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Design of the Present Study

This chapter presents a clear picture of the framework designed to carry out our present research study. It narrates the objectives of the study, sets the hypotheses, and discusses the methodology adopted to fulfill the objective and decide about the hypotheses. This chapter also introduces the nature and sources of data used in this study to test the hypothesis.

3.1 Objectives

The study is undertaken keeping in mind the following few objectives:

1. To evaluate the human development status of Bodos as compared to the State of Assam.

2. To identify the factors behind Bodo Movement by examining their socio-economic status, drawn from primary sources.

3. To present a descriptive and analytical frame through which the inference can be drawn about the role of the status of human development for the Bodo Movement in Assam.

4. To suggest some inclusive policy measures for avoiding such movements when both national integrity and social fabrics are at stake.

3.2 Hypotheses

The study would aim at testing the following hypotheses:
1. Bodos in Assam are systematically lagging behind other sections of population in terms of the expansion in human development.

2. Poor expansion of human development, along with other factors, has played an important role in triggering the Bodo Movement in Assam.

3.3 Methodology

To fulfill our research objectives and to decide about the set hypotheses a specific research methodology needs to be designed. Actually, our present methodology consists of three distinct parts:

1. Document Reviews
2. Question-Answer Type Interviews
3. Focus Group Discussions

First, in Document Review taking the stock of secondary information we attempt to evaluate the status of human development in Bodo-inhabited five districts of Assam. The status of overall Human Development Index (HDI) and of different dimensions of human development of these districts is empirically measured so that the relative position of these districts in the list of all districts of Assam can be monitored. This analysis will help us to test our first hypothesis.

The second part of our analysis which will decide the fate of the second hypothesis is based on primary information collected from those five districts of Assam. The questionnaire is designed in such a fashion that along with the information of human development indicators the Bodo aspirations on autonomy/statehood can be studied.
Finally, in the third stage of our study Focus Group Discussions (FGD) are conducted to obtain qualitative judgment of the concerned people of different categories.

3.4 Data Sources

The Scheme of Data Collection: Data from the secondary sources that would help us to analyze the various socio-economic variables in the study for the development of Bodos along with education as well as human development among Bodos of our study area are not available. The Census data limit themselves to the literate persons, income, expenditure, sex-ratio, mortality rate, student’s enrolment in schools (both primary as well as in secondary schools) and occupational distribution of population (workers). We planned, therefore, to collect the relevant data through a primary survey, by visiting the households ourselves with a detailed questionnaire. This method of obtaining data has strong as well as weak points of its own. On the one hand, it is not possible for an individual to visit a very large number of households in the villages scattered in a large area and therefore, the sample size must be kept at its modest level. On the other hand, the opportunity given by meeting the households in person provides a great scope for an in-depth investigation. Details on school enrolment, income, expenditure, mortality rate, sex-ratio, income from various sources, consumption-expenditure, family size, etc can be obtained from such an enterprise.

Selection of Sample: The Bodoland Territorial Council (BTC) or Bodoland Territorial Area District (BTAD) which was created under Sixth Schedule of the Constitution of India in 2003. In BTC or BTAD there are four districts, namely,
Baksa, Chirang, Kokrajhar and Udalguri. While at the time of creation of BTC or BTAD, major areas of five districts of present Assam namely, Barpeta, Bongaigaon, Darrang, Kokrajhar and Darrang, and in addition, few Bodo inhabited villages from other districts of the state had been included. We have chosen BTC or BTAD as the focused area of our present study the reason being that sixty percent villages of all five districts were covered under the jurisdiction of BTC or BTAD. The administrative unit was created with a mission to accomplish overall development of the area along with socioeconomic, cultural and linguistic aspirations of the Bodo people. BTC or BTAD was created by taking the then Kokrajhar district, and major parts of Legislative Assembly Constituency (LAC) from the districts of Barpeta, Bongaigaon, Kokrajhar, Darrang and Nalbari and some areas from other districts. More precisely, BTC or BTAD covers LACs of Sorbhog, Bhabanipur, Patacharkuchi, Barpeta and Chapaguri from Barpeta district; LACs of Sidli, Bongaigaon, Bijni and Abhayapuri from Bongaigaon district; Paneri, Kalaigaon, Sipajhar, Mongaldai, Dalgaon, Udalguri and Mazbat from Darrang district; Tamulpur, Nalbari and Barama from Nalbari district; Gauripur, Golakganj, Bilashipara West and Bilshipara East from Dhubri district; Kamalpur and Rangia from Kamrup district; Barchola from Sonitpur district. After the formation of BTAD four districts were renamed as: Kokrajhar, Chirang, Baksa and Udalguri. For administrative purposes the BTC or BTAD has further been divided into six Sub Divisions namely Portbotjora in Kokrajhar District; Bijni and Kajolgaon in Chirang District; Salbari and Tamulpur in Baksa District; and finally, Bhergaon in Udalguri District. The entire jurisdiction under BTC or BTAD is
presently spread over 25 Development Blocks, 13 Revenue Circles and 3082 villages.

The Bodoland Territorial Area Districts (BTAD) or Bodoland Territorial Council (BTC) in the state of Assam is bounded by the Himalayan Kingdom of Bhutan in the North, the Brahmaputra River in the South, river Paasnoi in the East and the Sonkosh River in the West. Geographically its boundary lies between 26°18’0” to 26°54’0” N Latitudes and between 89°48’0” E to 92°24’0” E Longitudes and is in the north western part of Assam. It covers 8970 sq. km. of area and is about 11.24 per cent of the total area of the state and is known as the gateway to the northeast India. The total population of BTC or BTAD area was 2631289 of which 1354629 populations were Scheduled Tribe out of which 1083701 were Bodo populations which accounts 80 per cent and Scheduled Cast populations are 137544 and 1139118 are General population.

The study area, Bodoland Territorial Area Districts (BTAD) or Bodoland Territorial Council (BTC) has four districts having 8038 villages. We selected 12 villages taking three villages from each District. A total of three hundred households were surveyed taking 25 households from each village.

While selecting villages and sampling units our main concern was to ensure variability of data. At the village level a number of factors determine variability, viz. connectivity by road, distance from the township, availability of power (electricity), population size of the village, school enrolment, literacy rate, mortality rate, income, consumption, expenditure, etc. The role of these factors lies in determining the socio economic status and human development of the
Bodos in the study area and their relative progressiveness. Connectivity by road and distance from a township influence availability of inputs, disposability of output, consumption pattern, approach to education and information, etc. which, in turn, determine the socio-economic structure of the village and human development among the Bodo population. These factors also influence living conditions of the people in the area. Availability of power influences productivity along with standard of living and the consumption pattern which determines the quality of life. Today when almost every implement/equipment and durable consumer goods have become electrical and or electronic in nature, unavailability of power in a village seriously jeopardizes its prospects in the spheres of production as well as consumption.

Keeping these considerations in mind, we planned to select villages some of which are nearer to the towns while others are far away from the town. Since Bodos are more concentrated in the villages which are far away from town, we decided to select one village from each district which is nearer to town and two villages that are far away from town.

Our stand in fixing the number of sample households from each village (irrespective of the total number of households residing in the village) rests on two considerations. Firstly, we are more concerned with the overall socio-economic structure as well as community’s educational scenario in the study area than the structure of each village economy which has more community. The frequency distribution of villages (in the study area) according to the population size suggests that small villages are many in number while large villages are only
few and far between. If we select sample households in proportion to the total number of households in each village, our sample will be overwhelmingly dominated by the households from a couple of large villages. This will distort the overall composition of data collected by us. Secondly, it is expected that the inter-relationships among different variables in every village are more stable than the values of those variables themselves. A sample of twenty households would capture the inherent inter-relationships among different variables and while larger samples are always preferred to smaller samples.

Having decided the sample villages and the number of samples to be drawn from each village, we went ahead to draw random samples from these villages. As mentioned earlier, we had already enumerated the households in each village (with the name of the head of the household). Next, we arranged the households in an ascending lexicographic order of the name of the heads of households and assigned to them a serial number 1 to \( N_i \). Then, uniformly distributed random numbers lying between 1 and \( N_i \) (inclusive) were generated for each village. Here \( N_i \) is the total number of households in the village \( i \) (\( i=1,2,…,7 \)) as found in our enumeration. These random numbers indicated as to which households to survey in each village. Since there cannot be any relationship between the lexicographic ordering of names and the random numbers generated by us, we hold that every household (in a village) got an equal chance of being selected.
Map: 3.4.1: Study Area
**Data Collection:** We served a detailed questionnaire to the (randomly chosen) head of the respective households in each village. In most cases they were to be explained as to what information we needed from them. Sometimes the respondent had to seek assistance of other members of the family to give the information. Normally we could get two to three filled-in questionnaires per day. Every evening, we crosschecked the information for consistency, and in case of some inconsistency, we met the respondents on the subsequent day and removed the inconsistencies. The program of data collection for a village lasted for some 20 days on an average, albeit with intervals of a few days during the span. Occasionally, we could not meet some head of the household. But meeting him on some other day was not a problem. We could collect data from all the 12 villages in a little over six months. The period was from December 2007 to June 2008.

**Tabulation and Analysis:** After collection of data, the same were presented in the form of a table using Microsoft Excel spread sheet. Apart from tabulation and use of descriptive statistics, we used simple statistical, mathematical tools and the most popular method used by the Planning Commission, Govt. of India to estimate various indices of human development such as Human Development Index (HDI), Education Index (EI), Consumption Index (CI) and Health Index (HI), etc.

In the third stage of our research Focus Group Discussions were conducted in each of our sample villages taking ten respondents in each group. The formations of the groups are based on some predetermined criterion which is discussed in detail in the relevant chapter of this thesis.