CHAPTER-I
Introduction
1.1 Concept of Ethnicity:

Ethnicity is a concept of referring to a shared culture and way of life, especially as reflected in language, folkways, religion and other institutional forms, material culture such as clothing and food habit and cultural products such as music, literature and art. Ethnicity defines individuals who consider themselves, or are considered by others, to share common characteristics which differentiated them from the other collectivities in society, within which they develop distinct cultural behaviour. The term was coined in certain distinction to race, since although members of an ethnic group may be identifiable in terms of racial attributes, they may also share other cultural characteristics such as religion, occupation, language or politics. Gordon Marshall stated that *Ethnic groups should also be distinguish from social classes, since encompassing individuals who share or are perceived to sharing common typical ethnic group, since they include individuals of different racial origins.* (Gordon Marshall, 1998. 101).

Ethnicity is the pattern of behaviour and attitude of an ethnic group. Whole mankind can be divided into a large number of nationalities on the basis of political boundaries which further can be divided into the level of language, religion, social organization, endogamy etc., that such
different micro levels, can be termed populations as ethnic groups. The term ethnic group was associated with biological formation of population and cultural parameters that prepare it to the social entity. Ethnic group defined as a population implies biological self perpetuating, shares fundamental cultural values, realized introvert unity in culture forms, makes up a field of communication and interaction, a membership which identifies itself and is identified by others as constituting a category distinguishable from other categories of the same order. Ethnic groups are not necessarily homogeneous but need a more flexible approach to ethnicity which does not make a prior assumption that the presence of boundaries between ethnic groups implies heterogeneity between such groups but homogeneity within them. S. L. Sharma supported that the basic attributes of ethnic group are its distinct cultural identity and ethnic consciousness. Providing a ethnic group, a character and quality, the summation of ethnic consciousness for status and recognition as a distinct social entity. (Sharma, S.L., 80).

Ethnicity is a social phenomenon referring to a shared culture, way of life as reflected in language, folk ways, religion and other individual forms, material culture, often called ethnic group which has a sociological importance for social cohesion and social conflict. The concept of ethnicity is not a static one or pre ordained category; it derives
from common economic, political, social and cultural interests and other protection by certain members in a plural society. (S.L. Sharma, 1991, 102).

The terms ethnic and ethnicity are frequently used today in both the political and academic levels. But yet nobody able to give a distinct concept for them and indicates an impression of meaning different things to different people in different contexts and country. The term ethnic may originally have been based on an idea of racial identity by connoting a social context or pattern to feel the concept of racial cum social or cultural cum psychological consciousness. (Hussain, M.G., 1989, 101).

The definition of ethnic group and ethnicity varies from person to person, country to country which create ambiguities and has brought an ongoing definitional debate. Urmila Pradhanis defined the term ethnic and ethnicity from following point of view considering the Greek Terminology. The word “ethnic” derives from the Greek word “ethnicikos” refers to (i) nation not converted to Christianity heathens, pagans (ii) race or large groups of people having common traits and customs and (iii) groups in an exotic primitive culture. In wider sense the term ethnic indicates the meaning of the term people which can be
discuss under three approaches (a) Objectives, (b) Subjective and (c) Culture bearing unit which reflects a narrow view and give importance to social continuity rather than social adaptation. In the subjective approach it is believe that ethnic identity manifests itself through cultural makers which lay stress on the self as well as group encompasses the attributed of presumed or fictive sense of relatedness, a kindred like feeling which is perpetuated by myths and memories and reinforced by common understanding concerning the meaning of a set of symbol , ethnic identity formation is indicate the process of fission as well as fusion, compression and persistence of ethnic group is the notion of ethnicity which is the summation of its impulses and motivations for power and recognition. Ethnicity is a device as much as a focus for group mobilization by its leadership through the use of ethnic symbols for socio-cultural and political- economic purposes. (Pradhan, Urmila, 1989, 110).

Yenger, J. Milton quoted that the ethnic group can be defined as small relatively isolated nearly primordial kin and cultural groups within which much of life proceeds, all the way large categories of people defined as alike on the basis of one or two shared characteristics.(Yenger, J. Milton, 1997,111).
The groups of different size having historical depth, link to other groups, self perception can be termed as ethnic. Ethnic group is a segment of a larger society, where every single entity or members have a common origin and share, important segment of common culture. The definition of ethnic group has three ingredients e.g., Language, Religion and Dress. The sense of alienation and deprivation felt in North East in general that has been primarily for meting ethnicity Gregory Bateson (1979, 78) stated that Words like "ethnic groups", "ethnicity" and "ethnic conflict" have become quite common terms in the English language, and they keep cropping up in the press, in TV news, in political programmes and in casual conversations. The same can be said for "nation" and "nationalism", and many of us have to admit that the meaning of these terms frequently seems ambiguous and vague. Ethnicity has been a main preoccupation since the late 1960s, and it remains a central focus for research in the 1990s. Through its dependence on long-term fieldwork, anthropology has the advantage of generating first-hand knowledge of social life at the level of everyday interaction. To a great extent, this is the locus where ethnicity is created and re-created. Ethnicity emerges and is made relevant through ongoing social situations and encounters, and through people's ways of coping with the demands and challenges of life. From its vantage-point right at the centre of local life, social anthropology
is in a unique position to investigate these processes. David Bidney’s views help to explore the ways in which ethnic relations are being defined and perceived by people; how they talk and think about their own group as well as other groups, and how particular world-views are being maintained or contested. The significance of ethnic membership to people can best be investigated through that detailed on-the-ground research which is the hallmark of anthropology. Finally, social anthropology, being a comparative discipline, studies both differences and similarities between ethnic phenomena. It thereby provides a nuanced and complex vision of ethnicity in the contemporary world. (Bidney, David, 1953, 48)

Ethnicity is the pattern of behaviour and attitude of ethnic group. Mankind is divided into a number of nationalities on the basis of political boundaries. Within each nationality there are further divisions on the basis of language, religion, social organization, endogamy etc. At the micro level we may term such populations as ethnic groups. The origin of the term “ethnic group” was associated with the biological formation of populations. Cultural parameters have been added to it when it has been accepted with the biological formation of populations. Cultural parameters have been added to it when it has been accepted also as a social entity. Endogamy is the prime criterion of biological basis of
formation of ethnic group which is sometimes restricted to “deme”. But in social plane many other criteria are associated with the ethnic group. J.Y. Okamura, defined ethnic group as a population which is—

1. Largely biologically self-perpetuation
2. Shares fundamental cultural values, realized in overt unity in cultural forms
3. Makes up a field of communication and interaction
4. Has a membership which identifies itself, and is identified by others, as constituting a category distinguishable from other categories of the same order. (Okamura, J.Y., 1981, 452)

The ethnic groups are not necessarily homogeneous. While discussing the position of Armenians of London Talai observe that we need ‘a more’ flexible approach to ethnicity which does not make a priori assumption that the presence of boundaries between ethnic groups implies heterogeneity between such groups but homogeneity ‘within them’. He also opined that ethnic groups are interest groups which go underground when there is no competition. (Talai, London, 1986, 125)

Ethnic have a long trajectory, too long to be outlined in full here. A few remarks on this trajectory are, however, necessary so as to
situate current theorization in a proper context. It is important to note the fact that the history of the theorisation of ethnicity is not a progressive and cumulative one. Rather, it is intimately bound up with political concerns and normative judgements. Moreover, any attempt to reconstruct this trajectory ought to take the form of a genealogy. "Ethnicity seems to be a new term", state Nathan Glazer and Daniel Moynihan (1975: 1), who point to the fact that the term's earliest dictionary appearance is in the Oxford English Dictionary in 1972. Its first usage is attributed to the American sociologist David Riesman in 1953. The word "ethnic", however, is much older. The word is derived from the Greek ethnos (which in turn derived from the word ethnikos), which originally meant heathen or pagan (R. Williams, 1976, 119).

It was used in this sense in English from the mid-14th century until the mid-19th century, when it gradually began to refer to "racial" characteristics. In the United States, "ethnics" came to be used around the Second World War as a polite term referring to Jews, Italians, Irish and other people considered inferior to the dominant group of largely British descent. None of the founding fathers of sociology and social anthropology - with the partial exception of Max Weber - granted
Ethnici much interest. Since the 1960s, ethnic groups and ethnicity have become household words in Anglophone social anthropology, although, as Ronald Cohen (1978) has remarked, few of those who use the terms bother to define them. In the course of this book, I shall examine a number of approaches to ethnicity. Most of them are closely related, although they may serve different analytical purposes. All of the approaches agree that ethnicity has something to do with the classification of people and group relationships. In everyday language, the word ethnicity still has a ring of "minority issues" and "race relations", but in social anthropology, it refers to aspects of relationships between groups which consider themselves, and are regarded by others, as being culturally distinctive. Although it is true that "the discourse concerning ethnicity tends to concern itself with subnational units, or minorities of some kind or another" majorities and dominant peoples are no less "ethnic" than minorities. (Tajfel, H., 1978, 111)

A. L. Kroeber and Clyde Kluckhohn investigated the various meanings of culture in the early 1950s (Kroeber & Kluckhohn, 1952), they found about three hundred different definitions. Although Ronald Cohen is correct in stating that most of whose who write on ethnicity do not bother to define the term, the exact number of definitions is already

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high - and it is growing (B. Williams, 1989, 14). Instead of going through the various definitions of ethnicity here be will point out significant differences between theoretical perspectives as it goes along. As a starting-point, let it examine the recent development of the term as it is being used by social anthropologists. The word "ethnic group" has come to mean something like "a people". But what is a people (?) Does the population of Britain constitute a people, does it comprise several peoples or does it rather form part of a Germanic, or an English-speaking, or a European people (?) All of these positions may have their defenders, and this very ambiguity in the designation of peoples has been taken on as a challenge by anthropologists. In a study of ethnic relations in Thailand, Michael Moerman (1965) asks himself: "Who are the Lue (?)" The Lue were the ethnic group his research focused on, but when he tried to describe who they were - in which ways they were distinctive from other ethnic groups - he quickly ran into trouble. His problem, a very common one in contemporary social anthropology, concerned the boundaries of the group. After listing a number of criteria commonly used by anthropologists to demarcate cultural groups, such as language, political organisation and territorial contiguity, he states: "Since language, culture, political organization, etc., do not correlate completely, the units delimited by one criterion do not coincide with the units delimited by
another" (Moerman, 1965, 1215). When he asked individual Lue what were their typical characteristics, they would mention cultural traits which they in fact shared with other, neighbouring groups. They lived in close interaction with other groups in the area; they had no exclusive livelihood, no exclusive language, no exclusive customs, no exclusive religion. Why was it appropriate to describe them as an ethnic group (?) After posing these problems, Moerman was forced to conclude that "[s]omeone is Lue by virtue of believing and calling himself Lue and of acting in ways that validate his Lueness" (Moerman, 1965, 1219). Being unable to argue that this "Lueness" can be defined with reference to objective cultural features or clear-cut boundaries, Moerman defines it as an emic category of ascription. This way of delineating ethnic groups has become very influential in social anthropology. Does this imply that ethnic groups do not necessarily have a distinctive culture (?) Can two groups be culturally identical and yet constitute two different ethnic groups (?) This is a complicated question which will be dealt gradually along with the discussions. At this point, it should note that contrary to a widespread commonsense view, cultural difference between two groups is not the decisive feature of ethnicity. Two distinctive, endogamous groups, say, somewhere in New Guinea, may well have widely different languages, religious beliefs and even technologies, but that does not entail
that there is an ethnic relationship between them. For ethnicity to come about, the groups must have a minimum of contact between them, and they must entertain ideas of each other as being culturally different from themselves. If these conditions are not fulfilled, there is no ethnicity, for ethnicity is essentially an aspect of a relationship, not a property of a group. Conversely, some groups may seem culturally similar, yet there can be a socially highly relevant (and even volatile) inter-ethnic relationship between them. This would be the case of the relationship between Serbs and Croats following the break-up of Yugoslavia, or of the tension between coastal Sami and Norwegians. There may also be considerable cultural variation within a group without ethnicity (Blom, 1969, 121). Only in so far as cultural differences are perceived as being important, and are made socially relevant, do social relationships have an ethnic element.

Ethnicity is an aspect of social relationship between agents who consider themselves as being culturally distinctive from members of other groups with whom they have a minimum of regular interaction. It can thus also be defined as a social identity (based on a contrast vis-a-vis others) characterised by metaphoric or fictive kinship (Yelvington, 1991, 168). When cultural differences regularly make a difference in interaction between members of groups, the social relationship has an ethnic
element. Ethnicity refers both to aspects of gain and loss in interaction, and to aspects of meaning in the creation of identity. In this way, it has a political, organisational aspect as well as a symbolic one. Ethnic groups tend to have myths of common origin, and they nearly always have ideologies encouraging endogamy, which may nevertheless be of highly varying practical importance.

1.2 Formation of Ethnicity:

The process of development of communities from ethnic categories is particularly associated with the early stages of modernization in multi ethnic societies, where language have not yet standardised, where religious groups have not became highly structured and compartmentalized, and where social fragmentation is prevalent. However, the transition may occur even in post industrial societies such as the United States, where Negros have become black, Mexican, Americans, Chicanos and many other ethnic groups have rediscovered their origins and identities. The second stage in the transformation of ethnic group involves the articulation and acquisition of social, economical, political rights for the members of the group or for the group as a whole. Depending upon the perceived needs and demands of the groups, its size and distribution, its relation with other groups and the

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political contexts, demands may aim at relatively modest, civil, educational and political rights and opportunities for individual members of the group or for recognition of the groups co-operate existence as a political body or nationality. Brass R.Paul believed that- Ethnic group succeeds by its own effort in achieving and maintaining group rights for political mobilization, It has gone beyond ethnicity to establish itself as a nationality. (Brass, R.Paul, 1991, 82).

In Assam ethnic identity consciousness raised among the Bodo, Missing, Koch, Tea garden labourers etc. Tea Garden labourers bearing the example of plural multiethnic socio culture rites. Indigenous group of Assam considered them inferior at the beginning and referred as 'coolie' and also outsiders and exterior. Bodo community of Assam feeling the imposed low status in society, suppression in every aspect of rights gradually become conscious for languages and social status. They demanded a particular territory too (Pakem, B. (ed), 1990, 49.)

Missing community found in the districts of Lakhimpur, Sibsagar, Dibrugarh, Sonitpur and Jorhat districts started movement to preserve their language like other tribal groups, led the process of tribal consciousness for self development. Few other community of Assam...
like Chaodange, Moran, Karbis, Dimasa, Sonowal Kacaries, Koch, Rabhas raised the question of identity, ethnicity gradually. The main sources of such development are mainly the social suppression in aspects like language, culture, rights etc. In other North Eastern states like Mizoram, Nagaland, Meghalaya, Tripura we found the example of raise of different movements, ethnicity and culture identity, tribal identity etc. The assessment of the importance of ethnicity in Africa as both a phenomenon in the real world and a subject to state here. African universally have described about two groups, i.e., tribal and non-tribal’s. Tribal identities are regarded as ancient and powerful. Paris Yarees stated that during 1950s and 1960s a focus laid on politics and nation. The concept of ethnicity received much more attention during the 1970s and 1980s (Yarees, Paris, 1996, 28).

North East’ undoubtedly for the majority it well be insurgency, terrorism, the ULFA, the NSCN, ethnic strife, bomb blast, bandhs and disturbance in general. Of late, Assam has found mention in the national Newspapers for the recent large scale violence in Karbi Anglong that has left hundreds dead and thousands homeless, and about the strife in Meghalaya between the Khasis and the Garos, the two major tribal groups that make up the majority of the population of this hilly
State. This is indeed very sad for this region so rich in natural and water resources, minerals and crude oil, tea, scenic beauty that is so suitable for tourism development and occupying a crucial position where it could have been India's gateway to South East Asia, is one of the worst victims of insurgency. The North East has more than 50 years now. It was even before independence that the Nagas had sought to assert sovereignty. The history of the ULFA is more than 2 decades old. Indeed, there is not a single State in the North East today that does not have a couple of militant organizations. Although Mizoram might claim to be the only peaceful State after the Mizo National Front (MNF) had signed an accord with the Center in 1986 and is now in power, the truth of the matter is that even today it cannot claim to be free of the Bluebells, a product of later years. In global map of terrorism, the North East of late has come to occupy a place of great importance. True, perhaps there is no place in this world at present which is free from the scourge of terrorism - Delhi too has emerged as a target with a failed attempt on the Parliament, and the recent instance of serial bombings and threats for more. But all said and done, it is the Kashmir valley and the North East that is most oppressed by insurgency and ethnic violence. Without going into the relative importance of which one of these two poses a greater, one can undoubtedly ascertain that Kashmir has so far received more importance.
than the North East. However, some defence personnel and security analysts are of the opinion that Indian's eastern border poses a greater threat than its western border, and hence should be prioritised. B. Pakem believes that "Ethnicity is one category of social phenomenon which involves the behavior of people as well as the structure of the society in regard to social distinctiveness. (Pakem, B, 1990, 114)

Formation of ethnicity is the process of the development of the distinct personality of an individual regarded as a persisting entity (known as personal continuity) in a particular stage of life in which individual characteristics are possessed by which a person is recognised or known (such as the establishment of a reputation). This process defines individuals to others and themselves. Pieces of the entity's actual identity include a sense of continuity, a sense of uniqueness from others, and a sense of affiliation. Identity formation leads to a number of issues of personal identity and an identity where the individual has some sort of comprehension of him or herself as a discrete, separate entity. This may be through individuation whereby the undifferentiated individual tends to become unique, or undergoes stages through which differentiated facets of a person's life tend toward becoming a more indivisible whole. (Blustein, D.L., 1989, 102)
In developmental psychology, a stage is a distinct phase in an individual's development. Many theories in psychology characterise development in terms of stages. Erik Erikson's stages of psychosocial development, expanding on Freud's psychosexual stages, defined eight stages that describe how individuals relate to their social world. James W. Fowler's stages of faith development is seen as a holistic orientation and is concerned with the individual's relatedness to the universal. Sigmund Freud's psychosexual stages describe the progression of an individual's unconscious desires. (ibid, 113)

Before ethnicity self identity is formed, which is the sum total of a being's knowledge and understanding of his or her self. The self-concept is different from self-consciousness, which is an awareness of one's self. Components of the self-concept include physical, psychological, and social attributes, which can be influenced by the individual's attitudes, habits, beliefs and ideas. These components and attributes can not be condensed to the general concepts of self-image and the self-esteem. (Erikson, E., 1968, 34)

Ethnic identity or Cultural identity is the (feeling of) identity of a group or culture, or of an individual as far as she/he is influenced by her/his belonging to a group or culture. Cultural identity is similar to and has overlaps with, but is not synonymous with, identity politics. There are
modern questions of culture that are transferred into questions of identity.
An ethnic identity is the identification with a certain ethnicity, usually on
the basis of a presumed common genealogy or ancestry. Recognition by
others as a distinct ethnic group is often a contributing factor to
developing this bond of identification.

Ethnic groups are also often united by common cultural,
behavioral, linguistic, ritualistic, or religious traits. Processes that result
in the emergence of such identification are summarised as ethnogenesis.
Various cultural studies and social theory investigate the question of
cultural and ethnic identities. Cultural identity remarks upon: place,
gender, race, history, nationality, sexual orientation, religious beliefs and
ethnicity. National identity is an ethical and philosophical concept
whereby all humans are divided into groups called nations. Members of a
"nation" share a common identity, and usually a common origin, in the
sense of ancestry, parentage or descent: (Ibid, 44-48)

A religious identity is the set of beliefs and practices
generally held by an individual, involving adherence to codified beliefs
and rituals and study of ancestral or cultural traditions, writings, history,
and mythology, as well as faith and mystic experience. The term
"religious identity" refers to the personal practices related to communal

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faith and to rituals and communication stemming from such conviction. In sociology, gender identity describes the gender with which a person identifies (i.e., whether one perceives oneself to be a man, a woman, or describes oneself in some less conventional way), but can also be used to refer to the gender that other people attribute to the individual on the basis of what they know from gender role indications (social behavior, clothing, hair style, etc.). Gender identity may be affected by a variety of social structures, including the person's ethnic group, employment status, religion or irreligion, and family. (Levine, C.G., 2002, 91-94)

Social relation can refer to a multitude of social interactions, regulated by social norms, between two or more people, with each having a social position and performing a social role. In sociological hierarchy, social relation is more advanced than behavior, action, social behavior, social action, social contact and social interaction. Social relations form the basis of concepts such as social organization, social structure, social movement and social system. Individuals gain a social identity and group identity by their affiliation. This is from membership in various groups.

These groups include, among various categories:

- family
- ethnic
- occupation

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The term collective identity or formation of ethnicity is a sense of belonging to a group (the collective) that is so strong that a person who identifies with the group will dedicate his or her life to the group over individual identity: he or she will defend the views of the group and assume risks for the group, sometimes as great as loss of life. The cohesiveness of the collective goes beyond community, as the collective suffers the pain of grief from the loss of a member. (Ibid, 100-105)

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term as it is being used by social anthropologists. The word "ethnic group" has come to mean something like "a people". But what is a people? Does the population of Britain constitute a people, does it comprise several peoples or does it rather form part of a Germanic, or an English-speaking, or a European people? All of these positions may have their defenders, and this very ambiguity in the designation of peoples has been taken on as a challenge by anthropologists. (Nairn, 1977, 111)

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When he asked individual Lue what were their typical characteristics, they would mention cultural traits which they in fact shared with other, neighbouring groups. They lived in close interaction with other groups in the area; they had no exclusive livelihood, no exclusive language, no exclusive customs, no exclusive religion. Why was it appropriate to describe them as an ethnic group? After posing these problems, Moerman was forced to conclude that "[s]omeone is Lue by virtue of believing and calling himself Lue and of acting in ways that validate his Lueness" (Moerman, 1965: 1219). Being unable to argue that this "Lueness" can be defined with reference to objective cultural features or clear-cut boundaries, Moerman defines it as an emic category of ascription. This way of delineating ethnic groups has become very influential in social anthropology. Does this imply that ethnic groups do not necessarily have a distinctive culture? Can two groups be culturally identical and yet constitute two different ethnic groups? This is a complicated question which will be dealt with at length in later chapters. At this point, we should note that contrary to a widespread commonsense view, cultural difference between two groups is not the decisive feature of ethnicity. Two distinctive, endogamous groups, say, somewhere in New Guinea, may well have widely different languages, religious beliefs and even technologies, but that does not entail that there is an ethnic
relationship between them. For ethnicity to come about, the groups must have a minimum of contact between them, and they must entertain ideas of each other as being culturally different from themselves. If these conditions are not fulfilled, there is no ethnicity, for ethnicity is essentially an aspect of a relationship, not a property of a group. Conversely, some groups may seem culturally similar, yet there can be a socially highly relevant (and even volatile) inter-ethnic relationship between them. This would be the case of the relationship between Serbs and Croats following the break-up of Yugoslavia, or of the tension between coastal Sami and Norwegians. There may also be considerable cultural variation within a group without ethnicity (Blom, 1969). Only in so far as cultural differences are perceived as being important, and are made socially relevant, do social relationships have an ethnic element. Ethnicity is an aspect of social relationship between agents who consider themselves as being culturally distinctive from members of other groups with whom they have a minimum of regular interaction. It can thus also be defined as a social identity (based on a contrast vis-a-vis others) characterised by metaphoric or fictive kinship (Yelvington, 1991, 168). When cultural differences regularly make a difference in interaction between members of groups, the social relationship has an ethnic element. Ethnicity refers both to aspects of gain and loss in interaction,
and to aspects of meaning in the creation of identity. In this way, it has a political, organisational aspect as well as a symbolic one. Ethnic groups tend to have myths of common origin, and they nearly always have ideologies encouraging endogamy, which may nevertheless be of highly varying practical importance.

1.3 Ethnicity and Power:

S.L. Sharma stated that Ethnic can be considered as a cultural phenomenon, which is defined as a collectivity of distinct nature in terms of race, decent and culture. The ethnic group is a social collectivity having certain shared historicity and common attributes such as race, tribe, language, culture, identity, a combination of which endows it with a differentiated character vis-a-vis with other groups as they perceive it and it perceives them (Sharma S.L. 1996,143).

The basic attributes of an ethnic group are its distinct cultural identity and ethnic consciousness. The concept of ethnicity is not a rigid one which often undergoes changes, summation of ethnic consciousness for status and recognition as a distinct social ethnic. Ethnic is based on economic, political and cultural interests; self consciousness of a community emerges from race, cultural language and realism. The
ethnicity is difficult to define in Indian context. If we consider ethnicity as a social or cultural characteristics in the original inhabitants of the land. The legends, literature, customs and traditions, speak volumes about the wealth of splendor and creativity of these people that have, concomitantly, influenced even those in vicinity who have chosen to don the grab of sophistication. There are apparent cultural differences and locational practices between the life styles of the tribal people of India, but historically, there is a basic unity in thought and philosophy among these people born and brought up in environment of diversity through the length and breadth of country. What would include most of the primordial groups in India (?) . To understand the main currents in Indian cultural, one has to probe the colourful world of the tribal people in different parts of the country who are generally considered these in the overall tribal system (?) can the question be answered by a study of this paper. Other items of culture like life pattern, social customs are interesting in the life of the tribal people. The culture always undergoes of the new among the old. The cultural factors operate on the relatively static materials of race and physical environment. In order to appreciate these matters it is necessary, however, to obtain a fairly full and balanced picture of the tribal life and system. But considering as a whole the life of a number of tribals, some of their life style and the study of socio cultural diffusion,
functional relation and development well be explored. The term identity crisis is very common in the literature dealing with ethnic identity. One the question whether tribals of India are undergoing a phase of identity crisis there are opposite view points. Few scholars like Pandey (1987) think that identity crisis leads to regional autonomy plea. The communication had a large role to play in the process of identity crisis. The tribes of India do not suffer any cultural identity crisis and the issue has been propagated by the self styled messages of the tribes who pride in their empty intellectualism and thrive on misplaced ideology of conflict and crisis. In early days most of the tribes living among the Hindus in cause of acculturation process. But after independence, the socio-political processes have generated a conscious movement of revitalization of their cultural tradition. Pranab Kumar Das Gupta stated that the process of sanskritisation for higher social status was not only operating among the tribes but also among the so-called low caste of the Hindu fold. Social status cannot be raised through the process of sankritisation alone if the group concerned has not political or economic power. This perhaps the reason why the tribes are asserting their identity. (Das Gupta, Pranab Kumar, 1991, 181-182).
Ethnicity and power are interrelated to each other. The phenomenon of power becomes increase and gradually dependent upon class and ethnicity. Ethnicity is a cultural phenomenon. It is defined as a collectivity of people of a distinct nature in terms of race, descent, and culture. Thus, an ethnic group is a social collectivity having certain shared historicity and common attributes such as race, tribe, language, religion, dress, diet, etc. Ethnicity is not a static or preordained category; it is a manifestation of the common economic, political, social, and cultural interests and their protection by ethnic members in a plural society. What is important for an ethnic community is to keep its culture distinct. An ethnic group as a social collectivity possesses and is aware of its distinctiveness by virtue of given shared historical experiences as well as objective attributes such as race, tribe language, religion, dress, diet etc. Combination of which endows it with a differentiated character vis-à-vis other groups as they perceive it and it perceives them. The basic attributes of an ethnic group are its distinct cultural identity and ethnic consciousness. The structure of ethnicity is not rigid, it keeps on changing. Pradhanis observes that “providing the ethnic group” a character and quality, ethnicity is the summation of ethnic consciousness for status and recognition as a distinct social entity. Ethnicity, thus, is not a static, predetermined category but the manifestation of the assertion of
the ethnic group in the political area to defend or sustain economic, political, and cultural interests. Cardene F. Ware while discussing the basic attributes of ethnic communities says that a community is held together by self-consciousness emerging from race, culture, language and realism. The ethnic community possesses a greater degree of cohesiveness based on common language, traditions, and a common pride for the land of origin. (Ware Carden,F,1957, 112)

Various scholars have defined ethnicity in various ways. In the Indian context it is difficult to fruitfully employ the term ‘ethnicity’. If we consider ethnicity as racial or cultural characteristic it would include most of the primordial groups in Indian. T.K. Oommen observes that the term “ethnic” is sometimes used to refer to minorities of various types in the Indian society (Oomen,T.K.,1986,72)

K.S. Nair who has applied the concept of ethnicity to India’s urbanization uses it as a collectivity of people who (I) share some patterns of normative behavior, and (ii) form a part of a large population, interacting with people from other collectivities within the framework of a social system. (Mair,K.S.,1985,72

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1.4. Ethnicity in Indian and Abroad:

The Indian society bears the example of plurality and diversity at all levels and in all aspects. We found many reference of upraise of ethnicity in different states of Indian. Kashmir represents a distinctive glorious past reflects the racial, regional, cultural and linguistic differentiation of its inhabitants, which have been caused as well as intensified among other factors, by geographical conditions. The total population of Kashmiris living in the state of Jammu and Kashmir was 5.9 million. The dominant majority of Kashmiri and Muslims can comprise 63 percent of total Population in Jammu and Kashmir (1991 Census). The dominant majority of Kashmiri Muslims have their own languages, dialects are also spoken. The local people have developed distinctive cultural features. The Kashmiri Muslims, practices a separate kind of Islamic religion which are quite different from other Muslim communities of the country. Kashmiri Muslims have developed consciously and maintained systematically their regional political identity which has often led to the assertion of distinctive Kashmiri identity (Hussain, M.G., 1996, 131).

The partition of colonial India into the two new countries Indian and Pakistan had its apparent legitimating in the ethnic
distinctiveness of two nations. In 1971, the emergence of Bangladesh signified the case of successful secessionist movement in the present country. The change in the pre-eminence of cultural diacritics form ‘Muslim Bengali’ to ‘Bengali Muslims’ during 1947-71 in Bangladesh operating a subordinate or muted manner of identity assertion. The reference group of Bangladeshis changed from Hindus in 1940s to Pakistani Punjabis during the period of united Pakistan. (Pradhanis, Urmila, 1989, 12-14).

With a population of more than 1,027 million as accounted by the March 1, 2001 population census, India is a colourful canvas portraying a unique assimilation of ethnic groups displaying varied cultures and religions. In fact, this uniqueness in the ethnicity of the country is the factor that makes it different from other nations. Moreover, the vastness of India's nationalism, accounting to a plethora of cultural extravaganza, religions, etc. is the reason that the country is seen more as a seat for a major world civilization than a mere nation-state. (Patterson, O., 1977, 312)

Since ancient times, the spiritual land of India has displayed varied hues of culture, religion, race, language, and so on. This variety in race, culture, religion, etc. accounts for the existence of different ethnic
groups who, although, live within the sanctums of one single nation, profess different social habits and characteristics. Regional territories in India play an important role in differentiating these ethnic groups, with their own social and cultural identities. The religions that are prevalent in the country are Hinduism, Christianity, Islam, Sikhism, Buddhism, and Jainism, with the freedom for citizens to practice any religion they want to. With the governance of 35 different states and union territories in the country, there has originated a sense of regionalism amongst the various parts, with different states displaying different cultures, which although eventually fuse through a common bond to showcase a national cultural identity. The Constitution of India has recognised 22 different languages that are prevalent in the country, out of which, Hindi is the official language and is spoken in most of the urban cities of India. Other than these 22 languages, there are hundreds of dialects that add to the multilingual. The migration, conquest, conversion, perception and polices of the dominant group, the process of partition, division and reunification of political community as well as the imperative and dynamics of modernization have serious implications for ethnic group identities, boundaries and relationship. Such type of process leading the question of identity found in the emergence of Anglo Indians in Indian and Burghers in Sri Lanka (Pradhani, Urmila, 1989,15).
The continued ethnic assertion found in USA, the devolution debate and the ulster crisis in the U.K., the issue of autonomy versus self determination in Canada, the endemic nationalities question in the USSR also the few examples. The combination of economy and culture in the analysis of internal colonialists is a forward thrust in an understanding of a politicized ethnicity. Internal colonization implies a geographically defined area and its relationship with the center should be that of dominant, subdominant, exploiting- subjugated one. Ethnic violence in Sri Lanka, recent turbulence in Punjab, Bangladesh, Baluchistan and to some extent Assam can compared along with such type of ethnicity question (Pradhani, Urmila, 1989, 30).

India is a country of various ethnic groups, identity, race, religion, tribe, language, e.g., Naga, Meitei, Tamil, Telegu, Malayalam, Kamadiga, Nepali, Bengali, i.e. Muslims, Sikhs, Hindu, Buddhists etc. developing themselves into ethnicity self conscious communities. The Tamil ethnicity based on language and territory, emphasizing the import of Telegu Desam despite thereligious incongruity. Similarly, the combining religion and territory gradually dilute linguistic and cultural affinities between Punjabi Sikhs and Punjabi Hindus (Pradhani, Urmila, 1989, 51).
The problem of identity also raised in North Eastern states too. Recently in Arunachal Pradesh a consciousness has raised among different communities as they, now, will not introduced themselves by their original and authentic names or by nick names which other neighbour or plain people used to address them. They felt the need of the identity for their total development. The major tribes of Arunachal Pradesh are Monpa, Sherdikpan Miji, Bangi, Aka, Nishi, Hrusso etc. The plain people could not grasp their original names correctly, so gave few own convenient names to referred them. Identity consciousnesses were not felt during the pre independent period. But soon after independence, they tried to give a definite identity to their community automatically (Pakem, B, (ed), 123).

In Sri Lanka during British rule and after independence, the Buddhist monks supported the cause of Sinhalese identity relatively easily because the collaborationist elite on the island became both Anglicised in language and Christianised in style of life, if not always in religion, and because the principal competing ethnic group on the island was Hindu and spoke Tamil. Yet, even in the case of Sri Lanka, what has occurred has not been the emerged of given identity, but the transformation of an old one, Due to the effect of the westernization of
some local elite groups, it could no longer be assumed that all Sinhalese speakers were Buddhist. The new identity changes the boundaries of the group by making religion the central symbol and contested category as both concept and phenomenon as started by Atkinson, Ronald, R.(ibid,38)

Ethnicity has emerged as one of the most significant social issues. Boundary of an ethnic group is not a static phenomenon. Depending upon the circumstances and specific goal, division and amalgamation may take place. In mono-ethnic situation, the maintenance of ethnic boundary is simple. But in poly-ethnic or plural societies like the Northeast India, diverse factors play their roles in moulding ethnic inter group relations. Ethnicity arised among small groups like Tai-Ahom, Chaudang and Bodo of Assam who are at present in three different stages of boundary maintaining mechanism. Assam is unique for its ability of "fusion" as various races viz. Autro-Asiatic, Negaitos, Dravidians, Alpains entered into Assam with distinct culture. In recent years, Assam became a center of attraction for its process of fusion. Cultural flexibility has been replaced by violence and socio-cultural fluidity has been frozen.

Tai Ahom is a significant racial element that entered Assam during the 12th century AD and ruled for six hundred years. They have
contributed meaningfully to the development of Assamese society and culture. At present they are influenced by identity move and governed by two aspects, one is socio-religious and other is socio-political in nature. (Bhattarcharjee, 2011, 112)

The development of ethnicity among the Chaudangs is in the initial stage. The Chaudang was neither a caste nor a community, but a functional group of khel during the Tai-Ahom administration in Assam. They too become conscious about their ethnic boundary and have started articulating their marginal voices in favour of their better placement in the contemporary world. On the other hand, the ethnic movement of Bodos has achieved a different stage. The demand for a separate state for Bodos was launched for the first time in 1986, which was culminated in the Bodo accord in 1993. Finally, the movement settled for the extension of the sixth schedule status to the Bodo areas. The Memorandum of settlement signed on 10th February 2003 was a path-breaking event. Thus it may be said that the boundary maintaining mechanism is a continuous process because the human society is not static. So the ethnic groups are always at different stages of group formation. Since independence, India has witnessed the rise of political movements that are mobilised along identity lines. The Jharkhand movement has been one such mobilisation, which has integrated dispersed tribes based on their shared recognition of
the forest as an integral part of their identity and livelihood. This movement has been a united struggle to safeguard tribal interests from the economic exploitation that resulted from the national development programme. The formation of the state of Jharkhand marks the success of this movement in realising an avenue that can enable tribal-people to sustain their right to self-determination.

1.5 Culture and Ethnicity:

Culture is the way of life. Culture is manifested in music, literature, lifestyle, painting and sculpture, theater and film and similar things. Although some people identify culture in terms of consumption and consumer goods (as in high culture, low culture, folk culture, or popular culture), Anthropologists understand "culture" to refer not only to consumption goods, but to the general processes which produce such goods and give them meaning, and to the social relationships and practices in which such objects and processes become embedded. For them, culture thus includes art, science, as well as moral systems.

Some definition of culture-

- Culture is an instant reality and apparatus of satisfaction biological delights need. - Melinowski.
Culture is the sum total of integrated long behavior patterns which are characteristics of members of society. - Hoebel

Religion is one kind of culture.

Culture as that complex whole which includes knowledge, belief, art, morals, law, custom, and any other capabilities and habits acquired by man as a member of society" (Tylor 1871, 1)

Culture which is a way of life, is a socially learned and enquired behavior that is committed from generation to generation.

It is the holistic emphasis of cultural anthropology that distinguishes it most clearly from other related disciplines. For example, an anthropologist may focus his or her research on a particular dimension of culture, such as religion or political organization, but that dimension will also be described in terms of its relationship to the "complex whole" of the local culture. (Ibid, 2)

Culture influences human personality. It is a continuous process. It neither be adopted nor measures. In society we get lags, when one aspect of the society goes ahead leaving other behind. In our modern time we have developed such concepts as material and non-material cultures. Culture is comprehensive in terms which include knowledge, belief and morality. The term culture has been differently defined by

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different intellectuals. According to Redfield, *Culture* in an organized body of conventional understanding manifested in human groups. According to Taylore, *Culture is that complex whole which includes knowledge, belief, out, morale, law, and custom and any other capabilities and habits acquired by man as a member of society.* Maclaver defined, culture is the realm of final valuations and human beings must interpret the whole world, of valuation. in the culture live the valuation that create group loyalties and group unities, that narrow or wider the range of community and that organize the means and power of society to the service of all common ends. White stated that Culture is the handiwork of man and as the medium through which he attains this ends. Joseph Piper is of the view that, *Culture is the quintessence of all natural goods of the world and that of gift and qualities which while belongings to man, lie beyond the intermediate sphere of his needs and wants.* According to A.F. Walter, *Culture is the totality of group way of through and action duly accepted and followed by a group of people.* In the words of C.C North, *Culture consists in the instruments constituted by man to assist him in satisfying his wants.* E.A. Howbel has said that, *Culture is the sum total of integrated learned behavior pattern which are characteristics of the member of a society and which are therefore not the result of biological inheritance.* E.V. de. Roberty has defined culture by
saying, that, Culture is the body of thought and knowledge both theoretical and practical, which only man can possess. A.W.Green says, Culture is socially transmitted system of idealized ways in knowledge, practices, beliefs along with the antifacts that knowledge and practice produce and maintain as they change in time. Spencer defined culture as, is supreme organis environment as distingised from the inorganic or physical and from the organic, the worlds of plants and animals. Accordingly to Gilliusand Gillin, each group, each society has a set of behavior pattern which are passed down from generation and taught to, which are constantly liable to change. These common factors, we call the culture. Graham Wallas said, Culture is an accumulation of thoughts, values and objects, it is the social heritage acquired by us from preceding generations through learning, as distinguished from biological heritage which is passed on to us automatically through genes. (Mukhi, H.R.1994,84)

Culture, after the above given definitions, it become amply clear that has specific meaning and characteristics. Culture is product of human behaviour and gaining knowledge through group. It has a link with past which preserves eternal nature, discards what has been socially condemned. Cultures constantly undergo changes and adapt itself to the
environments. Internal adaptation is absolutely necessary due to environmental development. In the changing course of history culture manifests man’s mind in varying moods. The term culture pattern is used to describe the ways of behavior associated with any permanent need or function is social life. S.S. Mathur said that different societies have different patterns. The language, literature, rearing up of individuals, the values of the society, the myths, customs, ideologies (Mathur, S.S., 1992.111).

Culture can classify in two broadly divisions namely material culture indicates material and physical objects, such as house roads, vehicles dresses, thoughts etc. A simple unit of culture may conveniently be called cultural trait and in the combinations of these traits cultural complex is formed on the basis of needs of life. The interrelation and interaction of cultural complexes determines its cultural pattern. The cultural complexes develop quickly and are others Hershovie J. Melivlee said that definition and theories between culture the concept of ethnicity. (Hershovie, J.Melvilee, 1994, 190).

In the world there are different cultures which are coming to contact with each other in one way or the other and influenced. The
process by which cultural traits of one society directly or indirectly spread to other societies is called cultural diffusion (Mathur, S.S., 1992, 130)

Assimilation of culture implies a process whereby attitude of many persons are united and developed into unified groups, as defined by Bogardus. It is an evolutionary process which gradually slowly comes to the final stage, by passing different stage. It is the outcome of coming into contact with each other outsider cultural. Complete and perfect assimilation does not come all at ones. As the cultures begin to influence each other the people belonging to one culture begin to adopt them in their life. The first step towards assimilation is called acculturation (Mathur, S.S. 1992, 134)

Indian society is covered by various ethnic and racial groups. The value system in parent in the Indian culture is the unity in ethnic diversity. But now-a-days we have seen the conflicts of all kind are only modified forms of struggle, which basically represents the various needs of a ethnic group. In the contemporary social structures ethnicity has an important place. Ethnic groups are part of the process of social differentiation which is based on the colour or culture, language etc. All
the ethnic groups of different societies are not in the same level. In world perspective we can consider the cases of the Nigroes who in spite of political and legal equality, are backward in the American society and their social status is lower as compared to that of the white citizens. Same is the case with schedule castes and schedules tribes in India. The structural differentiation of society may be considered from the functional basis, like as groups, organizations, Institutions, economic opportunities, social position, power etc. The contemporary social structure is divided on the ethnic basis. The ethnicity has own social, cultural characteristics like language, literature, mode of worship, believes etc. Here it is necessary to make a distinction between race and ethnicity before going to the depth of the discussion. Race is a group which shares in common a certain set of innate physical characters and a geographical origin within certain areas as quoted by J.B.S. Haldane. In the other hand ethnicity can be connected with social stratification. In the nineteenth century, Europe was influenced by the imperialism, which attaches the race to the concept of race superiority. White people considered intellectually superior to the people of the other races. On the basis of this absurd notion the minority of the whites justified its rule, over the majority of black people. Then the race consciousness deep rooted in the society. In many societies various parts of the population considers themselves different on the basis of
language, customs, religion, culture etc. In order to prove their superiority to other group the people of one ethnic group confined to their own ethnic character and present it which called ethno-centric tendency by sociologists. The ethnicity has a link with the social stratification, majority and minority. We can illustrate few examples from world perspective here. The lineal decedents of English and the Dutch enjoy various social and political facilities in South Africa. They own the economic recourses. Their mode of worship and cultural patterns are imposed on other people, but the aborigines who are black have no social or political base there. The original culture has been almost eliminated and they are totally deprived economically. The Chief instrument of their livelihood is working in the white man’s land, mines and factories as agricultural labourer, minor and worker. Thus in countries like Africa, America, Australia, and New Zealand, social stratification is based on ethnicity (Pradhani. Urmila, 1998, 190).

In ethnicity one group maintains its distance from another group. People of society and politically strong ethnic groups exploit the weaker ethnic group and disseminate against them. Thus the sociological processes like dissemination, legal or conventional alienation, prejudices, are continuous cultural heterogeneity is an important characteristics of the
contemporary society. Today, the society, of completely no homogeneous by nature due to the effect of immigration, linguistic contacts, conversion, industrailisation by multinational etc. The society, of few countries built by people from many nations and cultural backgrounds e.g. India, United States of America, Canada, Malaysasia, Sri Lanka, Australia etc.(Kumar, Dr., 1991,134).

It often found two kind of social classification of the society, i.e., Upper class strata always exploits, suppress low class strata, which raise the question of identity crisis (Ahmed, A. Social Scientist, 1999, 60-62)

When look at culture from the revivalist definition of culture, we have to recognized that social conflicts of various kinds, along with the lines of class, caste, gender, ethnicity etc. Culture is not only a National spirit, nor simply a zone of aesthetic, but a field rather of contention and conflict among classes and social forces that struggle for dominance. We can consider culture as the spirit of cultivation of distinction between high culture and popular culture, between great tradition and little tradition. Culture itself is conceived them not as a finished common possession, beyond the various social hiérarchies, but as a struggle for cultural entitlements as a part of a much broader
democratic struggle of ethnicity for social and economic entitlements of various kinds. Struggle against cultural imperialism were an integral part of the ethnicity. It has to reject certain kinds of cultural nationalism and fashion for ourselves a different kind. The essential task in the politics of culture is to combat the elitist, revivalist, communalist. Instead of that kind of culture we have to build a democratic, secular culture of modern civic values and radical equalities (Borah, Dilip, 1985, 21).

Culture is not as spiritual or religious heritage but as a set of material practices through which people live and produce the meanings of their lives. Culture not indicates heritage of past but the actual realities of the present, cultural goods such as education or training in the arts- that different classes and social groups have in real life. Aizaz Ahmed wrote that every nation has of any given time not one culture takes not only the begging from of unity in diversity as our nationalism presupposes, but also as unity of opposites. In today’s content, then we here to reject certain kinds of cultural nationalism and fashion for ourselves a different kind. Culture is not heritage of past but the actual realities of the present, and one of the things that most crusilly matter .then is the degree of access to scultural goods such as an education or training in the arts that different classes and social groups have in real life. Culture in this way we immediately recognised that social conflict of various type of lines of
class, caste, gender, ethnicity etc. actually leave very little room for all the people, or even minority of people to have roughly equal access to cultural goods, that may be shared by a people or a whole nation to any significant extent. In support of this Aijaz Ahmed stated that Culture is not an arena for harmonious unfolding of National spirit, as is often supposed by those who borrow their nationalist vocabulary from German Romantacism. (Ahmed Aijaz, 1999, 66)

Most major cities in the world are made up of diverse societies, consisting of a wide range of individuals from different ethnic and cultural backgrounds. Ethnicity refers to a social group, which shares certain distinctive features, such as language, culture, physical appearance, religion, values and customs. Culture on the other hand refers to how we do and view things in our group. For example a shared set of values, assumptions, perceptions and conventions based on a shared history and language can make a certain group. In order for society to function efficiently and smoothly these individuals must learn to integrate and coexist together. This will involve among other things, accepting and sampling different types of foods and even adjusting their diets. This is due to the large impact culture and ethnicity has on diet, which results in changes in health. As a result the choices and selections of food that
people make, in the classes of foods they eat, will vary widely. (Sanyal, B.S., 1981m 81-84)

Different cultures may encourage or frown upon consumption of different foods by individuals who belong to their groups. Also the consumption of different foods at different stages of life may be actively encouraged or discouraged. This is due to the benefits and dangers of consuming these foods at certain times of life and in certain conditions. For example most cultures will not approve of the consumption of alcohol during pregnancy or lactation. This is due to the adverse affects produced by this drink. Foods and nutrition may also be affected by culture, with respect to different beliefs within the culture. (Ibid, 86-87)

Religion plays one of the most influential roles in the choices and subsequent selection of foods consumed in certain societies. For example, in the Hindu and Buddhist religions the consumption of both pork and beef is frowned upon. This is because it is considered to not be clean meat. Also ancient Hindu scriptures prohibit the eating of these meats. As a result of this the large majority of Hindus and Buddhists (roughly 90%) have taken this rule to the extreme. They refuse to eat any meat at all and are strict vegetarians, despite being allowed to eat chicken and lamb. (Ibid, 94)