2.1 Introduction:
The term ethnicity has acclaimed an important position globally not just because of its academic importance; rather because of the constant ethnic conflict which rocked the globe. It is evident that, the world is divided or segregated into ethnic enclaves by processes glossed as ethnic conflict. Simultaneously there has been growing ethnicization of politics and vice versa in South Asia, which made the situation more alarming. By ethnicization of politics or politicization of ethnicity we mean the personal quest for meaning and belonging into a group demand for respect and more precisely power. This also means to stimulate a nexus between politics and ethnic cultural values and also designates cognitive awareness among the people in rendering that nexus. The notions of ethnicity therefore is a globally acclaimed phenomenon accepted as one of the common denominator of community life. It is recognized as one of the important elements of identity. Although the term itself contains seeds of habitual traits on some individual choices but at the core it generates social differences which are often well demarcated. Ethnic groups as mentioned by Nathan Glazer and Daniel P. Moynihan (1978),

"refer not only to the subgroups, to minorities, but to all the groups of a society characterized by a sense of difference owing to culture and descent, itself reflects the somewhat broader significance that ethnicity has taken up in recent years".

The term ethnicity sometimes found to be more inclusive in nature and sometimes more exclusive depending on what it generates. But internationally the
term is in debate because of its Inclusivist nature. The scenario worldwide has been quite different. States in different zones in the world experienced different sorts of inequality and conflict at some primordial level, but the immediate question that strikes us is, does all such conflicts can be called as ethnic. Here Nathan Glazer and Daniel P. Moynihan (1978) has rightly pointed out that,

"this single term applied to phenomena as various as the survival of psychological differences between Italian and Irish Americans in the United States; black politics here; the difficult effort to find a satisfactory place for the French-speaking element in undivided Canada; the restrained but devastating conflict between Fleming and Walloon in Belgium, the looming nationalities issue in Soviet Russia; the language problem in India; Border minorities in China; the status of Indian and mestizo in Peru; the all important issue in Africa of which tribes got recruited for the modern armies there. The phenomenon seems everywhere to be encountered, but somehow, everywhere, also, various. Does a single term help? Would it not be better to describe such varied phenomena as linguistic, national, religious, tribal, racial and the like, depending on their nature?"

Yielding on the above description conflicts can be distinguished in different kinds depending on what nature or what character it derives. In times conflicts can be called as linguistic, religious, racial, tribal, national and also ethnic in most of the time.

But there are some other inter-related themes to discuss on ethnicity and its functions. Important among them is whether ethnicity provides unique bond or it generates discord. The earlier social scientist believe, ethnicity is not about distinct
culture or recognizing everybody’s worth as different and unique, where in the name of Assimilation the smaller groups merged into the bigger group. In a nutshell it also speaks about certain amount of toleration that is apt for having if not completely but a partially homogeneous identity. But assimilation with complete submerge in the bigger group by the smaller groups became prove to be a utopian and which is also questionable. The coming parts of the chapter will discuss all these associated debates in details.

2.2 What is Ethnicity? : The “Self” and “Other” Debate

Ethnicity is the most popular phenomenon in social sciences although originated recently. It implies of a society/group, where there is (if not complete) certain homogeneity and commonality of attributes designates human action. Those attributes are sometime shaped by the cultural facets and sometime by the parallel linguistic affinities. This similarity also generates sense of dissimilarity between the communities. These general differences in times become so ostentatious that made community as a distinct group of people who are different from the others, with aspects that are primordial, instrumental and also constructed. The self and other debate cannot be understood with the isolation of the general understanding of the term ethnicity. But before entering to the details of that debate it will be necessary to discuss the origin and meaning of the term ethnicity and how it got a momentum in the international as well as regional studies and also in social science in greater sense.

The term emerged at a critical juncture, when there is complete distrust and disharmony among global communities, where almost every country witnessed ethno-social conflict in different intensity. But the term does not have an academic
recognition in social science before the 20th century. It is only after the Second World War it got an important place in academic field. The impetus became more vital after the anti colonial movement in South Asia, South Africa and Latin America during the last part of forties till the first half of seventies. It got further momentum when there was the dissolution of the former USSR into fifteen independent states during the hot conditions of cold war.

Despite of those international events ethnicity as an academic rudiment first come infront with the writings of David Riesman in 1953. It has further believed that the term does not really make an appearance in the 1933 edition of the Oxford English Dictionary, but do appear in the 1961 edition of Webster’s third New International, surprisingly does not got a place in the 1966 edition of Random House Dictionary of the English Language nor at the 1969 edition of American Heritage Dictionary of the English Language. Although it is again in the 1973 edition of American Heritage Dictionary it does able to secure a place where the term Ethnicity has been defined in two meanings: one as the conditions of belonging to a particular ethnic group and second as an Ethnic Pride. Both the terms however derives both Objective and Subjective interpretations. Whereas understanding ethnicity as a Pride become very much subjective as it contains seeds for relative status.

Locating ethnicity as a belonging towards a social order do substantially sounds partial, but, the writings of most social scientists and social anthropologists derive the same meaning with some trivially discrete interpretations. Following that, we may here discuss some of the important categorically distinct definitions of
ethnicity and some of its' symbolic characteristics. Social scientists such as Milton Gordon (1964) believed:

Ethnicity as a sense of peoplehood created by common race, religion, national origin, history or some combination of these.\(^7\)

The definition implies one of the pronounce characteristics of the term ethnicity which is reciprocal. This reciprocity might some time turn into a restricted social order, where one does not really permit the 'others' to interfere into their daily life practices, including their ethos and ways of seeing the universe. Fredric Barth (1969) has also accepted the fact that, among all the common characteristics mentioned above, the sharing of the common culture is most important.\(^8\) For him, ethnicity as the 'cultural bearing unit' is more important than any other attributes. Arguing to that aspect of ethnicity, he realized that, it is necessary for the persons or group of persons belonging to one ethnic community to realize their particular traits of culture. While realizing that fact, one must not overwhelmingly emphasize in the overt cultural traits which are in times also influenced by the ecological surroundings one experience. Notably, Barth has realized one very important fact that, the same group having similar cultural patterns might turn up to be different at least at some institutional level, as being forced to meet different environmental settings. But it could be wrong, if one accept those overt institutional patterns as the substitute of the cultural features of an ethnic group, as the daily action of a community must not be grounded only with the patterns of institutional behaviors one opted for with the changing ecology, it is more than that, even more cultural. We may disagree with the argument put forward by Barth with the fear that, people in times might not stick to the so called cultural traits and accordingly stop realizing
the original traits. And hence start substituting with the new sets of traits from a new kind of situation experienced. This presumption might not be futile, as because we have so many examples of such cultural conversion. We may here take an example of a Deori Society in the plains of Assam, India, whereby the same Deori tribe following different ways of communication, where a group of people known as Dibongiya speaks the traditional language of the tribe, where as the other two sub tribe of the group Tengapaniya and Borgangya have abandoned speaking their traditional language because of their geographical inhibition and also of the linguistic exchanges they made with the neighbouring communities. The close-door mobility and frequent interchangeability of communication can also be some other factors responsible for this. Although this does not help us to come to an ultimate conclusion that cultural traits are the sources for constituting ethnic groups, yet there have been more other factors which make an ethnic group.

Etymologically the term ethnicity derives from a Greek world called "Ethnos", (which in turn derived from a word called ethnikos), which originally mean Heathen or Pagan. Owing from the English literature, the term gradually identify itself with Race or any forms of racial characteristics. Nevertheless the term has been defined to understand a group of people having common descent, history, language, culture and identity. But this general understanding on ethnicity further raises certain questions regarding the validity of common hood among the segments of discrepancy and also of what J. Milton Yinger (1997) feared:

"where shall we draw the line, stating that here is ethnicity."

To answer this fear, it is not easy when there are both advantages and disadvantages in the equally contrary situations, i.e. to see similarities amidst
dissimilarities and also dissimilarities among similarities. At this stage we fear to
find an answer to the doubts, that gives a dubious situation for the formation of an
ethnic group and seek answer whether mere uniformity of color, creed and breed is
enough to locate ethnicity, answer is certainly not easy.

Following the argument stated above now the discussion will revolve on how
the notions of “Self & Other” have influenced the notion of ethnicity. Does it
contain a direct link in regulating a situation, which bears some brunt of stern order
or whether it avail possibilities of respect and toleration? Whether this formulation
of we and them is natural, biological or constructed ideas? What prompted a
community to create artificial barrier? These intimately contradictory variables need
to answer to estimate the making and unmaking of an ethnic group. Most of the
conflicts that took place in any part of the world are the result of these ethnic
boundaries. If the ethnic boundary is not strict, the chances for conflict become less
and if the ethnic boundaries are harshly maintained, then the intensity of conflict
become more. The ethnic boundaries are the result of social distinction of one
community over other. It shows the distinct features of a particular group which
made it exclusive to others and also shows the distinction of order among the
community. Ethnic boundary means how communities are being organized or on
which grounds. This organization does not necessarily mean territorial organization.
As because a community might have stay in different locality yet they might
organized or named before a community because of the cultural affinity they have.
Indeed these cultural affinities are symbolic and subjective in nature and drawn
mostly to differentiate themselves from others. De Vos, rightly observed that, ethnic
group observed:
"any aspects of culture, in order to create internal cohesion and (to) differentiate themselves from other groups".

These cultural affinities or ties are often interpreted as historically evolved bind of cultures which made them alike among fellow members and create dissimilar groups as others (although subjective). In that sense ethnic boundaries also imply the character of membership of a particular group. Joane Nagel (2007), observed that:

"ethnic boundaries determine who is a member and who is not and designate which ethnic categories are available for individual identification at a particular time and space".

While allotting the memberships the community often tends to leave some proportion of people because they noticed certain amount of dissimilarities among them and certainly evolved an "other". It is now evident that, ethnic boundaries does not only encompass a separate life world for communities, but also limits the social interaction/mobility with others. It is mainly because, a particular community starts judging or evaluating others on the grounds of their own ethnic parameters, which in most of the time results in "stereotypes" or in more sociological terms "Prejudice". These stereotypes and prejudice building are some social types although creates a false impression of one group which is indeed not accurate, yet that's how people visualize each other. Ethnic boundaries are the result of constant emphasis of one group over their cultural history as something prodigious and start glorifying their culture and traits as supreme and pure. Thus they viewed others as impure and somewhat inferior. Despite of that, there are some other factors which are responsible for some strict social closure. Sometime, because of certain
socio historical reasons a group need to close their boundary. Historically it is proved that, whenever a group experienced themselves in a situation of social insecurity, they used to recollect their memories of past and start searching similar tendencies among others to assemble in a common bond. This situation happens sometimes because of the imagination of a group itself to be vulnerable and insecure of being lose their age old name and sometimes it is politically instigated. The fear rose among a community mainly when there has been gross encroachment by some other communities over the “local” they otherwise have mastered. Immigration can be one of the major activities responsible.

The overwhelmingly increasing pressure over the identity formation in a hierarchal & heterogeneous society strengthens the “self & other disparity”. To be more precise, communities those are inclining towards their traditional and cultural practices make the whole discourse of ethnicity a battle field. If we refer to the recent development in the state of Northeast, than we will find that, commemoration of traditional ethnic, cultural and historical practices of one group, has subsequently lead to insecurity for other and that results ethnic contestations. Apart from that, ongoing demands for the identity formation, reformation and revive (in some form) in the region of Northeast contributed more pressure in this direction. Moreover, the pan Indian nationhood is harshly challenged by the little nationalism (Misra Udayan, 1980) in the state of Northeast via the constant insurgency movement channelized in ethnic lines. The last few decades after independence, therefore, grossly affected by the ethnic insurgency in all most all the states of Northeast raising the potential question “who owns the land?”. This also further strengthen the self and other contradiction. This contradiction has also resulted debates around aboriginality. The
contradiction of aboriginality have virtually supplemented by ethnic conflicts at two level, i.e., community level and institutional level, where communities are fighting through violent tactics for their own community. We may here refer to the cases of strives in Manipur where the Kuki and Naga militant groups are fighting each other, in Assam we have cases of Assam movement, Bodo Movement (see Baruah Sanjib, India Against Itself) Demands for Autonomy in the belt of Brahmaputra valley and ethnic tensions in the North Cachar and Karbi Anglong Hills districts (earlier known as North Cachar Hills district council) between all most all the relatively majority and minority communities, Naga Movement in the state of Nagaland (see Misra Udayan, Periphery Strikes Back), Mizo movement in Mizoram, the recent demands for Gorkhaland in Sikkim are some of the important. All these events have somehow or the other reinvestigates the earlier questions of aboriginality and debates associated with it. Details accounts of these debates are discussed in the succeeding chapters in details. In this point it is aimed to reveal an important theoretical question i.e., what might result an ethnic conflict and how far the self - other dichotomy responsible in building ethnicity as more than racial, communal, linguistic or even cultural practice and a source of identity conflict. It may conclude that, identifying a group with some permanent source of attributes representing a different life world (Biswa Prasenjit, Feb, 2008) in contrast to ‘others’ become the marker for ethnicity. It is when we start identifying similarities and dissimilarities among the cultural bearing units of a society we start identifying what make us a different group of persons. Other associated notions of these attributes are discussed in the succeeding parts of this chapter.
2.3 The Dilemma of Being Born: What Composed an Ethnic Group?

The earlier parts of this chapter has already provides us a knowledge how the identity of a group shaped and what difference or degree of distinction created two distinctly different life world. Generally it is believed that, to quote Paul Brass (1991), ethnic groups can be defined in three ways, "in terms of objective attributes, with reference to subjective feelings, and in relation to social behavior".¹³ This shows that a group's objective attitude to being different in many objective ways, to hold a subjective feeling what one ought to be and to bridge a relation with others by maintaining an ethnic boundary makes an ethnic group. Taking a clue from this interpretation, it is now inevitable to understand that, people's inherent difference in types and temperaments organized them as separate and individual community. These differences are often maintained and most of the time cherished by the group, in order to attain an identity for themselves. These general differences are although seems to be attain or regain in due process of identity formation, but in reality these are hereditary in nature. It means that, a person is a person; who not only born to his or her parents, but also born to a particular culture and identity. This is seemingly sounds like primordial when person's identity are more than cultural rather biological or genetic. This genetic or biological identification make a person member of a distinct identity and hence provides certain life attachments to maintain that identity, but at the most it made him as entirely different person from others. A person when grew older these life attachments become an important element of their life even if he dislikes it. The point that is aimed to discuss here is not what make a person subjugate to certain things which he or she does not otherwise follow, rather, what impulses them to behave in naturally inherited as well as socially attained ways.
and which make them more than an individual. The ways through which a person attained a life after the birth become very much social than biological. It involves different attributes which makes a person more than just a gender or a rational being. Although it does not essentially mean that, others attained or given attributes are not rational. They are as rational as the other biologically inherited organs, although those attributes are more immaterial and can be figured out throughout life. Thus, these attainments of attributes involve a lifelong process. A person’s social attitude and identity is very much relying on what attributes it undergoes and what norms directs his or her life. More often these norms are very much symbolic and thus person’s identity. This is to say, since the learning or attainment of attributes are different for different people so as the symbolism of identity, it generates different strata of society (although stratify is not an aim of this research). Ethnic groups are not exception to that. Although, a uniform order of learning for all the ethnic groups is not available. The process of learning and attainments of cultural symbolism are different to different ethnic groups. For some, it starts early and continues throughout life and for some with the changing situation it happens in phases. Therefore, the learning or attainment of an identity especially in an ethnic group depends on what social forces influenced the person most. If it is ‘religion’ then the person’s identity becomes more grounded of who he is; a Christian or Muslim, Hindu or Buddhist or so on. This sidelines the other possible ways through which the person could otherwise identified, since that society become more based on religion and it become the strongest force among other social forces. In India although ethnic groups are never been understood in terms of a religion, as most of them somehow or the other become a part of the Hindu religion (which is a major
religion), although with different names. This means ethnic groups are more inclined towards other social forces, even though religion becomes one of the most influential social forces and social marker in India. This has also been universally valid to other ethnic group in the world, at least with the consent that, the groups who are understood with religion are more intensified and grounded not to be identifying as ethnic.

For a group there are some other social forces which makes it ethnic than communal. When we said other social forces to understand what composed an ethnic group, we essentially mean the overwhelming importance of race, language and nationalism which are indeed culturally loaded. Race, language and nationalism (not the political nationalism) are part of ‘culture’ and become culturally defined phenomenon to identify what is ethnic. Interestingly most of the ethnic relationships in the world are guided through these cultural intricacies. Sometimes to identify which of them more important to frame what is ethnic and to say whether a person’s identity is racial based, linguistically ordained or defined by nationalism is not so easy. For a person these become more complicated, when s/he has to undergo a phase of transaction and have to define him or herself belong to a particular trait. Although in a unified society where the neighbors are belonging to the same community, there is no hurdle for anyone to identify who s/he is, but the case become complicated when the person have so much diversity in an around and share a multiple identity in terms of his or her nationality, linguistic affinity, cultural choices and so on. When there is peaceful coexistence at both personal and community level, this dilemma of whom a person is born to never be an issue. Until the person become aggressive to particular social forces among those challenging
the coexistence. This situation might end up in isolation or chauvinism. In both the cases ethnicity took up an institutionalized form resulted in formation of a new group loyalty. People starts either through reviving the historical identity or hence try to mobilize a section of people under the shadow of that revived identity or form a new group, asserting a common ethnic unification. Both this equally contradictory situations of formation of ethnic groups in the Northeastern region is very much common. Most of the ethnic movement and ethnic strives in the region are the outcome of these two factors, whereby they either of these ways try to mobilize some concession for that particular group concern. The cases of revive out of the earlier state of assimilation and formation of new identities become very much visible in the state of northeast. The demands for sixth schedule or more appropriately demands for tribal status recognition by various ethnic groups, in the state of northeast and demand for territorial recognition for a cultural group or tribe, which they thought inherit since the time immemorial, shows the intensity of these situations. Therefore in several times ethnic groups are formed out of the constant dilemma of being born into some social forces. The present case is also become an exaggerated example of this kind of situation where the existing social milieu is contested by the overriding claims for cultural recognition and for the sense of economic recognition of the groups who otherwise coexists with each other. Details of the cases will be discussed in the latter part of this thesis.

2.4 Race and Ethnicity: Cynicism over the Circumference

Most of the social scientist in the global north and most other from Europe establish a link between race and ethnicity. To be precise, many of them identify ethnicity and race as something unanimous. It is stated in the dictionary of Race and
Ethnic Relations (fourth Edition) that, “race” is as a synonym for what we usually call a nation or an ethnic group, as, for example, “the French race” or “the German race.”…this usage has become obsolete, but it was common in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Race becomes inevitable to understand the ethnic distinction in the states of America, Africa and other parts of greater Europe. Moreover writer like Pierre Van Den Berghe mentioned that, race and ethnicity emerged out of the same biological nepotism, by which he mean that, both the social facts are the outcome of the genealogical traits of kinship and over powered influence of it to define what a group is. But, saying that the author also aware of the distinction between race and ethnicity, which will be discussed latter. Therefore for many, understanding ethnicity starts with the understanding of race. This argument needs some theoretical understanding of what race or racial formation means.

Race: Meaning and Attachments: According to Encyclopedia of Race and Ethnicity, “A race is a social grouping of people who have similar physical or social characteristics that are generally considered by society as forming a distinct group.” This definition shows how the physical feature and social features amalgamate a racial group. But this definition also unleashes a very important dimension of any kind of racial or ethnic grouping, i.e. the “recognition” of the society. It means that, every grouping should get the consideration of the society as distinct, failed to which a group cannot be considered as an autonomous and individual group. Race according to the Encyclopedia of Race and Ethnicity become a combination of four distinct factors; based on those factors a following diagram has been prepared which will help us to understand it.

55
The diagram shows that, Race is socially constructed. It means that the sense of race hood is an outcome of a constant social construction, which a person or other identified through using different symbols. This symbolic interpretation, by self and by others is very much constructed. These symbols are collected from the human environment and became an integral part of the existing body of knowledge over society and culture. Thus using symbols are mainly aimed towards achieving one identity to a group.

It also says that Race is also a combination of some physical resemblance. This physical resemblance involves skin color, facial appearance or hair texture. Although the Encyclopedia believes that, these biological features are essential to form a race but the social features are also unique, as because many a time the physical features are used to make a social difference or stratification. It is also believed that apart from the physical similarities some sort of social similarities are also important. This social similarities involved common history, common descent, shared speech and tradition etc. These senses of similarities are also helpful to identify race. For example the groups who have similar pattern of social history such
as roots of migration (although at different time frame), the similarities of script are used to identify a particular group. Mongoloids\(^1\) are therefore understood as those people whose migration history is supposed to be from a same place.

The diagram has also portrait an important element of race, which is racial grouping. Unless and until people start identifies the differences between themselves, race will never be a reality. It means that every group shared some common features which are essential to form an ethnic group and make them unique and different from others. This common attributes are molded in person's personality through a long process called socialization\(^2\) and through social mobility.

**History of Race:** It is believed that the term *Race* entered the English language in the beginning of the sixteenth century. Since then till the early of nineteenth century it was primarily used to refer to common features present because of shared descent.\(^7\) But since the beginning of nineteenth century the term is used in various other forms. Earlier Race was mainly understood from a point of view of biology or zoology, where it unanimously meant for any kind of sub-spices in the

---

1. According to Merriam Webster Online Dictionary Mongoloid constitute those characteristics of a race of human kind native to Asia and classified according to physical features. The term Mongoloid was first used by Christoph Melners who understood it as a binary racial scheme.

2. Socialization is the process by which human infants begin to acquire the skills necessary to perform as a functioning member of their society, and is the most influential learning process one can experience. Unlike other living species, whose behavior is biologically set, humans need social experiences to learn their culture and to survive. Although cultural variability manifests in the actions, customs, and behaviors of whole social groups (societies), the most fundamental expression of culture is found at the individual level. This expression can only occur after an individual has been socialized by his or her parents, family, extended family, and extended social networks. This reflexive process of both learning and teaching is how cultural and social characteristics attain continuity. Many scientists say socialization essentially represents the whole process of learning throughout the life course and is a central influence on the behaviour, beliefs, and actions of adults as well as of children.

57
eco system. However writers like Sir, Julian Huxley and A. C. Hadon implies that the term race should be used to identify the ethnic groups.\textsuperscript{18}

**Difference between Race & Ethnicity:** Both the terms though usually relate by many social scientists, yet there are people who believed that, there has to be some delineation between these two. Andreas Wimmer (2008) is one of them, he believed that, *"subsuming race as a particular form of ethnicity is part of a sinister neoconservative agenda."*\textsuperscript{19} While saying that, the author cited a comparative example of the U.S. society and a society where phenotypical variation of population is noticed; but off course without racial affiliation. To draw the distinction between race and ethnicity, we may at least assume what Wimmer said about the society in U.S. which more often racially divided, where social relationships are more grounded on how one sees the other. But he also concerned about the limitation of such interpretation and said that, in some nonracialized ethnically differentiated society the degree of exclusion is as similar as of the race\textsuperscript{20}. It is believed that:

*"General conceptual distinction between 'race' and ethnicity is that 'race' evokes a biological and genetic referent, and ethnicity refers to cultural and religious difference and kinship."*\textsuperscript{21}

It is therefore important to note that, the degree to which groups are understood in different parts of the world specially as ethnic group do not necessarily composed on the basis of some racial characters rather they are pro to culture even ethnic. This degree of difference to name a group as ethnic is so varied to nations with different cultures, that might ended up saying that, a culture is the only dominant source that makes people different. Here by using the term culture we
essentially accept a very flexible meaning of it, representing every possible walk of life, i.e., taboos associated with, fooding, clothing, behaviour, customs, rituals, ceremonial functions, birth, death and many more. This distinguished the groups in a slightest possible ways to be unique and un-identical to anyone.

To support this argument we may refer to, Pierre V.D. Berghe who said, one basic element of understanding ethnicity and race as two if not complete but different social reality, is cultural than biological. To quote him:

"If ethnicity and race are both rooted in the biology of nepotism, why is that most ethnic groups stress cultural markers off membership rather than heritable physical ones? The answer here is quite simple: because most ethnic groups seek to differentiate themselves from their immediate neighbours in situations where some short-distance migrations and intermarriage take place. Therefore, most ethnic look so much alike their neighbours that they must rely on cultural markers of distinctions."

It shows that ethnic groups are culturally distinct than the racial groups.

2.5 Ethnicity as Nationalism: Operational Precincts

It is believed that, Ethnicity and Nationalism engrossed seemingly visible contradiction, both in academia and in real politics. The differences associated with these two terms are operational rather than definitional. It implies that ethnicity and nationalism has different but most of the time overlapping operational boundaries. If we study the great wars in the world, the first and the second, we may at least accept the truth that, world has been fighting not for a particular goal rather for many associated reasons, but the major one was the sense of autonomy and integrity of one nation from the yoke of others (mostly composed of colonial - imperialist).
Moreover, if we study the post world war history we can notice interesting change in the demands for nationalism. Especially in the colonies run by the Britishers were went through such nationalistic demands for change. Yes, we cannot generalize all the colonial provinces were liberated for analogous purposes and ways, but off course they were in many ways egg on by the rising discourse of nationalism. For many therefore, the histories of Colonial nations are the history of nationalism. But, if we study how nationalism is defined by the European writers, than we will notice a departure from those definitional designs on nationalism in the South Asia in general and India in particular. The departure is more operational than definitional as we mentioned above. The reason why one might take a departure from accepting nationalism and ethnicity as more or less identical ideas, reasonably meant for not accepting it as synonym but as two differently similar items supporting each other. But, to understand the operational differences one might need to see the definitional differences of these two terms. Therefore it is important to mention the definitional differences. Although the definition of these terms are clarified in the previous chapter, but for the sake of better understanding of the relation and the argument placed here a brief understanding of these terms are referred. It is believed by Smith (2009) that,

"Nationalism can be defined as an ideological movement to attain and maintain autonomy, unity and identity on behalf of a population, some of whose members believe it to constitute an actual or potential 'nation'. Nationalism is not simply a shared sentiment or consciousness, nor is it to be equated with the 'rise of nations'. It is an active movement inspired by an ideology and symbolism of the nation."

23
The definition shows the process of nationalism as an intense affair mostly aimed at building a nation. Nation in this sense for him is an outcome of a political process which is endorsed with ethno-symbolic matters. He further argues that the sentiments which other social scientist argued as important to measure nationalism such as patriotism are often linked with ‘state’ but not with ‘nation’. Therefore for him,

"Nationalism is a doctrine about the nations, not the state. . . . . . . . nations are natural organisms and 'exist in nature'; they are therefore prior to the state."^24

Therefore the author finds a classical departure to just pretend nationalism as a political object rather as cultural phenomenon. He has even identified eight important elements of nationalism which might vary to countries but are essential to form a nationalistic sentiment includes: autonomy, unity, identity, authenticity, the homeland, dignity, continuity and destiny. These elements are more cultural than political, more ethno-symbolic than ethnic. Gellner while mentioning about Anderson in his famous version on nationalism as imagined community also agreed with the fact that, nations are more cultural, more imaginative (not invented), even more group specific. Although these sounds like nationalism and ethnicity have a very close nexus in its operation, but in reality they are far flunked in the real operation of the terms. Eriksen has notably mentioned these degree of difference and mentioned that,

"Both studies of ethnicity at the local community level and studies of nationalism at the state level stress that ethnic or national identities are constructions; they are not 'natural'...(although) widespread assumption of
congruence between ethnicity and 'objective culture' in both cases shown to be cultural construction themselves. Talk about culture and culture can here, perhaps be distinguished in roughly the same way as one distinguishes between the menu and the food. They are social facts of different orders."

This definition counters what Smith and Anderson mentioned in their works and claimed that, ethnicity or more precisely ethnic identity can be used by the nationalism to mould an ethnic organization but it does not necessarily represent the demands of the other minority ethnic communities. Nationalism therefore might represent the ethnic interest of a group as believed as a cultural community but not all those diverse communities who themselves identify as different in their identity. The majority and minority rights representation is also an issue which makes the distinction between these two sharper and clear. As cited above, nationalist are mostly concerned towards one group of people which is mostly the majority, whereas for the ethnic communities does not represent only one homogenous group of people speaking a similar tone and having a similar diet. But this formulation of ethnicity is accepted by many right winged nationalist to assemble a political movement to construct a common homeland with common ethnic characters. But this over generalized definition is neither accepted nor acknowledged in social sciences, as ethnicity in its boarder sense does not include state in its agenda.

Moreover nationalism can have two meaning one as a cultural sentiment and second as political movement for larger autonomy. In that sense ethnicity may stands at disagreement to be as a cultural movement for freedom and autonomy alone whereas it can meant for the second meaning mentioned for nationalism, i.e., political movement for extension for autonomy and authentic identity. But this is not
to conclude that both these terms are standing at the same position to be alike. The point which makes them different is culture and the cultural boundary of a group. Although nationalism indeed follow a cultural line but the aim is to ultimately establish a nation with a stable political order, whereas ethnicity might not ended up in that aim alone (saying that it does not mean that ethnic group have no political motive at least in a very rudimentary form). Ethnic groups are mostly directed towards cultural recognition of difference and the ethnic conflicts are the outcome of those cultural wars or competition for recognition. If we take cases from India than we realized that, the incidents of ethnic based genocide and cleansing in the states of North-east are the manifestations of those cultural wars. The potency of those conflicts are enormous in ethnicity than the casualties in nationalism. This is mainly because the persons involved in these movements are gross and diverse compared to that of nationalism. The ambitions of nationalism therefore directed to secure the state pride, where as for the ethnic groups it’s the ethnic pride. State pride is the important element which aims to foster integrity, unity and harmony inside the nation, whereas ethnic pride composed the recognition, maintenance of identity and brought the ethnic uniqueness further to the succeeding generation. In both the cases boundary plays a very important position. For the state, state pride moves around maintenance of state boundary, whereas for the ethnic group maintenance of ethnic boundary is important. State boundaries are not only culturally defined rather it is a matter of political consent; whereas ethnic boundaries are culturally defined and very much distinct to group specific judgment.

Apart from these definitional differences, there is another important question that strikes our interest, i.e., if ethnicity and nationalism are two distinctly different
and overlapping pedagogies, than what makes them overlap? What are those factors which make these concepts closely related but over ridden in real politics? What does ethno-nationalism means? What extent ethno-nationalism affects the meaning of ethnicity and nationalism? To answer these questions we are here initiate one very important theoretical estimate put forwarded by Paul Brass. He stresses on ethnicity and nationalism, by relating them together with an elite competition. To stress on the critical side of his argument let us state his version of link between these two politically different but socially identical forms, when he said,

"...nationalism arises in response to objective exploitation of an indigenous group by an alien group, or of one social class by another." 26

To put an initial remark on his statement, we may say that, many a time a social inequality or an aggression of a particular class over other is not enough to build a strong nationalism. Sometimes the sense through which a particular group manipulate others to entertained national interest might be several time stronger than how the group manipulate that interest. The sense therefore occupies a central theme of study in ethnicity and nationalism. Groups increasing frustration and sense of relative deprivation with the majority community are the major source of many nationalist movements in different parts of the world and in India. The Naga national movement, the Mizo movement and even the demands for separate homelands for different communities in India are some stunning examples of such an issue.

2.6 Ethnicity and Assimilation:

Assimilation was treated as one of the crucial element of socialization vis-à-vis an important element of nation building during the early nineteenth century. Most of the social scientist therefore argues in favour of certain uniform and
common pattern of living, whereby a majoritarian ways of living is expected even followed. For most of the Marxist and Non-Marxist thinkers Assimilation become an important process through which a homogenous society can be achieved. For the Marxist, ethnic societies were essentially a primitive society where a less mobile, less developed stage of living was followed; this was again supported by the particularistic attitude of world view. Thus for having a socialist society this way of living should be merged into the general way of living, where there is no hierarchy. Moreover for the Marxist Socialism stands for termination of any kind of ethnic tensions or conflicts.27 Whereas, for the non-Marxist thinkers these kinds of ethnic tensions or way of life should be merged into the majority culture, otherwise industrialization and development cannot be gained. But these assimilationist tendencies did not succeed and lots of ethnic issues emerged in all over the world. It is already discussed in the previous part of this chapter how the world has been challenged by different ethnic issues. During the period of cold war it is noticed that ethnicity generates political fragmentation in the nations of Yugoslavia and Soviet Union.28 Apart from this there were several incidents which shows emergence of an ethnic mobilization throughout the world, although these mobilization was instigated through different cultural markers, such as, skin colour in United States, language in Canada, tribal affinities in Africa, religion in Sudan and Northern Ireland,29 autonomy movement in India, so on and so forth. But, we are neither aimed to study here what ethnicity results at the end, nor how the sources of dissimulationist tendencies swept away the possibilities of assimilation, these issues will be discuss in the following parts of the present chapter. Now, we will discuss the meaning and
scope of assimilation and its link with ethnicity and on different strategies through which assimilation is attained.

Assimilation is primarily said as the process of being similar but during the early twentieth century there is another secondary meaning attached to this term which appears with organic process resembles the absorption of nutriments by a living organism as the body is said to assimilate food. This analogical definition of assimilation was quite popular in the study in both sociology and anthropology, but there has been gross dissimilarities among those are sociologist and anthropologist to use the term assimilation and acculturation together. For them both of the terms are usually used simultaneously to mean the same thing, which Gordon (1964) referred as, coming of people together. Assimilation although in that sense stands for coming of different people under a same banner, yet there have been varied meaning for different people in understanding why people assimilate and how. Referring to the Subcommittee on Acculturation appointed by Social Science Research Council way back to the mid of 1930’s referred that:

Acculturation, “comprehends those phenomena which result when groups of individuals having different cultures come into continuous first-hand contact, with subsequent changes in the original cultural patterns of either or both groups”.

In this sense assimilation stands for an exchange of cultural behaviour where a degree of change is desired from both the sides and also aimed at structural change

---

3 Subcommittee on Acculturation was an authoritarian body established by the Social Science Research Council, established in the middle of 1930’s to study on Acculturation in USA was a body of highly assembled scholars during that period. The subcommittee was composed of three eminent Anthropologists including, Robert Redfield, Ralph Linton and Melville J. Herskovits.
in the ethnic relations. But, this definition illustrate only one side of the term as it does not mentioned anything on common culture. The definition offered by Robert E. Park and Ernest W. Burgess is therefore important to mention here. They forwarded:

"Assimilation is a process of interpenetration and fusion in which persons and groups acquire the memories, sentiments, and attitudes of other persons or groups, and, by sharing their experience and history, are incorporated with them in a common cultural life."

This definition provides an illustrated meaning of the term assimilation which not only means cultural exchange and behaviour; but also on the sense of common hood deployed by the term. The meaning of the term assimilation has been further extended by Park, an American Sociologist more firmly, when he said the need of cultural behaviour sometime more than social and politically overloaded. He said:

Assimilation,

"the name given to the process or processes by which peoples of diverse racial origins and different cultural heritages, occupying a common territory, achieve a cultural solidarity sufficient at least to sustain a national existence."

The definition shows that, Assimilation as a process become very much crucial, as it not only aimed at maintaining social solidarity but also in preserving the national integrity. These definitions are very much flexible in the sense that, there is no where mentioned about complete transformation of one group into another culture. Yet, this complete assimilation was hoped by few social scientists. Among them Henry Fairchild is important when he said:
In essence, assimilation is the substitution of one nationality pattern for another. Ordinarily, the modifications must be made by the weaker or numerically inferior group.\textsuperscript{34}

This definition shows how minority was forced to assimilate in the majority culture just to maintain one national identity and culture. The major ambition of this kind of assimilation is to secure one ethnic identity even at the cost of complete merger of smaller ethnicity. Milton Gordon (1964), has mentioned three stages development of Assimilation in America, (which we may not completely generalize in the context of South Asia). Which he named as- Anglo conformity, Melting Pot and Pluralism (cultural and structural). Theories on Melting pot and pluralism are the advance stage of assimilation and are very much debated by the authors in mid 60’s. The details of these debates will be highlight in the coming chapter. Now we will discuss what Gordon mean of these phases of assimilation.

2.6.1 **Anglo Conformity**: Anglo Conformity is widely known in theoretical circle, which mostly applicable to the Western Europe and the American context. In the central Asian context it has to be converted as – Russo Conformity. This describes an assimilation that is limited to acculturation, to the behavior and values of the core ethnic group. Gordon who attributes the “Anglo Conformity” theory to Stewart Cole, states that this ideal requires that, immigrants completely abandons their cultural heritage in favour of Anglo Saxon Culture. According to Gordon:

\begin{quote}
All have as a central assumption the desirability of maintaining English institutions (as modified by the American Revolution), the English language, and English-oriented cultural patterns as dominant and standard in American life.\textsuperscript{35}
\end{quote}
Such views, in his estimates are related to nativist programmes that promote the acceptance of any immigrants willing to acculturate in the basis of Anglo Conformity. He has mentioned that Anglo conformity gripped the nation like a fever with the Americanization Movement which got spread during the First World War. The aim was to assimilate people within the Anglo Saxon line in the native culture but the attempt was so intense that it became a, 'pressure cooking assimilation'. The situation was such that the whole American society was divided on two opinions, there were few groups who values the importance of the immigrants culture in the American nativist culture, but certain Lineage Patriotic Societies such as, Daughters of the American Revolution, the Society of Colonial Dames and the Sons of the American Revolution were not in-favour of the earlier argument and started certain programmes to grow patriotic feelings, to naturalized and to make them understand the American Political Institution in the minds of those immigrants through setting educational programmes. This had got an enormous support from the public and government institution as well, when there was a fear bubbled in America about the disarray and booming of immigrants from Germany, who were not affluent in English as the other Americans did. This made the federal agencies such as- the Bureau of Education, the Bureau of Naturalization and the Committee on Public information and the state governments to initiate programmes to educate immigrants on English and to make them a complete American. The cry was therefore 100 percent Americanism. The situation was such when the immigrants were forced to live the former origin and become an American. John Higham, has illustrated this situation as a threat to American Life. He forwarded:
“By threat and rhetoric 100 percent Americanizers opened a frontal assault on foreign influence in American life. They set about to stampede immigrants into citizenship, into adoption of the English language, and into an unquestioning reverence for existing American institutions. They bade them abandon entirely their Old World loyalties, customs, and memories. They used high-pressure, steam-roller tactics. They cajoled and they commanded.”

It is now evident that, for the Anglo Conformist, English language and institutions are better than others. Even those who do not support that are of the opinion that English is predominant in the existing American life. Therefore new comers must adapt to what is already in place. Anglo Conformists also assumed that, once immigrants have accultured based on Anglo conformity they will be acceptable and will no longer become a victim of prejudice and discrimination.

2.6.2 Melting Pot: Melting pot became another important pattern of Assimilation where all the ethnic groups are melting in one culture and made the solidarity a strong bond of identity. Gordon admitted that his version of Melting pot was a depicted idea made by a famous author named, Israel Zangwill who wrote a master piece named as – Melting Pot, symbolizing the complete transformation of different identities into a symphony of brotherhood. The drama as he wrote in the very beginning of the 20th century was an best illustration of a Russian immigrant who with the time realized that no matter what distinct images of culture one cherished from its original home, no matter what anomalies, what rivalry one confronts from the taboos s/he endorsed early are going to fused in one national
culture i.e. the American culture. The author let the protagonist speak his version of melting as it goes:

"America is God's crucible, the great Melting Pot where all the races of Europe are melting and re-forming! Here you stand, good folk, think I, when I see them at Ellis Island, here you stand in your fifty groups, with your fifty languages and histories, and your fifty blood hatreds and rivalries. But you won't be long like that, brothers, for these are the fires of God you've come to—these are the fires of God. A fig for your feuds and vendettas! Germans and Frenchmen, Irishmen and Englishmen, Jews and Russians—into the Crucible with you all! God is making the American."

He is further saying:

"Yes, East and West, and North and South, the palm and the pine, the pole and the equator, the crescent and the cross—how the great Alchemist melts and fuses them with his purging flame! Here shall they all unite to build the Republic of Man and the Kingdom of God. Ah, Vera, what is the glory of Rome and Jerusalem where all nations and races come to worship and look back, compared with the glory of America, where all races and nations come to labour and look forward."^39

This gives us a clear image that, for the melting pot theory there will be no exception to any ethnic stock in terms of the fuse they have to make. This theory of assimilation was accepted as the immigrants-receiving experience into the American culture. This had somehow generated tensions among the immigrants and created a sense of deprivation in the minds of the people. Even generally, if we apply the theory to estimate assimilation even in a very less diverse society, with very tolerant
and legitimized citizens, at certain time it may became furze out of recognition and chauvinism by the majority community. The case will more complicated when the native have to confront a huge amount of immigration as an added burden. Therefore it is visible that, this theory of assimilation hardly recognized the inferior ethnic to represent their way of good life and hence been critically debated by the latter scholars such as D. P. Moynihan and Nathan Glazer. With the emergence of the multicultural policies in the federal agencies this mode of assimilation faced confrontation. The associated debates and its departure from the American life will be discussed in the succeeding chapters.

2.6.3 Pluralism: By pluralism the author mentioned about the cultural pluralism. He mentioned that pluralism become an outcome of the real scenario in the American life. He mentioned that, cultural pluralism was there in the American society in every possible form before it become a theory. Although institutionally pluralism was not encouraged during that period, but socially the groups started finding certain communalities among the fellow members and creating a society within a society. He therefore identified pluralism as the national society where every smaller ethnic group got a chance to maintain its own identity. He forwarded:

"What, indeed, is racial and ethnic pluralism? In its most generic aspects it refers to a national society in which various groups, each with a psychological sense of its own historical peoplehood, maintain some structural separation from each other in intimate primary group relationships and in certain aspects of institutional life and thus create the possibility of maintaining, also, some cultural patterns which are different from those of the "host" society and of other racial and ethnic groups in the nation. I have
referred to these two dimensions as "structural pluralism" and, in the term suggested by Horace Kallen, "cultural pluralism".\textsuperscript{40}

Apart from these theoretical estimates on assimilation, with the changing international events many other theories on Assimilation are also emerging. As a result of large scale immigration to the United States of America from both the North Western as well Eastern and Mediterranean Europe the whole discourse of assimilation has got international importance. After that event the discourse of assimilation has shifted from its organic meaning to a solid sociological meaning. It was feared that the immigrants from Eastern and Mediterranean Europe were less assimilable thus a harsh assimilation process was applied known as Americanization. Thus assimilation became an official decorum in USA as it was in Britain in 1960 known as ‘Anglicization’.

But technically Assimilation not only mean to what United States of America undergoes in different period of time. Nations from the newly emerged countries whom we named as third world are also gone through the process of assimilation, although at a different level, ranging from both institutional as well moral changes in the ethnic structure and relation. With those assumptions it is now an accepted fact that, Assimilation becomes a condition of ethnic change through which a minor community (in most cases) and majority community in certain cases adopt, act or acculturate to be similar. This process might result two completely different conditions, when the host community (which is a majority community in that nation) very strongly claimed to maintain the age old traditions and the newly entered community finds it equally difficult and complex to accept the existing norms of taboos in food and other visible signs of living. This condition might result
in two contradictory situations; one, the community entered latter might leave their
traditional and ethnic origin and started to identify with the existing culture of the
country or might assimilate in certain aspect but maintaining their own culture in
many other aspect. The scholars on ethnicity understood both these possible
conditions, thus come up with two distinctly different theories known as- Melting
Pot or Straight Line Assimilation Theory and Segmented Assimilation Theory
(Schaefer Richard T. Eds., 2008), which will discuss in details in the next chapter.
To understand, what is the major definitional difference between these two schools
of thoughts we may illustrate one example of the American Society. The earlier or
first generation migrants which were mostly from the Europe as a whole seen
assimilate into the American culture, but after the change in the trends of migration
and with the sources of Diaspora, the issue of complete assimilation or melting
down into American culture was put under tremendous pressure. It was also seen
that some of the groups faced discrimination (although the term discrimination
become very much loaded in its orientation) and were forced to maintain the
national culture simultaneously following their own traditional culture. In that sense
the immigrant community had accepted both the way of living by accepting certain
variable of culture from both the ethnic cultures (national ethnic and original
ethnicity) such as language, diet, dress, marriage etc. The use of turban by the Sikhs
in USA can be a good example in that sense, where the community noticed speaking
English as the only way of communication language with a perfect competence.
Therefore the discourse of Assimilation becomes very much crucial in study
ethnicity, as it results different strata of people and their association with others.
Off-course the extension of such features of a society is very much in crisis as the
receipting and the newly arrived community lacks toleration and become chauvinist of their original culture. This has become a serious case with the constant pressure for assimilation by the majority community and the cultural rights of the minority community are sidelined even discarded to the extent of abandonment. The rise of smaller communities for the recognition of cultural rights in different parts of India out of the pan Indian identity can be a best example to be sited.

2.7 Ethnicity: Sources of Strength or Sources of Conflict?

The above discussions on ethnicity already give us an idea that ethnicity becomes both a source of strength and also become a source of conflict. To deal with this debate let us initiate what J. Milton Yinger mentioned in his famous book, ‘Ethnicity’ that, ‘mankind is built out of the krummen holze’. Which is to quote Kant, “Aus so krummen Holze, als woraus der Mench gemacht ist, kann nichts ganz Gerades gezimmert warden”, which means that, out of the crooked timber of humanity, no straight thing can ever be made. This means that, human relations and human agony are always critical so as their humanity. There is nothing like concrete and clear like water in human relations and attitudes towards others, when the very nature of humanity is not proper, solid or neither so straight. Taking this argument as the base for this part of the chapter, we may now proceed to discuss some of the important cases of ethnic contestation which will correlate the major hypothesis on ethnicity and provides us knowledge whether ethnicity stands for a source of strength or a source of conflict. This has unleashed one important question, i.e. what distinguished ethnicity as either/or strength or conflict. To answer it is assumed that, for most of the cases ethnicity ended up in two implications, one as assimilation and other as dissimilation. In many aspects both of these aspects went side by side.
These are the two forces and ideologies that expand the range of human contracts, expressing our interdependencies and our common needs and experiences, while at the same time emphasizing the cultural and structural boundaries that separate the members of human groups from each other. This shows that, ethnicity in times becomes contradictory in its orientation and also what it results at the end. For some instances it creates congenial environment for social cohesion and in many instances it results multiple sources for conflict. Here one must understand, what are the sources of assimilation and dissimilation which makes the single ideology or way of life a complicated whole.

So far we have discussed how ethnicity works as sources of strength, also how it derives assimilationist tendencies and the debates associated with. We will now discuss what their dissimilationists' tendencies are. It is mainly because without discussing the importance of dissimilation process is not easy to develop a theory of assimilation. To discuss about the dissimilationist tendencies without the International events will be futile. Ethnic conflict got it prominence in the international field after the Second World War. During the hot conditions of cold war, the world has been busy fighting blame games led by two super powers. This would have never come to an end if there was not a collapse of one super power. Apparently, civil wars took place in the form of intrastate rivalry, and that finally ease the cold war tension. It is stated that, because of the sharp reduction of the super power rivalry, dominant groups in many third world also faced a set back as they lose the outside support. This has provided the suppressed ethnic groups to reappear as part of the effort to fill the power vacuum. Therefore in that critical
international juncture ethnic groups got the chance to dissimilate from the existing society.

Technically dissimilation happens because of the constant differentiation among the already assimilated groups. Differentiation here means narrowing the ethnic boundary. This happens mainly because of the division and proliferation in the group into different parts. Donald Horowitz mentioned two ways how differentiation took place.

**Table 2.1: Process of Ethnic Fission**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Differentiation</th>
<th>Proliferation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Division</td>
<td>Proliferation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A --&gt; B + C</td>
<td>A --&gt; A + B</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>One group divides to two or more component parts</td>
<td>One or more groups (often two) produces an additional group from within their ranks</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


To illustrate the table Horowitz gives a very illuminative example of two different conditions. To quote him,

"In Chamba, the Brahmauris were dividing into component parts, one of which, the Gaddis, was further subdividing into its component parts. *Whereas there are cases of* ethnic proliferation *in some parts of West Indian Society* he said, in certain West Indian societies under slavery, "whites" and..."
"blacks" (themselves amalgams) produced separate "mulatto" or "brown" groups through procreation.\textsuperscript{44}

This shows that dissimilation took place in a form of construction, deconstruction and even reconstruction. The cases are quite similar in several instances in the North Eastern part of India, where group's name like Tiwa, Karbi, Mishing are the reconstructed name of the earlier groups as Lalungs, Mikirs and Miris respectively.\textsuperscript{4} Apart from division and proliferation other basis of differentiation includes group feeling and discrimination which is building up through random categorization and demonstrated similarity. In both the cases individuals are supposed to discriminate infavour of the ingroup member.\textsuperscript{45} The case of dissimilation gets more intense as the members are often over occupied in enhancing group loyalty and relative ingroup advantage, no matter at the cost of maximize inter-group differentials.\textsuperscript{46}

Apart from these issues dissimilation happens because of few other factors, important among them are: Sense of relative deprivation, fear of extinction, going back to history, ethnic revival, and so on. To illustrate all these factors will take another separate chapter. But to sum up, all these factors born out of the constant pressure from the majority community to forced assimilation, which at the end generates sense of frustration among the minority communities, resulted in dissimilation. The chauvinism of the majority group to acculturate the ethnic groups into one standard form of living become intolerable for most of the ethnic

\textsuperscript{4} Changing nomenclature of group's name has refined and reconstructed meaning. The earlier names by which the groups are identified has been seen as used in derogative sense by the majority communities which they tend to revive in a new form to attain a social privilege and status. These types of movements are quite familiar to the many such movements in northeast including among the Nishis in Arunachal, Trwipri in Tripura, Meitei in Manipur, Lalungs, Miris, Mikirs in Assam.
community, thus create options for ethnic revival. In another case, ethnicity become source of conflict in a very diverse society, as the society embrace seeds for ethnic contestations largely because failure of accommodation policies and also because differentiate agendas. Therefore dissimilation is as inevitable as the assimilation, as irrefutable as acculturation. Till when ethnicity or ethnic identity studies takes integration as an important agenda in the social research so will be the dissimilation. Thus ethnicity is understood as a combination of both the factors, thus it become contested.

2.8 Primordialism or Constructivism: Which is the Best Way of Explanation?

There is an abundance of theoretical ventures into the emergence, occurrence, and reproduction of ethnicity into various levels. We have so far mentioned few of them. This abundance is the result of the multifaceted meaning attach to it. But, to be precise we are not intended to study all the theories deals with the notion that are mentioned in the present research. The study on the process of formation of ethnicity has undergoes a persistent and fundamental conceptual difference among different scholars on the basis ethnic groups are formed. There is a genuine doubt regarding the formation of ethnic groups; which provokes us certain questions, such as, do the formation of the ethnic is a natural process, or it is shaped, reshaped or melt into a new form, whether the creation of those groups are encouraged by a particular section of people whom we know as elite or evolving a ethnic community involves any sort of political process. Based on these nuances the scholars formed different schools of thought which evolve different ways of interpreting the term ethnicity. The Primordial’s and the Constructivist’s are the pioneer schools of thought among them, which deal with the notions of ethnic
groups and interpreted how they are formed. Study of the formation of ethnic group therefore is an important issue as it open up, the logic and rational behind why groups are formed. Generally, if we oblige what Primordial’s or Constructivist’s believed, than the whole issue of rationality will loom aside with incompleteness. This is to say that both the theories have two different orientations in defining why groups are formed and how, thus a comparison is all inevitable.

2.8.1 Primordialism: For the primordialists, natural similarities play an important part in human life. For them every person born with certain attachments, although in times they faced construction of their ethnic boundary, but at the end this natural and sociologically defined ties are found to be fixed. These attachments are the outcome of other naturally inherited properties, including, from the place of birth, kinship relationships, religion, language and social practices, which are natural as well as spiritual to the person. These attachments guides individual to find an easy affinity with others based on similar attributes and to form an ethnic group based on that affinity. Speaking about Primordialism, Elliott D Green stated that, ethnic groups are the actual kinship groups and members use nepotism to propagate their line. It means that ethnic groups are formed by extending the historical tie of kinship. It shows how the human being are associated with the notions of kinship resorted towards forming a close boned relationship with those whom they thought similar at least in certain aspect. Whereas direct and acute kinship tie is possible only till the extensions of family and their lines, till few generations, but, not to all who have an assumed kinship tie. Therefore kinship is very often assumed and constructed with certain common attributes.
The earlier usage of the theory of Primordialism goes back to Edward Shils. He has mainly pointed out that, every person carry certain affinities which is exclusive to different individuals. His version of Primordial attachments goes as follows:

"As one thought about the strengths and tensions in family attachments, it became apparent that the attachment was not merely to the family member as a person, but as a possessor of certain especially "significant relational" qualities, which could only be described as primordial. The attachment to another member of one's kinship group is not just a function of interaction.... It is because a certain ineffable signficance is attributed to the tie of blood....The fact that those both factors operated in many of the more intensely knit families does not demonstrate that the two variables are one, but rather that two types of attachments each move in the same direction."\(^{49}\)

Similarly, author like, Geertz, has identified these immediate affinities among the groups as given or as assumed given by some natural forces.\(^{50}\) For him primordial attachments are those givenness, which,

"stems from being born into a particular religious community, speaking a particular language, or even a dialect of a language, and following particular social practices. These congruities of blood, speech, custom, and so on, are seen to have an ineffable, and at times overpowering, coerciveness in and of themselves.......The general strength of such primordial bonds, and the types of them that are important, differ from person to person, from society to society, and from time to time."\(^{51}\)
This definition shows that, primordial attachments are given, a priori, which is prior to all experience, therefore carried out within the primordial realities. This also mentioned that, these attachments are ineffable. These are so powerful that they cannot be measured through any social interaction alone. These are so overwhelming that they are different for different persons. This definition also pretends to draw these attachments as emotional bonding of binding a group with some similar attributes.\textsuperscript{52} Geertz further stresses that, primordial attachments which are important to form an ethnic group includes: Assumed Blood Ties, Race, Language, Region, Religion, and Custom. Details of these attachments are already discussed in the previous parts of this chapter. But the point important here is that, all these attachments lives in the minds of the individual throughout the life, although most of the time these are found to be latent, but played a very decisive role in framing person’s choices to form a social and political grouping. These are the continuing attachments which make a person what s/he is.

2.8.2 Constructivism: Constructivism is another important school of thought which emerged to evacuate what Primordialism stresses upon. Therefore it is said that, the study of Primordialism will be incomplete without highlighting its differences from constructivism.\textsuperscript{53} Constructivism deals with the ways how historically new ethnicity is developed. According to Joane Nagel,

\textit{"the development of a model of ethnicity stresses the fluid, situational, volitional, and dynamic character of ethnic identification, organization, and action – a model that emphasizes the socially ‘constructed’ aspects of ethnicity, that is, the ways in which ethnic boundaries, identities, and}
cultures, are negotiated, defined, and produced through social interaction inside and outside ethnic communities."\(^{54}\)

As per the statement made by Nagel, ethnic group formation is an outcome of the individual’s and group’s creative choices based on their ethnic criteria. That means, groups identities are often the outcome of the ethnic boundaries they maintained with others or the vice versa. Other important attachments that are mentioned by the primordialists in the previous parts are also used to define what ethnicity is composed of. It is already mentioned that for the primordialists attachments namely, language, culture, appearance, ancestry or regionality etc are gained by a person as natural, given or as attained, whereas for the constructivist these are used to provide a meaning and to negotiate an ethnic boundary. It is further believe, the major distinction of constructivism with Primordialism is, ethnic groups are artificial and constructed rather than natural and eternal.\(^{55}\) His distinction is quiet clear. For him, the boundary of an ethnic group is a matter of construction, which potentially raises options for adhere different ways of living without being loosing the historical ethnic ties. It is possible because of the growing interexchange of culture among the people. Nagel has cited a very beautiful example of an American Armenian experience by the non Armenians, still enjoying fewer extensions of an Armenian. He believed that, ethnicity therefore become symbolic in its outlook. By this he meant that, remembering the nostalgic historical culture of one of his earlier native, without being incorporate it in the everyday life. This has importantly shown simultaneous increase and decrease in ethnic affiliation which for him raises a crucial question. He forwarded:

83
“How can people behave in ways which disregard ethnic boundaries while at the same time claim an ethnic identity? The answer is found by examining ethnic construction processes- in particular, the ways in which individuals and groups create and recreate their personal and collective histories, the membership boundaries of their group, and the content and meaning of their ethnicity.”

The construction of ethnicity moves with two things: individual’s self identification and outsider’s ethnic designation. Both of these conditions are indeed important to formed what a group is look like. To take a clear understanding it means that, ethnic identity is an outcome of a dialectical process involving both internal as external opinions and processes. It means the group identity is not what we think but also what others perceived. Construction begins when the individual moves into the daily life and interacts with different audiences and all these audiences start identify different angles of the group’s features, and to assimilate and integrate with the changing neighbor the groups start negotiating with the ethnic boundaries. Therefore Nagel, stated that,

“Ethnic boundaries, and thus identities, are constructed by both the individual and group as well as by outside agents and organizations.”

He further said that,

“The chosen ethnic identity is determined by the individual's perception's of its meanings to different audiences, its salience in different social contexts, and its utility in different settings.”

This is to note that, the discourse of constructivism roam around how people are formed into different groups, but to say that it does not only mean that
outsiders comments are the only influencing factors which mould one identity. Sometimes there are some other factors which also contribute in the construction process. Ethnic identity therefore is not optional alone to individual among the other possible ethnic choices; rather sometimes these ethnic choices are socially and politically defined. At a very informal way people with a minority status in a very ethnically exhausted society got so many options to construct their own ethnic boundaries. These informal ways can be come in both positive and negative processes such as- Flexible Social Mobility, Less Social Control, Prejudice, Stereotyping, Strong Social Stratification, etc. These are very informal but, socially very strong form of judging people with their attitudes, although represent both objective as well subjective natures; but are very important tools for constructing one's identity. Individual undergoes these processes start constructing their ethnic boundary as both rigid and flexible manner so that to assimilate and dissemilate the existing society. The process of construction becomes more intense when the formal institutions endorsed policy to distinguished cultural communities. Therefore to quote Nagel,

"if informal ethnic meanings and transactions can shape the everyday experiences of minority groups. Formal ethnic labels and policies are even more powerful sources of identity and social experience."59

2.8.3 Primordialism vs. Constructivism: After the discussion made on both the theories it is now evident that, at one point both the theories agreed upon, i.e., ethnic identity formation is a matter of construction based on those biologically inherited syndromes and also on perceived artificial ethnic boundary respectively. Andreas Wimmer has rightfully mentioned that,
"Primordialism," which underlined that ethnic membership was acquired through birth and thus represented a "given" characteristic of the social world, was pitted against "Constructivism," which maintained that individuals choose between various identities according to self-interest.\(^6\)

Our ambition here is not to find out what are the similarities or dissimilarities these theories carried upon, but to see which of these theory explain the term ethnicity better. If we relook what are the major arguments put forwarded by the theorist, than it will be evident that, there is always a lacuna present in both the theory. Sometimes primordial overwhelming stress on race and other race related items to define ethnicity become so much intense that we hardly realized the fact that ethnicity has some other meaning too. Moreover primordial notions of fixed identity of ethnic group are another important area that invites debates. Since there is no end to human quest, a quest for acquires new knowledge, new experience from the changed environment makes this position a myth. The cultural exchange among different communities, the cross cultural exchange, quest for shared identity, rapid rate of immigration, proliferation of mass culture in the primitive culture in almost every country are some of the prominent example that might justify the argument. Whereas one cannot accept entirely what constructivist says about ethnic identity as artificial and constructed identity, which may negotiate the existing ethnic boundary of community. No doubt people choices are always open in a free market capitalist society, but it does not make them entirely abandon their traditional culture. In many cases mixture of different cultural values is noticed in the modern society. Moreover there are certain institutions and processes which still become relevant in ethnic societies, which are as natural as the other primordial elements. The caste system in
India (although there is a debate to consent these system an ethnic tag), the animism practiced among different ethnic communities in North East India, the system of marriage, the dialect speaking communities, the ethnic food, dress, and taboos relating to worship, organizing ceremonies of death, birth and puberty among certain societies are still prevalent and that too without any change. These examples show that, neither of these theories is seldom complete and all these theories are important in defining ethnic conditions in different time and space.

References: