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A Study of Infrastructure Facilities of Primary Education of the Bodos in Kokrajhar District of Assam

Kusum Brahma, M.A.



Abstract

Primary education appears to be a basic foundation of social, political, education and economic development of a country. It is primary education that empowers an individual to become self-

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reliant and enables them ultimately to participate in the process of national development. Many studies also highlight that countries which have made proper provision for primary education are far ahead of those of inadequate provision. Infrastructure facilities are also another basic provision of primary education. Providing sound and adequate infrastructure facilities can contribute a lot to the qualitative improvement of primary education as well as participation of students.

The present paper focuses on the infrastructure facilities of primary education of the Bodos in Kokrajhar district in respect to housing facilities, types of school building, number of rooms, types of furniture, etc., provided in the schools.

Introduction

Primary education is the basic foundation of all higher education. In this stage, an individual first learns to read, write and do mathematical calculation. We can expect the future progress of our country only from a well-planned and implemented primary education. At this stage child's cultural, emotional, ethical, intellectual, moral, physical, social and spiritual development also takes place. Primary education empowers the individual to become self-reliant and enables them to participate in the process of national development. It develops the human efficiency and competency and contributes to the overall economic growth and development. Primary education raises the productivity and earning potential of a population and improves the quality of lives (World Bank, 1993, Barrow 1991). It is the indicator directly associated with economic development and indirectly with poverty alleviation and population growth.

Widespread illiteracy among people has hindered their access to information. Without basic literacy, it is much more difficult to promote better understanding of our changing social scenario. The knowledge of primary education can produce a literate and numerate population who can deal more or less satisfactorily with their problems encountered in daily life. Primary education serves as a basis on which a society is to be restructured and further education planned. It can bring a positive effect on the productive capacity of a society. Recent research by Bridesall and Londono (1998) confirms that there is a high correlation between country levels of

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income inequality and inequality in the distribution of literacy. Thus, primary education advances human capability, economic opportunity and political participation. It fructifies multiple dimensions of freedom from fear and want, it generates self-confidence, and supports orientation towards future, offers coping mechanism in terms of crisis (Amartya Sen). Without a quantitative and adequate development of primary education, the process of development of the country will come to a grinding halt.

In India, primary education has been given special importance in Article 45 of the Directive Principles of state policy of the Indian constitution. It clearly states, “The state shall endeavour to provide within a period of ten years from the commencement of the constitution for free and compulsory education for all children until they complete the age of fourteen years.” Special emphasis is given for providing free and compulsory education for all with concrete plan of action. To achieve the goal of UEE, government has undertaken many programmes ranging from Operation Black Board to SSA. In spite of the various mentioned act and policy it has not been able to achieve the target.

So, it is an urgent need to conduct an in-depth study of the present existing primary education system of India to ensure ‘education for all’. However, in-depth study of such a large number of populations is not possible. Therefore, the present study try to locate only the area of Kokrajhar District which has only 9, 05, 764 population.

Rationale of the Study

Article 350-A of the constitution laid down that mother tongue should be used as the medium of instruction at primary level. The 1986 National Policy of Education also gives emphasis to implement this obligation as far as possible and accordingly some of the modern Indian languages are already being used as medium of instruction.

So, it seems that the present study would be very significant as the Bodo language has been introduced as the medium of instruction in primary level since 1963 and it is also included in the 8th schedule of the Constitution of India through and amendment by the Parliament. Now Bodo is also the associate official language of Assam. No significant work has been carried out on any aspects of education of the Bodos. That is why studies such as the present paper will be

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significant as these will throw light on the existing infrastructure facilities of primary education of the Bodos.



Title of the Study

Keeping in view of the rationale of the study, the title given to the present study is ‘A Study of Infrastructure Facilities of Primary Education of the Bodos in Kokrajhar District of Assam’.

Objectives of the Study

The present study is undertaken with the following objective –

To Study the infrastructural facilities of Primary education of the Bodos in Kokrajhar District in terms of:

- Housing facilities
- Types of school building
- Number of rooms breaking for different purposes
- Types of furniture provided in the schools
- Playground facilities
- Drinking water and electricity facilities
- Teaching aids facilities
- Hostel facilities

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- Provision of physical training facilities
- Toilet facilities
- Provision of Health check-up facilities
- Mid-day Meal facilities

Delimitation

The present study is delimited to Primary Education (from class I to IV) of the Bodos in Kokrajhar District.

Methodology

This is descriptive research. This method describes and interprets what exists at present.

Population

The population of the present study comprises of all the provincialized lower primary schools (class 1-4) of Kokrajhar district.

Sample

There are 1084 Lower Primary schools in total in Kokrajhar District (DISE-2006-07, MIS, SSA, Dhubri, Assam). As per the objectives of the present study, an equal proportion of 10% sample (total 108) schools representing each medium from five (5) educational blocks have been selected by using stratified random sampling technique. Then the selected schools are categorised into three as Bodo medium, Non-Bodo medium and Mixed medium of instruction schools. All the Assamese medium schools, Bengali medium schools and Hindi medium schools are included under the category of Non-Bodo medium schools and all the schools having two media of instruction are included under the category of Mixed medium schools. Out of 108 selected schools, 40 are from Bodo medium, 55 schools are from Non-Bodo medium and 13 are from mixed medium schools. Each and every Head teacher of selected sample schools was the respondent of the present study.

Tools

For collection or gathering of data standardised open and closed form of school information schedule is used. Here information of infrastructural facilities was collected from the Headmasters of the selected sample schools.

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Interpretation of Data

Qualitative and quantitative analysis and interpretation of data are made on the basis of the nature of the data and this is presented below.



As per the objective number one, i.e., housing facilities

Housing facilities play a significant role in maintaining quality education. A school having its own building helps in carrying out each and every activity of the school.

Table -1: Housing Facilities

Medium	No. Of Schools	Own Buildings		Rented Buildings		Donated		Rent Free		Others	
		score	%	Score	%	score	%	score	%	score	%
Bodo	40	40	100	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Non-Bodo	55	55	100	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Mixed	13	13	100	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-

Source: Field Study

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It is found from the above table that all the selected Bodo, Non-Bodo and Mixed Medium schools are run in their own building.

As per the objective number two, i.e., type of building

Types of school building have a great impact on education.

Table – 2 Types of School Building

Medium	No. Of Schools	Open Air		Pucca		Kuchcha		Semi-Pucca		Mixed		Thatched Huts	
		Score	%	Score	%	Score	%	score	%	score	%	Score	%
Bodo	40	-	-	32	80	2	5	3	7.5	3	7.5	-	-
Non-Bodo	55	-	-	52	94.55	-	-	3	5.54	-	-	-	-
Mixed	13	-	-	9	69.23	-	-	-	-	4	30.77	-	-

Source: Field Study

The above table shows that out of the 40 Bodo medium primary schools, 80% schools have *pucca* type of building, 5% schools have *kuchcha* type of building, and 7.5% schools have semi-pucca and mixed type. There is no thatched hut school in Bodo medium. Among Non-Bodo medium schools 94.55% schools have *pucca* type, 5.54% schools have semi-pucca type of building. There is no school which has kuchcha, mixed and thatched huts in its compound. On the other hand, out of 13 mixed medium schools, 69.23% schools have *pucca* building and the rest 30.77% schools have mixed type building. When compared to Non-Bodo medium schools, Bodo medium schools have less number of *pucca* buildings.

As per objective number three, i.e., number of rooms used for different purposes

Availability of rooms increases the attention and motivation of the students and improves their academic performance.

Table – 3: Number of Rooms used for different Purposes

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Medium	Head Masters Room		Teachers' Common Room		Total Class Room		Others		Total no. of rooms	
	Score	%	Score	%	Score	%	Score	%	Score	%
↓ ↓										
Bodo	-	-	4	4.76	78	92.86	2	2.38	84	100
Non-Bodo	2	1.09	10	5.43	162	88.04	10	5.43	184	100
Mixed	1	1.75	4	7.02	47	82.46	5	8.77	57	100

Source: Field Study

Regarding the number of rooms, it is found that the selected Bodo medium schools have a total of 84 rooms. Of which 4.76% is used as Teacher's Common room, 92.86% is used as classrooms, 2.38% is used for other purposes. In selected Non-Bodo medium schools, there is a total of 184 rooms of which 1.09% is used as Head Master's room, 5.43% is used for Teacher's Common room, 88.04% is used for Class room and remaining 5.43% is used for other purposes. In selected Mixed medium schools, there is a total of 57 rooms, of which 1.75% is used as Head Master's room, 7.02% is used as Teacher's Common room, 82.46% is used as Classrooms and 8.77% is used for other purposes. Compared to other two medium schools, i.e., Non-Bodo and Mixed medium, Bodo medium schools are run without Head Master's room, and in schools there is no teacher's common room. But, Bodo medium schools have maximum number of classrooms.

As per objective number four, i.e., type of furniture provided in the schools:

Table -4 Types of furniture facilities provided in the Schools

Medium	No. of Schools	Wooden Bench & Chair		Steel Bench & Chair		Individual Desk & Chair		No Furniture	
		Score	%	score	%	score	%	score	%
Bodo	40	36	90	2	5	1	2.5	1	2.5
Non-Bodo	55	54	98.18	3	5.45	-	-	1	1.8

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									2
Mixed	13	13	100	2	15.38	-	-	-	-

Source: Field Study

Regarding furniture, out of 40 Bodo medium schools, 90% of schools is having wooden benches and chairs, 5% of schools has steel benches and chairs, 2.5% of schools has individual desks and chairs. Only a few schools have no furniture at all. In Non-Bodo medium schools, out of 55 selected schools, 98.18% of schools has wooden benches and chairs, 5.45% of schools has steel benches and chairs, 1.82% of schools has no furniture. In mixed medium schools, out of 13 selected schools, all the schools have wooden benches and chairs and a few schools have both wooden benches and chair and steel benches and chairs. The data reveals that Bodo Medium schools have less number of wooden benches and chairs and steel benches and chairs than the Non-Bodo and Mixed Medium schools. One school each of Bodo and Non-Bodo medium schools was running without furniture facilities.

As per objective number five, i.e., in respect to playground facilities

Sports and games play vital roles in education but these cannot be possible to organised without sufficient playground facilities.

Table -5: Schools Having Playground

Medium	Number of Schools	Schools Having Playground Facilities	
↓	↓	Score	%
Bodo	40	29	72.5
Non-Bodo	55	47	85.45
Mixed	13	9	69.23

Source: Field Study

The above table indicates that out of the 40 Bodo medium schools, 72.5% of schools has playground facilities. Out of 55 Non–Bodo medium schools, 85.45% of schools has playground facilities .On the other hand, out of 13 selected sample schools, 69.23% of schools does not have

playground facilities. Both Bodo and Mixed medium schools have less playground facilities to organise various activities than the Non-Bodo medium schools.

As per objective number seven, i.e., availability of teaching aids

Table – 7: Teaching aids

Medium	Total Score	Blackboard		Chalk / Duster		Chart/ Globe		Radio	
		Score	%	Score	%	Score	%	Score	%
Bodo	40	40	100	22	55	21	52.5	23	57.5
Non-Bodo	55	55	100	55	100	49	89.09	45	81.82
Mixed	13	13	100	13	100	13	100	8	61.54

Source: Field Study

The above analysis reveals that out of the selected Bodo medium schools all the schools have blackboards, 55% of schools has chalk/duster, 52.5% of schools has chart/globe and 57.5% of schools has Radio facility. In Non-Bodo medium schools also all the schools have blackboard and chalk/duster, 89.09% of schools has chart/globe and 81.82 % of schools has Radio facility. In Mixed medium schools all the selected schools have blackboards, chalk/duster, chart/globe facilities and only 61.54% of schools has Radio facilities. Although all the medium schools have blackboard facilities in schools, in Bodo medium schools chalk/Duster, chart/globe aids are less in number. Not all schools also have radio facility.

As per objective number eight, i.e., hostel facilities

Hostel facilities also form another important part of school infrastructure.

Table -8: Schools Having Hostel Facilities

Medium	Number of Schools	Schools Having Hostel Facilities	
		Score	%
↓	↓		
Bodo	40	00	0
Non-Bodo	55	00	0

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Mixed	13	00	0
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Source: Field Study

Table -8 shows that all the three medium schools, i.e., Bodo, Non-Bodo and Mixed medium schools have no hostel facilities.

As per the objective number ten, i.e., toilet facilities

Proper toilet facilities help to increase the school attendance of the students and help in maintaining hygiene. These inculcate clean habits in students, ensure the health of individuals and protect people from several diseases.

Table -10: Toilet Facilities

Medium	No of Schools	Schools Having Toilet Facilities	
		Score	%
Bodo	40	40	100
Non-Bodo	55	55	100
Mixed	13	13	100

Source: Field Study

Table -8 shows that all the Bodo, Non-Bodo and Mixed medium schools have toilet facilities.

As per objective number nine, i.e., physical training facilities

Table -9 Schools having Physical Training Facilities

Medium	No of Schools	Schools Providing Physical Training Facilities			
		Yes		No	
↓	↓	Score	%	score	%
Bodo	40	24	60	16	40
Non-Bodo	55	25	45.45	30	54.55
Mixed	13	5	38.46	8	61.54

Source: Field Study

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The above table exposes that out of the selected Bodo Medium schools, 60% of schools provides physical training to students whereas 40% of schools does not have physical training facilities. In Non-Bodo Medium schools, 45.45% of schools provides physical training whereas 54.55 % does not provide physical training facilities to students. On the other hand in Mixed medium schools 38.46 % of schools provides physical training whereas 61.54 % schools does not provide physical training to students. Regarding physical training facilities, Bodo medium schools are much more advanced than other two medium schools.

As per objective number 9, i.e., Games and Sports and other facilities:

Table- 9 Schools Providing Games and Sports and other Facilities

Medium	No of Schools	Outdoor	Indoor	Social Service	Scout & Guide	Picnic	None
Bodo	40	37.5	17.5	-	2.5	10	32.5
Non-Bodo	55	32.73	14.55	1.82	-	7.27	43.64
Mixed	13	61.54	15.38	-	7.69	15.38	-

Source: Field Study

In Bodo medium schools 37.5% of schools has outdoor game facilities, 17.5% of schools has indoor game facilities, 2.5% of schools has Scout and Guide facilities, 10% of schools has picnic facilities and 32.5% of schools has no other facility. In Non-Bodo medium schools 32.73% of schools has outdoor game facilities, 14.55% of schools has indoor game facilities, 1.82% of schools has social service facilities, 7.27 % of schools has picnic facilities. 43.64 % of schools has none of the above mentioned facilities. In Mixed medium schools 61.54% of schools has outdoor game facilities, 15.38 % of schools has indoor game facilities, 7.69% of schools has Scout & Guide facilities, 15.38% of schools has picnic facilities. It is found that more than half the number of selected Bodo medium schools has almost no outdoor games, indoor games, Scout & Guide and picnic facilities.

As per objective number twelve, i.e., Provision of Mid-day Meal facilities

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Improved Mid-day Meal programmes could have a major impact on school attendance, child nutrition and social equity. The following table shows the provision of Mid-day facilities of the selected sample schools.

Table – 12: Provision of Mid-day meal facilities

Medium	No of Schools	School provides mid-day meal to students			
		Yes		No	
		Score	%	Score	%
Bodo	40	40	100	0	0
Non-Bodo	55	53	96.36	2	3.64
Mixed	13	12	92.31	01	7.69

Source: Field Study

It is found that all the selected Bodo Medium schools have provision for Mid-day Meal to students. In Non-Bodo Medium schools 96.36% of schools has the provision of Mid-day Meal to students whereas 3.64% of schools does not have the provision of Mid-day Meal to students. On the other hand, in Mixed medium schools 92.31% of schools has the provision of Mid-day Meal to students and 7.69% of schools does not have the provision of Mid-day Meal to students. The data proved that Bodo medium schools following the rules of the government in providing Mid-day meal much better than the Non-Bodo and Mixed medium schools.

As per objective number thirteen, i.e., water and electric facilities

Table -6: Schools Having Water and Electric Facilities:

Medium	No of Schools	Water Facilities						Electricity		None	
		TubeWell/Well		Tap		Filtered		Score	%	score	%
		Score	%	score	%	score	%				
Bodo	40	20	50	5	12.5	5	12.5	-	-	10	25
Non-Bodo	55	43	78.18	2	3.64	6	10.91	2	3.64	2	3.64

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Mixed	13	9	69.23	1	7.69	1	7.69	1	7.69	1	7.69
											69

Source: Field Study

Above table shows that out of 40 selected schools, 50% schools have tubewell/ well facilities for water, 12.5% of schools has tap and filtered facilities for water, 12.5% of schools do not have water and electricity facilities. In Non-Bodo medium schools 78.18% of schools has tube well/well facilities for water, 3.64% of schools has tap water facilities, 10.91% of schools have filtered facilities, 3.64% schools have electricity facilities and 3.64% schools has no water and electricity facilities. In Mixed medium schools 69.23% of schools has tube well/well facilities for water, 7.69% of schools has tap water, filtered facilities and electricity facilities. 7.69% of schools has no water and electricity facilities. As compared to other medium schools none of the Bodo medium schools has electricity facility.

Major Findings and Conclusion

1. It is found that all the selected primary schools of Bodo, Non-Bodo and Mixed medium schools of Kokrajhar district are run in their own buildings without paying rent to others.
2. Although most of the schools of selected Bodo, Non-Bodo and Mixed medium schools function in *pucca* buildings, a few schools are still run in non-*pucca* buildings (i.e., *kuchcha*, semi-*pucca*, or mixed).
3. More than 90% of Bodo, Non-Bodo and Mixed medium schools are provided wooden benches and chairs but a few Bodo & Non-Bodo medium schools still do not have any furniture facility for seating.
4. Out of the selected Bodo (40), Non-Bodo (55) and Mixed (13) medium schools 72.5% of Bodo, 85.45% of Non-Bodo and 69.23% of Mixed medium schools have playground facilities in their respective schools.
5. All the medium of schools have blackboard facilities in their own respective schools but especially in Bodo medium schools there are some school which do not have chalk/duster, chart/globe and radio facilities.

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6. All the Bodo, Non-Bodo and Mixed medium schools have no hostel facilities.
7. It is found that all the selected schools of Bodo, Non-Bodo and Mixed Medium schools have common toilet facilities.
8. 60% of selected Bodo Medium schools have more physical training facilities compared to 45.45% of Non-Bodo and 38.46% of Mixed Medium selected sample schools.
9. It is found that there is less provision for social service and Scout & Guide in Bodo medium, Non-Bodo and Mixed medium schools. Only a few schools have such facilities. There are still many schools where no games and sports and other related co-curricular activities are organised.
10. Regarding the provision of Mid-day meal facilities, all selected Bodo medium schools provide Mid-day meal which is not the case with the other two medium schools, i.e., Non-Bodo and Mixed medium.
11. It is found that 25% of schools of Bodo medium are run without water and electricity facilities whereas only 3.64% and 7.69% of schools of Non-Bodo and Mixed medium schools respectively have no water and electricity facilities.
12. It is found that there is no provision for health check-up facilities in Bodo, Non-Bodo and Mixed medium schools.

School infrastructure is one of the basic components to provide quality education to students. This is already demanded in the 1986 National Policy of Education. As per the recommendation of N.P.E. 1986, Operation Blackboard Scheme (OBB) was launched in India to provide minimum basic requirements for quality education at the school level. Many significant basic changes have been observed after the implementation of the scheme, but in Kokrajhar district, there is still need to work for the improvement of school infrastructure (especially in school buildings, classrooms, furniture, water and electricity facilities, health facilities). More emphasis should be given to the specific study of each medium schools. Equal facilities for equal development are very necessary for overall improvement of primary education.

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