

Problems for Achieving Universalization of Primary Education: An Analytical Study in Undivided Karbi Anglong District



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Abstract

Universalization of primary education is a great challenge in India and it is more difficult in the hills areas like Karbi Anglong. In this paper an attempt is being made to study the problems for achieving the universalization of primary education with special reference to the problems related to physical facilities and household problems of primary school children in undivided Karbi Anglong district. The survey method was used for the present study. Both the primary and secondary data were collected to achieve the objectives of the study. The primary data regarding the physical facilities of the primary schools were collected from Head masters/ teachers of primary schools. To find out the household problems two problem checklists were prepared, one for the parents/guardians and another for the pupils to check out the family/household problems of the primary school children. The study leads to the conclusion that there are lots of family/household problems and the problems regarding physical facilities of the primary schools which create obstacles in universalization of primary education in Karbi Anglong. There is no one way solution to remove these problems and a comprehensive effort of State Government and Karbi Anglong Autonomous Council could help to solve these problems to a great extent.

Keywords: Problem, Universalization, Physical facilities, Primary, Education, Karbi Anglong.

Introduction

Development of a society largely depends on the qualitative improvement of its human resources. Education is the pivotal means to develop the human resources. In the last five year plans our country has been emphasizing on proper development of human resources providing adequate educational facilities. Since Independence, the government of India has been allocating huge amount in order to develop quality education in our country. Yet after 70 years of independence, the result has not been satisfactory. The problem is more acute in the field of primary education in the hills areas like Karbi Anglong.

East Karbi Anglong and West Karbi Anglong are two hills districts of Assam, mainly dominated by the hills tribes. The total geographical area of these two districts is 10,434 square kilometres as per 2011 census which accounts for about 13.35% of the total area of Assam. But the number of educational institution is lesser than that of other district of Assam. There are 1772 primary schools in Karbi Anglong, but it is not sufficient with the changing demand of the people of Karbi Anglong. According to 2011 census, literacy rate in Karbi Anglong is 73.52%, while the literacy rate in India is 74.04%. Similarly, percentage of female literacy in Karbi Anglong in 2011 is 64.62%, while the percentage of female literacy in India is 65.46%. It has been a matter of concern why these disparities have been seen in Karbi Anglong and what are the problems of primary education in the district? What are the physical facilities provided by the state government and Karbi Anglong Autonomous Council to the primary schools of Karbi Anglong? To find out the problems regarding physical facilities and family/household problems of primary school children the present study was taken up with the following objectives.

Objectives of the Study

In the present investigation an attempt is being made to realise the following objectives-

1. To study the problems related to physical facilities of primary schools in Karbi Anglong.
2. To study the family/household problems of the primary school children which create obstacle for achieving universalization of primary education in Karbi Anglong.
3. To suggest some remedial measures to overcome these problems.

Review of Literature

A careful review of the research journals, books, dissertations, theses and other sources of information on the problem to be investigated is one of the important steps in the planning of any research study (Koul, Lokesh. "Methodology of Educational Research", 1993; Vikas Publishing House Pvt. Ltd., New Delhi, page-83). Review of related literature helps the researcher to acquaint with current knowledge in the field or area in which the investigator is going to conduct the research. Here an attempt is being made to review some related literature which encouraged the investigator to undertake the present study.

G. L. Mandal conducted a study in 1980 on "Universal, Free and Compulsory Primary Education in Bihar (1950-74)-A Study on Problems and Measures". G. V. Pillai, J. Benjamin and K. R. Nair in 1980 collectively carried out a study on drop outs in primary education in Karala State. J. K. Gupta, P. K. Rostogi and M. K. Gupta jointly carried out a study under NCERT, New Delhi in 1989 on "Stagnation and Dropout at Primary Stage in Nine Educationally Backward States". D. S. Chavare carried out an investigation in 1991 on the problem of students dropping out of the primary schools of Pune Municipal Corporation.

In India, some work has been done on tribal education also. L. R. Bihari conducted a survey in 1969 on "Wastage and Stagnation in Primary Education among the Selected Tribal Communities of Gujrat". M. L. Masavi conducted a study in 1971 on "Wastage and Stagnation in Primary Education among the Tribes of Gujrat". H. N. Agarwal in 1972 carried out a survey on "Wastage and Stagnation in Mahendragarh Tribal Development Block, Bhopal". J. Sarma conducted a study in 1998 on "Problems and Prospects of Disadvantaged Groups of Assam with Special Reference to Gender Issues among SC and ST Children at Primary Level". Some other work has been done on the tribal education in North East India. R. C. Das carried out a study in 1970 on the topic "Problem of wastage and stagnation at the primary level of education in Sibsagar District". K. G. Devi carried out a study in 1983 on the topic "Problems of dropouts in primary schools of Manipur with special reference to Imphal Town". State Institute of Education (SIE), Assam conducted a study in 1988 on a topic "Dropouts in the Primary Schools in Assam". T. Thakur, N. Sarma, U. J. Mahanta, D. Sarma and G. C. Goswami conducted a study in 1988 on "Drop-outs in the Primary Schools of Assam". Nirmala Sarma conducted her study in 1994 on "Wastage and

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Stagnation in Primary level of Education among the Tea Garden Labourers of Jorhat and Sibsagar District of Assam". B. Thakuria carried out a study in 1996 on problems of primary education under west Guwahati area. J. K. Sarma in 1997 carried out a case study on "The problem of non-enrolment and dropouts among girls at primary level in Jorhat district of Assam". SCERT, Kohima, Nagaland conducted a survey in 1999 on the topic "Elementary school dropouts in Nagaland".

Almost all studies carried out by individual researcher and institutions on primary education in India and North East India touched upon the similar issues there are some similarity regarding the problems of primary education in Karbi Anglong district with other parts of India and North-East India. However, the geographical location, socio-economic and cultural environment, administrative system of education in Karbi Anglong district is to some extent different from other parts of the country for which the investigator has an interest to undertake this study in 2015.

Delimitation of the Study

The present study is limited to the government, provincialised and recognised primary schools of Karbi Anglong located in rural, semi urban and urban areas. The primary data were collected from 177 primary schools of Karbi Anglong.

Method of Data Collection

The survey method was used for the present study. The data require for the present study was collected from 177 Head masters/ teachers of primary schools, 354 primary school pupils and 354 parents/guardians of Karbi Anglong. Besides, secondary data were collected from various sources such as – government office, institutions and websites to achieve the objectives of the study.

Sampling

Sampling is the process of selecting a sample from the total population. In the present study purposive sampling technique has been adopted by the investigator. There are four sub-divisions and eleven educational blocks in Karbi Anglong. Total six blocks have been selected from the two district and 15% schools from each block have been selected for this study. Block wise highest number of primary schools are found in Lumbajong, Howraghat, Bokajan, Nilip, Chinthong and Rongkhang Block of Karbi Anglong. Therefore, the schools have been selected from these six blocks.

Tools

The standard and quality of research depends on the use of valid and reliable tools use for the research work. There are two types of tools generally use by the researcher for the investigation. The standardised tool and self developed tool. In this study the investigator used self developed tool for the investigation.

Preparation of Questionnaire and Problem Check List

For this study a questionnaire schedule is prepared for the primary school teachers of Karbi Anglong district to collect the information regarding physical facilities of the schools. Two problem

checklists were prepared, one for parents/guardians and another for primary school children to check out family/ household problems of the primary school children. After pilot survey the questionnaire schedule and problem checklists were finalised.

Analysis of Data

The physical facilities of the primary school affect the whole educational programme as well as the physical and mental development of the children. Adequate lay-out of the land, healthy surroundings, fresh air, a good supply of pure drinking water and light are essential factors in determining the situation of the school. A properly designed building with good construction in a well selected site is bound to create a sound educational atmosphere. Therefore, necessary suitable physical facilities should be available in the modern schools for providing quality education to the students. Here, an attempt is being made to analyse the problems related to physical facilities available in the primary schools and household problems of primary school children of Karbi Anglong.

Classroom Wise Distribution of School Building

Classroom is an essential variable which determine the educational environment of a school. The Kothari commission had remarked "Destiny of the nation is being shaped in her classrooms". This statement clearly indicates the importance of suitable

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classroom in a school building. In table – I classroom wise distributions of schools is presented in detail.

Table - I

Classroom Wise Distribution of School Building

Number of Class Room	Percentage of Sample School
One Class Room	40.11
Two Class Room	15.82
Three Class Room	16.38
Four Class Room	12.43
Five Class Room	12.43
Six Class Room	2.83
Total	100%

(Source: Field Survey)

Other Infrastructure Facilities Available in the School Based on Primary Investigation

Besides the suitable classroom facilities, there should be the provision of teacher common room, separate toilets for teacher and pupils, compound wall, play ground, suitable sitting facility for teacher and students, drinking water facility and electrification facility etc. in every school. On the basis of primary investigation as reported by the teacher respondents of the sample schools, the detail information of all these variables, available in the primary schools in Karbi Anglong is presented in table – II.

Table – II

Distribution of Different Infrastructure Facilities Available in The School

Sl. No.	Type of Physical Facilities	Percentage of Responses	
		Yes	No
1.	Compound wall	8.47	91.53
2.	Play ground	45.76	54.24
3.	Road to the School	63.28	36.72
4.	Separate toilet for Teacher and Pupils	50.28	49.72
5.	Teacher Common Room	33.90	66.10
6.	Drinking Water Facility	40.11	59.89
7.	Transportation	29.38	70.62
8.	Electrification	1.69	98.31
9.	Sitting Facilities for Teacher and Pupils	44.07	55.93
10.	Separate Kitchen for Prepare Mid Day Meal	53.67	46.33
11.	Benches/ Furniture	64.41	35.59
12.	Black board	90.96	9.04
13.	Adequate Ventilation	46.33	53.67
14.	Adequate number of class room	46.89	53.11
15.	Play Materials	45.76	54.24

(Source: Field Survey)

Problem Checklist for Students to Check Out Home/Family Related Problems

In this investigation a problem checklist was prepared to identify the home/family related problems faced by the primary schools children of Karbi Anglong. In problem check list there are three

responses against each question i.e., always, most of the times and not at all. The respondent has to put a tick (√) mark wherever required. The item wise responses of the student respondents are shown in table- III.

Table – III

Problem Checklist for Primary School Students of Karbi Anglong

Sl. No.	Nature of the Problem Problems Related to Home/Family Environment	Percentage of Responses		
		Always	Most of the Time	Not at All
1.	I have to perform some household duty.	44.07	47.74	8.19
2.	My parents prefer me to do household duty instead of attending school.	10.17	21.47	68.36
3.	Household duty affects in the learning process.	24.01	37.57	38.42
4.	Economic condition of my parents is bad.	31.07	50.57	18.36
5.	My home environment is unsuitable for study.	61.30	23.45	15.25
6.	There is lack of uniform and other study materials for study.	30.23	57.34	12.43
7.	I find difficult to understand the lesson as I have to study myself at home.	30.64	52.54	16.82
8.	There is lack of proper guidance of my parents in completing home assignment.	61.30	25.42	13.28
9.	My parents unable to help me in study.	58.47	25.71	15.82

(Source: Field Survey)

In the problem checklist (Table –III) responded by the primary school students, unsuitable home/family environment got the highest rank in order of importance followed by lack of guidance of the parents, involvement of the children in household duty, poor economic condition of the parents, lack of tutor, lack of uniforms and study materials etc.

Problem Checklist for Parents/guardians to Check Out Home/Family Related Problems

Another problem checklist was prepared for the parents/guardians to identify the home/family related problems faced by the primary schools students of Karbi Anglong. In problem check list there are three responses against each question i.e., always, most of the times and not at all. The respondent has to put a tick (✓) mark wherever required. The item wise responses of the parent/guardian respondents are shown in table- IV.

Table – IV

Problem Checklist for Parent/guardian of Primary School Student of Karbi Anglong

Sl. No.	Nature of the Problem Problems Related to Home/Family Environment	Percentage of Responses		
		Always	Most of The Time	Not at All
1.	My child has to do some household duty.	34.46	55.37	10.17
2.	My economic condition is bad.	47.46	47.74	4.80
3.	With my limited income I am unable to manage day to day requirement of my family.	58.21	38.81	2.98
4.	There is lack of suitable furniture for my children to study at my home.	57.91	24.86	17.23
5.	It is difficult for me to provide suitable uniform and other study material for my children.	21.47	52.26	26.27
6.	I am unable to supervise the learning of my children.	54.52	35.31	10.17
7.	I am unable to help my children in completing his/ her home assignment.	48.87	38.70	12.43
8.	I am unable to help my children in study at home.	68.36	13.84	17.80

(Source: Field Survey)

In the problem checklist (Table –IV) responded by parents/guardians respondents, illiteracy of the parents got the highest rank in order of importance followed by poverty of the parents, lack of suitable furniture, lack of guidance of the parents, involvement of the children in household duty, lack of uniforms and study materials etc.

The Major Findings

The major findings of the study are -

1. Shortage of sufficient classroom is a great problem in the primary schools of Karbi Anglong. Primary data indicate that there is only one classroom in 40.11% of the primary schools, two classrooms in 15.82%, three classrooms in 16.38%, four classrooms in 12.43%, five classroom in 12.43% and six classrooms in only 2.83% of the primary schools of Karbi Anglong. The data clearly indicate that majority of the

primary school have only one big room or hall and children of all six classes have to sit in the same room.

2. Compound wall is very much important in primary school for the safe and security of the children. Increasing number of vehicles create threat and insecurity in the road and intensity of road accident increasing day by day both in the urban and rural areas. But primary data indicates that compound wall is available only in 8.47% of the primary schools and there is lack of compound wall in 91.53% of the primary schools in Karbi Anglong.
3. Play ground is a very important variable which determine the standard and quality of an educational institution. Different co curricular activities, specially the games and sports can be organised in the school if there is a suitable play

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- ground. Organising the games and sports help not only the physical development of the children but help to develop some other qualities like co-operation, sympathy, tolerance, team spirit, discipline, leadership qualities etc also. But the play ground facility is available in 45.76% of the primary schools and there is lack of play ground in 54.24% of the primary schools in Karbi Anglong.
4. A suitable road to the school building from the main road is very essential in primary school. The suitable road facility is available in 63.28% of the primary schools and there is lack of suitable road facility in 36.72% of the primary schools in Karbi Anglong.
 5. Each school should have separate toilet facility for boys and girls students and for the teachers. The primary data reveals that separate toilet facility for teacher and pupils is available in 50.28% of the primary schools and there is lack of separate toilet facility for teachers and pupils in 49.72% of the primary schools in Karbi Anglong.
 6. Drinking water facility is available in 40.11% of the primary schools and there is lack of drinking water facility in 59.89% of the primary schools in the district. During the field visit it was observed that though drinking water facility is available in 40.11% of the primary schools, but in those schools there is lack of pure drinking water facility. In some schools there is a well or tube well within the school campus but the water of the well or the tube well is dirty or the well is full of some dirty materials. The children use to drink water from that dirty well which creates threat to the health of the children. In the majority of the schools there is lack of water filter and in some other schools only the teacher use the water filter. In some other schools the water filter supplied from the government is kept and use in the teacher's residence, because there is lack of door and the windows in the school building or the school building is totally not secured to keep these type of important materials. So, majority of the primary school children are deprived from pure drinking water facility in the school.
 7. Road communication facility of Karbi Anglong is very poor in two districts. Basically, in the rural areas the villages are scattered in different small hills and the hills are located in distance places. There is no suitable road to connect different villages in the hill areas. The primary school children have to go for study in the school located in distance village. Primary data reveals that only 29.38% of the primary schools have transportation facility in the district and there is lack of transportation facility in 70.62% of the primary schools in the district.
 8. Electrification of the primary school in the district is very pathetic and it is a great challenge for the teachers as well as the pupils of the primary school. During the summer season both the teachers and students should attend the school tolerating the extreme heat and young children suffer from different diseases. Primary data

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- shows that the electrification facility is available in only 1.69% of the primary schools in the district and there is lack of electrification facility in 98.31% of the primary schools in the district. During the field visit electrification facility was found in two schools of Bokajan sub division i. e. Bokajan Project Head Quarter Lower Primary school and Chowki Hola Government Primary school and one school of Howraghat sub division. In these three schools the teaching faculties personally contributed to make the arrangement and the monthly electricity bill is also paid by the teachers.
9. Sitting facility for teacher and student in the primary schools is not satisfactory. The table II reveals that sufficient sitting facility is available in 44.07% of the primary schools and there is lack of proper sitting facility in 55.93% of the primary schools in Karbi Anglong.
 10. Mid day meal facility has been introduced in all the primary schools in the district. A separate kitchen for cooking mid day meal is very important in every primary school. The table - II reveals that separate kitchen for cooking mid day meal is available in 53.67% of the primary schools and there is lack of separate kitchen for cooking mid day meal in 46.33% of the primary schools in Karbi Anglong.
 11. Black board is the most important equipment of a class room. The black board facility is available in 90.96% of the primary schools and there is lack of black board facility in 9.04% of the primary schools in Karbi Anglong. During the field visit the investigator observed that in majority of the primary schools there is only one black board for all classes of the primary school. There is lack of separate black board for each and every class.
 12. Suitable ventilation and illumination facility should be available in each school building for pure air and proper sun light. The pure air is essential for the health of students and teacher. The class room should be such as that pure air in them always circulates. The primary data reveal that there is suitable and sufficient ventilation facility in 46.33% of the primary schools and there is lack of suitable and sufficient ventilation facility in 53.67% of the primary schools in Karbi Anglong. Similarly, Play materials are found in 45.76% of the primary schools and there is lack of play materials in 54.24% of the primary schools in Karbi Anglong.
 13. In the problem checklist (Table –III) responded by the primary school students, unsuitable home/family environment got the highest rank in order of importance followed by lack of guidance of the parents, involvement of the children in household duty, poor economic condition of the parents, lack of tutor, lack of uniforms and study materials etc.
 14. In the problem checklist (Table –IV) responded by parents/guardians respondents, illiteracy of the parents got the highest rank in order of importance followed by poverty of the parents, lack of suitable furniture, lack of guidance of the

parents, involvement of the children in household duty, lack of uniforms and study materials etc.

Suggestions

The study leads to the conclusion that there are lots of household problems of the primary school children and problems relating to physical facilities of the primary schools of the district. From the experience gained and based on the views expressed by the students, teachers, parents, guardians and the administrators in the field study, the investigator felt that, the following remedial measures may be considered to reduce these problems of primary education among the children in Karbi Anglong.

1. Infrastructure facilities are not available in majority of the primary schools. The concerned authority should provide the necessary infrastructure facilities such as permanent building, sufficient number of classroom, play ground, furniture, electricity facility, suitable audio visual aids including Television, Radio, Tape Recorder etc. If it is not possible to provide all these audio visual aids to every school, at least a group of schools may be provided with these facilities which can be shared by five or six schools in a particular area.
2. The environment of the schools should be improved to make school more attractive for the children. The behaviour of the teachers should be impressive and children friendly. The teachers should understand the tribal tradition and culture so as to apprehend the actual need, nature, attitude and desire of the tribal children. In this regard the non tribal teachers may be given the knowledge of tribal language, culture, tradition, custom, beliefs and attitudes and it should be the part of formal training programme. If it is not possible to include in the curriculum of the formal training programme, then short term training programme may be organised for the non tribal teachers those who have been serving in the tribal dominated areas.
3. During the field work it was observed by the investigator that in some schools mid day meal is provided to the children only three or four days per week and pure drinking water facilities are not available according to the total number of children in the hill areas. The mid day meal should be provided to the children every calendar day except the holidays and pure drinking water facility should be provided to the children. The water filter should be supplied to the schools proportionately, at least one water filter against 25 children.
4. Suitable and sufficient number of free uniform should be supplied to the children to cater the need of summer and winter seasons.
5. The parents should be educated about the importance of sending their children to the school regularly and not to engage their children too much in household work or income generation activities. Local Non government organisations or social organisations can organise some awareness programme in this regard. Poverty alleviation measures will help in relieving children

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from such work and making them more regular in attending school.

6. The quality of education in schools should improve so that parents feel that the child is learning something worthwhile in school and they should no longer remain indifferent about child's education and unconcerned about whether the child attends school or not. The teachers in the school should be friendly with children and classroom should be attractive so that children feel enthusiastic to go to school instead of being reluctant to attend school.
7. Illiteracy of the parents is a great constraint in the development of primary education in Karbi Anglong. Non formal education programme may be widely expanded in the rural and backward areas to eradicate the illiteracy among the parents. The local educated unemployed youth may be engaged in non formal education programme. Non government organisations have to be involved in the promotion of education and literacy programme among the schedule tribe communities. Proper monitoring of the schemes by local body is needed so that incentive schemes of the government may be reached by the beneficiaries.
8. Short term non formal educational programme may be organised for the illiterate and semi literate tribal parents and adults those who are engaged in shifting cultivation. This type of programme should be organised for one to three months in a season when the parents complete their shifting cultivation and free from agricultural activities. Temporary staying accommodation facilities may be provided for such parents during that time. These types of short term non formal education programme may be organised in community halls, clubs or in some schools before or after the school hours.

Conclusion

The study leads to the conclusion that there are lots of household problems of the primary school children and problems relating to physical facilities of the primary schools for achieving universalization of primary education in Karbi Anglong. There cannot be a one way solution to the problems. A comprehensive effort of the Karbi Anglong Autonomous council, the district administration, state government and the central government can help to solve these problems to a great extent. It is the responsibility of the government and the policy makers to take measures to eradicate the problems of primary education among the different communities of the district. The State Government and Karbi Anglong Autonomous Council should take proper step to provide necessary facilities such as permanent school building, sufficient number of class room, separate toilets for teacher and pupils, teacher common room, compound wall, suitable road to the schools from main road, play ground, furniture, pure drinking water, electrification, separate kitchen for cooking mid day meal, suitable audio visual aids as early as possible. Suitable and available physical facilities could help to improve the quality of primary

education of our state in general and Karbi Anglong in particular.

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