

Chapter 3

The Field of the Study

This chapter aims to contextualize the study by presenting a brief description of study area, that is North East, Assam ,BTAD and the villages .The North East region ,Assam and BTAT are introduces in terms of geographical ,historical ,demographic features and the studied villages are introduces in terms of location, demography ,religious ,economic and educational institutions etc.

A Brief profile of North-East India

Geography

The North-East region is popularly known as eight sister states of India. It is situated in the eastern most part of the country and comprises as a political unit namely Assam, Arunachal Pradesh, Manipur, Meghalaya, Mizoram, Nagaland, Tripura and the Himalayan state of Sikkim. The region is located between 20° and 22° North latitudes and 89°46` and 97°5` East longitudes (Sarthak Sengupta, 2002). The total geographical area of North Eastern region is 262,230 sq. km. out of which around two third is covered by hilly area and one third is plain. It constitutes about 8% of country's total land. The North East is a true frontier region which is surrounded by international and national borders. It shares international border with China in the north, Myanmar in the east, Bangladesh in the southwest and Bhutan to the northwest (https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Northeast_India Accessed on 4 March, 2015). Indeed 98% of the total land border of the North East region is with foreign countries and only 2% borders with the other Indian states. This has greatly enhance its' strategic importance (Sarthak Sengupta, 2002). The region is connected with mainland India by a narrow corridor squeezed called "Chicken's Neck" between Bhutan and Bangladesh. (https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/North-east_India accessed on 4 March, 2015.)

Population

According to census report of India, 2011 the total population of the North East region is approximately 40 million, which represents 3.1% of country's total population (1,210 million). The following table focuses the population structure of the region.

Table No. 3.01 State wise population distribution of North East India; along with Density and Sex Ratio.

Rank	State	Population	% of population	Density	Sex Ratio
1.	Assam	31,169,272	68.37%	397	954
2.	Tripura	3,671,032	8.05%	350	961
3.	Meghalaya	2,964,007	6.51%	132	986
4.	Manipur	2,721,756	5.98%	122	987
5.	Nagaland	1,980,602	4.34%	119	931
6.	Arunachal Pradesh	1,382,611	3.03%	17	920
7.	Mizoram	1,091,014	2.39%	52	975
8.	Sikkim	607,688	1.33%	86	889
9.	Total		100		

Source: Census report of India, 2011.

The above data shows that among the eight states of North East, Assam has the highest number population (68.37%), followed by Tripura (8.05%), Meghalaya (6.51%), Manipur (5.98%), Nagaland (4.34%), Arunachal Pradesh (3.03%), Mizoram (2.39%) and Sikkim (1.33%) (http://populationcommission.nic.in/content/9341_Densityofpopulation.aspx Accessed on 10 April, 2015). So far as density is concern, Arunachal Pradesh, Mizoram, Sikkim and Nagaland has the lowest density like 17,52, 86 and 119 persons in per square Km. respectively. The overall sex ratio in India has been unfavorable to females during last few decades and 2011 census have recorded a upward change in this regard. The picture is quite satisfactory in some states of North East India. The sex ratio of Meghalaya (986),

Manipur (987), Mizoram (975), Tripura (961) and Assam (954) is higher than national average.

Literacy

The overall literacy rate of North East India is higher than national average. 78.84% people of the region are literate, out of which 83.32% male and 70.28% female. (https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Indian_states_ranking_by_literacy_rate Accessed on 11 April, 2015). The following table focuses state wise literacy rate of North East region.

Table No. 3.02 Distribution of North East States on the basis of Sex and Literacy.

State	Literacy Rank in India	Literacy	Male	Female	% of Change
Mizoram	3	91.33%	93.35%	86.72%	2.53%
Tripura	4	87.22%	91.53%	78.98%	14.03%
Sikkim	13	81.42%	86.55%	66.39%	12.61%
Nagaland	15	79.55%	82.75%	70.01%	12.96%
Manipur	16	79.21%	86.06%	71.73%	8.68%
Meghalaya	24	74.43%	75.95%	71.88%	11.87%
Assam	26	72.19%	77.85%	63%	8.94%
Arunachal Pradesh	34	65.38%	72.55%	53.52%	11.04%
–	–	78.84%	83.32%	70.28%	82.66%

Source: Census Report of India, 2011.

The above data reveals that among the eight states of the region, Mizoram has the highest literacy rate (91.33%), followed by Tripura (87.22%), Sikkim (81.42%), Nagaland (79.55%), Manipur (79.21%), Meghalaya (74.43%), Assam (72.19%) and Arunachal Pradesh (65.38%) respectively. It also depicts that more than half of the state's literacy rate is above national average.

Ethnic Composition

The North East India is characterized by pluralism and diversity. Most of the States in the region like- Arunachal Pradesh, Meghalaya, Manipur, Mizoram and Nagaland are predominantly inhabited by tribal. There is rich assemble of tribal culture and communities in this rugged expanse of the Eastern Himalayas. There are approximately 130 tribal groups living in North Eastern India. Among them majority are hill tribes and few inhabiting in the plain areas of the region. It is said that one third of the total number of listed tribes of the country are found in this region. State wise distribution of the tribes shows that Arunachal Pradesh has 16 tribes. Tribes living in Assam are categorized into 14 (fourteen) hill tribes and 9 (nine) plain tribes, Manipur is the abode of thirty four tribal groups. Meghalaya, Mizoram are tribal dominated state. Nagaland is inhabited by 13 (thirteen) major tribes and number of sub-tribes speaking different dialects. Among the Nagas, altogether sixteen distinctly recognized tribal groups are found. Tripura is the home of nineteen various scheduled tribes. In Sikkim, four major tribal groups are found. Two major ethnic strains are found among the tribe and sub-tribes of North East India these are Mongoloid and Austroloid. According to 1971 census, approximately 220 languages are spoken in the north-east Indian states. These languages basically belong to three language families, namely Indo-Aryan, Sino-Tibetan and Austro-Austic. The Indo-Aryan language family is represented primarily by Assamese and Bangle; Austro-Asiatic language family is represented chiefly by Khasi and the Sino-Tibetan family of languages categorized as the Tibeto-Burman and the Siamese-Chinese sub-families. However, the majority of languages spoken here belong to the Sino-Tibetan language families. In particular Ahom language belonging to the Thai group has significantly merged with Assamese now (S. K. Bhuyan, 1974).

It is believed that the Tibeto-Burman tribes had arrived through the way of Burma and entered the hills and valleys of north-eastern India approximately at around 1000 B.C. Gradually they intruded the Austric settlers, who have existed in these parts since 2000 to 2500 B.C., and drove most of them to seek shelter in the mountainous regions. That was how the Khasi tribes began settling in their mountain homes high on the hills of

Meghalaya and gradual union with other north-eastern sections was established (B.K. Baruah, 2003).

However, the greatest density of Tibeto-Burman speakers is found in the north-eastern part of the country, as compared to other Indian regions in the country. North-east Indian languages comprise Assamese, Nepali, Manipuri or Meiteilon, Kokborok or Tripuri, Nagamese, Mizo, Khasi, Garo, Bodo, Karbi, Dimasa, Mishing and Apatani, Bishnupriya Manipuri, Bengali, Rabha and others (http://www.indianetzone.com/39/northeast_indian_languages.html accessed on 20/5/14).

North East India is characterized by multi-ethnic, multi-culture and multi-religious communities. Indeed, the North East region is a gateway of commerce and culture that linked India with South East Asia. Successive waves of migration from East and West subsequently have resulted in cultural mixture of the region. The census report 2001 and 2011 regarding religious composition of the region shows dramatic changes in religious composition in North East states. Hindu population has been declined in all the North East states with an exception in Nagaland. All the North East states witness growth in Muslim population except in Manipur. Maximum growth of Muslim population has been observed in Assam, (3.3%) Percentage of Christian population has been increased in all the states except in Nagaland. In Nagaland Christian population decline (-2.04) and highest increase has been found in Arunachal Pradesh (11.54%). Sikh and Jain are religious minority in the entire North East states. An inadequate change has been observed in both the communities. Interestingly, Buddhist population have found to decline in Arunachal Pradesh (-1.26%) and Sikkim (-0.72%). Other religions and persuasions have shown overall declining trend (T. Raatan, 2004).

Religion wise population composition of the North East states portray interesting picture. As per the census of India 2011, in Assam Hindus are the dominated community followed by Muslims, Christian and others. Christianity began to be spread here by missionaries in the mid 20th century. Majority population of Mizoram, Nagaland and Meghalaya belongs to Christianity. However, there exist the animistic or traditional religion in the Northeast Indian states even today, such as, 'Bathou' religion of Bodo tribes of Assam, 'Songsarik' animistic religion of Garo tribes of Meghalaya, significant

proportion of people Upper Subansiri, West Siang, East Siang, Upper Siang, Lower Subansiri and Dibang Valley districts of Arunachal Pradesh mainly practicing indigenous religion 'Donyi Polo' (sun-moon). But most of the traditional or animistic religions are counted as Hindu population or is not recognized yet (www.censusindia.gov.in Accessed on 11 April, 2015).

Resources

North East India has a great wealth of variation in different respects. The region is rich in different resources like-forests, water and mineral etc. Among them, the forest resource is most remarkable one. Forests occupy around 60% of the total land of Arunachal Pradesh, Manipur and Tripura; around 70% of total area in Assam, Meghalaya and Mizoram; and around 17.4% area in Nagaland. The region has many National Parks which attracts the attention of foreign tourists to visit in the region (S.K. Phukan, 2001).

The Kaziranga National Park of Assam is famous for its one horn rhino in the world. Namdapha National Park of Arunachal Pradesh covering an area of 1,985 sq km is the largest national park of the region. It is also one of the largest wildlife protected areas in India. The ecosystem of this park abounds in more than 150 species of bamboo, different types of rare fauna, species include Pinus Merkusi, Abies Delavavi, Blue Vanda and Mishimi Teeta etc. are found. The Namdapha Tiger reserve is also situated in Changlang district of Arunachal Pradesh. The total area of this Tiger Reserve is 1,850 sq km. It is the home to feline species such as clouded leopard, tiger, and snow leopard. Primates such as Assamese macaque, pig-tailed macaque, stump-tailed macaque, Hoolok gibbon, ape besides other mammals (Elephant, Asian black bear, Indian bison, deer etc.), birds (Great Indian hornbill, white winged wood duck, pheasant, Jungle fowl,) and reptiles add to the rich fauna diversity (S. K. Phukan, 2001).

Apart from forest resources, the region is rich in hydro power potential and mineral resources. The principal mineral resources are petroleum, natural gas, coal, limestone, dolomite and refractory raw materials etc. Recent surveys have revealed some deposits of metallic minerals and uranium as well (Agarwal, 1987).

Festivals

The people of North East India celebrate different national, regional and ethnic festivals throughout the year. They celebrate Dewali, Holi, Durgapuja, Maharam, Laxmi puja, Christmas, Idh etc. along with their ethnic festivals. Like Assamese celebrate Bihu, Bodo-Bwisagu, Dimasa- Bishu Dima etc. Similarly Naga, Garo, Kuki, Karbi, Aphantani etc. celebrate enthusiastically their own ethnic festivals throughout the year. The festivals and celebrations in the North- eastern states of India are a colorful reflection of the people and their lives. Throughout the year, different people celebrate different festivals with lot of fanfare in different ways, most of them cantering their modes of living and livelihood (<http://ignca.nic.in/craft002.htm> Accessed on 10 January, 2015).

Assam

Origin of the term Assam

The term Assam is derived from Sanskrit word Asom or Assam meaning peerless. The land whose bewitching picture is conjured by name Assam' is in fact peerless, judged by her exquisite natural beauty, cultural richness and human wealth (G. Baruah, 1972). Assam is known by different name in different historical period. During epic period Assam was known as 'Pragjyotisha' or the place of eastern astronomy mentioned frequently in Indian scriptures, mythologies. In medieval periods poetical works mentioned Assam by the name of Kamrup. Finally, this eastern most State came to be known as 'Assam' after the mighty Ahoms took the administration of the land in 1228 (K. L.Baruah, 1996).

The first known mythological monarch of the Pragjyotisha or Assam was Narakasura, a mighty and powerful king with Aryan influence bearing Dravidian blood. His successor, Bhagadatta, figured in the Mahabharata war leading a vast army against the Pandavas (Barua, K. L, 1996).

Another king of Pragjyotisha Banasura is famous as he fought against Lord Sri Krishna, when Anirudha, the grandson of Sri Krishna kidnapped Usha the daughter Banasura. In

another occasion, Sri Krishna also fought against King Bhismaka of Kundil for marrying his daughter Rukmini. (K. L,Baruah, 1996).

In medieval period also Assam was ruled by number of kings like Bhaskar Verma, who flourished in the seventh century, was one of the greatest monarchs of eastern India. Other powerful dynasties ruling over Assam prior to the Ahoms were the Salastambhas, Palas, and Varmans etc. A part from this advent of the Ahoms across the eastern hills in 1228 AD was the turning point of Assam history. They ruled Assam nearly six centuries (1228-1826). The Burmese entered through eastern borders and overrun the territory at a time when court intrigues and dissensions were sapping the vitality of the Ahom royalty. Lastly Assam came under British rule in 1838 (G. Baruah, 1972).

Geographical Location

In independent India, Assam is located between the great Himalayan foothills to the north and plateau of Meghalaya to the south where lies at 24°.50' North to 28°00' North latitudes and at 88°25' East to 96°00' East longitudes. The state is surrounded by Arunachal Pradesh in the East, West Bengal, Meghalaya and Bangladesh in the West, Bhutan in the North, and Nagaland, Manipur, Mizoram, Meghalaya and Tripura in the South. Except a narrow corridor running through the foothills of the Himalayas that connects with the state of West Bengal, this region is almost isolated from the rest of India (M. L. Bose, 2003). At present it covers an area of 78,523 sq. kilometers (approximate). Assam is the gateway to north-east India. It is a land of blue hills, rivers and valleys. She has lavishly bestowed upon her unique natural beauty and abundant natural wealth. The natural beauty of Assam is consists of evergreen forests, majestic rivers, lofty green hills ,rich landscape, rarest flora and fauna, bushy grassy plains, beautiful islands and what not. Dispur is the capital of Assam and one-hoed rhino is the state emblem. The physiographic of Assam is one of the most enchanting in the country. Assam can be divided in to three well-defined geographical regions:

1. The Brahamaputra Valley
2. The Barak Valley

3. The hilly regions comprising the North Cachar Hills (Now Dima Hasao) and the karbi Anglong district which separate the two valleys.

The natural division of Assam is the Barak or Surama Valley which is surrounded by North Cachar, Manipur and Mizoram. This valley is dominated by the Barak River. It flows through the valley and finally empties itself to the old bed of Brahmaputra in Bangladesh. This valley has hills and ‘Beels’ or lakes in plenty. Flood is a common feature lending the quality of fertility to the valley (S. K. Bhuyan, 1974).

The two valleys are separated by long range of hills. The Karbi Hills and the North Cachar Hills are located in the south of the Brahmaputra valley. Karbi hills are a part of the Meghalaya plateau. These hills are dotted with plain areas. Greenery is the hallmark of these hills, slowly reaching their full height towards the middle of the North Cachar district, merging with the Barail range-which is the highest hill range in Assam. This hill is full of dense forest and rare wild lives (P. C. Chaudhari, 1966).

Nesting at the foothills of the Himalayas, Assam is the place where one can find natural peace and solace. There are a few states in India which have such vast fertile valleys, dense forests, numerous rivers and lofty hills. Assam is located about 79.5m above sea level. The rural and urban land distribution is shown in following table:

Table No. 3.03 Rural and Urban Land Distribution of Assam (in sq. km.)

Types of Land Distribution	Area	Percentage (%)
Rural	77476.23	98.77%
Urban	961.77	1.23%
Total	78, 438	100

Source: Statistical Handbook of BTC, 2010.

The above table depicts that the total land area of Assam is 78, 438 sq. km. out of which 77476.23 sq. km. (98.77%) are rural and 961.77 km. (1.23%) are urban area.

Population

As per census report of 2011 the total population of Assam is 30.57 million. The literacy rate is 72.19% out of which 77.85% male and 66.27% female. This report shows that Assam is lagging behind in literacy rate than national average (Census Report of Assam, 2011).

Religion, Language and Ethnic composition

Assam is a heterogeneous state. It has been the home of several ethnic groups like-Austro-Asiatic, Dravidians, Mongoloids and Aryans belonging to different religions like Hindu, Islam, Christian, Buddhism and many other tribal religions. As a matter of fact, different branches of races, language and religion come up into the region since time immemorial as a result of which a racial fusion with their predecessors flourished in the region. The following table highlights religious composition of the population of Assam.

Table No. 3.04 Religion-Wise Distribution of Population of Assam.

Religion	Population	Percentage of population
Hindu	17296455	64.89 %
Muslim	8240611	30.92%
Christian	986589	3.70%
Buddhist	51029	0.19%
Sikh	22519	0.08%
Jain	23957	0.09%
		100%

Source: Statistical Handbook of Assam, 2010 (Provisional population census, 2011)

The above table shows that in Assam, Hindu (64.89%) is the dominating religion followed by Muslim (30.92%), Christianity (3.70%), Buddhism (0.19%), Sikhism (0.08%) and Jainism (0.09%).

Tribes of Assam

Assam is not only diverse in religion but ethnically diverse state too. A large number of tribal and non-tribal communities are residing side by side in Assam. More than 15 tribes and sub-tribes are found in hilly and plain area of Assam. Among the tribal, Bodos are the largest group in Assam. The distributions of major tribes of Assam are shown here under.

Table No. 3.05 Distribution of major Scheduled Tribes population of Assam.

Major Scheduled Tribe	Total population	Percentage (%)
Bodo	1,352,771	43.22%
Miri	587,310	18.77%
Mikir (karbi)	353,513	11.29%
Rabha	277,517	8.87%
Sonowal Kachari	235,881	7.53%
Lalung (Tiwa)	170,622	5.45%
Dimasa	110,976	3.54%
Deori	41,161	1.31%
Total	3129751	100%

Source: Office of the Registrar General, India (based on 2011 census report)

The above table reveals that Bodos consist the highest percentage (43.22%) of total tribal population of Assam, followed by Miri (18.77%), Mikir (11.29%), Rabha (8.87%), Sonowal Kachari (7.53%), Lalung or Tiwa (5.45%), Dimasa (3.54%) and Deori (1.31%) respectively. The rest of the Scheduled Tribes are very marginal in their population size.

Bodoland Territorial Area District (BTAD)

Since Independence Bodos, one of the major tribal groups of Assam deprived of socio-political and economic development. In 1960, Assam Government declared that Assamese should be official language of Assam. This declaration not only dissatisfied the Bodos but also other non Assamese communities of Assam (T. Pullopillil & J. Aluckal,

1997, P. 83). The tribals of plain and hill area along with Bengalis of Barak valley opposed such blatant hegemonic imposition of the Assamese language on them. They have apprehended the hijacking silent aggression of the originally microscopic minority. The governments of Assam seem to have been resorting to exploit the Bodos and other Mongoloid groups of people politically, socially, economically, linguistically, culturally and ethnically by imposing Assamese language. Moreover, the Bodos are the original inhabitants and ruling dynasties of Assam since the time immemorial though they were forcefully thrown from their political powers and own land. In fact, it is horrible panic for the Bodos that in their own land they become heinous victims of force subjugation by means of political hypocrisy through the constitution of India (Premananda Mosahari, 2011). They found that with the passage of time, their existence as a separate community was threatened (A.C. Banerjee, & S.S. Roy, 2010). However, they feel that they were suppressed, oppressed and deprived by the ruling class (dominant caste) and the aspirations of the Bodos were far from being fulfilled. Hence, at this critical juncture the Bodos became united and launched movements for their rights. They formed literary organization named the 'Bodo Sahitya Sabha' (Boro Thunlai Afad) on 16 November, 1952 at Basugaon and started a prolong movement on language development. The main objectives and demands of the Bodo Sahitya Sabha were- (i) develop Bodo language, literature and culture through creation of a separate Directorate of public instruction for Bodo medium educational institutions; (ii) retention of English as medium of instruction in the Primary, Secondary, Graduate and Post-graduate stages, (iii) implementation of Bodo medium schools; (iv) inclusion of the Bodo language in the Eight Scheduled of the Indian Constitution; (v) recognition of Roman script for Bodo language and so on (Khema Sonowal, 2013).

In 1967 all the plain tribes of Assam united and formed an organization 'Plain Tribal Council of Assam' (PTCA) and launched political movement. This organization demanded a separate political region for plain tribals called 'Udayachal' and that is why this movement is known by the name of Udayachal movement. The movement continued up to 1986; but failed to bring fruitful result (Khema Sonowal, 2013). Besides these in 1967 another organization 'All Bodo Students' Union' came into existence with an aim to protect the interest of the Bodos and demanded separate statehood. As a result of their

movements- one political Accord was signed between the Government of India, Government of Assam and All Bodo Students' Union, Bodo Peoples Action Committee on 20th February, 1993. As a result of which the Bodoland Autonomous Council (BAC) had been created as a council administration under six scheduled of the Indian constitution. But the Bodoland Autonomous Council (BAC) could not fulfill the hopes and aspiration of the Bodos. So, again the All Bodo Students' Union (ABSU) launched a vigorous movement for separate statehood backed by the 'Bodo Liberation Tigers' (BLT). This movement was also not successful in achieving its target but another accord was signed on 10th February, 2003 between the Union Government, Assam government and the Bodo Liberation Tigers (BLT). This accord led to the creation of an autonomous self governing body to be known as Bodoland Territorial Council (BTC) within the state of Assam. As a result Bodoland Territorial Council (BTC) administration came into existence (ACHR, 2012)

The Bodoland Territorial Area District (BTAD) council was formed with the Bodoland Territorial Council (BTC) accord. It is a territorial privilege established in India according to the Memorandum of Settlement of February 10, 2003. The Bodoland Territorial Area District (BTAD) came into existence immediately after the surrender of Bodo Liberation Tigers (BLT) cadres. The Bodo Liberation Tigers (BLT) laid down their weapons on December 6, 2003 under the leadership of Hagrama Mohilary and he was sworn in as the Chief Executive Member (CEM) on December 7, 2003 (Hira Charan Narjinari, 2014). The Bodoland Territorial Area District (BTAD) council consists of 46 executive members. They are selected from 46 constituencies and each looking after the development of their own constituency called somoshti (https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bodoland_Territorial_Council Accessed on 10 June, 2015). Kokrajhar is the head quarter of the council.

Geography Location

Geographically the Bodoland Territorial Area District (BTAD) roughly lies within 26°7` to 26°48` north latitude and 89°46` to 92°19` east longitude. The region is situated on the north bank of the mighty Brahmaputra, stretched to the foothills of the great Himalaya. In

the northern side it shares the international border with the Himalayan kingdom of Bhutan; on the west there is the Indian state of West Bengal (Pachimbangha) and in the south and east other districts of Assam are there (Statistical Handbook of BTC, 2010). The Bodoland Territorial Area District (BTAD) consists of four districts namely - Kokrajhar, Baksa, Udalguri and Chirang- carved out of seven existing districts - Kokrajhar, Bongaigaon, Barpeta, Nalbari, Kamrup, Darrang and Sonitpur- an area of 8821.68 sq. km. (35% of Assam). For the convenience of the administration the BTAD is further divided into 10 subdivisions, 25 development blocks, 415 Village Council Development Committees (VCDC) (Statistical Handbook of BTC, 2010, P.2). The Bodoland Territorial Area District (BTAD) is created under the sixth schedule of the constitution of India (Khema Sonowal, 2013).

Population

The populations of Bodoland Territorial Area District (BTAD) according to 2011 census report are given below.

Table No. 3.06 District wise population distribution of BTAD

District	Population	Percentage (%) of Population	Male	Female	Density (per sq km)	Sex Ratio (Number of female per 1000 male)
Baksa	953,773	30.22%	484,829	468,948	475	967
Kokrajhar	886,999	28.11%	452,965	434,034	280	958
Udalguri	832,769	26.39%	423,617	409,152	497	966
Chirang	481,818	15.26%	244,675	237,143	244	969
Total	3,155,359	—	1,606,082	1,549,277	374	965

Source: Statistical Handbook of Assam, 2010 (Provisional Population Census, 2011).

The above data shows that the total population of BTAD is 3,155,359 (3.15 million) out of which 1,606,082 male and 1,549,277 female. Among the four districts, Baksa district

has largest number of population (30.22) followed by Kokrajhar (28.11%), Udalguri (26.39%) and Chirang (15.26%). The sex ratio of all the districts of BTAD shows higher than national average.

Literacy

Literacy is one of the major indicators of human development. The literacy rate of BTAD are shown here under-

Table No. 3.07: Literacy Rate of BTAD in comparison to Assam.

Assam			BTAD		
Male	Female	Total (in %)	Male	Female	Total (in %)
77.85%	66.27%	72.19%	74.28%	59.70%	67.12%

Source: Statistical Handbook of BTC, 2010 (Provisional population census, 2011)

The above table reveals that the total literacy rate of the BTAD is 67.12% which is less than the state's literacy rate 72.19%. Sex wise 74.28% male and 59.70% female of BTAD are literate. .

Kokrajhar District

Kokrajhar is one of the fourth district of Bodoland Territorial Area Districts. Kokrajhar district can be described as the gateway of this region. Both road and rail touches this district at Srirampur before they go outside of North East India. The total area of district is 3,169.22 sq. km. Kokrajhar is located on the north bank of the river Brahmaputra. The district lies roughly between 89.46' E to 90.38' E longitudes and 26.19" N to 26.54" N latitudes. The district is bounded on the north by Bhutan, the Himalayan kingdom by Dhubri district on the south, Bongaigaon district on the east and the Indian state of West Bengal on the west (Keshab Basumatary, 2014).

Kokrajhar was originally a part of undivided Goalpara district. Till 1956, it was merely a small village with a railway station that connected it to the rest of the world. In 1957 a new Civil Sub-division was created after carving out the northern part of Dhubri

Subdivision and some parts of Goalpara Sub-division. On the 1st of July, 1983 the Kokrajhar Sub-division was upgraded into Kokrajhar district with headquarter at Kokrajhar town. There are four police stations in the district viz. Bijni, Sidli, Kokrajhar and Gossaigaon. The area of the district extended from the Manas River in the east to the Sonkosh on the west (<http://www.icssr.org/kokrajhar.pdf> Accessed on 11 April, 2015). In 1989, there was further reorganization of the districts of Assam and some new districts were created. Thus, about 40 percent of the total geographical area of Kokrajhar district was carved out for insertion in the new district of Bongaigaon. The area delimited from Kokrajhar district to Bongaigaon covers the entire Bijni Revenue Circle along with 347.50 square kilometers of Sidli Circle. Later on 20 villages of Naikgaon Gaon Panchayate with a total area 40.22 square km under Chapar Revenue Circle of Dhubri district was transferred to Kokrajhar district. The present geographical area of Kokrajhar district is estimated to be 3,169.22 square km. The district now has two revenue subdivisions Kazigaon and Gossaigaon Subdivisions (<http://www.icssr.org/kokrajhar.pdf> Accessed on 11 April, 2015).

Population

The total population of the kokrajhar district according to 2011 census report is 886999 with a decadal growth of 15%, during 2001-2011, which is lower than the state and national average. About 7.1% population in the district lives in urban areas, which is lower than the state average of 12.9%. There are altogether four towns in the district. The density of population in the district is 294 persons per sq. km., which is lower than the state average of 350. Near 33.7% population in the district belongs to various scheduled tribes, mainly the Bodos, and 3.4% is from scheduled caste communities. In terms of religion, around 65.6% population is followed Hinduism, 20.36% followed Islamism, 13.72% followed Christianity and negligible proportion of population of the district belongs to other religions (Census Report of India, 2011).

Sex ratio

The overall sex ratio in the district is 958 in 2011. Religion wise, sex ratio of the district shows that Christian community has better sex ratio (960) than that of the Muslims (949) and the Hindu community (938) (Census Report of India, 2011).

Literacy Rate

Literacy rate of the district (66.63%) is lower than that the state average of (78.28%). As reflected from the census data of 2011, the literacy rate of Hindus (56.1%) is better than that of the Muslims (40.7%) and Christians (44.4%) community. Gender discrepancy in literacy is more reflected in the district. The female literacy rates of the district irrespective of their religious composition are lower than their male counterpart (Census Report of India, 2011).

Workforce

The strength of workforce in the district at present is about 37%. This proportion is higher than the state average 35.8%. However, marginalization of workforce is more in the district (11%) than the state average of 9.1%. Religion wise data reflects that Muslims has larger proportion of non-workers than other two major communities. Moreover, relatively smaller proportion of cultivators and larger proportion of agriculture labor among the rural Muslim community reflect that possession of cultivable land in the community is limited (Census Report of India, 2011).

Education and Health

The district has 1080 Lower Primary Schools, 313 Middle Schools, 132 High Schools and 18 Higher Secondary Schools. However, the pattern of enrolment at different levels indicates that the district has much higher potential for enrollment of students than the state average. Each primary school in the district accommodates 94 students against the state average of 116 students, each middle schools accommodates 130 students while the state average is 171 and each high schools accommodates 113 students against the state

average of 133 students. However, performance of students in final school examination under state education board is not satisfactory. The pass percentage in the district during 2006 was just 41.1% (ranked 21st among the 23 district in the state) compared to the state average of 53.5%. The district has two hospitals (most of the districts in the state has one), 37 PHCs (public health centre), 7 dispensaries and 198 sub-centers. Hospital bed per lakh population in this district is 42, which is much higher than the state average of 27 per lakh population (All Bodo Students Union, 2008).

Human Development Index

Kokrajhar is one of the poor performing districts in terms of development in basic human capabilities in three fundamental dimensions, viz., a long and healthy life, knowledge and a decent standard of living, as indicated by its HDI (human development index) value of 0.354 (15th rank), which is below the state average of 0.407. In terms of income, education and health, this district occupies 14th, 22nd and 9th places respectively in district wise rankings of the state. The Human Poverty Index calculated in 1999 indicates that 31.5 percent of population in the district are living below poverty level and placed in 20th rank. The Gender related Development Index, the district is placed in 11th position in the state and the index 0.354 was lower than the state average of 0.407 (Assam Human Development Report, 2003).

Agriculture

The district is situated in a humid sub-tropical climate, which is the characteristic of the lower Brahmaputra Valley of Assam. There is high rainfall and humidity. Large number of area of the district covers by forest. The soil in the district is fertile and suitable for paddy cultivation. The main source of irrigation of the district is natural dongs and canals. The Bhutan hills are also the source of a number of rivers that flow through the district and act as tributaries of the mighty Brahmaputra. The important rivers of the district that flow from north to south are the Champamati, the Gaurang, the Tipkai and the Sonkosh. The soil quality of the district is composed of sand and clay in varying proportion ranging from pure sand in the riverbed to soft clay in different parts. So the

geo-climatic condition of the district is in favor of agriculture. The district ranked tenth in Agriculture Per capita gross domestic product in the state during 2000-01. Total 27.1 percent geographical area of the district is put into agriculture use whereas 35.6 percent area of the state is under cultivation. In crop production the district is better than state average.

Industries

Assam is not an industrially developed state and the position of Kokrajhar district in industrial scenario of the state is insignificant. The district has 22 registered factories and about 900 small scale units (1.8 percent of the state total). The district has four handloom training centers. (<http://www.icssr.org/Kokrajhar.pdf>. 11/06/15)

The Villages

The study was conducted in six villages of Kokrajhar district namely Gombiraghat, Maliahgoi, Gombrikhata, Harjhora, Kazigaon and Bongshhijhora. All these villages came under Kazigaon Village Council Development Committee (VCDC) and Kazigaon sub-division. Kazigaon sub-division is approximately 43 Km. far from district head quarter Kokrajhar and 202 Km. from state capital Dispur. Kazigaon sub-division surrounded by Debitola Teshil towards West, Rupsi Teshil towards South, Gauripur Teshil towards North and Mahamaya Teshil toward East. However, New Jalpaiguri railway station is the nearest railway station which is 226Km. away from Kazigaon sub-division. Kazigaon village is the birth place of Gurudev Kalicharan Brahma. The following table shows the approximate distant of the villages from district headquarter.

Table No. 3.08 Distribution of the Villages on the Basis of Approximate distances from district head quarter.

Distance from District Headquarter (Approx)	Villages						Total
	Kazigaon	Gombiraghat	Maliaghoi	Gombrikhata	Harjhora	Bongshij hora	
41-45	1	-	-	-	-	-	1
46-50	-	-	1	-	-	-	1
51-55	-	1	-	1	-	-	2
56-60	-	-	-	-	1	-	1
61-65	-	-	-	-	-	1	1
Total	1	1	1	1	1	1	6

Source: Field work visited during May 2012 – January 2015.

The above table reveals that the approximate distances of all the six villages from the District headquarter is not more than 65 Km. On the other hand both the Gombiraghat and Gombrikhata villages are approximately 51-55 Km. far from District headquarters. Kazigaon is the nearest village to district headquarters. But the distance from one village to another is not much. All the villages are situated within 15-20 km. of areas and link with one another through Kachcha road.

Population

All the villages are inhabited by Bodo tribe that is these villages are one tribe dominated village. The village wise populations are shown in following table.

Table No. 3.09 Distribution of the Villages on the basis of Population.

Name of Villages	Population
Kazigaon	430 (14.90%)
Gombiraghat	302 (10.50%)
Maliaghoi	318 (10.99%)
Gombrikhata	447 (14.50%)
Harjhora	515 (17.81%)
Bongshijhora	879 (30.40%)
	2891 (100%)

Source: Field study conducted during on May 2012 - January 2015.

The above table reveals that the total population of the six villages is 2891. Among them Bongshijhora (879) is the highly populated village followed by Harjhora (515), Gobrikahata (447), Kazigaon (430), Maliaghoi (318) and lastly Gombiraghat (302).

Educational Institution

Almost every villages of Kazigaon sub division have at least one primary and few villages have primary along with middle school. One or two villages of the sub division have primary, middle and high school also. Majority of primary, middle and high schools medium of instruction is Bodo and run by government. But unfortunately most of the school suffers from the shortage of teacher. As a result one teacher needs to conduct multi subject tutorial classes in order to cover the syllabus. Although, the state government has taken initiative to resolve the problem by recruiting young teachers through conducting Teacher Eligibility Test (TET) but still problem remain unsolved. The Central Government Scheme called Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA) is playing a holistic role for the students of lower primary and middle schools by providing free mid-day meal, books and school uniforms. All the six villages of the study area also have schools. Following table make it clear.

Table No. 3.10 Distribution of the Villages on the basis of Schools.

Name of Villages	Number of educational institutions					Total
	L.P (Lower Primary)	M.E (Middle School)	H.S (Higher School)	H.S.S (Higher Secondary School)	College	
Kazigaon	4	3	2	1	1	11
Gombiraghat	1	1	-			2
Maliaghoi	1	1	-			2
Gombrikhata	1	1	-			2
Harjhora	1	1	-			2
Bongshijhora	1	1	-			2
Total	9	8	2	1	1	21

Source: Field study conducted during on May 2012 - January 2015.

Above table indicates that every village of study area has at least one lower primary and one middle school. Among the six villages, Kazigaon is rich so far as educational institution is concern. Being a sub division the village has four lower primary school, three middle schools and two high schools and one higher secondary school. Except one high and higher secondary school, all the L.P., M.E., High School of Kazigaon is government run Bodo medium school function under Sarbha Siksha Abhijan. The two private school namely **Gurudev Kalicharan Brahma High School, Upendra Nath Brahma Academy** are also Bodo Medium School. After completing primary and middle school education the students of Kazigaon and nearby villages have to admit themselves either the three school of Kazigaon for further study.

Except Kazigaon the infrastructure facilities of the schools of other villages are very poor. Like none of the school of these villages have boundary wall, proper toilet facility, sufficient class room, proper furniture etc. One of the common problem of almost all the middle and high school of these villages are shortage of Science and mathematics teacher.



Plate 3.01 Kazigaon Lower Primary and Middle School

College

Out of six villages Kazigaon has one private college namely **Swilendra Kumar Brahma college**, Kazigaon. The college was established by the initiative of some forward minded people in 2009. The idea of establishing a college first came in the mind of Mr. Harsrang Brahma and Debakanta Brahma and latter some other people joined with them. The college is named after Harsrang Brahma's father. The college has only Arts stream and it offer subjects like English, Bodo, Political Science, Economics, Education, History and Philosophy. After completion of Higher Secondary level study, a student can take admission in this college for further study. But if the student wants to enroll in other stream than they either has to go Tipkai (approx. 8 Km. from Kazigaon) or Kokrajhar town (approx. 43 Km.).

Temples

Bathou and Brahma religion are practices by the Bodos of these villages. It is found that each village has at least one Brahma and one Bathou temple. For the construction of temple neither the Brahma nor the Bathou follower, follow any architectural model of traditional Hindu temple. Brahma temple is generally an open hall with tin roof and no idol placed inside the hall. Only one earthen alter is made in the middle of hall for performing fire oblation rituals (yogya ahuti). Similarly Bathou worship place or mandir (temple) is also open hall but rituals are performed outside the hall in open air on Bathou tansali. There is no hard and fast rule of performing daily rituals in Bathou temple. During especial day like garja puja, kerrai puja any villagers can perform rituals with the help of douri. Whereas in Brahma temple the follower have to lighten earthen lamp on the alter every Thursday. Mr. Anil Kr. Brahma a Sahitya academic awardees raiders near Kazigaon said that they perform rituals of yogya ahuti in the birth and death day of Kalicharan Brahma.



Plate 3.02 Brahma Temple of Kazigaon



Plate 3.03 Bathou Temple of Banshijora

Post Office

Out of six villages only Kazigaon has one post office which was established in 1999. This post office is run by one post master and one peon. People of nearby villages including studied villages open their saving account, send and receive letter and did other work through this post office.

Hospital or Health Care Centre

Except Kazigaon, other five villages do not have any health centre or sub centre or hospital. For treatment they have to approach Kazigaon health sub centre which is run by one nurse. This sub centre provides only first aid treatment. So for better and proper treatment the people of all the six villages have to go Gossaigaon or Kokrajhar civil hospital or private nursing home of Kokrajhar town which is 10-15 and 25-56 Km. (appro.) far respectively from these villages.

But the respondents of all these villages inform that one or two (Accredited Social Health Activist) ASHA are working in their respective villages from last seven (7) or Eight (8) years, ASHA are working mainly for the improvement of health of mother and children.

Youth Club

All the six villages has at least one youth club. These clubs were established, organized and founded by the village. Normally these clubs consists of president, secretary, vice-president, assistant secretary, cashier and few members. The youth clubs of all the six villages have their own land and building. Details of clubs are given in the following table

Table No. 3.11 Distribution of the Villages on the basis of Youth Club.

Villages	Clubs			
	Name of the Club	No. of Member	Year of Establishment	Registration
Kazigaon	Kazigaon Jotai club	15	1987	Yes
Gombiraghat	Gombiraghat Sanjarang club	12	-	No
Maliaghoi	Malighoi Jwngsar club	13	-	No
Gombrikhata	Gombrikhata Serenja club	15	-	No
Harjhora	Harjhora Sayamaya club	14	-	No
Bongshijhora	Bongshijhora Barhungkha club	15	1990	Yes
Total				2

Source: Field study conducted during on May 2012 - January 2015.

The above data reveals that all the six villages has at least one youth club. These clubs are not large in size and consisted by 12-15 members. But it is a tradition of Bodo village that all the youth of the village can consider himself as club member and participated different activities organized by the club as member. Out of six clubs only two namely Kazigaon Jotai Club and Bongshijhora Barhungkha club got government registration in the year of 1987 and 1990 respectively. The registered club get fund from government for renovating club house, repairing sports field etc. All these club whether registered or not, engaged with different types of socio-cultural, educational and sports activities like- organizing inter village sports tournament, football and cricket coaching camp, health awareness program, providing financial aid to poor students etc.

Market

Except Kazigaon other five villages have small daily market. The villagers visited their respective market for selling goods and purchasing essential commodities like vegetable, oil, fish, salt, spices, dry fish, meat etc. A big weekly market is held in Kazigaon every Sunday where people from different areas gather for buying and selling goods. In this weekly market all the necessary item along with agriculture and fishing equipment, cloths, animal like cow, goat, duck, hen etc. are found. People from nearby villages also visit in this big weekly market by authorickshaw, bicycle or other available vehicle.



Plate.3.04 People are buying and selling commodities in Kazigaon Daily Market

Shops

All the studied villages have one or two shops. Details of shops are given below.

Table No. 3.12 Distribution of the Villages on the basis of Shops.

Types of Shops	Villages						Total
	Respondents						
	Kazigaon	Gombiraghat	Maliaghoi	Gombrikhata	Harjhora	Bongshijhora	
Grocery	07	01	01	01	01	02	13
Tea Stall	05	02	01	02	01	02	13
Book Stall	01	-	-	-	-	-	01
Pharmacy	03	-	-	-	-	-	03
Wine Shop	01	-	-	-	-	-	01
Total	17	03	02	03	02	04	31

Source: Field study conducted during on May 2012 - January 2015.

The table shows that these villages have different types of shop namely grocery tea stall, book stall and wine shop. Grocery and tea stall are commonly found in all the six villages. Except wine shops other shops are displayed open, majority of grocery shops are open in front of room of their residence. All the essential commodities of daily needs like rice, pulse, onion, potato, tea, sugar, kerosene, oil, biscuit, milk etc. are sold in these grocery shops.

The wine shops run by the villagers illegally. They made rice bear and jou gwrn (wine made from rice) by themselves and sell it secretly. Kazigaon have all the five types of shops like grocery, tea stall, book stall, pharmacy, wine shop. The owner of tea stalls Mr. Katindra Brahma of 35 year old, inform that every evening his stall become the point of cheat-chat for the youth of the village. Their discussion ranges from love affairs, sports, cinema and politics to village problem.



Memorial Statue

In memory of Kalicharan Brahma one monument was built in his cremation ground in Kazigaon village. Earlier only small alter was there but in 2007 it was rebuilt with the help of government aid and one statue of Kalicharan Brahma (in standing mode) was made, one rest house and Gurudev Kalicharan Brahma high school was also build within the boundary of the ground. The ground is well maintained by the school authority. Every year the birth day of Kalicharan Brahma is celebrated by the students and teachers of the school along with other villages.



Plate 3.06 Statue of Kalicharan Brahma

Bank

Out of six villages only Kazigaon has on State Bank of India (SBI) branch which serve the people of nearby village. This branch is run by (three) 3 or (four) 4 staff members. The villagers said that they have to wait for long time for opening account and other transaction.