

Chapter 1: Introduction

1.1 Profile of the District

The District of Sonitpur situated on the north bank of river Brahmaputra is bounded on the North by Arunachal Pradesh, on the east by Lakhimpur district and on the west by Darrang district.

The District spans an area of 5,281¹ sq km, which is 6.73 *per cent* of the total area of the State (78,438 sq km) and has its headquarter at Tezpur. The District accounts for about 6.25 *per cent* (16.65 lakh) of the population of the State (2.66 crore) with 90.45 *per cent* (15.06 lakh) of them residing in rural areas. The District comprises of three Sub-Divisions² and seven revenue circles. To cater to rural development, the District has been divided into 14 Community Development Blocks covering 158 Gram Panchayats (GPs). The rate of literacy in the District is 59 *per cent*, which is lower than the State literacy rate of 63 *per cent*. Out of 3.10 lakh families of the District, 25 *per cent* (0.79 lakh families) live below the poverty line (BPL). The sex ratio of the District is 929 against the sex ratio of 935 in the State. SC/ST population comprises 16.83 *per cent* of the total population of the District.

1.2 Administrative Set-up

Deputy Commissioner

The District Planning and Development Committee is the apex body at the District level for approving a shelf of schemes for development of the District. The Deputy Commissioner (DC) is in-charge of the District and is the sanctioning authority for all developmental programmes in the District. He is also the Executive Director (ED) of the District Rural Development Agency (DRDA), and ensures co-ordination between DRDA, Panchayati Raj Institutions (PRIs), field officers and all other departments of the State Government. In other cases (State and Central Plan schemes implemented by various Departments), he is the District Programme Coordinator (DPC). Although DC is the overall incharge of the District, including law and order, the Superintendent of Police (SP) is primarily responsible for maintenance of law and order in the District.

DC is assisted by an Additional DC (Development), who is the Chief Planning Officer for preparation and prioritisation of schemes and their monitoring and review.

District Rural Development Agency (DRDA)

DRDA is the main organ at the District level to oversee the implementation of various rural developmental programmes. It is responsible for planning and coordinating with various agencies - Governmental, non-Governmental, technical and financial for successful programme implementation. DRDA enables the community and the rural

¹ Based on 2001 Census (Statistical Hand Book 2010)

² (i) Biswanath Sub-Division (ii) Gohpur Sub-Division and (iii) Tezpur (Sadar) Sub-Division

poor to participate in the decision making process, oversees the implementation of various programmes to ensure adherence to guidelines, quality, economy and efficiency and reporting to the concerned authorities at prescribed intervals. It is also responsible for conduct of various surveys relating to BPL families etc. Project Director (PD) is the executive in charge of DRDA and the controlling officer for all the Block Development Officers (BDOs). PD, DRDA is responsible for interaction with the District/State administration as well as with GoI and ensures co-ordination with ZP for implementation of various rural development programmes.

The Chief Executive Officer (CEO), ZP, who is appointed by the State Government, is the sanctioning authority of schemes and exercises control over BDOs and the Secretaries of Gram Panchayats (GP) for execution of works under ZP.

The administrative set-up of the District is depicted in Chart 1.

Chart: 1 - Administrative set-up

