

**HUMAN DEVELOPMENT IN ASSAM: A STUDY IN THE TRIBAL
INHABITED DISTRICT OF KOKRAJHAR**

THESIS

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CHAPTER-7

FINDINGS, CONCLUSIONS AND POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

7.1 Introduction

The chapter summarizes the preceding chapters. Major findings of the present study are presented in the section 7.2; and this section also presents implications on the hypothesis of present study. Section 7.3 presents policy imperatives and recommendations for the expansion of human capabilities in the study area; and improvement of data base and methodology of measuring human development. In section 7.4, limitations of the present study are presented in precise way. Section 7.5 indicates the future scope of the research in the present theme and study area. The last section 7.6 presents concluding notes on present research work.

The preceding chapters analyzed various aspects of human development and capabilities in Assam with special reference to the tribal inhabited district of Kokrajhar. Chapter-1 presents introduction to the study, statement of the problem, objectives, hypotheses, methodology and organization of the thesis on present study. Chapter-2 deals with related review of literature on theoretical, empirical and methodological aspect of human development. An empirical study on disparity aspect of human development at global, SAARC, South East Asia and Indian context is presented in Chapter-3. The Chapter-4 analyzed human development scenario in the state of Assam in a perspective way; inter district variations with special reference to the tribal inhabited district of Kokrajhar was presented precisely. Variations in human development dimensions in the historical divisions of the state of Assam are also presented in Chapter-4. In this context, Human Development Index (HDI), Gender Development Index (GDI), Gender Inequity Index (GII) and other related aspects of human capabilities are

analyzed. Both Chapter-3 and Chapter-4 study represents *a document review* based on secondary information. Human development and deprivations in the tribal inhabited district of Kokrajhar based on primary survey data is presented in Chapter-5; the *question-answer type interview step* was followed to gather primary data from sample block and villages. Inter block and inter village variations of human development based on conventional variables is presented in this chapter. Human capability aspect in the present study area from the observation of sample respondents through Focus Group Discussions (FGD) is presented in Chapter-6.

7.2 Summary of Findings

Relevant data shows that India is not only showing poor performance in terms of human development indicators at the global level including SAARC countries, but also representing lower performer than many Asian and South Asian countries such as China and Srilanka. India's position in terms of life expectancy at birth, MYS, EYS and GNI per capita remained well below the OECD and world average. Not only that, India's position was even below the average of developing countries. The average annual HDI growth from 1990-2019 was higher in low human development countries than high and medium human development countries indicating a convergence trend; and the case is same in case of GDI and GEM.

Progress of Human Development Index of India from 1990 to 2019 indicates that in terms of HDI rank, India's position improved from 128th position in 2005 to 119th in 2010; and then deteriorated to 131st in the year 2019. Though India has done well in human development indicators over the past six and half decades, necessary policy initiative is required to join the rank of 0.800 HDI value. There has been a wide inter-state variation in the performance of HDI. The estimated value of HDI varies from 0.237 to 0.500 in 1981; 0.308 to 0.591 in 1991; 0.367 to 0.638 in 2001 and 0.467 to 0.790 in 2011. While considering percentage changes from 2001 to 2011, Orissa, Madhya Pradesh, Uttar Pradesh experienced negative changes. However, this negative percentage for the states may be attributed to the introduction of new components or indicators while measuring HDI values since 2010.

It has been observed that except Assam and Arunachal Pradesh, the North Eastern States were perceived to be doing fairly well in human development as compared to states in other regions of the country. As per HDRNER 2011, Assam had the HDI value of 0.364, lowest in the region against the Mizoram and Nagaland with 0.584 and 0.570 HDI values respectively. The data for human development aspect in NER shows that the state of Assam experienced highest percentage changes from 1993-94 to 2004-05 with 52.30 percent followed by Arunachal Pradesh with 48.78 percent. It is also being observed that the better off states percentage changes were well below than Assam and Arunachal Pradesh indicating the fact that poor performing states can have better improvement, if proper policy is adopted.

The state of Assam is lagging behind other states in terms of Human Development aspects. The National Human Development Report (NHDR 2001) of India indicated that out of 15 major states considered by the report, Assam ranked 14th with HDI value of 0.386; which is much below the national average of 0.472. Even the state rank gawn down from 10th in 1991 to 14th in 2001 as published by NHDR, 2001 of India; and the position of Assam was just after Bihar from the bottom. HDI value of the state increased to (0.444) in 2007-2008 as per NHDR, 2011 which is lower than the all-India average of (0.467). The state ranking even went down to 16th in 2007-2008 as published by the NHDR, 2011.

The tribal inhabited district of Kokrajhar and the state of Assam as a whole lagging far behind the other developed districts and states in terms of human development. HDI value of 0.407 which was estimated by the Assam HDR, 2003 for the state of Assam as a whole indicates that given the desired normative goal, the state could reach even below the half way mark. The position of tribal inhabited district of Kokrajhar among the 23 districts stood at 14th place with HDI value of 0.354. It is noteworthy to mention that the state of Assam could not attain the level of even medium human development values till 2003. The average HDI of the state of Assam is estimated at 0.407 as published by Assam HDR 2014. This indicates that the level of overall progress in human development in Assam was just a little beyond the halfway mark.

Data relating to human development indicators indicates that the upper Assam districts are in a better position in comparison to lower Assam districts; only the Barpeta district could maintain 9th position with HDI value 0.369. The tribal inhabited district of Kokrajhar ranked 20th with HDI value of (0.519). In terms of percentage improvement from Assam, HDR 2003 to Assam, HDR 2014; HDI percentage of tribal inhabited district of Kokrajhar increased only marginally (by 46.61 percent). The data reveals that the highest percentage improvement attained by the district Dhubri (125.23 percent); and lowest percentage was attained by the district Golaghat (60 percent). However, the gap between the highest and lowest HDI value decreased from (0.436) to (0.266) indicating more equal trend among the districts from Assam, HDR 2003 and 2014.

An Analysis based on the Assam HDR 2014, by considering historical division of Assam at district level indicates that the attainment of human development largely vary across the regions of Assam. Highest variation is found in the case of health dimension; highest value (0.798) attained by Kamrup (R) and the lowest value (0.319) attained by Cachar represents a large gap of (0.479); and the gap between the highest and lowest dimensional index of income and education is represented by (0.424) and (0.217) respectively. HDI also vary largely across the districts in the region; the gap between the highest and lowest HDI is 0.266; CV of health index, education index, income index and HDI being 13.61, 4.24, 4.95 and 6.68 percent respectively.

From the analysis of division wise attainment of dimensional index in the historical divisions of Assam, it has been observed that the average dimensional index of health, education and income in the state of Assam is represented by (0.523), (0.661), (0.501) respectively. Average HDI value is being represented by (0.557). While considering health index, Lower Assam region (0.610), North Assam region (0.566) and Upper Assam Region (0.525) were higher than state average; and that of Hills and Barak Valley Region (0.439) represent lower than state average. Dimensional index of education shows that three regions, Lower Assam Region (0.657), North Assam Region (0.642) and Hills and Barak Valley Region (0.636) represents lower than state average of (0.661); and Upper Assam Region (0.698)

represented higher than state average. Dimensional index of income shows that three divisions, Hills and Barak Valley Region (0.452), North Assam Region (0.481) and Lower Assam Region (0.487) represents lower than state average of (0.501); and Upper Assam Region (0.510) represent higher than state average. While two regions, Hills and Barak Valley Region (0.495) and North Assam Region (0.556) represent lower than state average HDI of (0.557); and Upper Assam region (0.570) and Lower Assam Region (0.574) represented higher than state average.

Co-efficient of variation analysis at the level of divisions of the state indicates that HDI and dimensional index of health, education and income vary largely across the districts in the regions of Assam. Highest differences among the regions can be observed in the case of health dimension; the gap between the highest co-efficient of variation (43.04 percent) attained by Hills and Barak valley Region and lowest co-efficient of variation (11.94 percent) attained by Upper Assam Region is represented by (31.1 percent). Likewise, the gap between the highest and lowest co-efficient of variation of dimensional index of income and education is represented by (11.57 percent) and (5.56 percent) respectively. HDI data also shows a large variation across the districts in the region; representing a gap of (12.12 percent) between the highest .and lowest co-efficient.

Analysis of gender development based on Assam, HDR 2014 reveals that the GDI improved considerably from the value of 0.537 (Assam, HDR 2003) to 0.875 (Assam, HDR, 2014). Out of 27 districts, 9 districts attained higher than state average GDI (0.875); and eighteen (18) districts attained lower than state average GDI. GDI (0.977) attained by Kamrup (M) is much higher than the lowest GDI (0.683) attained by the district Karimganj; showing a gap of (0.294). GDI largely vary across the districts in the state. However the gap between the highest and lowest value decreased from 0.865 (Assam, HDR 2003) to 0.294 (Assam, HDR 2014) indicating more equal trend among the districts. It is noteworthy that the tribal inhabited district of Kokrajhar achieved much lower GDI than the state average; the district placed 20th position in the state. Out of nine districts that have GDI values above the state average (0.875), only five districts have comparatively high HDI ranks, above (0.600). The present

study indicates that there is no clear correlation between HDI and GDI; correlation between GDI and HDI is not apparent.

Gender Inequity Index analysis based on Assam, HDR 2014 reveals that out of 27 districts, 10 districts attained lower than state average GII (0.375); and 17 districts have GII higher than state average GII. Lowest GII giving the lowest inequality between male and female attained by the district Dibrugarh (0.271) is much lower than the highest GII attained by the district Dhubri (0.566) giving highest inequality between males and females; representing a large gap of (0.295). It is noteworthy that the tribal inhabited district of Kokrajhar was poorer than other districts in the state; and the district maintained 21st rank in the state as per Assam, HDR 2014.

From the above analysis of dimensional indices, HDI, GDI and GII based on Assam HDR 2003 and 2014, it can be observed that in terms of human development indicators, the performance of the tribal inhabited district of Kokrajhar is much lower than other districts and the state average of Assam. As per Assam, HDR 2003, Kokrajhar district ranked at 14th out of 23 districts. HDI value of the district Kokrajhar and state average was represented by (0.354) and (0.407) respectively. Assam, HDR 2014 reveals that, except health index, performance of the district was much lower than other districts and the state average of Assam. Education index of the Kokrajhar and state average was estimated at (0.645) and (0.661) respectively; and income index of the Kokrajhar ((0.402) was much lower than the state average of (0.501). HDI value of the district (0.519) was also lower than the state average of (0.557); and the district placed at 20th out of 27 districts. The estimated value of GDI and GII for the Kokrajhar as published by Assam HDR 2014 were also lower than the state average of Assam. Survey data of the present study also reveals that the figure of all the three dimensional indices and HDI is much lower than the state average of Assam as published by the Assam, HDR 2014. The present study estimated health index, education index, income index and HDI of the district at (0.504), (0.636), (0.392) and (0.499) respectively. This establishes the hypothesis No. 2 that the tribal inhabited district of Kokrajhar is lagging behind the other districts of the state in terms of human development aspects.

All the indices – HDI, GDI and GII vary largely across the districts in the state. For all the districts GDI is greater than the HDI. The co-efficient of variation of HDI, GDI and GII are represented by (12.5 percent), (8.6 percent) and (16.5 percent) respectively. Comparative gap between the highest and lowest dimensions of GII, GDI and HDI is represented by (0.295), (0.294) and (0.266) respectively. State average GII, GDI and HDI value are (0.375), (0.875) and (0.557) respectively.

Primary survey data reveals that the achievement of the sample villages in terms of human development indicators is very low. At the village level, Habrubil in Gossaigaon Block and Pokalagi in Hatidura Block ranked 1st and last 15th with HDI values (0.641) and (0.439) respectively. At the Block level, Gossaigaon, Kokrajhar, Hatidura, Dotma and Kachugaon Block ranked 1st, 2nd, 3rd, 4th and 5th respectively.

Village level analysis of human development aspects in the district indicates large variations across the sample villages; the CV of income index, education index, health index and HDI being (19.06), (12.52), (5.29) and (11.15) percent respectively. Highest variation between the highest and lowest dimensional value is found in the case of education dimension; highest value (0.792) attained by Habrubil in Gossaigaon Block and lowest value (0.508) attained by Kumtola in Kachugaon Blok is given by (0.284); and while considering like way analysis, gap between the highest and lowest dimensional value of income index, health index and HDI are represented by (0.275), (0.103) and (0.202) respectively. At the village level, among the 15 sample villages, Habrubil in Gossaigaon Block maintained 1st rank in the dimensional index of income, health and HDI; the reason being that the villagers managed to avail most of the opportunities of Government Programmes.

From the analysis of human development aspects in the sample Blocks of the present study area, it has been observed that the average dimensional index of health, education and income in the district are represented by (0.504), (0.636), (0.392) respectively. Average HDI value is being estimated at (0.499). While considering health index, Gossaigaon (0.522), Dotma (0.509) and Kokrajhar (0.507) are higher than district average; and that of Kachugaon (0.501) and Hatidura (0.481) represent below the average. Dimensional index of education shows that three Blocks,

Kokrajhar (0.660), Gossaigaon (0.655) and Dotma (0.642) represent higher than district average of (0.636); and Hatidura (0.626) and Kachugaon (0.597) represent below district average. In the case of income dimension, two Blocks, Gossaigaon (0.447) and Kokrajhar (0.396) represents higher than district average of (0.392); and Hatidura (0.389), Kachugaon (0.373) and Dotma (0.359) represent below average. While considering HDI, two Blocks, Gossaigaon (0.532) and Kokrajhar (0.508) represent higher than district average HDI of (0.499); and Hatidura (0.488), Dotma (0.487) and Kachugaon (0.480) represents below average.

Block wise analysis of co-efficient of variation shows that HDI and dimensional index of income, education and health index largely vary across the sample Blocks. Highest differences among the Blocks can be observed in the case of income dimension; the gap between the highest co-efficient of variation (28.00) of Gossaigaon Block and lowest co-efficient of variation (8.30) by Kachugaon Block is represented by (19.7) percent. Likewise analysis reveals that the gap between the highest and lowest CV of dimensional index education and health are represented (9.87) and (5.70) percent respectively. HDI data also shows a large variation across the sample Blocks in the district; the gap is given by (11.63) percent. The above analysis of village level and Block level variations establishes the hypothesis No.2 of the present study that there is a wide disparity in terms of human development indicators in the tribal inhabited district of Kokrajhar.

Co-efficient of variation of HDI and dimensional index vary largely across the Blocks in the district indicating disparity among the sample Blocks in terms of human development aspects. Highest differences among the sample Blocks can be observed in the case of income dimension; the co-efficient of variation being (8.54) percent. Highest average dimensional index of income (0.447) attained by the Gossaigaon Block is much higher than the lowest average dimensional index of income (0.359) attained by the Dotma Block; showing a large gap of (0.88). Survey data also reveals a large gap between the highest and lowest average dimensional index of education and health; representing a gap of (0.063) and (0.041) respectively; the CV of the dimensional index of education and health being (4.00) and (2.97) percent

respectively. HDI data also reveals large gap across the sample Blocks in the district, the CV is being (4.25) percent; the gap between the highest and lowest HDI is (0.052) percent. From the above analysis it can be observed that in terms of dimensional index of human development, the performance of the Gossaigaon Block represent as best doing Block and the Kachugaon Block represent as worst performer among the Blocks in the district. This aspect establishes the hypothesis No.2 of the present study that there is a wide disparity in terms of human development indicators in the tribal inhabited district of Kokrajhar.

HDI and dimensional index of health, education and income of the Kokrajhar district on average as represented by survey data is below the figure as published by AHDR, 2014. Dimensional health index of present study and Assam, HDR 2014 are represented by (0.504) and (0.539) respectively; showing a gap of (0.035). The dimensional index of education is represented by (0.636) and (0.645) respectively; showing a gap of (0.009); the dimensional index of income are represented by (0.392) and (0.402) respectively; showing a gap of (0.010). HDI value (0.499) based on primary survey and (0.519) of Assam HDR, 2014 shows a gap of (0.020). Both the figure, average HDI based on primary survey and Assam HDR, 2014 for tribal inhabited district of Kokrajhar is well below the state average of (0.557) as published by Assam, HDR 2014.

Sex ratio of a region which involves economic development, human development and gender equity aspects in the society shows better position than other districts in the state. Survey data indicates that the average sex ratio of tribal inhabited district of Kokrajhar is 976 which show better sex ratio than 959 as per 2011 census data. It is noteworthy to mention that sex ration of Ghoramara (1025), Dholmara (1053) in Kokrajhar Block; Habrubil (1017) in Gossaigaon Block and Pokalagi (1032) in Hatidura Block have better sex ratio in which number of female is higher than male population. Kartimari in Gossaigaon Block has most unfavorable sex ratio, 859 females per thousand males. Block wise survey data shows that Kokrajhar, Kachugaon, Hatidura, Dotma and Gossaigaon have sex ratio in descending order, represented by (1014), (985), (978), (960) and (943) females per thousand male

population respectively. Survey data reveals vast inter Block differences of sex ratio in the study area.

Primary data indicates that on average age category below 6 years, 7-14 years, 15 -59 years and above 60 years are represented by 10 percent, 14 percent, 63 percent and 12 percent respectively in the tribal inhabited district of Kokrajhar. While considering below 6 years category of population which involves future implications, survey data reveals highest in Kachugaon Block (12 percent) and lowest in Hatidura Block (8 percent). At village level, all sample villages in Hatidura Block - Pokalagi, Mechpara and Srirampur No.1 and Tulshibil from Gossaigaon Block; Ghoramara in Kokrajhar Block have higher females population than males under the category of below 6 years age of population.

Population representing age group of 15-59 years is considered as economically active population in the economy. Primarily, productivity of output and the growth of the economy depend on this section of the population in the society. Primary data shows that on average, 63 percent of the total population represents the age group from 15 to 59 years in the district. Among the five Blocks in the study area, Dotma and Hatidura Blocks have greater male percentage of the economically active population group than female counterpart; male and female percentage being (33 percent) and (31 percent) respectively in Dotma and Hatidura Block. Kokrajhar Block, Kachugaon Block and Gossaigaon Blocks have smaller percentage of male population than female in this category of age distribution.

It has been observed that the tribal inhabited district of Kokrajhar is uniquely diverse in terms of its demography. The demographic pattern; the diversities – spatial, demographic and institutional–have significant implications for determining ‘advantages’ and ‘achievements’ of people in making diverse choices in life. Survey data indicates that six villages, namely Haloadol, Gossainichina, Boragari, Gongia, 1 No. Sekadani, Kumtola are represented by hundred (100) percent ST population. Ghoramara, Singimari and Pokalagi are the three villages in which (100 percent) households are represented by minority community (Muslims).The district on average

constitute ST, SC, OBC, General and Minority community by (51 percent), (4 percent), (19 percent), (2 percent) and (24 percent) respectively.

The literacy rate and level of educational attainment of people are two important indicators of a country's development. Survey data indicates that the average literacy rate of tribal inhabited district of Kokrajhar is represented by 76.0 percent which is much lower than the state average of Assam 85.9 percent as recently announced by the National Statistical Office (NSO). Survey data also reveals inequality between male and female; male and female literacy rate being 79 and 72 percent respectively; showing a gap of 7 percent. At Block level, Hatidura is at the top with 81 percent and Kachugaon at the bottom with only 66 percent literacy rate showing a gap of 15 percent between the highest and lowest. The gap between highest and lowest male literacy is 10 percent; and the gap is even more in case of female literacy by 19 percent which forms a serious concern for the tribal inhabited district of Kokrajhar. At village level, survey data reveals that the literacy rate of village Haloadol (93 percent) and Kumtola (52 percent) represent a vast gap between highest and lowest percentage of literacy being 41 percent; and a gap of 51 percent between highest and lowest female literacy rate which forms a serious concern for policy implications.

Survey data reveals that the percentage of pucca house, semi-pucca house and kutcha house in the district on average are (47 percent), (19 percent) and (34 percent) respectively. It, thus, emerges from survey data that, on the whole, there is a considerable degree of deprivation in terms of housing facilities and the deprivations worryingly substantive in absolute sense. As per survey data, in average, only (66 percent) households are using safe drinking water facilities in the district. At village level, Haloadol in Kokrajhar Block and Srirampur No.1 in Hatidura Block jointly represent highest safe drinking water facility (76 percent); and Kumtola in Kachugaon Block and Kartimari in Gossaigaon Block jointly represent the village with lowest safe drinking water facility (56 percent). On average (87 percent) households are connected with electricity in the tribal inhabited district of Kokrajhar. It is noteworthy that the village Kumtola in Kachugaon Block has no electricity facility since the demolition

and disconnection of electricity by the agitators of Bodoland Movement during 1987-1993 (as informed by the villagers).

This is very much serious concern that there are no single households in Singimari village availing bathroom facility. Dholmara in Kokrajhar Block has got only (4 percent) and Gangia in Kachugaon Block and Ghoramara in Kokrajhar Block have only (8 percent) bathroom facility. Survey data reveals that the Kokrajhar district on average has only 24 percent households availing bathroom facility. Sanitation facility (latrine and toilet) in the study area is too poor; the district in average has got only (65.20 percent). Kumtola in Kachugaon Block represent lowest percentage (4 percent) followed by Gangia in Kachugaon Block (24 percent). Survey data indicates that a large percentage of the population still either defecate in open or use unsanitary bucket latrines or smelly public toilets. This poor facility of safe drinking, sanitation facility may form basic reason for ill-health condition in this tribal inhabited district of Kokrajhar.

Survey data shows that on average (65 percent) households in the district availed BPL card during the survey period. Survey data also reveals that on average (44 percent) household availed APL card in the district.

Primary data reveals that the per-capita monthly income (PCMI) of the sample villages in the district on average is Rs 3822. Highest per-capita monthly income attained by Habrubil in Gossaigaon Block (Rs 7903) is much higher than the lowest per-capita monthly income of Gangia in Kachugaon Block (Rs 1779); a large gap of (Rs 6104), representing unequal distribution of income across the sample villages. The per-capita monthly consumption (PCMC) of the sample villages in the district on average is Rs 2685. Data reveals a large gap of (Rs 4913) between the highest PCMC of Habrubil in Gossaigaon Block (Rs 5965) and lowest PCMC of Gangia in Kachugaon Block (Rs 1052) representing unequal consumption standard and quality of life in the study area. Survey data reveals that high percentage of income devoted to consumption expenditure as the level of income of the sample households remained at low level during the survey year and the sample villages with low level of income comparatively devote less percentage of their income on consumption. The per-capita

monthly consumption expenditure and the surplus income of the sample villages as the percentage of per-capita monthly income in the district on average are (70.25 percent) and (29.75 percent) respectively. Per-capita monthly income, per-capita monthly consumption expenditure and the surplus income of the sample Blocks in the district on average is Rs 3822, Rs 2685 and Rs 1137 respectively.

Survey data relating to Block level analysis reveals large variation across the sample Blocks in terms of per-capita monthly income, per-capita monthly consumption expenditure and surplus income; the co-efficient of variation being (33.73 percent), (38.96 percent) and (22.89 percent) respectively. Data reveals very large inter Block differences in terms of per- capita monthly income; highest value (Rs 5307) of the Gossaigaon Block is much higher than the lowest value attained by Kachugaon Block (Rs 2193); representing a gap of (Rs 3144). Co-efficient of variation of per-capita monthly consumption expenditure is (38.96 percent); highest value (Rs 1343) attained by the Kokrajhar Block and lowest value (Rs 825) attained by Kachugaon Block; indicating a large gap of (Rs 518) across the sample Blocks. Co-efficient of variation of surplus income dimension reveals a gap of (Rs 518) between the highest amount (Rs 1343) attained by the Kokrajhar Block and the lowest amount (Rs 825) attained by the Kachugaon Block.

From the analysis of co-efficient of variation of the sample Blocks in terms of per-capita monthly income, per-capita monthly consumption expenditure and surplus income it is found that highest variation has been observed in the Gossaigaon Block; as the achievement of the village Habrubil is much higher than the other two villages in different dimensions.

The *focus group discussion* reveals that the unity and the peace-loving nature of various communities living in the study area have been perceived as the major resources which may help the authority while formulating plan and policy for development. About 40 per cent of the total participants across the age groups of both sexes consider the unity among different community as the major advantage for achieving developmental goals; and to them, human development was possible only

with unity among different communities. Hard-working nature and skills, brotherly feelings between tribal and non-tribal communities living around emerges as next important resources. Few participants, however, emphasizes on tribal values of the community as a part of developmental issues. Majority of the participants in *focus group discussion* opined that current dominating nature of the people in the area is not congenial for development. They stressed on change of the attitude of the people and the authority for the development of the society in the area with equality.

The next aspect of discussion focused on the major obstacles that came in the way of development as potential barriers in the study area. Here, the participants pointed out different aspects of *ill fare and* social exclusions. About 73 per cent of male respondents blame poor governance responsible for their low human development and social exclusion in various aspects of human capabilities. Opinion of respondents indicates that only some 30 percent people in the study area are availing major proportion of the schemes and facilities, representing existence of inequality and unhealthy growth in the study area. About 63 per cent women feel that immediate solution of various agitations by the groups, organizations; and restoration of peace and unity in the area is necessary for the betterment and development. They also stresses on equal opportunity for gender unbiased development.

Lack of poor educational infrastructure and opportunities in the study area are pointed out by the young respondents of both sexes which have contributed to lower performance of the students than other parts of the state. They also pointed out inadequate health care facilities which form the aspects of ill- health condition of the people in the study area. The aspect of inadequate health care facilities is responsible for high rate of Infant Mortality Rate (IMR) in the study area. Ethnic identity plays a crucial role in the mind of the older respondents, basically *51 and above* category of participants. Frequent occurrence of violence, riot including Bodoland movement, contributed to low level of development in the study area. These aspects are also responsible for low level of human capabilities. A proper initiative need to be taken by the authority for the involvement of common people in decision making process.

7.3 Recommendations and Policy Implications

On the basis of the analysis of human development and disparity in various chapters and findings as presented above, this research work makes the following recommendations, in order to improve human development aspects in the tribal inhabited district of Kokrajhar, in particular and the state of Assam as a whole.

The tribal inhabited district of Kokrajhar and the state of Assam is a unique storehouse of demographic diversities with uniquely rich and diverse social norms and customs, different tribes and communities. The district is also part of interesting institutional diversities in the state of Assam – Bodoland Territorial Council (BTC), and now Bodoland Territorial Region (BTR), an autonomous council for self-governance by different communities. While formulating plan policies for the development, relative advantages and disadvantages; and aspirations of various groups and communities need to be understood and proper policy need to be incorporated in terms of human capabilities.

The tribal inhabited district of Kokrajhar and the state of Assam is characterized by unrest and lack of development has contributed to this aspect. The state has been continuously facing fragile communication facilities, poor developmental infrastructure, poor performance in agriculture and lack of industrial development. Despite the attempts of the central and state governments for balanced regional development, it is observed that the gap between the states of NER including Assam and other states of the country has widened. Significantly, the states in the region unable to receive the benefits of globalised growing economy of the country. The state and the NE region have been facing the problem of mismatch between the required amount of resources for developmental purposes and available resources. Under these critical circumstances, the state and the NE region necessitated extraordinary support and guidance from the Central Government and Planning Commission of India.

The present study, based on survey data, puts the Human Development Index (HDI) in the tribal inhabited district of Kokrajhar at 0.499 which is even lower than state average of Assam 0.557 as published by Assam HDR, 2014. This indicates that

given the desired goal, the performance of the district in terms of HDI represents just about half point. A proper plan and policy with the strategy of differentiated approach need to be incorporated to cope up with other developed districts of the state in terms of human development.

The present study based on secondary data reveals that the human development of some districts in the state of Assam is very poor; including tribal inhabited district of Kokrajhar which represents below state average HDI of (0.557) as published by Assam HDR, 2014. Administration of respective districts and state government should introduce special packages for the improvement of education and health care; and to create opportunities to work by introducing productive economic schemes in these backward districts.

Economic growth and development that achieved by a region needs to be translated for better human development achievements and for the improvement of quality of life of the people; and for achieving this goal an attempt is required to provide gainful employment, quality universal healthcare and quality widespread education. Successful initiative towards these aspects will give better human development results and while making the economic growth process inclusive and broad based. The state needs to ensure human capability not only by resolving the issues of environmental externalities, rather it also requires an effort of addressing the issues of deprivations and myriad forms inequalities which exist in the study area. The present study, therefore, suggests for inclusive institutions and the growth process with people's participation.

There is an urgent need for re-examination of pattern of development in the present study area. It is important to be noted that the state needs to have a policy to prioritize, focuses and target relatively backward areas and the underprivileged group of people. The authority should also aims at decentralized and integrated developmental strategy. Investment pattern need to address the aspect of disparities among the districts and villages in terms of health, income and education; and other social indicators.

There was an improvement of average GDI value of 0.537 (Assam, HDR 2003) to 0.875 (Assam, HDR 2014). Assam, HDR 2014 reveals that the average GII value of the state is (0.375); and the highest GII (0.566) of Dhubri district and the lowest GII (0.271) of Dibrugarh indicate the prevalence of high gender disparity in the state of Assam, including tribal inhabited district of Kokrajhar of GII value (0.424). The present process of national output estimation, neither it is recognized nor given due remuneration for women's labor contribution to the economy. Women in Assam face aggression, violence, insecurity, uncertainty and also growing problem of harassment at the work place. Effective strategy is to be worked out for dynamic, gender sensitive and forward looking gender guiding principles to address the existing inequity, and that seeks to make a positive policy framework for required changes in the area of opportunity between men and women. The gender developmental strategy needs to consider women as active partners. Job reservation (positive discrimination) for women in order to improve the economic status of women; and thereby to empower women sections of the society will reduce gender disparity in the study area.

There exists a myriad form of inequalities in the present study area and the state of Assam as a whole. The extent of inequality in terms of land holding, consumption expenditure, per capita NSDP is considerably large. The per capita NSDP of Kokrajhar has been lower than state average and rest of the country. The aspect of inter-district inequalities which is prevalent in the present study area needs to be addressed by incorporating effective plan and policies and a differentiated approach as an integral part of the developmental planning; prioritization of state authority initiative is important. As the economy of India has been experiencing higher growth path in recent decades, it is imperative that the Kokrajhar district, Assam and its entire people be enabled to improve their standard of living and quality of life.

Despite of declining trend, about one-third of population are denying basic necessities of human life in the present study area representing multi-dimensionally poor aspect and the case is more worsening in the tribal inhabited district of Kokrajhar. The study area has been experiencing a quandary gap between levels of

income and employment in the state and higher levels of income and employment in other states of the country. Given the critical role of public investment, to close this gap, it must continue to play critical role. Under such circumstances, public resources need to be transferred from the Centre to the present study area of the state of Assam in an enhanced form. In the context of present condition in which large proportion of the population lives below the poverty line, adequacy and strategic funding of public investment is even more urgent.

Though the agriculture contributes only about one-third of the State Domestic Product, it provides employment to the large proportion of the total work force in the state, about 69 percent of the population dependent on agriculture for their livelihood. Growth rate of agriculture in the state is not comparable to the other agriculturally developed states and all-India level, and the case is more relevant in case of tribal inhabited district of Kokrajhar. In recent decades, the state of Assam has experienced growth in primary sector only marginally by 2 percent which represents lowest among the three main sectors of the economy. It is matter of great concern that the production of food grains has declined indicating serious implications of food security, particularly for vulnerable and underprivileged groups. Agricultural allied activities in the present study area also yet to get momentum raising income of the state substantially in a sustained form that may raise purchasing power in the study area.

The present state of the agriculture needs to be enhanced and modernized to produce surplus quantity to steer the economy of the state on to a higher and appreciable growth path; and the growth should be equitable sustainably so that the benefits of its expansion are distributed equally. Government role and initiative need to be strengthened further to raise agricultural productivity in the study area and the state of Assam as a whole. The policy, instead of relying on subsistence agriculture, should aims at technologically updated modern and market oriented agriculture marked by improved agricultural practices, multiple cropping and high yields variety. Moreover, the policy should aims at providing effective credit, especially to marginal farmers; and most importantly controlling measures to overcome the problem of uncertainties which arises due to vagaries of nature in the present study area.

Despite its vast deposition of natural resources, the tribal inhabited district Kokrajhar, in particular and the state of Assam as a whole have remained industrially most backward. Geographical isolation and inadequate quality infrastructure, high transportation cost, shortage of capital and lack of well developed markets has prevented the state from industrial diversification and growth of the sector. Effective policy is required to develop some identified sectors such as handloom and textile and food processing industries. It is noteworthy to mention that under such critical circumstances, role of the state is extremely important in the case of private investment including Multi National Corporations (MNCs) from outside state and abroad. Necessary support is to be enhanced for industrial development, particularly in the power, communications and transport sectors.

The study area and the state as a whole is marked by high incidence of unemployment, measured as a percentage of the labor force. The unemployment rate in the state has been increasing at a considerable rate, and it is to be estimated at higher than all-India average. Assam's unemployment rate had risen substantially to 4.6 percent; and the rate has been increasing at alarming rate in recent years. The scenario is even more worsening in the tribal inhabited district of Kokrajhar as the district is very much backward industrially. The study area has been experiencing a quandary gap between levels of income and employment in the state and higher levels of income and employment in other states of the country. Given the critical role of public investment, to close this gap, it must continue to play critical role. Under such circumstances, public resources need to be transferred from the Centre to the present study area of the state of Assam in an enhanced form. Priority is to be given for the creation of job opportunities which may address different types of unemployment in the study area. Training to Rural Youth Self Employment (TRYSEM), Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MNREGA), Indira Awas Yojana (IAY) and other employment schemes need to be stressed for their effective implementations.

Though there has been an impressive growth in educational sector in the present study area and the state of Assam as a whole in recent decades in term of

enrollment in schools, expansion of physical infrastructure, teacher induction; enrollment gap between the boys and girls continued to be prevalent in the study area. Many areas and habitations are still continuing without the govt. schools; and many children remain either out of school enrollment, or they attend the school irregularly; and the case is more relevant in the case of current study area. Inter-district and intra-district variations are also persistent in the present study area. There continue to be provisioning deficiencies in terms of additional school infrastructure including drinking water and toilet facilities. It is a great concern for the state that there is an increasing trend of school dropout rate, while for the country as a whole the school dropout rate has been declining. Programs like Adult Literacy Rate (ALR), Sarva Siksha Abhiyan (SSA) etc. too could not help much.

Considering the issue of the gender gap in education, the Government needs to identify the areas, population groups and sub-district pockets with substantial gender differentials. The initiative is required for the establishment of new schools and building both academic and non-academic infrastructure and to redress the grievances of the educational system with the basic idea of rationalization and reorganization in the study area. Concerted effort is to be enhanced in a fixed time frame to provide quality education and widespread education at the primary level. Proper plan and policy for the management of school by involving local community need to be enhanced by considering appropriate strategy to existing local conditions.

Health represents one of the indicator human capabilities and social well-being has got immediate important implications on quality of life of the people in the society. Productive capacity of the economy too, largely depends upon health status of the people. Although there is an improvement of health care facilities, people from remote and forest areas are still facing the problem of accessibility of proper and sound health care facilities. There are both chronic and acute malnutrition among children in the present study area. Govt. initiative for providing adequate and sound primary health care facilities, bringing awareness on various issues of health along with dissemination of appropriate information for maintaining hygiene, nutrition,

proper and hygiene sanitation, safe drinking and other relevant health issues including maternal and child health care issues. An effective system of vaccination can contribute to the health and longevity of children.

Survey data reveals that considerable degree of deprivations prevails in terms of housing facilities, safe drinking water facilities, bathroom and sanitation facility (latrine and toilet) which may be the basic reason for ill-health condition in this tribal inhabited district of Kokrajhar. Survey data indicates that a large percentage of the population still either defecate in open or use unsanitary bucket latrines or smelly public toilets. Government should initiate the initiatives to improve these basic facilities to overcome the problem of prevailing ill-health condition; and to improve quality of life of the people in the study area.

Peace and stability represents important pre requisite condition of good governance. The tribal inhabited district of Kokrajhar in the state has been confronted with social unrest and political agitations and violent activity of various insurgency groups. Lack of employment opportunities and development, inequity aspect and apparent discrimination have added to the crucial aspect of discord and strife in the present study area. Such situations are rarely, if ever, conducive to development, socially, economically, culturally and politically. Bodoland Territorial Council (BTC) agreement in 2003 and recent Bodoland Territorial Region (BTR) agreement have brought positive solution to some extent. Proper implementation of both BTC and BTR agreement may bring peace and harmony in the society and a path of development in the region including study area. The Government needs to have more initiative promoting surrounding environment for developmental activities; and restoring peace and confidence and reducing violence in the current study area.

7.4 Limitations of the Present Study

The human development perspective is an improvement over other perspectives of development such as the standard of living (income) perspective, physical quality of life perspective and the minimum needs perspective. The present study made an attempt to analyze human development and deprivations in the sample

Blocks of tribal inhabited district of Kokrajhar by employing primary survey; and the state of Assam based on secondary data. However, the present study is not free from limitations. Its main limitations are the following.

- i) The HDI methodology revolves around certain conventional indicators the availability of which is generally considered as additions to human well-being. It completely ignores many factors the presence of which could definitely lower the level of welfare. They generally take the form of distresses like morbidity, crimes, pollution, etc. Non-inclusion of such non-conventional indicators in the measurement of human development will unrealistically inflate the human development performance of the society.
- ii) The statistical databases available, in many parts of the country, for the computation of various indices of human development are quite inadequate and largely unreliable, and the tribal inhabited district of Kokrajhar and Assam is no exception to this. Data constraints often hamper the computation of HDIs, particularly for small areas like districts and Block levels. For instance, the district level data on life expectancy at birth, the most commonly used indicator for the computation of health sub-index of the HDI, is yet to be available in the district and Block level.
- iii) Although there is considerable size of collections of statistical information with numerous agencies in the state of Assam, many of them are unreliable, irrelevant, out-dated, ill defined or poorly organized; using such data may result in an overstatement or understatement of HDI and other indicators of human development.

7.5 Future Scope

The present study is only an elementary step towards improving micro-level studies in human development of tribal inhabited district of Kokrajhar and the state of Assam. It is indicative, rather than comprehensive. The aspects of human development and capability in the present study area needs further studies, particularly at more disaggregated levels. Researcher of the present study hopes that

this work will be useful in initiating and intensifying the present research work in future. A number of studies can be undertaken by the future scholars following the framework developed in the present research work. The important contribution of the present study is the observation that *the tribal inhabited district of Kokrajhar is lagging behind most of the districts in the state of Assam in terms of human development and capability. Present study also reveals that there are acute deprivations and inter-block and intra-block disparities in the present study area. From the present study, it has also been observed that while estimating HDI through conventional indicators, there is possibility of over estimation of it.* These aspects of observation can be taken as the basis for future social science researches.

7.6 Conclusions

The present research work has made an attempt to study the aspect of human development and deprivations in the tribal inhabited district of Kokrajhar based on primary data and the state of Assam as a whole based on secondary data; keeping in mind of the underlined objectives of the present study. From the analysis in the previous sections of the present study, it has been observed that inter district disparity is prominent in the state of Assam in terms of human development and capabilities. The gap between the highest and lowest value attained by the districts in terms of HDI, GDI and GII are also found to be too large. Survey data reveals that the tribal inhabited district of Kokrajhar is lagging behind other comparatively developed districts in the state in the area of human development; deprivations in terms of health, income, education is remarkable. Village wise and Block wise analysis reveals sizable extent of deprivations in terms of basic amenities of life such as electricity, dwellings, sanitation facilities which may be responsible for poor and ill health condition of the people in the present study area. HDI and dimensional index of health, education and income largely vary across the sample Block and villages. At village level, Habrubil managed to maintain best performing village representing 1st position in dimensional indices; the reason being that the villagers have been availing most of the facilities out of government programmes. Households of some sample villages are almost totally

deprived from basic amenities like bathroom, toilet, latrine etc. The tribal inhabited district of Kokrajhar in the state has been confronted with social unrest and political agitations and violent activity of various insurgency groups. Lack of employment opportunities and development, inequity aspect and apparent discrimination have added to the crucial aspect of discord and strife in the present study area. Such situations are rarely, if ever, conducive to development, socially, economically, culturally and politically. The Government needs to have more initiative promoting surrounding environment for developmental activities; and restoring peace and confidence and reducing violence in the current study area. Proper implementation of the Bodoland Territorial Council and recent accord of Bodoland Territorial Region will help while improving the economic status and the aspect of human development and capability in the tribal inhabited district of Kokrajhar. It is noteworthy that the planners and the government need to keep in mind so that the encouraging attitude and values of the tribal people does not hamper while formulating and executing the plan and policies for development. However, the present study is only an elementary step towards improving micro-level studies in the area of human development and deprivations; it is indicative, rather than comprehensive. The present study may help the scholars while undertaking further research work in the area of human development aspect which require more extensive study at micro level in the present study area.