CHAPTER VI
MODERNIZATION OF BASIC AMENITIES AND SOCIO-ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

The type of socio-economic organization that existed in different periods under different economic and socio-political milieu and evolving pattern of socio-organizational frame work reflect the pattern of changes in a particular region.

The nature of infrastructural facilities required for social well-being in a given region varies according to general development of the region (Vyas, 1991). An appraisal of the pattern of change leading to development of social amenities observed in the Hajo Block is made as follows:

All the existing social amenities of the block have been grouped into five broad categories, viz. (i) educational amenities, (ii) medical facilities, (iii) drinking water, (iv) transport and communication and (v) electricity. They are further subdivided into various sub categories.

6.1 DISTRIBUTION OF SOCIAL AMENITIES
EDUCATIONAL AMENITIES

Educational amenities are considered to be the basic ingredients of socio-economic development of a society. Level of education largely determines human occupation, which, in turn, determines income and standard of living. The level of education, by and large, reflects the general socio-economic status of the people in a region. The spatial distribution of educational amenities is not evenly distributed throughout the block. Nature of physiography, distance from the urban centers, size of settlement and transport network are some of the dominating factors determining the
level of educational development in particular and overall regional development in general.

The rural literacy rate of the block as a whole is 47.38 per cent against the state’s literacy rate (both urban and rural) of 52.89 per cent and that of the country’s literacy rate of 52.89 per cent and that of the country’s literacy rate of 52.91 per cent in 1991. The educational level of the block can be measured by the indicators, such as number of different categories of schools and colleges, number of students and teachers in those institutions. An attempt has, therefore, been made here to analyse the various indicators to show the level of educational development in the region.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sl. No.</th>
<th>Gaon Panchayat</th>
<th>Primary School</th>
<th>Middle School</th>
<th>Secondary and Higher Secondary School</th>
<th>College</th>
<th>Inhabited Villages</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
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<td>1</td>
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<td>13 (100.00)</td>
<td>7 (53.85)</td>
<td>5 (38.46)</td>
<td>1 (7.69)</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
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<td>Hajo No. 2</td>
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<td>7 (43.75)</td>
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<td>16</td>
</tr>
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<td>3</td>
<td>Ramdia No.1</td>
<td>14 (93.33)</td>
<td>7 (46.67)</td>
<td>5 (33.33)</td>
<td></td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Ramdia No. 2</td>
<td>11 (91.67)</td>
<td>9 (75.00)</td>
<td>7 (58.33)</td>
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<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Pachim Bongshar</td>
<td>29 (93.55)</td>
<td>12 (38.71)</td>
<td>5 (16.13)</td>
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<td>31</td>
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<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Pub Bongshar No.1</td>
<td>12 (100.00)</td>
<td>5 (41.67)</td>
<td>3 (25.00)</td>
<td>1 (8.33)</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Pub Bongshar No. 2</td>
<td>26 (100.00)</td>
<td>15 (57.7)</td>
<td>9 (34.61)</td>
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<td>26</td>
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<tr>
<td>Total for the Hajo Block</td>
<td>121 (96.8)</td>
<td>62 (49.6)</td>
<td>41 (32.8)</td>
<td>3 (2.4)</td>
<td>125</td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1. PRIMARY SCHOOL

It is one of the most fundamental facilities for the people of a region. Although some areas are lagging behind the required number of primary school, most of the villages have the basic educational amenity of primary school (Table 6.1).

The block has as many as 202 primary schools in 1991 against the corresponding number of 108 in 1971. The number of students is found to be 31,108 among which 16,799 (54 per cent) were boys and 14,309 (46 per cent) were girls. Out of 135 revenue villages in the block, there are as many as 121 villages having at least one primary school. It is obvious that 89.63 per cent of the villages have been provided with the amenity of primary school. The remaining 14 villages, which do not have this basic amenity, are generally located in the remote and isolated char lands. There are 81 thickly populated villages which have more than one primary school. Against a total number of 31,108 students, there are 486 teachers, the student-teacher ratio being only 64:1. It is encouraging to note that the number of primary schools increased by 87 per cent where as population increased by 50.67 per cent during the period 1971 to 1991. On the average, each of the 120 rural households has at least one primary school. In this respect, the position of the Hajo Block is better than that of many other blocks of the state.

2. MIDDLE SCHOOL

Middle school is also one of the basic educational institutions so far as rural education is concerned. There are 62 villages having the basic amenities of middle school. It is most encouraging that more than 60 per cent of the inhabited villages of the region have middle schools. Each of the middle schools has three feeder primary
schools, imparting education to more than 90 students on the average. There are as many as 310 teachers against 5,768 students, the student-teacher ratio being 18.6:1.

3. SECONDARY AND HIGHER SECONDARY SCHOOL

Secondary schools are the highest educational institutions available in most of the villages of the region. These educational institutions are the bridges between the higher education and the primary education. There are altogether 48 secondary and higher secondary schools with a total number of 9880 students and 455 teachers, the student-teacher ratio being 21.7:1.

4. COLLEGE

The region as a whole is still lagging behind the required higher educational amenities in general and the science education in particular. In 1991, there were only three colleges in the Hajo Block. Out of these, one-degree level college was established in the village of Kulhati (Damdama) known as Damdama college in the Hajo No. 2 Gaon Panchayat. Another college named as S.B.M.S. College was established in the township of Sualkuchi. It is a pioneer institution, so far as higher educational amenity is concerned. This is also a degree level college which helps the rural students to a great extent, although located in the urban area. It extends educational facility to the student of Pub Bongshar No. 1, Pub Bongshar No. 2 and Pachim Bongshar Gaon Panchayat. Another college was established in the vicinity of the Hajo town, known as Suren Das College. It extends educational facility to the students of Hajo No. 1, Ramdia No. 1 and Ramdia No. 2 Gaon Panchayats. All the three colleges have arts faculty only. There is not a single science college.
5. ADULT EDUCATION CENTRE

There are 50 adult education centers covering all the seven Gaon Panchayats of the Hajo Block. Generally, villages having this amenity belong to interior villages with compact settlement. The objective of adult education center is to make all elderly persons literate. Through these centers, it was intended to make all elderly people able to write their own names and addresses, besides to acquire the knowledge of identifying coins and currency.

The above discussion reveals that the basic educational amenities have been extended up to the remote villages of the region, which to a great extent eradicates the regional disparities in the block. This is in fact a right step towards the balanced regional development.

Table 6.1 shows a relative picture of existing educational amenities in the block. That the region has only 3 colleges covering only 2.4 per cent of the villages is not found to be adequate for the block as a whole where the total number of population is 188,100 (including urban population). Secondary and higher secondary schools were found in 41 (32.1 per cent) villages, while middle schools and primary schools were established in 62 (49.61 per cent) and 121 (96.8 per cent) inhabited villages respectively. No large village is found without a primary school.

Discussion on the above educational amenities leads to the fact that most of the occupationally dynamic Panchayats viz., Pub Bongshar No.1, Pub Bongshar No.2, Pachim Bongshar and Hajo No.2 were provided with more educational amenities.

HALTH SERVICES

The block has two Primary Health Centers (PHC) to extend valuable health services to a greater part of the rural areas, although these two Primary Health Centers
have their locations at two separate urban centres – Niz Hajo town and Sualkuchi industrial town, each of them with 24 beds and 7 doctors. These significant development in public health service is a good indicator of socio-economic upliftment of the society. Each PHC has 24 beds and provides the facility of diagnosis. Although it covers only 1.6 per cent of the inhabited villages, it provides medical facility to all the villages.

Health care is one of the most important indicators to measure the state of social well being of a region. It is more important for development because it meets basic welfare need.

**TABLE 6.2**

**DISTRIBUTION OF VILLAGES HAVING MEDICAL AMENITIES IN HAJO BLOCK, 1991**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Gaon Panchayat</th>
<th>PHC</th>
<th>PHS</th>
<th>CWC</th>
<th>MCW</th>
<th>HC</th>
<th>H</th>
<th>D</th>
<th>FWC</th>
<th>MH</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
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<td>3</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>-</td>
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<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ramdia No. 1</td>
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<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ramdia No. 2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pachim Bongshar</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>-</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>31</td>
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<tr>
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<td>1</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>1</td>
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<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>25</td>
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<tr>
<td>Total for the Block</td>
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<td>6</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
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<td>(12.8)</td>
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<td>(4.8)</td>
<td>(1.6)</td>
<td>(2.4)</td>
<td>(2.4)</td>
<td>(0.8)</td>
<td>(0.8)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Source: Census of India, Assam, 1991.*

Reference: PHC = Primary Health Centre  
PHS = Primary Health Sub-Centre  
CWC = Child Welfare Centre  
MCW = Maternity and Child Welfare Centre  
HC = Health Centre  
H = Hospital  
D = Dispensary  
FWC = Family Welfare Centre  
MH = Maternity Home.

There are three hospitals (H) and three dispensaries (D), each one is established in the interior and far off villages in order to provide primary treatment to the rural people of the region. Each of Ramdia No. 1, Ramdia No. 2 and Hajo No. 1 has one
hospital. Out of three dispensaries, two are established in Pachim Bogshar and one in Ramdia No. 2. These hospitals and dispensaries provide the general and primary treatment to patients and also provide medicines. These are established in big villages only with compact settlement so that health services can be provided to a number of neighbouring villages.

Primary Health sub-Centre (PHS) is one of the basic medical amenities where treatment is provided by the nursing staff. Although medicine is provided, services of doctors are not available at primary health sub centers. Generally, these sub-centres are located even in small villages with sparse settlements. There are all together 16 Primary Health Sub-Centres, highest number of PHS being observed in the Hajo No. 2 (4) and Pub Bongshar No. 2 (4), where PHC amenity is not available, followed by Hajo No. 1 (3) and Pachim Bongshar (3), while each of Ramdia No. 2 and Pub Bongshar No. 1 has one Primary Health Sub-Centre. It provides medical facility to 12.8 per cent of the inhabited villages.

Children of the block are taken care of with the help of Children Welfare Centre (CWC). It provides all types of health services to the children. The block has six Child Welfare Centres in 1991, which provides medical facility to 4.8 per cent of the villages. It is significant to note that Child Welfare Centre was not available in 1971. Maternity and Child Welfare Centres (MCW) are very essential for the well being of both the child and the mother. There are 6 Maternity and Child Welfare Centres in the block in 1991 against 4 MCW in 1971 so far distributional pattern is concerned. Likewise, Hajo No. 2 has one C.W. Centre and two MCW Centres; Ramdia No. 1 has two C.W. Centres and one MCW center; Ramdia No. 2 contains one C.W Centre and one MCW center and Pub Bongshar No. 2 avails of the amenity
of one CW Centre and one MCW center. On the other hand, Hajo No. 1 and Pachim Bongshar enjoy the facility of one MCW centre and one CW Centre respectively.

Besides, Primary Health Centres, there are two Health Centres (HC), which provide the facility of diagnosis with only a limited number of beds available for patients. Each of Pub Bongshar No. 1, Ramdia No. 1 and Pub Bongshar No. 2 has one Health Centre. It is important to note that Health Centre amenity was not at all available in 1971. One was established in the interior village of Ramdia No. 1 and another was in the Pub Bongshar No.1 with a view to provide for medical facility to poor people in the absence of Primary Health Centre. In the Hajo No. 1 Panchayat, one Family Welfare Centre (FWC) was established in order to make the people aware of the knowledge of family welfare scheme. In addition to the amenity of Maternity and Child Welfare Centre, one Maternity Home (MH) is established in the Panchayat of Hajo No.2. Maternity Home provides the facility for maternity and health care. Maternity Home is the new step in the field of medical facility in the rural areas like the Hajo Block. Keeping in view of birth control and health care and family planning scheme, family planning centers have been attached with the Primary Health Centres.

The above facets reveal that although the region has attained a significant development towards the medical amenities, yet it is not adequate in comparison to the other developed areas of the country.

**DRINKING WATER**

The problem of drinking water was very serious in most of the villages of the Hajo Block prior to 1971. Most of the settlements were lacking in drinking water facility. What is true is that more than 70 per cent of the households had their common source of drinking water like community pond, river or spring and common
well provided by the government through 'Local Board'. Due to the impact of on-going socio-economic development presently, more than 80 per cent of the households have privately owned wells or tube wells, which are available in 9.6 per cent of the villages in 1991. There are a few small settlements, which still do not have modern amenities of drinking water. Spring or river water is used there for drinking purpose. Most of the villages in char areas are lacking in drinking water facility. Neither they have tap water nor well or tube well water. River water is the prime source of drinking water.

It is encouraging to note that the earlier unhygienic sources of drinking water have been replaced by the modern sources of hygienic drinking water in the post 1971 period. The study also reveals that prior to 1971, more than 70 per cent of the households had natural or commonly owned unhygienic sources of drinking water. This resulted in the frequent occurrence of epidemic like cholera and typhoid. But by the emergence of privately owned hygienic sources of drinking water like tube well, well and tap water provided by the government, the occurrence of epidemic has been eradicated in the post 1971 period.

So far as the drinking water is concerned, most of the villages have been served by more than one type of drinking water facilities. Large number of villages (53.6 per cent) have been provided with the amenity of well water and tube well water. Again the amenity of tube well water alone is available in 13.6 per cent and well water alone in 7.2 per cent of the villages. Tap water facility along with tube well water or well water is available in 5.6 per cent of the villages. Whereas the facility of tap water with well water and tube well water is found in 4.00 per cent of the villages.
TABLE 6.3
DISTRIBUTION OF VILLAGES HAVING DRINKING WATER FACILITIES IN HAJO BLOCK, 1991

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sl. No.</th>
<th>Gaon Panchayat</th>
<th>W-TW</th>
<th>TW</th>
<th>W</th>
<th>T-W</th>
<th>T-TW</th>
<th>TK-W</th>
<th>TK-TW</th>
<th>T-W-TW</th>
<th>TK-S-R</th>
<th>R-TW-W</th>
<th>Inhabited Villages</th>
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<td>(42.86)</td>
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<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>(6.25)</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
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<td>(4.0)</td>
<td>(1.6)</td>
<td>(5.6)</td>
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</tbody>
</table>


Note: W = Well
TW = Tube well
T = Tap
TK = Tank
S = Spring
R = River
The amenities of tank water with well water and tube well water are available in 8.80 per cent of the villages. No village is found which uses only tap water for drinking purpose. Modern means of drinking water is totally absent only in 1.6 per cent of the villages, which have used river water, tank water or spring water for drinking purpose. However, river water with tube well water and well water is found in 5.6 per cent of the villages.

6.2 TRANSPORT AND COMMUNICATION

TRANSPORT

The provision of efficient transport system in an area is a good indicator of development. Transport is a basic pre-requisite for economic development and socio-economic change of a region. It is a means for the movement of goods, people and services and also the messages from one part to another. Lavarishichev (1969) remarks that, “it effects multifarious connections between production and consumption, between industry and agriculture, between the extractive and manufacturing industries and ensures production connections between economic areas and various branches of the national economy”.

It is an important element of infrastructure for the development of a region. A well developed ‘Transport and Communication System’ contributes to a great extent towards serving the social needs and providing necessary infrastructure for rapid socio-economic development of a region. But the Hajo Block hardly enjoys a creditable position in this respect. The region has been still suffering from inadequate transport and communication facilities which continues to act as an impediment to the economic development of the region. The important causes of such a condition are as
### TABLE 6.4

**DISTRIBUTION OF VILLAGES HAVING TRANSPORT AMENITIES IN HAJO BLOCK, 1991**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Amenity</th>
<th>Particular</th>
<th>Hajo No. 1</th>
<th>Hajo No. 2</th>
<th>Ramdia No.1</th>
<th>Ramdia No.2</th>
<th>Pachim Bongshar</th>
<th>Pub Bongshar 1</th>
<th>Pub Bongshar 2</th>
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</tr>
</thead>
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<td>16</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
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<td>(20.52)</td>
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<td>(64.29)</td>
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<td>41.5</td>
<td>22.85</td>
<td>17.00</td>
<td>206.65</td>
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</table>

*Source: Statistical Branch, P.W.D. Office, Hajo Block, 1991*
follows:

(1) The region as a whole, frequently experiences devastating floods which often breach and damage not only the earthen roads but even metalled or surfaced roads too. These again necessitate repair and renovation of roads requiring time and expenditure.

(2) The region has many turbulent rivers and tributaries which flow with fury during the rainy season. As a result, most of the roads suffer from surface and gully erosion.

(3) Besides these natural causes, the lack of all-weather surfaced road cause dislocation of transport system particularly during rainy season.

(4) Innumerable weak wooden bridges and narrow culverts also create inconvenience to the smooth transportation of goods and people as these are more vulnerable to the flood havoc.

(5) Lastly, timely repair of damaged roads and bridges by the concerned authorities becomes a far cry to the people of the affected areas. It takes long time to resume smooth functioning of transport system.

The only State road Amingaon – Hajo – Nalbari road runs from Amingaon in the northeast to Nalbari in the southwest through the panchayats of Pub Bongshar No.2, Hajo No. 2 and Hajo No. 1 and Ramdia No. 2. This road was constructed in the year 1873 to facilitate the transport network between the two big urban centers – Guwahati and Nalbari. The Local Board constructed other main roads of the blocks after 1880. Guwahati – Sualkuchi road was initially constructed by the E & D as the embankment in 1955. Later on, it has been converted to PWD road and becomes the important road for the southern Hajo Development Block. In the subsequent period,
some important PWD roads have been constructed connecting Chessa – Rangia, Hajo – Bongshar, Hajo – Ramdia, Ramdia – Bamundi, Sualkuchi – Bamundi, Bongshar – Dampur, Hajo – Mukalmua and Chessa – Sangsari.

**ROAD NETWORK IN THE HAJO BLOCK**

Development of transport network has been found to be insignificant till 1971. There were only 15 km (4.07 per cent) surfaced roads and 120 km (32.56 per cent) graveled roads under PWD, while earthen roads accounted for 233.53 km (63.37 per cent). Evidently, the total road length of the block was only 368.53 km in 1971. The significant road development took place during the post 1971 period as a result of which total road length has been raised to 653.49 km by 1991.

The road transport is the sole means of transport in the Hajo Block as the region is served neither by the railway nor by the waterway. The total road length of the block was 653.49 km of which 48.00 km (7.35 per cent) were surfaced roads, 206.65 km (31.62 per cent) were graveled roads and remaining 398.84 km (61.03 per cent) were earthen roads. The average road length per 100 square kilometer of geographical area is 181 kilometers against the state’s average road length per square kilometer of 44.79 kilometers. Again the average road length per lakh of population is 409.34 km against the state’s average road length per lakh of population of 137.00 km and that of the national average road length per lakh of population of 222 kilometers. So, the position of the Hajo Block is better than Assam and India.

The services rendered by the public sector and private sector extends to every nook and corner of the region. These services facilitate easy movement of rural people for better occupational pursuits than the primary activities. This is one of the
reasons why many rural people have been leaving their traditional primary occupations.

**BUS STOP**

Bus stop is another important social amenities for the rural settlement. There are as many as 58 recognized bus stops which bear the responsibilities of providing an efficient means of transportation for goods and people. Most of the road-side settlements where density of population is higher, have one or more bus stops. It includes terminal points and intermediate stops at the village level. A good number of bus stops have been observed in the sites and places where several village roads, foot paths, metalled or unmetalled roads converge. Each foot path, village road and gravelled road connects some hamlets or small settlements or the villages with one another or connects the village road with the nearest district roads or state high way. Later on, star-like settlements develop in such cross-road sites; where houses spread out along the sides of the roads in all directions. The sites of convergence of roads have resulted in a bus terminus or an intermediate bus stop. Each bus stop, on the average, renders services to two adjacent villages. Spatial distribution of road networks provided by PWD and C.D Block (under MNP) encompasses more than 90 per cent of the inhabited villages.

The foregoing facts reveal that road length per 100 sq.km of geographical area and per lakh of population in the block is remarkably higher than that of the state’s and country’s average road length. Such a high density of roads facilitates large-scale occupational mobility to a great extent, throughout the block. It is comparatively higher in the panchayats of Pub Bongshar No. 1, Pub Bongshar No. 2, Hajo No. 2 and Pachim Bongshar where transport intensity is higher.
TRANSPORTATION ASSETS

Modernization of transport network and large-scale occupational mobility resulted in notable changes in the transport system in general and transportation assets in particular. Bicycles, boats, bullock carts and a few scooters have constituted the major household means of transportation assets in the Hajo Block prior to 1971. But due to the rapid development of all types of roads, the movement of goods, people and services has been increased remarkably. As a result, cars, scooters, motor bikes, rickshaws and hand carts become essential household means of transportation assets in addition to public and private bus services.

Motor cars were limited in number and possessed by the well-to-do families. Yet it served as an important means of transportation. There are as many as 16 cars in 1991 against only 7 cars in 1971 in the Hajo Block. Of these 30 per cent were in Pub Bongshar No. 2, 25 per cent was in Pachim Bongshar, 15 per cent each in Pub Bongshar No. 1 and Hajo No. 2 while each of Ramdia No. 1, Hajo No.1 and Ramdia No. 2 possessed 5 per cent.

The above facts reveal that the panchayats with better road facility witness high percentage of cars than the inaccessible areas.

Motorbike or scooter also provides some important means of transportation, although found to be in limited number. At the time of field survey (1991) only 42 scooters had been found. Unlike cars, Scooters were possessed by the owners of far-off villages.

COMMUNICATION SYSTEM

The communication system of the block has not yet found to be well developed. Still it is lagging far behind the other developed regions of Assam in
respect of communication system consisting of (i) post office, (ii) telegraph office, (iii) post and telegraph office (iv) telephone exchange, (v) radio and television and (vi) newspapers.

There are different types of post offices; such as sub-head post office, post office, sub post office and branch post office. Sub-post office and branch post office serve interior areas with small settlement while post office and sub head post offices are available in the big settlements with well-developed transport system. The region has been served by 22 post offices, 8 daily newspapers and 7 weeklies. The number of post offices per lakh of population is 19 against 18 post offices per one lakh of population in the country as a whole. The number of post offices in the region is relatively higher than some of the areas of the state in terms of population served by each post office. There are only two telephone exchanges located in two urban centers of Hajo and Sualkuchi. It has been observed that post and telegraph amenity is not adequate in the far-off villages of the block. However, radio and newspapers occupy a unique position so far the communication system is concerned. More than 70 per cent of the households have radio or transistor, which is equally found in all the villages of the block. More than 45 per cent households have television with the highest in Pub Bongshar No. 2 (61 per cent), followed by Pub Bongshar No.1 (54 per cent), Hajo No. 2 (51 per cent) Pachim Bongshar (50 per cent). It is less than 50 per cent in the remaining Panchayats. More than 50 per cent of the villages in Pub Bongshar No. 2, Pub Bongshar No. 1, Hajo No. 2 and Pachim Bongshar have been served by the daily newspaper which is mostly absent in the interior villages of the remaining panchayats. It is evident that the panchayats having higher occupational mobility enjoy more social amenities than those with less mobility.
ELECTRICITY

Nowadays, the level of economic development is measured by the amount of electricity consumed. Higher the per capita consumption of electricity, better is the level of development and standard of living. The consumption of electric power is an indicator of general economic development of an area and an important component of modern infrastructure (Sheshadri, K.V., 1975).

Out of the total inhabited villages, 81 (64.8 per cent) villages in the region are electrified. Highest percentage of villages (81.25 per cent) with this facility is found in the Hajo No.2 Panchayat followed by the Pub Bongshar No. 2 (72.00 per cent) and Pub Bongshar No. 1 (66.67 per cent). The facility of power supply is least in Ramdia No. 2 (41.67 per cent) and Hajo No. 1 (42.86 per cent) which are predominantly inhabited by the immigrant and scheduled caste population respectively. The percentage of villages electrified in Pachim Bongshar and Ramdia No. 1, 74.19 and 53.3 respectively.

The above discussion shows that social amenities are distributed unevenly in the villages of the region. But it bears significant correlation with the occupational structure and occupational mobility of the working population. Higher percentages of secondary and tertiary workers in the Pub Bongshar No. 1 (75.8 per cent), Pub Bongshar No. 2 (45.23 per cent), Pachim Bongshar (42.19 per cent) and Hajo No. 2 (40.29 per cent) Panchayats have created better social amenities and consume higher amount of electricity too.

HOUSES

Good houses are the principal indicators of standard of living of the people. "To achieve rural development and reconstruction, housing should find one important
place as a house is not only a place for protection from vagaries of weather but also is an institution itself (Singh, A.K., 1985). The houses of the block underwent tremendous change in type, construction, design and building materials. Field observation reveals that the block witnesses five distinct types of houses with an average of 3.5 houses per household. The common house type includes (i) 'Bamboo with thatched roof' houses, (ii) 'Bamboo with tin roof houses, (iii) 'Wooden with thatched roof' houses, (iv) "Wooden with tin roof and brick wall or half brick wall, supported by kucha plinth or pucca plinth and (v) RCC buildings. Empirical observation also reveals glaring disparity among the settlements in the spatial distribution of house type. Big households of Hajo No. 1, Hajo No. 2 and the Pachim Bongshar Panchayat have on the average of 5.5 houses per household, while each household in the Ramdia No. 2 and Ramdia No. 1 Panchayat have on the average of 3.5 houses per household. Both the Pub Bongshar No.1 ad Pub Bongshar No.2 Panchayat have on the average 4 houses per household.

'Bamboo house with thatched roof' is typical in char lands of Ramdia No. 2 and Ramdia No. 1 although it has more or less been found all over the block among the most distressed section of the people. "Bamboo with thatched roof" houses accounted for 35.41 per cent. "Bamboo with tin roof" houses are very common throughout the block and accounted for 28.56 per cent. Prevalence of this type of house is observed elsewhere in the block, highest number being in the Pub Bongshar No. 1, Pub Bongshar No. 2 and Pachim Bongshar Panchayats where handloom factories are also found in large-scale. "Wooden house with tin roof" accounts for only 12.53 per cent. The tin roofed houses have replaced this type of houses. "Wooden houses with tin roof" and brick wall or half brick wall, generally known as 'Assam Type' is the
leading house type in the rural areas of the region which accounts for 23.35 per cent. RCC building is rarely found which becomes the first choice of the well-to-do families. This type represents only 0.15 per cent and is observed in the Pub Bongshar No. 2 and Pub Bonghsr No. 1 Panchayat. Discussion on modernization of amenities and socio-economic development leads to the fact that occupationally dynamic panchayats viz. Pub-Bongshar No.1, Pub Bongshar No.2, Hajo No.2 and Pachim Bongshar were provided with more basic amenities.

**PER CAPITA INCOME**

"Per capita income is an alternative analysis of income in connection with the size of population, which provides a rough idea about the average income and standard of living of the people of the country" (Dhar, 1999). The per capita income of the block was found to be Rs. 5,179.16 during 1990-91 as against Rs. 959.72 in 1970-71. On the other hand, the state's per capita income (at current price) in the corresponding periods were Rs. 4281.0 and Rs. 538.6 respectively. The above figure shows an overall increase of per capita income by 440 per cent at the average annual growth rate of 22 per cent as against the per capita annual growth rate of Rs. 1.8 per cent in the state as a whole. It also reveals the fact that per capita income in the Hajo Block is significantly higher than the per capita income of Assam. In 1990-91, the positive gap between the per capita income of the Hajo Block with the state was found to be Rs. 898.16 while there had been a negative gap of Rs. 678.2 between the per capita income of Assam and India in the same year.

It exhibits a most striking characteristics regarding the economy of the region, which resulted from the rapid growth rate of per capita income. Per capita income was highest in Pub Bongshar No.2 (Rs. 6809.42) followed by Pub Bongshar No. 1 (Rs. 
The per capita income is also higher in Pachim Bongshar (Rs. 5325.84) and Hajo No. 2 (Rs. 5265.49) while it was lowest in Ramdia No. 2 (Rs. 3681.45) and Hajo No. 1 (Rs. 4396.95). A higher percentage of tertiary workers in Pub Bongshar No. 2 (36.48 per cent) and Hajo No. 2 (31.15 per cent) and higher percentage of secondary worker in Pub Bongsha No. 1 (58.92 per cent), Pachim Bongshar (18.52 per cent) and Ramdia No. 1 (14.15 per cent) increased the per capita income in these panchayats. On the contrary, prevalence of primary workers in Ramdia No. 2 (83.77 per cent) and Hajo No. 1 (74.28 per cent) witness lower per capita income during 1990-91.

Although, in general, per capita income was a good indicator of standard of living but in the study area per household income reflects a more transparent picture of standard of living of the people. This is due to the fact that the income of each individual earning member deposits their income to the head of the family. All expenditures are made out of this fund thereafter. So it represents a household oriented economic system as well as a typical social phenomenon of the study region. But there is a glaring disparity in the monthly income of each household.

Among the panchayats, Pub Bongshar No. 2 (Rs. 3720.59) recorded highest monthly income per household followed by Hajo No. 2 (Rs. 3156.92) while per household monthly income was lowest in Ramdia No. 2 (Rs. 2163.89) and Hajo No. 1 (Rs. 2393.61). The average monthly income per household was comparatively higher in Pachim Bonghsar (Rs. 2926.09),, Pub Bongshar No. 1 (Rs. 2805.12) and Ramdia No. 1 (Rs. 2692.89).

The above facts reveal that prevalence of medium and big families in the Pub Bongshar No. 2 and Hajo No.2 Panchayats have flourished higher family income
while dominance of nuclear and small families in Ramdia No. 2 and Hajo No. 1 witness minimal family income.

Big and medium families comprise multi occupational avenues. Different members earn their livelihood from different sectors of economy in which some service holders, in addition to their monthly salary, do agriculture as an additional source of income. Apparently, these families have higher monthly income than the small and nuclear families where family earning comes only from one sort of economic activity.

The economic scenario in Pub Bongshar No. 1 and Pachim Bongshar is completely different from that of the other panchayats of the block. Household earning in these two panchayats basically comes from the secondary economic activities pertaining to weaving and silk industry where each and every adult member of the family takes part in processing and production activities of the factories. This high work participation rate facilitates the household to earn more money as it provides them an assured monthly income. It is also observed that a good number of rural people have left agriculture and joined the secondary occupation pertaining to silk industry. They only take the help of hired labour at the time of cropping and harvesting. So the yield thereon becomes an additional income in addition to their monthly earning of cash money. Another striking feature is that both the factory workers as well as service holders have not sacrificed their shares of parental plots of land. In practice, they become the absentee landowners who do not have much interest in any agricultural operation. Simply they have been doing this for an additional source of income. Most of the households of Pub Bongshar No. 2, Hajo No. 2, Pub
Bongshar No.1, Pachim Bongshar and Ramdia No. 1 belong to this category of higher income.

Under such circumstances most of the traditional socio-economic assets and implements have gone considerable changes.

AGRICULTURAL IMPLEMENTS

The primitive methods and implements are still in vogue among the peasants of the Hajo Block. Till 1970, more than 85 per cent of the households used wooden plough with pairs of bullock on the average of 1.5 ploughs per cultivating families. The prevailing agricultural system in the block is a small-scale peasant farming which is more problem ridden and enigmatic (Das, 1984). So there has been a decreasing trend in the peasantry as well as in the use of wooden ploughs and harrows, which were the basic tools of peasant agriculture since long past. Although these traditional type of agricultural implements has been still predominant in the Hajo Block, there has been a marked decrease of its use along with the number of agricultural population. As a result, the percentage of household decreased to 55 in 1991, who tilled their land by wooden ploughs with the help of pairs of bullocks. Iron ploughs were used by 5 per cent of the households while 0.81 per cent of the households used tractors. The decline of wooden plough was not caused neither by the use of modern agricultural implements nor by the upgradation of the levels of technology, but more so, due to the decrease of the farming community. The small-scale agriculture with small size of landholding that too fragmented into several scattered plots creates such a situation that it is not economically feasible to adopt modern agricultural practice. Such characteristics along with other adverse socio-economic factors limit the size of
agricultural output resulting in a disability of the sector to keep pace with the increasing demand for crops (Bhagabati, 1990).

The above observation also reveals that out of bare necessity, more and more people left agriculture which resulted in the decrease of traditional farm implements.