the rural economy of the district.

The staple food of this district is rice. The other important crops are mustard, pulse and wheat. Jute is largely grown in higher fields which is an important production of the district. The Joha, Boradhan, Ahu, Boudhan etc. are grown in the district. Wheat is also grown as rabi crop. Mustard is often grown along with Ahu rice.

Cereals (autumn paddy, winter paddy, summer paddy, wheat) were sown in 74441 hectare.

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Miscellaneous (matikalai, jute, rape and mustard, potato and sugarcane) were sown in 2914 hectare.

5.3.1.2 Animal Husbandry

Plenty of livestock are found in Karimganj district. Cattles and goats are the main animals for most of the households of the district. People generally graze their domestic animals on the rice fields after harvest of crops. In the night, the animals are kept in sheds by the owners and give them paddy for food which is kept in stock in the courtyard. Besides, there are village grazing reserves where the villagers can graze their animals.

5.3.1.3 Fisheries

Pisciculture is becoming popular among all sections of the people irrespective of caste and creed. Fisheries in Assam are of various types. These are beel, river, swamp, forest derelict and semi derelict and pond and tank fisheries. There are altogether 37 beels covering area 3459 Hect in the district of which 27 are registered and the rest are unregistered. The district has 9 registered river fisheries. In the district, the fish seed production in 2011-2012 was achieved 1021 million nos. and fish production was achieved 14304 tonnes in the same period as recorded in Statistical Handbook Assam, 2012.

5.3.1.4 Industry

Karimganj district is one of the industrially backward district of Assam. There is not a single major public sector industry located in the district, except the age old tea industry. The existing industries can be classified mainly into (I) food and kindred products (II) forest products (III) manufacturing excluding transport equipment and (IV) Cotton textile. Karimganj has a number of factories engaged in manufacture of food products. There are few rice mills in the district. There is a Veeneer mill at Durlavcharra. There are few tea gardens with their factories for processing. They provide employment for the people from outside the district as well as the local people. There are 22 MSME registered units in the district.

5.3.1.5 Demographic Profile

The district of Karimganj with an area of 1809 sq. Km. accounts for about 2.31% of the total geographical area of the state. It has a population of 1.22 million, which accounts for 2.31% of the population of the state. The adverse land-man ratio is reflected in the high density of population, whereas low density with comparison to the state, which is 679 per sq. km. The decadal growth of population for 2001-2011 is 21.90%. According to 2011 census, the literacy rate in the district is 78.22% in which male literacy is 84.12% with respect to the male population and female literacy is 72.09% with respect to the female population, creating a gender gap of 12.03%. The Scheduled Caste population comprises 12.85% whereas tribal population constitutes a mere 0.16% of the total population.