Infrastructural Facilities for Primary Education in the Sivasagar District of Assam

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Abstract

Primary education is considered as a basic requirement for all around development of an underdeveloped state like Assam. It is also a basic requirement for increasing overall productivity a society. Primary education was made universal under the British Government in the state. After the independence government has taken various schemes for development infrastructural facility for primary education in the state time to time. Primary education is free and available to all children in the age group six to fourteen in the state. In spite of making different efforts, the demand for universalization of primary education is not fulfilled in Assam. The paper is associated with infrastructural facility and primary education in the Sivasagar district of Assam.

Keywords: Infrastructural facilities, Primary education, Sivasagar district, Constitution of India, RTE Act, 2009

Introduction:

Primary education is considered as an important element which can play a significant role for the overall development of a country. The primary education had been accepted as the starting point for promoting gender equality and empowering women in a society. The basic purpose of primary education is to offer children a pure foundation in the basics of a curriculum (Aggarwal,2013). It is a basic requirement for economic development, modernization of the social system and the smooth functioning of modern democratic institution. It also used the term lower primary

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stage or school where includes classes I to V. The term upper primary school includes classes VI to VIII in India. As per the Constitution, all children of 6 to 14 are to get free education up to 8th standard in India. The education from class I to class VIII means elementary education as per the Right of Children to Free and Compulsory Education Act 2009(RTE Act, 2009). The RTE Act,2009 provided free and compulsory education to all children of the age of 6 to 14 years in India . Elementary schools have been established for fulfilling the obligation to provide for free and compulsory education to all children as stipulated under Article 45 of the Constitution of India. The Article 45 of the Constitution of India asserts compulsory education for all children until they complete the age of 14 years. The quality of life of a person depends on the primary education and one gets from the state (Konwar, 2017). All developed nations provide public primary education for the young children in the world.

The all around development of a country is always considered by a high level of infrastructural facilities. It is globally accepted that infrastructure is key for socio-economic progress of a country. An economy and a society cannot grow without available supply of basic these facilities. Infrastructure refers to such core elements of socio-economic change which serve as a support system to the production process in the economy of a country. Rapid development of infrastructure is a sing qua non of development of socio-economic change. There are both forward and backward linkages between economic infrastructure and social infrastructure used in the process of development (Borah and Goswami, 2001). Social infrastructure refers to the core elements of social change which serves as a foundation for the process of social development of the economy. It is focused on human resource development including implying the development of skilled personal. In the absence of social infrastructure, any efficient system of social change would remain a distant possibility. If proper attention is not paid to the development of social infrastructure, it is likely to act as a serve constraint on the social development process of the country. There is need for heavy investment in developing social infrastructure. Education is one major area in the social infrastructures which require investment (Zutshi and Rai, 2013). The government has been emphasizing the need of increase in investment in social infrastructure like education in our country. For developing of education sector, there is a need for investment in primary schools so that people can send their children to schools to acquire education. At the time of independence, India had very poor in primary school infrastructure and the planning

process during the last seven decades has made efforts to strengthen it at different levels. The development of primary education of a state depends very much on the availability of its infrastructural facilities. High priority was given to the development of infrastructure from the very beginning the planning process in the primary level schools in Assam. Drinking water facility, toilet facility, electricity facility, play ground facility, text book facility, type of school etc are included in infrastructural facilities in the school. The state government is increasingly taking the responsibility for providing basic infrastructural facilities for the development of primary education as per provision of RTE Act in Assam.

It is known that the average classroom is 2.9 for primary schools of the state in 2013-14. The average classroom is the highest in Kamrup Metro district(3.9) and lowest is the Hailakandi district(2.0) among the districts in Assam (Statistical Hand Book Assam,2014). It is found that total 85.12 percent, 67.22 percent and 86.90 percent primary schools have drinking water facility, boys toilet and girls toilet in Assam in 2013-14. The status of infrastructure at primary level education in Assam is not satisfactory in Assam as compared to the national average. In order to make the primary education free and compulsory to all the government of Assam has been extending basic educational infrastructural in Sivasagar district. The district is divided into three sub-divisions namely, Sivasagar, Charaideo and Nazira. The total population of the Sivasagar district stood at 1051736 and 1150253 as on 2001 and 2011 census(Konwar, 2018). The literacy rate was 75.33 percent and 81.36 percent of the district, which was higher as compared to 64.28 percent and 73.18 percent in Assam. It is observed that the schooling infrastructure has improved during last decade in the Sivasagar district of Assam.

Objective of the Study:

The primary education is selected for our study as the quality of primary education has significant positive impact on aggregate social, cultural and economic growth. In light of RTE Act, here an attempt has been made to discuss the basic infrastructural facilities of primary education from various perspectives and dimensions in the Sivasagar district of Assam.

Methodology:

The study is mainly based on primary data. There are six educational blocks for the development of primary education in Sivasagar district. All total 28 primary schools were randomly selected for the collection of field level primary data from the six educational blocks of Sivasagar district. The primary data were collected from both rural and urban areas. The primary data were collected from class I to V of the sample schools in the year of 2015. A survey scheduled has been prepared for the primary level data collection for the study. The primary data were collected through personal interview method. In addition to primary data, the secondary data were collected from both government and non government sources. We have taken seven variables to discuss the infrastructural facility for primary education in the Sivasagar district of Assam

Major Findings of the Study

1. Drinking Water Facility: Water is one of the most important renewable resources its availability is largely determined by climatic conditions of an area. The necessity of water to life is so significant that water has been accepted as a natural right for the people. Vasudha Pangare and Ganesh Pangare observed that water for life is usually given the highest priority as it concerns the provision of water for the survival of human being and other living beings as well. Traditionally, local water resources were used freely by people to meet subsistence and livelihood needs in India. The availability and quality of drinking water is a serious problem for us at the present time. Clean water is a basic human right which is necessary for lives and livelihoods. The shortage of freshwater can seriously affect the health and economic activity of the people. The drinking water facility is very essential for the primary level students. The drinking water facility for primary schools within school premises in rural area for government was 75.19 percent as per Seventh All India School Education Survey (SAISES) in the country. The data regarding drinking water facility of the sample schools are presented in Table-1.

Table-1

Block wise Drinking water Facility of Sample Schools

S.L	Blocks	Category			Total Schools
		Tube well	Running water	Different sources	
1	Amguri	5(83.33%)	-	1(16.67%)	6(100%)
2	Demow	6(100%)	-	-	6(100%)
3	Khelua	5(83.33%)	-	1(16.67%)	6(100%)
4	Nazira	3(75%)	1(25%)	-	4(100%)
5	Sapekhati	3(75%)	-	1(25%)	4(100%)
6	Sonari	1(50%)	-	1(50%)	2(100%)
Total		23(82.14%)	1(03.57%)	4(14.29%)	28(100%)

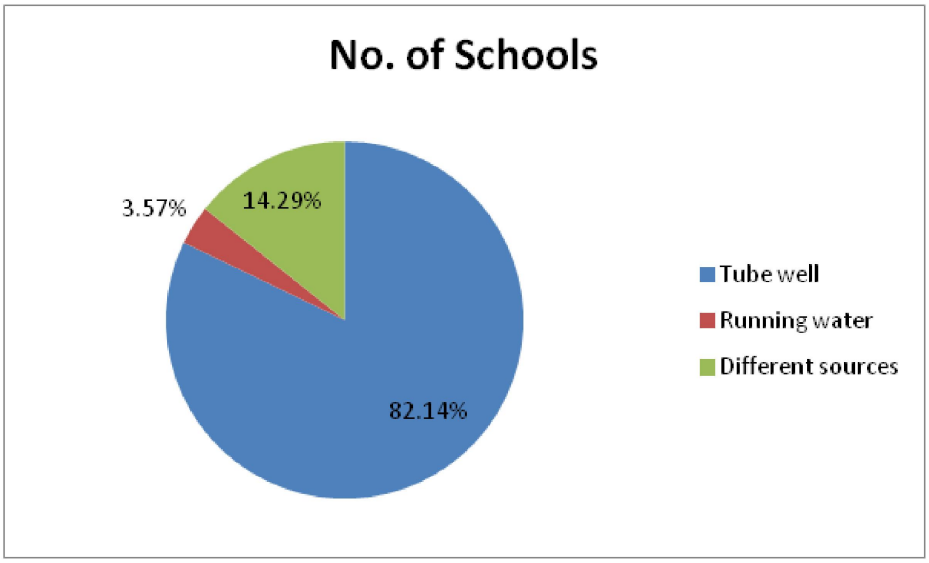

Figure-1 : Pie Diagram of Drinking Water Facility of the Sample School

It is learn from the Table-1 that all sample schools have drinking water facility. Out of total 28 sample schools, 82.14 percent schools have tube well facility. The remaining has running water facility (3.57%) and different sources (14.29%) of the sample schools. Different source means student used some time pond, river, supply water and currying water from home for drinking. The highest number of sample schools Amguri(83.33%)

and Khelua (83.33%) used tube well as a source of drinking water in the schools. Out of 6 educational blocks, all 6 sample schools of Demow block have used tube well facility where only 1 sample school of Nazira Block have used running water facility. As per District Information System for Education (DISE) report 2009-10, total 12 percent primary schools were without drinking water facility in India. In Assam, about 85.12 percent primary schools were drinking water facility in 2013-14. On the other hand, 96.99 percent primary schools have drinking water facility in Sivasagar district in 2013-14.

2. Toilet Facility: Toilet is necessity for living. As we know that 19th November is observed as World Toilet Day. To provide toilet facility is one of the objectives of Swachh Bharat Mission. The toilet facility is very essential for quality of life in both the rural and urban areas in our country. Gregory Pierce observed that inadequate toilet use directly contributes to high rates of morbidity and mortality within India . Although urban rates of toilet use are markedly higher than in rural areas, this is a huge problem over the decades since independence for us. The 2011 census of India recorded that nearly 31 percent rural households were having any toilet facilities on the premises. We know that MDG in 2000 emphasized to reduce the number of people without toilet facilities in developing countries by half in the world. Poor toilet system has been linked to a number of economic and social issues. Social analysts pointed out that separate toilets for the opposite sex in educational institutions would encourage their education and bring down the disease rate among children. Availability of toilet facility within the school campus is a basic requirement not only for students but also for teachers. It is unfortunate that large number of primary schools do not have provision of urinal and lavatory facilities in the country. Toilets were constructed in over 80 percent of all primary schools in the country in 2007. The toilet facility of the schools is given in Table-2.

Table.2
Blockwise Toilet Facility of the Sample Schools

S.L	Blocks	Category		Total Schools
		Pucca	Kutcha	
1	Amguri	6(100%)	-	6(100%)
2	Demow	5(83.33%)	1(16.67%)	6(100%)
3	Khelua	6(100%)	-	6(100%)
4	Nazira	4(100%)	-	4(100%)
5	Sapekhati	4(100%)	-	4(100%)
6	Sonari	1(50%)	1(50%)	2(100%)
Total		26(92.86%)	2(7.14%)	28(100%)

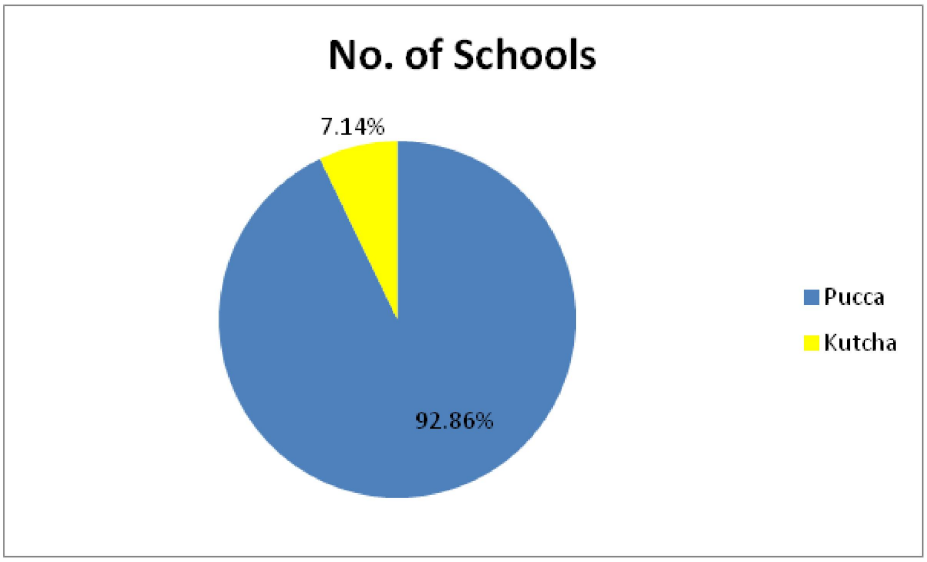

Figure-2 : Pie Diagram of Toilet Facility of the Sample Schools

It is seen from the Table- 2 that out of total 28 survey schools, 26(92.86%) schools have pucca toilet facility. Out of 6 educational blocks, all sample schools of Amguri, Khelua, Nazira and Sapekhati blocks have pucca toilet facility. Only 2 (7.14%) schools have kuchcha toilet. The two Kuchcha toilet facility schools name are Udaipur Na-ali at Demow block and Mohangaon Rajapukhuri at Sonari block in the district. Presently, the government has been taker decision for construction of toilets in all schools in India.

Nearly 67.22 percent of primary schools have boys' toilet in Assam in 2013-14. Out of total 1925 primary schools in Sivasagar district, 1464(76.05%) primary schools have boys' toilets in 2013-14.

Building Facility: Generally the physical conditions or building facility of the educational institutions largely depend on the economic resources of the government. The primary school building is a very serious problem and unless it is taken upon top priority, it would adversely affect enrolment in the backward areas. Every state today finds it very difficult to cope up with the construction of programme for the school building. The physical condition of the primary schools may be classified into three categories- Kuchcha, Semi-Pacca and Pacca. A Semi-Pacca school is one which has half Katcha wall, burnt bricks, roof with C.I.sheet and pacca or kuchcha floor. In case of Pacca schools, burant bricks, cement, iron rods etc. are used in the construction. The most difficult period of on academic year is rainy season in which the students face does not problems in the physically good condition schools. According to SAISES, out of total 6,51,064 primary schools, 19.28 percent were running in non-pucca buildings, whereas the remaining 80.72 percent were functioning in pucca buildings in the country in year 2002. As per DISE report, 3.53 percent of the primary schools did not have any building in the country in 2008-09. The physical condition of the sample schools are shown in Table-3.

Table-3
Blockwise Physical Condition of the Sample Schools

S.L	Blocks	Category			Total Schools
		Pacca	Semi pacca	Kuchcha	
1	Amguri	6(100%)	-	-	6(100%)
2	Demow	4(66.66%)%)	1(16.67%)	1(16.67%)	6(100%)
3	Khelua	6(100%)	-	-	6(100%)
4	Nazira	4(100%)	-	-	4(100%)
5	Sapekhati	3(75%)	-	1(25%)	4(100%)
6	Sonari	2(100%)	-	-	2(100%)
Total	-	25(89.29%)	1(3.57%)	2(7.14%)	28(100%)

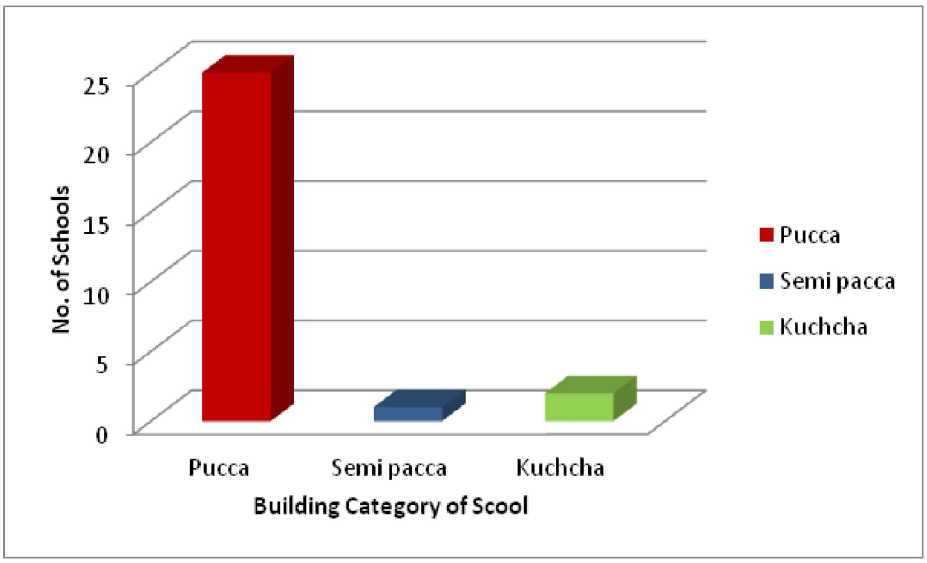

Figure-3 : Bar Diagram of Building Condition of the Sample Schools

It is seen from the Table -3 that the majority (89.29%) school's structure is pacca in the surveyed area. Out of total 28 survey schools, 2 (7.14%) schools structure is kucheha. The names of two schools are Udaipur Na-ali at Demow block and Nabajyoti LPS at Sapekhati block. As per information made by headmaster of the two schools that recently the two schools were probincilized and they hoped that the kucheha structure will change to pucca of the two schools very recently. Only 1(3.57%) school structure is semi- pacca. It name is 1 No. Udaypur LPS at Demow block. It is observed that generally newly provincial zed schools structure is semi pacca and Kuchcha in the district as well as in Assam.

Teacher Common Room Facility: The teachers should have different facilities for effective teaching in the schools. Teacher common room is considered one of the most important components of school infrastructure. Generally table, chair, picture, calendar etc. are seen in the teacher common room of the schools. In order to render effective teaching, these items are an important requirement for the teachers. These items are indispensable components of an ideal classroom for all the schools at primary level. The data regarding teacher common rooms of the sample schools are shown in Table-4.

Table-4

Districtwise Teacher Common Room Facility of the Sample Schools

S.L	Blocks	Category		Total Schools
		Having separate common room	Not having separate common room	
1	Amguri	3(50%)	3(50%)	6(100%)
2	Demow	1(16.67%)	5(83.33%)	6(100%)
3	Khelua	5(83.33%)	1(16.67%)	6(100%)
4	Nazira	2(50%)	2(50%)	4(100%)
5	Sapekhati	-	4(100%)	4(100%)
6	Sonari	2(100%)	-	2(100%)
Total	-	13(46.43%)	15(53.57%)	28(100%)

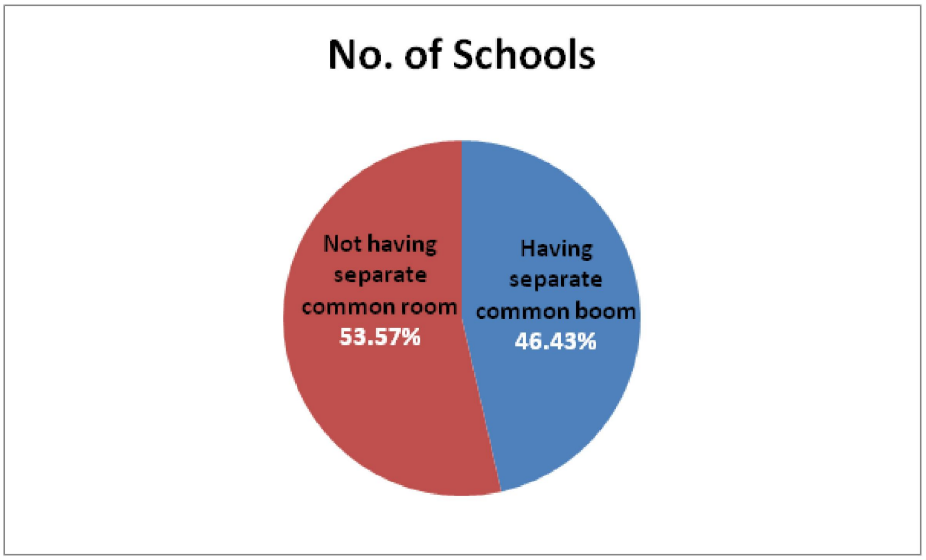

Figure-4 : Pie Diagram of Teacher Common Room Facility of the Sample Facility

It is quite clear from the Table-4 that out of the total 28 surveyed schools, 13 (46.43%) schools have separate teacher common rooms. The majority (53.57%) of schools have not separate teacher's common room in the survey areas. Out of 6 educational blocks, Khelua block have highest (83.33%) and Demow have lowest (16.67%) separate teachers common rooms in the district. There is no separate teacher common room of all (100%) survey schools in the Sapekhati block of Sivasagar district.

Playground Facility: History goes to prove that students have been fond of games and sports since ancient times. Games and sports have an important role in student life. Games and sports are also teaching the students about discipline, co-operation, friendship and liberalism which are very essential to students. Game and sport is a tonic for a child's brain and body. At present time games and sports are played in many different modern ways and so they have become more enjoyable than before for the students. A well developed play ground is required for games and sports. Playground is very essentially required for physical and mental development for the primary school students. Each and every school is required to have specific game time for the students. Activities on the playground provide an opportunity for securing mental and moral discipline. Games on the playground go a long way in the development of the children personality. The game periods for primary school students does not have any meaning unless there is a playground for play of the school. All the outdoor and indoor games are enjoyable for the primary school younger students. There are some games requiring playing instruments for the younger children. The SAISES reveals that at primary level of schooling, the playground facility within the school premises was available in 34.81 percent schools in rural area whereas the same facility was available in 39.36 percent schools in urban area in India. The data regarding playground facility of the sample schools are presented in Table-5.

Table-5

Districtwise Playground Facility of the Sample Schools

S.L	Blocks	Category		Total Schools
		Having playground	Not having playground	
1	Amguri	2(33.33%)	4(66.67%)	6(100%)
2	Demow	-	6(100%)	6(100%)
3	Khelua	1(16.67%)	5(83.33%)	6(100%)
4	Nazira	1(25%)	3(75%)	4(100%)
5	Sapekhati	2(50%)	2(50%)	4(100%)
6	Sonari	1(50%)	1(50%)	2(100%)
Total	-	7(25%)	21(75%)	28(100%)

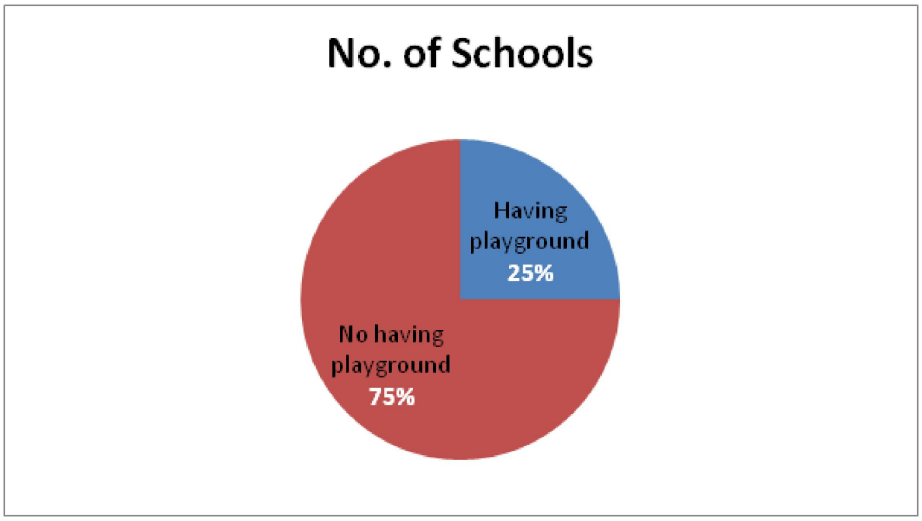

Figure-5 : Pie Diagram of Playground Facility of the Sample Schools

The Table-5 reveals that out of total 28 sample schools, only 7(25%) schools have playground facility. The remaining 21(75%) schools have no playground facility. The survey revealed that playground facility is absent in the survey schools of Demow block. It is unfortunate that majority of children are deprived for playing in the schools. Without proper playing facility we cannot expect a sound body and sound mind of the children. It is observed in the field survey time that there is lack of playing items and suitable size of playground in the survey schools. Generally games and sports are mainly of two kinds- indoor games and outdoor games. Indoor games are played within the houses or sheds while carom, chess, ludo etc. are some important indoor games. On the other hand, indoor games are played in the open fields. Football, cricket, volley ball etc. are included as outdoor games. Both types of games keep students healthy and strong. Therefore, every student should give importance on games and sports. It is observed during the field study time that there are lack of proper facilities of games and sports for the students. The size of playground of the sample schools is not sufficient for games and sports. Generally some traditional game like Kabadi, balls etc. are played in the schools. Cricket is the most favorite game for boys students. They enjoy playing cricket here and there without proper facility in the schools.

Blackboard Facility: There should be one specific blackboard facility for the students of each class. It is very essentially required component of a good classroom. It is widely known from experience that without blackboard, it becomes very difficult for the teacher to teach and attract children properly. Generally, attached wall blackboard, moveable wooden blackboard and hanging blackboard are seen in the schools. All these three variety of blackboards, at least one variety is needed in schools. The data blackboard facility of the sample schools are given in Table-6.

Table-6

Blockwise Black Board use of the Sample Schools

S.L	Blocks	Category				Total Schools
		Moveable wooden blackboard	Attested wall blackboard	Hanging blackboard	Attested wall blackboard and moveable wooden black board	
1	Amguri	1(16.67%)	4(66.66%)	-	1(16.67%)	6(100%)
2	Demow	1(16.67%)	3(50%)	-	2(33.33%)	6(100%)
3	Kheiua	2(33.33%)	4(66.67%)	-	-	6(100%)
4	Nazira	-	4(100%)	-	-	4(100%)
5	Sapekhati	1(25%)	3(75%)	-	-	4(100%)
6	Sonari	-	1(50%)	1(50%)	-	2(100%)
Total	-	5(17.86%)	19(67.86%)	1(3.57%)	3(10.71%)	28(100%)

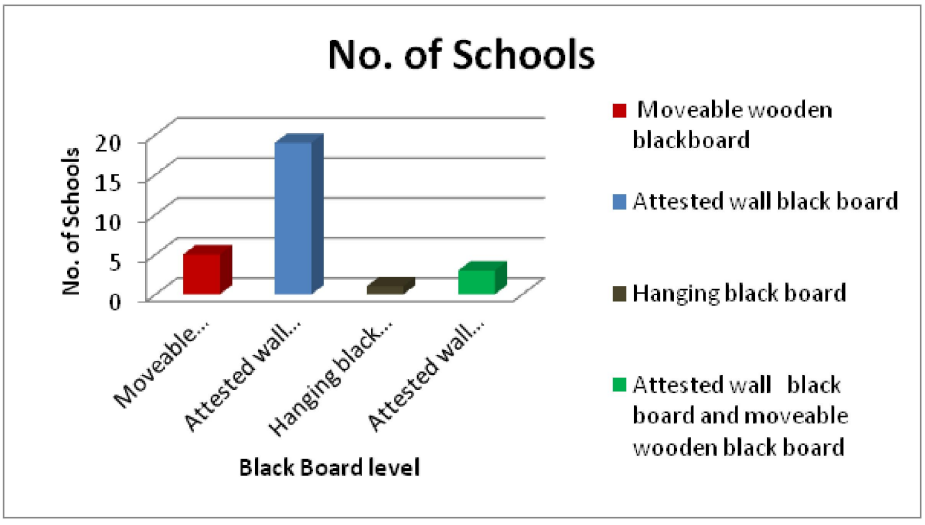

Figure-6 : Bar Diagram of Black Board use of the Sample Schools

The Table-6 reveals that attested wall blackboard facility is popular in the survey schools. Out of 6 educational blocks, attested wall blackboard facility is highest (75%) in Sapekhati block**.** Hanging blackboard black board facility is found only Sonari blocks where 50 percent schools have hanging black board facility. Out of total blackboard facility, about 67.86 percent sample schools have attested wall blackboard facility. On the other hand, 17.86 percent sample schools have moveable wooden blackboard provision in the district. Some schools are used both attested wall black board and moveable blackboard where only 3.57 percent school is used hanging blackboard in the teaching.

Electricity Facility: Electricity facility is one of the most important components of infrastructure for educational institutions. It is observed that provision of the important input is nearly limited to the schools covered by our study. The SAISES recorded that recognized primary schools having electric connection were found to be 15.99 percent. The distribution in rural area primary schools was found to be 10.93 percent in the country. The data of electricity facility of the sample schools can be seen in Table-7.

Table-7

Blockwise Electricity Facility of the Sample Schools

S.L	Blocks	Category		Total Schools
		Having electricity facility	Not having electricity facility	
1	Amguri	2(33.33%)	4(66.67%)	6(100%)
2	Demow	-	6(100%)	6(100%)
3	Khelua	4(66.67%)	2(33.33%)	6(100%)
4	Nazira	3(75%)	1(25%)	4(100%)
5	Sapekhati	1(25%)	3(75%)	4(100%)
6	Sonari	-	2(100%)	2(100%)
Total	-	10(35.71%)	18(64.29%)	28(100%)

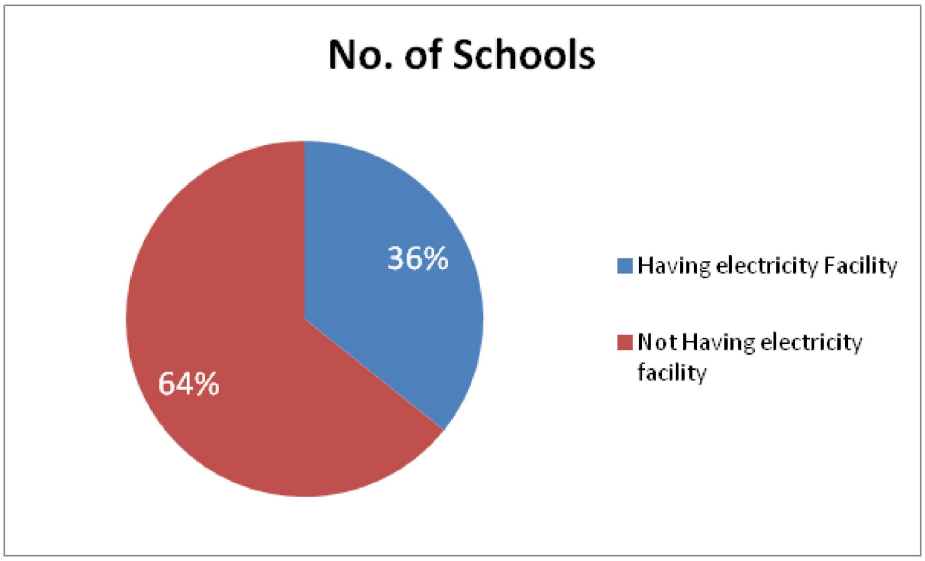

Figure-7 : Pie Diagram of Electricity Facility of the Sample Schools

It is known from the Table-7 that out of total 28 schools; only 10(35.71%) schools have electricity facility. Out of 6 educational blocks, the survey schools of Nazira block has highest (75%) and Sapekhati block has lowest(25%) electricity facility. There is no electricity facility of all (100%) survey schools of the Demow and Sonari blocks. It is observed during the field surveyed time that in majority of cases electric supply is not available for majority of days or times of the schools. Availability of electric supply in primary schools has not improved as it is one of the major concerns in educational development programme of the government.

Recommendations: The following measures are suggested for the smooth development of primary education in the Sivasagar district of Assam.

- To make the parents more aware parent –teacher meet should be regularly organized in the schools.
- The scholarship is urgent for the poor family students. Scholarship should be provided to all merit students in the schools.
- Emphasis needs to be given proper infrastructural facilities in the schools.
- Effort should be made for proper implementation of RTE Act, 2009 in the remote schools.
- Proper teacher-pupil ratio should be maintained in the schools.

Conclusion:

The above study shows clearly that there are infrastructural deficit at primary schools in the Sivasagar district of Assam. During the field survey, all respondent opined that they are not happy about the infrastructural facility in their respective sample schools. The progress of the RTE Act in different villages cannot be easy or smooth, unless there is proper development of infrastructural facility in the primary schools. The basic infrastructural facility for primary education in the district has not developed as per the objectives laid down in the RTE Act. Proper infrastructural facility will certainly enhance the quality of primary education for both rural and urban children. Proper utilization of financial resources and active initiative from the part of all concerned is required for the development of infrastructural facility in the villages. The history of more than five decades of planning reveals that though the state government has taken different measures to solve the various infrastructural problems of primary education yet the measures so far taken are too insufficient to solve the different infrastructural problems fully in the Sivasagar district of Assam.

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