

## **Infrastructural Facilities and Economic Development of the People of Kokrajhar District, Assam**

**Dhruba Jyoti Nath**

*Dept. of Economics, Kokrajhar Govt. College, Assam, India*

---

**Abstract:** *The purpose of this paper is to focus on the infrastructural facilities of the people of Kokrajhar district of Assam. This paper uses data which are collected from the secondary sources. Data have collected from the Census of India, different issues of statistical handbook of Assam and Bodoland Territorial council, journals, internet etc.*

*Different parameters of development of infrastructure like transport and communication, energy, banking etc. have been used as indicators of the economic development of a nation. Kokrajhar, headquarter of Bodoland Territorial Council, falls behind the state of Assam so far as the development is concerned. The reason behind such fact attracts careful attention towards various problems like underdevelopment, terrorism, insurgency movement etc. Such problems need immediate solution which may open new avenues for improving economic growth and development of this area leading to progress and development.*

**Key words:** *Backwardness, Development, Infrastructure, poverty, rural people*

---

### **I. Introduction**

The word infrastructure is a combination of Latin word “infra” meaning “below” and “structure”. According to the Online Etymology Dictionary, the word infrastructure has been used in English since 1927, originally meaning “The installations that form the basis for any operation or system”. According to Oxford English Dictionary, the word ‘infrastructure’ was imported from French where it means sub grade and originally applied in a military sense. Military of the United States used this term to achieve currency after the formation of NATO in the 1940s. Then the word adopted by urban planners in US in its modern civilian sense by 1970.

The term became very prominence in the United States in the 1980s following the publication of ‘America in Ruins’, which initiated a public-policy discussion of the nation’s “infrastructure crisis”. In Keynesian economics, the word ‘infrastructure’ was exclusively defined as public assets that facilitate production. However, the word has grown in popularity during the post-Keynesian times. It has been applied to suggest the internal framework discernible in any technology system or business organization.

It can be generally defined as the set of interconnected structural elements that provide a framework supporting an entire structure of development. It is an important term for judging a country or region's development. It is also known as social overhead capital which comprises such activities as transport, communication, energy, intermediate goods output, increasing productivity of natural resources such as irrigation, drainage, afforestation etc., Science and technology, information, system, finance and banking, piped water supply, sanitation and sewerage, solid waste collection and disposal etc. It works on a number of determinants of economic development and opens up the possibilities of investment by opening up the size of market as well as increasing the supply elasticity and efficiency of factors of production. Development of infrastructure of financial institutions helps in mobilizing potential saving and channelizing them into productive investment. It creates the conditions on which the superstructure of economic activities is build up. The efficiency with which infrastructure services are provided is also a key to realizing potential returns. However, infrastructure facilities of an area have vital role for the economic upliftment of the people at large especially Kokrajhar district of Assam. There are poverty, unemployment and backwardness. Realizing the importance of infrastructure facilities for the economic development of this area, the researcher has made a probe into the problems of the people of a backward area like Kokrajhar District in Assam.

### **II. Objectives**

The study was planned with the following objectives:

- To study the extent of infrastructural facilities available in the district.
- To find out the level of economic development of people through the available infrastructural facilities.
- To examine the nature of problems faced by the rural people in developing infrastructural facilities.

### III. Hypothesis

On the basis of the above objectives, the following hypotheses were developed outlined.

- Development of infrastructural facilities enhances the economic development of the people.
- Nature of problems, suggest solutions accordingly.

### IV. Methodology

This study is based on the data from secondary sources only.

### V. Profile Of The District

Kokrajhar is the western most district of Assam of the north eastern part of India. It came into existence as a sub-division in 1957 and was eventually notified as a district in 1983 with its head quarter at Kokrajhar by dividing Goalpara district. Kokrajhar district lies roughly within 89°46' East to 90°38' East and 26°19' North to 26°54' North Latitude.

Kokrajhar district is again created on 10<sup>th</sup> February 2003 which was initiated by the leaders of the Bodo movement. It is the Head Quarter of the district as well as Bodoland Territorial Council. The district is bounded by the Chirang district, Dhubri district and the foothills of Bhutan and a part of West Bengal. Its total geographical area is 3169.22 sq. Kms. with 3(three) sub divisions viz, (1) Kokrajhar with headquarter at Kokrajhar, (2) Gossaigaon with its HQ at Gossaigaon and (3) Parbotjhara with its HQ at Kazigaon. The district has 3(three) Assembly constituencies with 5 (five) revenue circles. There are 5 (five) full-fledged Community Development Blocks in the district and 6 (six) part blocks which were adjusted with other developmental blocks of the neighbour districts. A total of 1072 revenue villages are there in the district. Besides, 8(eight) Police Stations and 14 (fourteen) out posts are also functioning in the district with 120 post offices, 2(two) fire stations. It has two urban bodies namely Kokrajhar Municipality Board and Gossaigaon Town Committee.

Population of this district is 8,86,999 as per 2011 census with female population 4,34,038. The literacy rate is 66.63% with male 73.44% female 59.54%. The sex ratio in Kokrajhar is 958 female against 1000 male. Further, it is found from the census that it is 961 female in rural and 931 female against 1000 male in urban areas of the district. The population density is 280 per square KM. The rural urban population composition of the district is 8,32,201 (93.81%) in the rural and 54,941(6.19%) in the urban areas as against 85.9% in rural and 14.10% in urban in the state of Assam.

### VI. Analysis Of The Data

#### 1. Transport and communication:

Transport and communication is the prerequisite for achieving rapid economic development. This are known as the nerve of country. It is crucial for attracting investment and essential for marketing agricultural products, and enabling the farmers to get a fair price of their product.

#### 1.1 Roads:

As far as the length of roads is concerned, in Kokrajhar district during 2010-11 the National High way is about 37 kms, State High way is 61 kms, Major District Roads 131kms, Rural roads 748 kms, and Urban roads 16 kms.

**Table No.-1: Length of roads of Kokrajhar district and state (in Kms)**

Sl. No.	Categories	Kokrajhar	Assam	Percentage share of Road of Kokrajhar
1	National High ways	37	2,841	1.30%
2	State high ways	61	3,134	1.95%
3	Major District Roads	131	4,413	2.97%
4	Rural roads	748	30,844	2.43%
5	Urban roads	16	1,409	1.14%
	Total	993	42,641	2.33%

Source: Statistical Hand Book Assam, Statistical Hand Book BTC

As against this the roads of different categories in the state, the district has a share of only 1.30% of national High Ways, 1.95% of State High Ways, 2.97% of Major District roads, 2.43% of Rural roads and only 1.14% of urban roads. Hence it can be concluded that the road transport in Kokrajhar district is not adequate as compared to other district of the state. It is also mentioned that there is only 109.41 kms of road against one lakh population of the district. Further, there is only 30.66 kms of road against one hundred square kms of geographical area in the district.

#### 1.2 Motor vehicles:

There are 4,038 registered motor vehicles in the district in the year 2012-13 as against 2,27,367 in the state. The number of motor vehicles in the district is less than the district average of 8,421. The growth of registered motor vehicles is shown in the table below:

**Table No.-2: Year wise registered motor vehicles in the district**

Year	Motor Vehicles registered
2008-09	1,843
2009-10	--
2010-11	4,237
2011-12	4,953
2012-13	4,038

Source: Statistical Hand Book of BTC 2009, 2010, 2011, 2012

## 2. Post and telecommunication:

In the district there are 108 post offices out of which 104 are in rural areas and 4 in urban areas. As against this, there are 4013 post offices in the state out of which 3726 post offices are in rural areas and the remaining 287 in urban areas. The number of post offices per lakh population in the district is 12.17, which is almost satisfactory with the state level figure, which is 12.85. Population serve per post office in the district is 8001 in rural and 13735 in urban.

## 3. Energy:

Energy otherwise known as power is one of the prime movers of any developed economy. Adequate and reliable availability of power is indispensable for sustained growth of the economy. It is found that there are 98711 domestic connections and 8625 commercial connections in the district. Further it has been revealed from the data that by the end of 2012-13, 806 villages were electrified under RGGVY, i.e. about 75.5 percent of villages of Kokrajhar district have been electrified which is very less than the percentage of villages (85.3 percent) electrified at State level.

## 4. Irrigation:

Development of irrigation has conferred immense benefit to the rural economy. It augments the productivity in the agrarian sector making the agriculture successful. Source of irrigation may be classified as medium and major irrigation and minor irrigation. The minor irrigation may be of flow and lift. By the end of 2012-13 irrigation potential created in Kokrajhar district was 4,065 hectares for Rabi and 10968 hectares for Kharif. Under minor irrigation (flow) this figure was 6230 hectares and under major irrigation 4750 hectares created during 2012-13 in the district. As against this by the end of 2012-13, 6,82,782 hectares has been brought under in the State. Under minor irrigation (flow) irrigation potential of 4,28,440 hectare were created by the end of 2012-13 and 254342 hectares under major and medium irrigation. Though the progress in case of minor irrigation at state level is somehow better the position in case of major and medium irrigation, both yet flow and lift level is not satisfactory when compared with the district average.

## 5. Forest:

Forests are important source of livelihood for weaker section of society in general. Forest activities create substantial wage employment opportunities. The district has 1994.4261 sq. kms of total forest area of which 1734.6583 sq. Kms of reserved forest area, 214.1878 sq. kms proposed reserved forest and 45.58 sq. Kms of protected area network. It is found that 63% of area is covered by forest in the district which is 10% of the state forest and 2.54% of the state geographical area. As against this, the state has a recorded forest area measuring 19351.73 sq kms i.e. 24.7 percent of the state's geographical area of 78438 sq kms. So the position of forest area in the district is very encouraging.

## 6. Financial institutions:

The role of well-developed financial infrastructure in stimulating and sustaining economic growth is well recognized. A network of financial institutions helps the economy to deploy its savings more efficiently.

The reporting offices in the district are 31 with a credit deposit ratio of 26.74. The credit deposit ratio is not satisfactory as compared to the state (36.76). Hence the banking sector is not encouraging in the district.

## 7. Educational institutions:

In the district there are 1314 lower primary schools having 3146 teachers and 84,721 students. As against this we have 35064 lower primary schools in the state having 1,03,010 teachers and 29,57,340 students during the year 2012-13.

In the same year, the district has 352 upper primary schools having 2670 teachers and 52,321 students. As against this we have 5823 upper primary schools in the state having 83040 teachers and 1608590 students.

In the same period the district has 135 high schools having 1489 teachers and 26858 students. As against this figure there are 5743 high schools at state level with 48256 teachers and 864030 students. At the higher secondary level the district has 19 Higher Secondary Schools having 586 teachers and 4305 students' enrolment. At the state level, the number of higher secondary schools are 1080 having 16163 teachers and 1,61,029 students. Moreover, there are 15 junior colleges with 315 teachers and 7720 students.

The scenario of higher education in the district is given below:

**Table 3: Higher Educational Institutions in Kokrajhar District**

Serial No.	Higher Education	No.
a)	Bodoland University	1
b)	Central Institute of Technology	1
c)	College for general education	10
d)	Engineering College	1
e)	Law College	1
f)	Music and fine arts college	1
g)	B. Ed. College	2
h)	Basic training centre	1
i)	District Institute of education and training	1
j)	Industrial Training institute	1

## VII. Findings

From the information explained in respect of transport, communication, minor irrigation, forest, credit deposit ratio of bank and financial institutions, Education, there is no hazitation to say that the district is backward. Under development of infrastructure facilities is one of the several causes for which the economic development of the people of the district is at low level. It is obvious from the percentage of Households holding below Poverty Line Ration cards in the district, which is at very high level i.e. 27.8 (2008) percent.

The people especially the rural people of the district face number of problems and they are economically backward due to several causes as far as the observations of the researcher is concerned.

- (i) Different Government Departments and Officials entrusted with the development work should work with dedication. There should be direct helping hand from the side of these officials to take the people on the path of development through the schemes available for them. Unless they will take keen interest in activities of public interests the area in general and individuals in particular cannot prosper.
- (ii) Planning without participation of the people and their active involvement cannot expect to be realistic. The people of the rural areas should become an active participant in the government programmes intended for their development. It's the time to change the mind set of these people. For this, the role of the educated youths, social activists, NGOs, officials, politicians are noteworthy to initiate the people in participation to the planning processes of the country.
- (iii) A strong political will is not found in Rural Development. Motivation and mobilization of more financial resources by the political representatives for their area is not only essential but also expedient.
- (iv) Planning process of any development activity starts from the top level which is known as the top-down approach of development. But this approach cannot be sustained for long as it ignores the question of mobilizing the vast masses for taking their destiny in to their own hands. The remedy lies in transforming all such rural activities to the local people and their Panchayats, which can perform these tasks in a far more efficient economical manner. Decentralization is the key to rural rejuvenation and resurrection.
- (v) Leakages of allocated resources are the prime constraints in the field of rural development. Constant monitoring and evaluation of the ongoing programmes are the essential panaceas to plug these leakages.

## VIII. Conclusion

India is a country of villages and Assam being one of its states is no exception to it. If villages perish we along with our state and country will perish. So development of villages and rural people is a must and this task of rural development is a collective task. There is every possibility of development in the district. It needs a care and guidance only. The politician, local government, State government, central government, educationist, Economists, organisations, well wishers etc. need some initiative to make the path of development for the district. If the problems faced by the people and difficulties in the field are suitably tackled we cannot be considered as backward people in a backward state of India.

## Reference

- [1] Govt. of Assam (2012): Statistical hand Book, Assam, Directorate of Economics and Statistics, Assam, Guwahati.

- [2] Govt. of Assam (2012, 2011, 2010, 2009): Statistical hand Book, BTC, Directorate of Economics and Statistics, BTC, Kokrajhar.
- [3] <https://en.wikipedia.org>
- [4] <https://www.google.co.in>
- [5] <http://www.assamtribune.com/scripts/detailsnew.asp?id=jul2713/at07>
- [6] <http://knoema.com/atlas/India/Kokrajhar-District>