4.1 Aryan and Non Aryan Aspects

Assam in the beginning of the twenty first century was not so in previous centuries in spheres of geography, sociology and humanities. Assam is now a truncated area of the British dominated Assam which was known as Pragjyotisha, Kamarupa, Lohityadesha, etc in early classical literature. The present state of Assam is in the eastern region consisting of twenty six districts bounded by sisterly neighboring states like Arunachal Pradesh, Nagaland, Manipur, Mizoram, Tripura, and Meghalaya. Even the state of Sikkim is linked with Assam in political and regional perspective. The classical and vedic literature of India described the primitive inhabitants of India as Nisada, Savara, Chanda, Munda, Dravida, Dasa-Danava, Asura, Kirata, Arya, and the like. The human civilization in the sum total of cultures reflected in diverse races and tribes of the world. It is very difficult to differentiate the cultures of so called schedule tribe and schedule castes of India as well as Assam in terms of the non-schedule castes and non-schedule tribes as envisaged in the constitution of India originally drafted by Dr. B.R. Ambedkar intended for the republic of India since 1950. The schedule castes and tribes are listed in the different states of India on the basis of their habitat, backwardness, customs and tradition. It is no different in Assam. Culturally the tribal people of Assam have contributed immensely.
towards the formation of the culture of Assamese. There are an element of tribalism in Bihu and other festivals of Assam. Assam is the meeting ground of diverse races who settled down in this territory with their cultures, traditions and spoken languages. Australoids, mongoloids, Tibeto-Burmans, Alpines, Dravidian, Negritos, Aryans etc migrated to Assam through different routes and contributed lots in different aspects of life towards their neighbouring people i.e other community in the close contact. This way these people, later on identified as Assamese as the majority group was known as Assamese. Assamese culture which appear today as a composite culture of various cultural items. Assamese culture because of the tribal and non-tribal mixture appears to be a duplication of Indian culture. If Assam linguistically is a mini India, Its culture is also a mini form of India composite culture. Tribal elements in Assamese culture particularly of those plains tribes like Bodo, Rabhas, Mishings (Miris), Tiwas (Lalungs), Deori, Sonowal Kacharis, and hills tribes like Karbis (Mikirs) and non schedule ethnic groups like Tai Ahoms, Tai Khamtis, Chutias, Morans, Mataks and Koch Rajbongshis in respect of sicifacts, menifacts, agrifacts and artifacts are conspicuously noticeable. Aryans are caste Hindu inhabited in Hindu Kush. Indo Aryans on Aryans were generally concentrated in the valleys of river Ganges and Indus. B.M. Das also supported the above facts and discussed that Aryan

(126)
confined to the people of the upper castes, witness the opening of a new chapter in history of the land with regard to development of a new civilization. They have highly developed and distinctive culture. They included people representing various vocations. Most of them were expert agriculturists. They were specialised in cattle breeding, that is pastoral people. Some had the knowledge of metallurgy. Again others were specialized in ancestor worship and eventually priest craft. With the spread of the Brahmanism in due course they became the intelligentsia group. (Das, B.M., 1987, 59)

In Ramayana and Mahabharata, we found the evidence of contact of Aryans with the people of Assam. Arjuna came to Manipur married princes Chitrangada. Anirudha married Usha, daughter of king Bana. All these suggest that Assam might have come under influence of the Aryans, from a very early period. In the Dubi and Nidanpur copper plates of king Bhaskarbarman gives us definite clue as regards the presence of Aryans. Hiuen Tsiang the Chinese pilligrime wrote in this record that he met people of higher castes, Brahmin and Kayastha. Ananda chandra Agarwala confined Aryan people as the great people. He stated that Aryans had spread civilisation, involve with agriculture and Animal husbandry (Agarwala, Ananda Ch., 196)
There were no any distinct definition about Aryan. Professor Ramcharan Sharma stated that the Aryans during the time of Rig Veda were not same caste people, but they use same language and living pattern. (Sarma, Ramcharan, 1985, 8-9)

Dr. Kousamvi said that Aryans were the people who sused Veda as their religious book. (Kousamvi, Damodar, 1981, 86).

Historian Ramila Thappar described that Aryan is in fact a linguistic term indicating a speech group of Indo Europeans origin, and is not an ethnic term. To refer to the coming of Aryan is therefore inaccurate. However this inaccuracy has become so current in historical studies of early India that it would sound unduly pedantic to refer to the Aryan as the Aryan speaking peoples. Their ethnic identity based on Indian evidence. (Thappar, R, 1990, 7).

Aryan aspects are important to develop a society which influenced the other ethnic groups of the region too. Assamese culture is the admixer of Aryan and Non Aryan civilisation. Assamese culture has developed the co-existence of various tribes and sub tribes living in Assam since ancient times and their mutual exchanges. Therefore Assamese culture is
composite one and not the monopoly of a particular tribe, ethnic or linguistic group. Assam is a place where the cultural elements of the tribals and the non tribals have been absorbed, so intimately that any attempt to try to distinguish the separate layers or constituents is bound to end in smoke. B.M Das stated that a large number of people belonging to various ethnic groups have migrated to Assam in different historical periods. The *Austricts*, the *Tibeto Burmans*, the *Aryans*, the Ahoms and the others came to Assam from different directions and at different time, as we know (Das, B.M., 1987, 30,-31).

It is indeed a paradox of sorts, that today, after centuries of evolution of the greater Assamese society, we are being forced to confront our own sense of identity, of who we are and of where we come from. To provide constitutional safeguards under the provisions of clause vi of the Assam accord, the state government has been entrusted with the task of coming up with a comprehensive definition of the term Assamese people on sober reflection, it is galling to think that today when they are should have been no question at all as to the compactness and homogeneity of the Assamese race, and its unique identity doubts are being raised on just such an issue and the Assamese people are being ask to come up with a definition of the term Assamese. No less and august
body than the Assam Sahitya Sabha had been entrusted with this tasks which is an unprecedented step. Assamese culture is conterminous with the Assamese language and this limited to the Assamese speaking people in the plains of Assam. This is a very narrow view. Assamese culture, like the Assamese people has a wider context than the Assamese language. While language in an ingredient of culture, it is not the sole determinant of culture. Assamese culture like people of Assam is a composite product embody in it not only Aryan but also Dravidian, Mongolian and other tribal trades, as Dr. B. M. Das has wrote. (Das, B.M., 1987,54).

It is worth recalling that in undivided Assam the Assamese did not represent a particular race in the ethnological sense. They are a composite people comprising various ethnic groups which inhabitant the plains of Assam as well as the Hill region on the fringes. Historical process of continuous assimilation and integration of dis diverse and desperate racial groups of Tibeto Burman and Chinese – Siamese stock of the Indo Mongoloid race, the distinctive Assamese identity evolved with their unique cultural believes a literature and traditions. Over centuries of evolution this groups abandoned they are original dialects and acquired the Aryan – Assamese language which the Aryan settlers in the valley developed out of sanskritised basses. Thus although in its restricted sense
Assamese are as only those people in Assam whose mother tongue is Assamese rightly understood, they comprise within their fold various ethnic groups that mingled through war and conquest and voluntary association to form the composite community as the Assamese. (Bhattacharjee, Promod Ch., 2000, 10)

The Indo Mongoloid contribution to the Assamese language and even to Assamese culture is remarkable. In the development of Aryan Assamese language, the influence of Bodo, Naga as well as the Ahom language is noticed. Dr. Banikanta Kakati, in his treaties, *Assamese and its Formation and Development* has given list of words and toponyms of Khasi origin as well as Bodo Ahom origin in Assamese. Similarly, with respect to culture and religion, through Brahmanical Hinduism slowly own over the non-Aryan groups of people to its fold various tribal beliefs and institutions were concentrated and embodied in the Hindu superstructures. (Ibid, 13-16)

In the realm of social habits, and customs, religious beliefs, rights and ceremonies, in the realm of Folklore, Dance and Music, Painting and Architecture, in dress and apparel and in the arts of spinning and weaving, one would find the diffusion of culture traits from the one
ethnic group to another in a given area. The Bihu, an Assamese national
festival of dance and music must have been a gift of the tribal peoples to
the composite Assamese culture. Arguably, the best Bihu dance is even
now performed by the Missing, one can also see the likeness of Bihu
dance and music among the other ethnic groups, similarity of endogenous
Assamese female grace and mode of hair dressing with that prevalent
among the Karbies and one can hear the distinct eco of familiar tunes in
the distant hill which may be the home of a tribe. (Thakur Sharma, G.C.,
2000, 103)

In the history of Assam as also of Kochbihar, Cachar, Jayintia Hills and Tripura which formed parts of the old Kamrupo
Kingdom, it was may the Hinduized Non Aryan, who took part in the
Bihu celebration Brahmans and other purer Hindus hailing mostly from
the west being numerically too small to take effective part in local
affaires and political up heavalls. The later only acted as a powerful liver
in gradually bringing about a uniformity of religion and culture through
puranic hindusm (Ibid, 106)

This transformation was clearly evident in plains, but their
was little of it in the hills which therefore remained in the past mostly

(132)
unaffected by influences from outside. The history of Assam from the middle of the 13th to the end of the 17th century was to some extent the history of a struggle between the original in the Mongoloid inhabitants the country (mostly Bodos such as the Chutia, Morans, Borahis, kasharies and Koches) and the newly arrived Ahoms who belonged to a distant branch of same sino- Tibetan stop. (Ibid, 108)

Of the various tribes inhabiting the Brahmaputra Valley, the Ahoms are almost the only people whose ancient records, as pointed out by Mr. Herbird Risley, through light on the origin of a tribe. The Ahoms are a people of Shan stock who entered Assam early in the 13th Century and within the queried the early in the eastern half of the old Kamrupo Kingdom and possibly give the Koch power after the fall of the Koch power at the end of the 16th Century. Koch Bihar and the adjoining districts were lost to the Kamrupo Kingdom. The Kingdom itself disappeared and in its place emerged the most compact and easterly kingdom of Assam where the Ahoms consolidated their rule. The Ahoms defeated their rivals in the plains and subjugated or kept in the check by friendly relations, the hill tribes on the boarders. It was during the period that the Assamese people, who are by no means coterminous with Ahoms, but include them in their category, evolved in all their strength as

(133)
a distinct nation or community. Towards the end of the 17th century the Ahoms embraced Hinduism, lost their original language and merged along with others such as the Chutias, Kasharies, Koches and the Morans in to a single Aryan - Assamese speaking people in Assam. The Ahom king Rudra Singha at conquered cachar and Joyintia Hills and had thus made himself complete master of both the Brahmaputra Valley and the hill regions to the south. (Choudhury, P.C., 1966, 61)

Thus it is noticed the gradual revolution of a homogenous entity as against, an out of, the diversity represented by numerous small ethnic groups. Since very early times in the history of Assam. The process was intensifed during the Ahom rule as the Ahom, besides consolidating their military power also, also gave Cohesion to the socio cultural milieu. It is very difficult to ascertain the exact period of migration of people. Social historians and scholars believe that some of these groups landed here even in the pre- historic age. People belonging to the Austric group first moved into Assam and settled here for several centuries before the Christians era. Enough materials are found during the time of pre historic age and therefore essential features and characteristics of these people still in dark. However, it is viewed that the Khasis and the Jayantias of Meghalaya bear at least some characteristics. It is known that Austic family was associated with the Australoids and their

(134)
decendants have two broad divisions, namely Austro-Asiatic and Autroesian. These people settled in Khasi and Jayantia Hill near the places of Tibeto-Barman settlers. Linguistic exchange occurred before the coming of the waves of Bado. Different Austric words are used in different dialects of other tribal people is very common. In the Political History of Assam, edited by Arunch Bhuyan it is found that the root of the Assamese language is Sanskrit. It passed through different stages of development to reached present form. Assamese language is incorporated to several Austrict words. Australoid racial elements as well as Austric words have entered into the Caucasoid Assamese population and Assamese language. Linguistically besides the vocabulary Assamese language is also under influence of some phonological and morphological items of the various tribal languages, for which Assamese phonemes have developed some peculiar pronunciation. Sibilants i.e unvoiced glottal fricative/x/representing /s /s /s in Assamese is quite peculiar. There may not be any direct influence of tribal language, but some indirect influences of tribal language spekers pronounce Assamese /x/ as either /kh/ or /h/ for which the probability of indirect influence is observed. Samething is observed in case of the aspirated consonant. Loss of long vowels in Assamese, no doubt is a historical development, bit in such historical growth and development at the kamrupi apabhrams and
avahatta stage there might have some influence of the tribal languages for close contact of the speakers of these two types of languages. Assamese does not possess cerebrals and dental phonemes, which are used in writing, but pronounce as alveolar phonemes. Here also role of the close association with the tribal languages are considered as an important factor. The gender i.e Masculine and feminine is indicated in Assamese by some suffixes like a, I, ini, etc. But using the words indicating masculine or feminine as adjective to identify the gender in Assamese is the result of tribal contact. Dr. Banikanta Kakati in his book *Assamese its Formation and Development* few of such examples have given:

- Mata Hati (Male) ———— Maiki Hati (Female)
- Mata Para ———— Maiki Para
- Mata Mah ———— Maiki Mah

Such use of male and female indicative is the result of tribal language influence. Another important item is personal definitive or personal affixes of nouns of relationship. Words of relationship in Assamese take on different personal affixes according to the relationship indicated with the first the second and the third person. In second person horrific and inferior is also considered by the affixes.
These suffix er/r, era/ra, ek/yek are not Sanskrit origin. Moreover such use are not available in any other magadhan languages. Here we can compare to the BODO afa “my father” , namfa , nongfa“your father”, bi fa “his father” and Karbis( Mikirs) e-po “my father”, nangpo “your father”, a-po “his father”. Such uses are the result of tribal contact.

The formative suffix -ma, a bodo suffix indicating big is also used in Assamese as in Ballam, ‘a spear’, jalam ‘shining decoration’ . Pekham ‘Peacock’s dancing with spread plumage. Etc. The Negative verbs in Assamese has also shown peculiarities which is nothing but the
assimilation of the final vowel of the negative particle “Na” used as prefix with the verb-root to indicate negation. Here Influence of the AHOM language is observed eg. Na-Kare, Na-Khale, Ni-Kine, Nu-Phure, Ne-Khele etc. Besides Grammar, Vocabulary has been the greatest contribution of the tribal towards the formation of the Assamese language, amongst which The Bodo tribes stand out as the biggest contributor. Pundit Kaliram Medhi in his well documented book Assamese grammar and origin of the Assamese language has emphasized that there are many tribal elements in Assamese language. The Tibeto-Burman and Tai elements are quite visible. Some of the example of the words which could not be substituted are given below.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Words</th>
<th>Meaning</th>
<th>Tribe Derived From</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Aapa</td>
<td>Boys</td>
<td>Bhutia, Koch, Chutia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aadlahi</td>
<td>Guest</td>
<td>Karbi (Mikirs)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kerep</td>
<td>Care</td>
<td>Karbi (Mikirs)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Khang</td>
<td>Anger</td>
<td>Chutia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Laopani</td>
<td>Fermented Liquor</td>
<td>Tai-Ahoms</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hiloi</td>
<td>Gun</td>
<td>Tai-Ahoms</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(138)
Baralaa -------------- Widower------------------ Koch

Dong --------------- Irrigation Channel-------- Karbi (Mikirs), Chutias

Deka --------------- Young man -------------- from

“Dekaagu” in Chutias

Kalahaas ------- Alkaline prepared

------------------ from banana stem ------- Kacharis

Kharisaa --------- Bamboo Shot---------------- Kacharis, Karbis

Bihu ------------- Bihu Festival -------------- Deori’s Bisu and

-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------- Kachari’s Baisagu.

Anali -------------- Troubles ------------------ Bodo

Abra -------------- Foolish ------------------- Bodo

Tangan ------------ Beating Stick ------------- Bodo

Batar -------------- weather ------------------ Karbi’s Botor &

Bodo’s Bouther.

(139)
Haphalu ------------ Out Hill --------------- Bodo
Jakhala ------------ Ladder --------------- Bodo
Hoja ------------ Simple --------------- Bodo
Dokhar ------------ Piece of cut off --------------- Bodo
Mena ------------ Crooked --------------- Bodo
Habong ------------ Silly --------------- Bodo
Bonda ------------ Male of a cats --------------- Bodo
Cang/chang ------------ Platform --------------- Bodo
Lapha ------------ Vegetable --------------- Bodo
Ufehi ------------ Dandruff --------------- Bodo’s Khaofi
Dormaha ------------ Salary --------------- Karbi (Mikirs)

Etc..... etc.... etc....

Besides the Vocabulary, Place’s name also indicates the greatest contribution of the Tribal towards the formation of the greater Assamese Society. Eg. Kachari’s Names like..Daiyung, Dikrai, Dikrang, Diphu, Dibru, Dimow, Dihing, etc..Chutia’s Chirang Chapor. In Kachari
“Di” means Water. Ahom’s Namdang, Namrup, Namchai..etc. In Ahom language “Naam” means Water. The Ahom word “Ti” signifies place. Thus place names like Tingkching, Tiplai, Tipam, Tipuk, Tiok, Tingrai, Tihu, Tipling etc are the gifts of the Ahoms.

Karbi’s Lamding, Lanka, Langcholiate, Langhing, etc. The Karbi Word “ Lang” means Water. Kaziranga name of the famous national park is also the contribution of the Karbis( Mikirs) , which is derieved from “Kajir-a-rang” meaning Kajir’s village . “Kajiror gaon”.It is said that about 25 % of vocabulary in Assamese is being taken from the tribal languages. Above is a brief pen picture of the tribal elements in Assamese culture and the entire gamut of the tribal elements could not be covered in this short article. It is admitted that Assamese Culture contains sizeable tribal elements and the synthesis thus created is the characteristic feature of the Assamese life culture preserved through ages. (Kakati, B.K., 1964, 121)

Austric people are hunters and food gathers, had knowledge of primitive agriculture. Probably they were the people tame elephant for the first time in India. They had efficient to the art of earthen pot. They had belief on ancestral worship and animism. It is believe that totemic belief is the main contribution of the Australoids of India. The Australoid people mixed culturally and ethnically with other population groups that
it is difficult to isolate the original form of Austrics. (Bhuyan Arun Chandra, 1977, 89-166)

Naturally their beliefs, custom and usages laid the foundation of the cultural life of Assam. Another Major tribal stock of Assam was Mongoloid stock. This stock was popularly known as kiratos. These kiratos were food gatherers and they had some knowledge of Herbal Medicines. Kiratas were dependent on collection of fruit roots and tubers. Kiratos have a distinct type of culture. They had spread all over the plains of Bengal up to sea. They collected forest products and minerals. They were expert weavers. They kept contact with neighbors through trade. B.M Das stated that the ancient civilisation of this land was a harmonious mixture of cultural identities belonging to different ethnic groups came to this region in different times of history. Every ethnic stock had contributed to the Assamese society, i.e. language, culture and social pattern. The hill tribes like Aka, Adi, Khamti, Naga, Chutiya etc are the off springs of Mongoloids.(Das B. M., 1987, 36-40).

_Aryans_ are last ethnic group who came to this region. With their advanced knowledge, skill and laboure, the _Aryans_ gave a new dimension to the Brahamaputra Valley civilization. The _Aryans_
comprising mostly the Caucasoid in origin. Among Aryan Hindus two board divisions of castes are Brahmins and the non Brahmins. The caste system amongst the Assamese Hindus is not practiced rigidly, which is common to some other states of Indian. K.L Baruch wrote that the Assamese culture is the result of synthesis of Aryan and Non Aryan civilisation. It has developed out of the co-existence of the various tribes and sub-tribes living in Assam since ancient times and their mutual exchanges. Aryans by virtue of their advancement in certain aspects of life including the language, exercised great influence on the already, existing non Aryan culture. Due to the contact of Aryan culture, the region was dominated by Shakti cult around kamakhya, and Saivism around Sonitpur, Vaishnavism around the region patronized by king Bhismaka of kundil (Baruah,K.L,38) K.L Baruch also said that it is very difficult to determine when Aryan Brahmins came to Assam but like the Saraswati river of vedic ages, Ganga river of Brahmanic ages, Aryans described the river Brahmaputra a mighty one. Yogini Tantra and Kalika Purana beard ample evidence of such. Aryans established different Hindu temples, religious organisations, pilgrimages etc. (Branch K.L,49)

M.N. Srinivas stated that Aryanisation or Sankritisation is one of its function was to bridge the gap between secular ritual rank.

(143)
When a caste or section of caste achieved secular power it usually also tried to acquire the traditional symbol of high status, namely the customs, rituals, ideas and the style of the locally highest caste. It also meant obtaining the service of a Brahmin priest at various rites of passage, performing Sanskritic, Calendrical festivals, visiting famous pilgrim contras and finally attempting to obtain a better knowledge of the scared literature. (Sivinivas, M.N., 7)

Aryan not imposed vedic religion to general people or Non Brahman sections. It is a secular one. Araynisation comprises admixture of both tribal and non tribal cultures. Aryanisation create an integrity among all the inhabitant of the region. There were not much difference of economic condition of tribal and non tribal populations of Assam. Both tribal and non tribal populations were based on agriculture. So they were living together and maintaining a composite cultural complex. But in the course of time the superior mindset of caste Hindus or non tribal group create an obstacle in the path way of integrity and sense of identity crises raised.
4.2 Intra Ethnic understanding:

Intra ethnic understanding is a ethnic processes. This process is very impotent for a multi ethnic society. This process creates homogeneity among different groups of region along with their cultural and language differences. B.Pake stated that, the process of intra ethnic understanding take place as a result of interaction between communities unconnected by kinship, that is communities with separate linguistic and culture parameters in each case (Pakem, B,1990)

Intra ethnic understanding integrates different explanatory approaches to ethnic conflicts: studies on ethnic clientelism and discrimination, on political mobilisation by minority elites, on unequal relations between ethno regions, and on the effects that different political systems have on the dynamics of ethnic conflicts. For each of these approaches, the relevant research is reviewed and illustrated by selected examples from post-imperial societies. Propositions that seem empirically plausible are integrated into a comparative model which is in turn based on a specific theory of political modernity. The premise holds that the politicisation of ethnicity is to be interpreted as a central aspect of modem state-building. For only when ‘people’ and state are mutually related within the ideal of a legitimate order does the question arise for which
ethnic group the state has to act, who is regarded as its legitimate owner, and who is entitled to have access to its services. Ethnic conflicts can thus be interpreted as struggles for the collective goods of the nation-state. Within this paradigmatical frame, a step-by-step analysis at a medium level of abstraction tries to show under which conditions state-building leads to an ethnicisation of political conflicts and in some cases to an escalation into rebellions and wars.

Intra Ethnic understanding is a complex topic of discussion. Before going to the depth we have to trace back history of Assam which reminded to be the land of immigrants like Khasis, Mizo, Karib, Garo, Rabha, Koch, Kachari, Tiwa, Jayantiya, Naga, Chutiya, Boro, Missing and many other groups, belonging to Austro- Asiatic and Tibeto Mongolian origin. Narakasura was one among their kings. He was killed by lord Krishna of Dwarka. All the tribal people used to worship Shakti. In 13th century Ahoms entered Assam and established kingdom, ruled over 600 years. During the reign of king Narakasura and other local kings like Koch, Kachari, Chutia, Jayantia etc. A sizable population of Aryans entered Assam. These Aryans had established intra racial marriage with local women resulting in formatting of a new community called Assamese. B.M very fairly described that in ancient time, abode of vaiety
of ethnic groups, physical diversity, separate cultural patterns, clan and group allegiances, there exists an inter bond of unity among the people of the land which binds them together. This racial harmony was largely due to the intimate contact among different ethnic groups. Many of the tribal people came under the influence of *Aryan* people, they accepted Hinduism. Many of the tribal groups used Assamese language in their day today life even they had their language, dialect. Ahoms were also Hinduised and accepted Assamese languages. The Assamese Hindus were not practiced rigidly to the extent it is found in some other states of India. Most of the migrated tribal groups accepted the Assamese language and culture and formed an integral part of the region. The ethnic groups had diverse socio-cultural background, but in course of time each of these populations contributed their respective shares in building up a composite culture. *(Das, B.M.1987, 3-17)*

Till the middle of the sixties of this century a detribalization effort was going, but due to various socio-political pulls and pressures the effort was put to a halt. Instead the concept of re-tribalisation or ethnocentrism got the upper hand leading to the formation of states, autonomous districts and the demand of state hood.
4.3 National Integration:

The History of the Indian civilization bears the evidence of evolution. Indian civilization grown up in the bank of river Sindhu in prehistoric age and bloom as the flower lotus. This civilization spreaded to each corner of India also towards north east. In 13th century B.C., this north eastern part became popular as Assam. In ancient epic and purans, this part was brown as pragjyotisha or Kamrupa. Indian culture was grown up during the vedic age. Culture is the way of life is interrelated with development of a society, livelihood, food habits, dresses, festivals, relationship of men and women. If studied these elements the artistic point of view have abled to understand. It is known that Indian civilization is the admixer of both Aryan and non Aryan cultures. In Aryanised culture, it is believed that human being is the great creation of divine lard. These cultures have two fold forms, i.e. divine form and non divine form. Indian civilization is based on this divine form of culture. Two instincts influence the ancient Indian life, i.e., respect and fear. These instincts help ancient men to overcome the obstacles in the pathway of life, struggle of life. The people belong to Arynised stock realized the contribution of nature to human life, so they sung surjya vandana everyday. But along them few other people also inhabited in
this region. DR. Binod Sharma in his writing on Indian culture stated that these people can classified as non Aryans, pre *Aryans* and primitive men. Veda stated these peoples as *Aryan*, so there was a conflict between the Aryan and non *Aryans* at former stage. But with due course of time they assimilated each other and had shared the pattern of living. (Sharma, Binod, 1989, 75)

Assamese society and culture are the part of greater Indian culture and society. The reflection of Tibetan and Chinese tradition also common in Assamese society and culture. Assamese people have earned few food habits from foreigners that invaded the region and ruled over. Use of cymbal in *nam-kritana*, *venda flower* in the nap of women folk during the Bihu dance came to Assamese society due to the contact of Chinese society. But the form of use of such elements had changed due to the contact of greater Indian culture (Ibid, 76)

Bihu is the major festival of Assam. This festival is not based on any religion, caste or colour. It is a spring time agriculture based festival. The primitive sense of Bihu had developed to spiritual sense by *Aryan* people and gradually it became the national festival of Assam. So it has become clear that Assamese society and culture are not rigid or
static one which undergoes changes with the course of time. Both Indian and Assamese culture contacted and influenced by each other. Assamese culture bears own distinctive characteristics. Assam was ruled by different king of different dynasty of different historical period. Every dynasty had carried pride and glory of own distinctive culture, tradition and mode of administration. But along with their own distinctiveness, they established a close relationship with other parts of India. Dr. Binod Sharma stated that since the time of king Naraka to Bhaskar Varman of 7th century it was seen that there was evidence of establishment of relationship with other parts of India and world. Bhaskar Varman brought Chinese pilgrimages Hu-en-tung to his kingdom and discuss about the Buddhism. It was a great example of ad mixer of Assamese society and culture along with outer society. Such example was not found in other parts of the country. National integration implies the feeling of sanctity towards the boundaries of one's own country and a realization that historically it has identity, continuity and a geographical unity too. It always had and will continue to have this unity. J.C. Aggrawal described national or emotional integration as a feeling among people to share certain common objectives, purposes or ideals and giving them high place over smaller or sectional legalities. In other words, it has been defined as a feeling of oneness which may transcend all groups a cultural difference.
and synthesize the different religions, Castes, linguistic communities emotionally into a compact whole. (Aggarwal, J.C. 1993, 389)

Assam is a region where different ethnic inhabitant used many faiths, creeds, castes, language, religion. S.S. Mathur quoted that if we think about the national integration, It is a hardest problems to filled up a national mind by combating the religious, linguistic and communal conflicts which tend to disunite us. (Mathur, S. S. Dr., 1992, 367)

National integration was attained in historical past. The feeling of belongingness is the most important feeling in the path way of the integration. National integration demands the integration of the heart and souls of the people for promoting all round welfare, rather than more conglomerations of states or geographical areas. Humayuna Kabir said that It has been paradox of Indian History that in spite of basic identity of culture, the country has been divided into kingdoms, which have after developed sub-nationalism sharply distinguished from one another. (Kabir, H, 1961, 116)

Assam is facing a great threat from divisive forces, which are bent on destroying its unity and integrity. Indian constitution has
given religion and caste affiliation permanency to the society, which is undoubtedly responsible for a large number of social evils of the present society. The partition of the country takes place because of the rigid attitude of different religions. Casteism is one of the most serious obstacles in the path of national unity. The idea of linguistic states got some political shape in India. The State Recoganisation Commission has recommended the division of the country into a number of states. But it could not meet the wishes of many linguistic groups. This division of the country has been very much responsible for the encouragement of the disruptive elements. J.C. Aggrawal said that Literature is the mirror of a society, where the society is reflected. Literature can create a sprit of patriotism, a love of one’s own people and realizations that their destiny lies with other people of the land. The main base of literature is language. A better and powerful language brings greater national integrations than the multiplicity of language. (Aggrawal, J:C, 312)

Culture is another factor of national integration. Culture can move the people towards a certain goal. It is the central theme of human life that brings emotional integration. Cultural awareness brings unity among the people. Culture demands equality and equal opportunity to all the people irrespective to cast, sex, age and religion. J.C.Aggerwal also
stated that Diverse religion sometimes create an obstacle in the path of integration, but secular spirit of constitution helped to create an atmosphere of unity and good will. (ibid,314)

Dr. Amalendu Guha believed that Assam, the land of Srimanta Sankardeva is reputed for good will, communal harmony, fraternity, amity and unity for ages. The language, literature during the time able to established a co-ordination, among different ethnic groups. Sattras the vaslnavite institution also help to create an integration too. (Guha, Amalendu, 1985, 26).

The main purpose of national integration is to keep together different groups of people in a palace having social and cultural differences and also to strengthen social and cultural bonds among the people. Two important aspects are closely related with the concept of national integration, i.e. society and culture. A socially and culturally backward nation can never attain actual national integration. Justice for all sections of people must be available without any discrimination. J.C Aggrawal stated that the centrifugal forces appearing in the country in the form of linguism, casteism, communalism and regionalism are the
Assam was rocked by ethnic violence during last few years. Incidents of Assam and clashes were reported from different parts of state. Ethnic and religious communities have lived together peacefully during the past millennium. But now a days they become conscious about their own ethnic identity. (National Integration: Directorate of Advertising and visual publicity, Ministry of Information and Broad costing, Govt. of India, 1961)

The national integration of a country or state depends upon the political unity and emotional unity. Emotional integration is pre-conditioned need to attain political unity. Emotional unity is strengthened through political unity. Feeling of oneness which can keep the country united is looking at present. The political unity was won due to the emotional unity but it can be lost if emotional unity is not strengthened. So for the present the most important factor which is involved in national integration is emotional unity. The people of a region must realize that their personal interest have no meaning when it is question of nation. Such feelings cannot be forced. The people themselves have to inculcate
people are liable to inculcate the feeling of affection, sacrifice and duty toward nation.

4.4 Contribution to the Indian life:

The political History of Assam bears the following evidences. The people of Assam always think themselves as an integral part of Indian civilisation and nationality. In the great epic Ramayana and Mahabharata of 4th & 5th century BC described Assam as Pragjyotisha in the Kalika Purana and Yogini Tantra of 10th century A.D. & 16th century AD gave a detail account of the region. The Puranas, Bhagavata, Harivansha and the Samhitas also mentioned about the ancient city of Pragjyotishpur. Pragjyotishpur was the centre of astronomical study. From 4th -5th century AD, this region became popular as Kamrupa. In the Mahabharata, Bhagadatta a king of Pragjyotish played a remarkable role in the great battle of the contemporary Indian kings. Bhaskarvarman, the great king of Assam had friendship with Harshavardhan, the then emperor of India. The great vaishnavite saint, Sankardeva visited towards India. He highly praised about the greatness of India in his writings. The great Ahom king Rudra Singha planned to make a confederacy with contemporary the tie of friendship. This was the invisible thread that
bound all people inside the geographical periphery of the Indian subcontinent even in these days. Of course this Indians were not as prominent as of today’s India, but a feeling of an invisible band served the purpose of that time. Even during the 1857, when the great revolt shock the British it was the some unity of scattered Indian people against a foreign power. In the freedom struggle of 1921, 1930, 1942 and later, the people of Assam fought against the British as Indians only. (Bhuyan, Arun Chandra, 221)

Assam with all her variety and diversity represents India in her miniature form. Assamese culture is the epitome of the great Indian culture. The characteristics of Assamese culture is the epitome of the great Indian culture. The characteristics of Assamese culture are not different from those of Indian culture. Assamese culture was spread to other parts of India by the cultural and political contacts of different period of time since divine past. (ibid,223).

Assam is the meeting place of various ethnic groups. But in ancient time there was a integration, assimilation among different groups, which is an important example to other ethnic groups inhabited different parts of the state. (ibid 224)
A process of absorption and assimilation of countless small tribal and groups into the generic category of Assamese people have been all along at work through centuries of its evolution. Cultural diversity is an inescapable fact of modern life. Culture refers to a historically inherited system of meaning and significance in terms of which a group of people understand and structure their individual and collective lives. It defines the meaning or point of human activities, social relations and human life in general, and the kind and degree of significance or value to be attached to them. A culture's system of meaning and significance is embodied in its beliefs and practices, which collectively constitute its identity. To say that almost every modern society is culturally diverse or multicultural is to say that its members subscribe to and live by different though overlapping systems of meaning and significance. Cultural diversity in modern society has several sources. Many societies include different ethnic, religious, cultural and other communities, with their more or less distinct ways of life. Some of these communities were long denied collective self-expression in the name of nation building or a hegemonic ideology, and are now keen to exercise their newly won freedoms. Modern men and women, being profoundly shaped by liberal individualism, take pride in forming their own views and making their own choices. They naturally arrive at different views of life. This is
reinforced by the breakdown in the traditional moral consensus, which both requires and makes space for individual choices. Globalization too exposes each society to different currents of thought, and its members respond to these in different ways. (Gogoi, L. 1982, 62)

Immigration is yet another source of cultural diversity, and it takes many forms. People move freely within from inside and outside India. Ethnic groups move from one country to another. Members of the diaspora return to their lands of origin in their old age, or because these countries have now become more prosperous than when they left them, or because they no longer feel welcome in their countries of settlement. And in each case they bring with them some of the ideas and practices they have absorbed in these countries. People fleeing persecution or desperate circumstances seek asylum, and many of them are admitted. Cultural diversity is likely to disappear in the foreseeable future, cultural diversity is not only an inescapable but a more or less permanent feature of modern life. (Ibid, 93)

The sources of diversity would remain alive. It should therefore avoid the all too common mistake of racializing diversity by equating it with or attributing it exclusively to immigration. Furthermore,
the diversity introduced by immigrants is not necessarily deeper or more extensive. Some of the latter have indigenous peoples whose ways of thought and life are quite different from those of the rest of society. More importantly, they also include individuals and groups who take quite different views from the majority on such subjects. Almost all these subjects immigrants often share the views of the majority, and the moral and cultural divide between them and the rest of society is narrower and shallower than that separating its own members. It should not therefore exoticize immigrant cultures, and conclude that just because immigrants look different, speak differently and come unfamiliar countries, their moral and cultural lives are or must also be quite different from. This is not to deny that immigrant cultures often differ in important respects, but rather to point out that these and other differences should not blind to the commonalities and that they are not necessarily more intractable than the other differences found in the receiving society. (Agarwal, MM, 1996, 121).

It is sometimes argued that almost all societies in history except the most primitive have been multicultural, and that there is nothing new or historically distinctive about our age. Although this is true, it ignores some of the unique features of contemporary multicultural
societies. Whatever their differences, almost all premodern societies were religious and broadly agreed on many of their basic moral beliefs and practices.

Furthermore, in premodern societies minority communities generally accepted their subordinate status, and remained confined to the social and even the geographical spaces assigned them by the dominant groups. Contemporary multicultural societies are different. Democratic ideas give equal status and rights, minority communities demand equal treatment, including absence of discrimination, equality of opportunity, and equal right to participate in and shape the collective life of society. (Ibid, 124).

In recent years equal treatment has been interpreted widely to mean that the state should not be identified with a particular ethnic, religious and cultural group, and should be either neutral or even handed in its approach to its constituent communities. The facts that modern societies share a common industrial economy such that their members cannot lead economically self-contained lives, that they are dominated by liberal ideas of individual choice, that they participate in a common political life that cuts across communal boundaries, etc. also add to their
uniqueness. Since deep and extensive cultural diversity is a fact of modern life and is legitimized in terms of the widely shared and deeply held liberal and democratic ideas of individual choice and equal treatment, every modern multicultural society needs to find ways of accommodating diverse demands without losing its cohesiveness and unity. Different kinds of diversity raise different problems and require different responses. The demands of indigenous peoples, territorially concentrated national minorities, immigrants, etc. (Ibid, 126)

An influential body of opinion, usually called assimilationism, argues that a society cannot be cohesive and stable unless its members share a common national culture, including a common system of meaning and significance, a shared conception of the good life at personal and collective levels, and a shared body of customs, practices, habits, attitudes and collective memories. In the absence of such a shared culture, they would disagree deeply about the meanings of different human activities and relations and the values to be assigned to them, and would simply not be able to cooperate and sustain a shared life. Some assimilationists give the argument an ontological basis, and maintain that human beings are so constituted that they find it extremely difficult, even impossible, to relate to and identify with those holding substantially
dissimilar views to theirs on moral and cultural matters. In their view, this is a basic fact of human nature, an ineradicable human instinct which a society may disregard at its peril. (G. Robert, 2007, 91).

The assimilationist approach makes important points. A society cannot be held together unless its members share certain basic beliefs and values in common. If some of them saw no value in human life, if they thought that all who refused to share their religious or political beliefs were fools or evil and should be suppressed, if they did not see the point of reciprocity and fairness and insisted on living in society on their own terms, or if they denied obvious facts about the social world and rejected the empirical and scientific mode of reasoning about them, no common life would be possible with them. It is also the case that as people live together, they develop similar habits, interests, tastes, etc., sometimes spontaneously and at other times out of self-interest or in response to subtle social pressure. The assimilationist, however, goes wrong in asking for a greater degree and range of unity than is possible or necessary. Human beings understand the world and their place in it in vastly different ways. Some are religious, others are not; the former belong to different religious traditions; and there is no rational way to resolve their disagreement. This is equally true of their moral
differences. Not surprisingly, almost every modern society displays and has to find ways of living with unresolved philosophical, cultural and moral differences. Since it has no cultural and moral consensus, it is not clear what immigrants are to be assimilated into, and what to do with the dissenting insiders. The assimilationist view bears no relation to contemporary reality and remains trapped in a dangerously naive nostalgia. Some assimilationsists appreciate this, but insist on moulding immigrants into their own view of their society’s idealized culture in the hope that this will help create a consensus around which to reorganize the rest of society. This is intellectually and morally dishonest, and is doomed to failure because immigrants are rarely willing and are in any case too small in number to play the regenerative, even redemptive, role assigned them by the assimilationist. Assimilationism is also open to other objections. It is simply not true that human beings can only identify with those who are like them. If that were so, inter-ethnic and inter-religious friendships and marriages as well as reasonably successful multiethnic and multicultural. (Ibid, 99-191).

The assimilationists' obsession with moral and cultural uniformity springs from and leads to a deep suspicion of moral and
cultural differences. For them these differences are departures from the norm, they are abnormal, deviant, sources of disorder. Once they have eliminated some of them, they turn their attention to others. And since differences are constantly generated by human ingenuity, creativity and choices, the assimilationists are forever at war with their fellow citizens. Their hostility does not remain limited to immigrants, and extends over time to other members of society, such as the followers of different religions, gays, cohabitees, single parents and, their bête noire the liberals. This is hardly the way to hold a society together, which they say is their basic objective. By demanding far more than what is possible, they fail to secure even what is necessary. (Ibid, 191-198).

There are several good reasons why society should respect the cultural differences that immigrants bring with them. Their culture is part of their identity, it has profoundly shaped them and means much to them, and their self-respect is tied up with respect not only for them as individuals but also for their culture. Respecting them therefore involves respecting their culture. This does not at all mean that their culture may not be criticized, and some of its practices disallowed. No culture is self-authenticating, and it is precisely because one takes its members seriously that one enters into a critical dialogue with them about their beliefs and
practices. Respecting a culture means that one does not dismiss it out of hand, that one owes it an obligation to understand it in its own terms, that one does not self-righteously take one's own culture as the standard for judging all others, and that one credits its members with enough intelligence and good sense to be able to explain why they hold certain views and to change those that are indefensible. Respect in this basic sense is owed to all cultures as part of our respect for their members, and a culture does not forfeit its claim to respect simply because some of its practices are unacceptable, for in that case no culture, including our own, would merit respect. Furthermore, when immigrants' cultures are treated with insensitivity and contempt, and when they are required to abandon them as a condition of their acceptance, they feel besieged and threatened, turn inward, close ranks, stifle internal dissent and diversity, and become defensive and defiant. This is hardly the way to create a cohesive society. (R.B. Hall, 1999, 248).

Another reason for respecting immigrant cultures has to do with the value of cultural diversity. No culture is perfect or represents the last word in human wisdom. Each articulates a particular vision of the good life, develops some human capacities and virtues, and marginalizes or ignores others. They can therefore benefit from a sympathetic
dialogue. The dialogue makes them aware of their commonalities and differences as well as their strengths and limitations, and encourages critical self-consciousness and legitimate pride and humility. It also alerts each to its own internal differences and diversity, and protects it against the all too common tendency to homogenize and essentialize it. Immigrant cultures provide the wider society with a vitally necessary critical interlocutor, a partner in dialogue. Even if they are less sophisticated, they ask probing questions and hold a mirror to the prevailing culture in which it can recognize its specificity and biases. They also bring to it new forms of imagination, new ideas of beauty and goodness, new forms of resourcefulness and skills, new sources of energy and dynamism, and add to its cultural capital. (Ibid, 251).

Since the assimilationist demand is unjust, illiberal and unrealistic, many writers and political leaders have proposed integration as an alternative social goal. Indeed it has now become a universally favoured model in the discourse on immigration. Although the term is widely used, it is rarely subjected to careful analysis. As a result, it lacks focus and conveys a disparate body of ideas. It avoids the two extremes of assimilation and segregation, and seems to have caught on largely because of this negative virtue. Prima facie it appears to be a perfectly

(166)
sensible goal, for no one wants individuals and groups to be excluded or marginalized. However when probed deeper, it is not as innocent as it seems. Unlike assimilation, integration is primarily a socio-political rather than a cultural concept. It implies that no individual or group of individuals should be excluded from society or treated as inferior, as was the case under racial segregation in the United States. However it involves far more than inclusion and equality. It implies that those included should be incorporated or integrated into the social structure so that they become an integral and indistinguishable part. In the integrationist view, a society is held together not by a single and homogeneous national culture but by a common body of institutions, values and practices. They structure social relations, ensure uniformity and predictability, facilitate the conduct of common affairs and create a shared moral order. While members of a society may organize their personal lives as they please, their shared social life requires and can only be sustained by such a widely accepted body of public institutions and norms of interpersonal behaviour, etc. In the integrationist view immigrants should integrate if they wish to be accepted and treated as equals. According to integrationists, integration involves three things. (Ibid, 268).
The integrationist approach defines integration in terms of loyalty, participation, and acculturation or adaptation. It has its virtues and is better than the assimilationist rival. It respects cultural differences and seeks to reconcile their demands with those of social cohesion and unity. It rightly insists that immigrants should commit themselves to the society in which they have chosen to settle and show it basic loyalty. The integrationist is also right to insist that immigrants should participate in the common life of society and avoid communal ghettos in order to build up common ties of interest and attachment with the rest of society and as an earnest of their willingness to become full members. Immigrants cannot expect to reproduce their country of origin in their new environment and demand to live on their own terms. Both respect for the history and identity of society and their own ability to flourish in it require that they should respect its institutions, values and norms of behaviour. In spite of these and related insights, the integrationist approach suffers from several limitations, many of which it shares with assimilationism. Like the latter, it too sees integration as a one-way process. The onus to integrate is always on the immigrants, so is the blame for their failure to do so, and all the necessary adjustments and accommodations are to be made by them. This is a highly misleading account of the process of integration. The social and political structure of
a society is the product of its history and reflects the current self-understanding of its members. As new members arrive with their distinct histories and experiences, it cannot hope to remain the same. Some of its practices and attitudes might make no sense to or have an adverse effect on them, and need to be changed. Its collective self-understanding too needs to be redefined to take account of their presence. (ibid, 270).

Cultural identity and discourages integration. Integrationists also feel worried if immigrants retain a strong sense of commitment to their country of origin, reproduce its political controversies, direct some of their philanthropic activities there, and so on. For them, all this is a sign that immigrants are not fully committed and are holding themselves back; they take it as an invitation to increase the pressure on them to become ‘fully’ integrated like the rest of their fellow-citizens. Some integrationists do not share such an extreme and comprehensive view of integration. They appreciate that immigrants might wish to and have a right to retain parts of their cultural identity, and that integration could and should be partial and ‘thin’, limited mainly to society’s ‘common institutions’. (Waterman, A.S., 1984, 206).
Like the language of assimilation, that of integration is also vulnerable to subtle forms of racism. Since integration is the goal, one is led to ask what kinds of immigrants can be integrated with relative ease, are less likely to make inconvenient demands, and with whom the rest of society would find it easier to identify. The integrationist logic requires a society either to avoid ‘difficult’ immigrants or to subject them to a harsher regime of control. Immigrants are outsiders who wish to become, and whom the rest of society wants to make, insiders or full citizens. Immigrants should enjoy all the rights and discharge all the obligations of citizenship, and the rest of society needs to do all it can to ensure that they are able to do so. One might argue that this is enough and that nothing more is needed to ensure social cohesion than the practice of equal citizenship. While such a thin libertarian view has its values, it is flawed. Citizenship is not just as matter of rights, obligations and status. It involves commitment to the political community, accepting it as one’s own and being willing to make sacrifices for it. Citizens share common interests and bonds and make claims on each other that they do not do in relation to outsiders. For these and other reasons, citizenship needs to be grounded in and nurtured by a common sense of belonging.13 Rather than ask how immigrants can be assimilated or integrated, we might more profitably ask how they can become equal citizens and be bound to the
rest by the ties of mutual commitment and attachment. This is our general objective, and all else is derived from it. It obviously requires some form of integration in the sense that immigrants should not be excluded or marginalized, and it also requires some degree of assimilation in the sense that they should share certain basic beliefs and values. However integration and assimilation are the means not the end, and their relevance, importance, forms and degrees should be decided by their ability to serve the overall objective in the context of the constantly changing relations between immigrants and the wider society. Common belonging is a two-way process. Immigrants cannot belong to the society in which they have chosen to settle unless it is prepared to welcome them, and conversely it cannot accept them as full members unless they wish to belong, with all that this entails. Common belonging therefore can only be achieved if each party respects the terms of the relationship and discharges its obligations. Immigrants arrive of their own free choice and wish to belong to their country of settlement. A society is not a chance collection of people who happen to live together and are only contingently related to each other. It represents an intricate and complex way of life built up through struggle and sacrifice over several generations. Since their identities, lives and personal histories are closely bound up with it, they rightly feel possessive and protective about it. They want to be reassured
that immigrants value their membership of it, and understand and respect its way of life. Even ordinary clubs and associations insist on rules of membership, and rightly expect their successful new applicants to join in good faith, observe the norms, and do nothing to undermine and subvert it. This is even more the case with political societies, which have long-established historical identities and which members regard as home. (ibid, 210-213).

Every society as a matter of fact constantly redefines and reconstitutes itself in response to the emergence of new generations of young men and women who bring with them new ideas, sensibilities, aspirations, forms of self-understanding and modes of behaviour. Immigrants present a similar challenge, especially because they arrive as fully formed adults with only limited room for malleability. They may therefore legitimately ask for changes in the practices and institutions of the wider society when they can show that these bear unduly heavily on them, make demands they cannot meet, are deeply biased, not as self-evident as the society assumes, and so on. Their demands carry weight and are likely to receive a favourable response only if they have made a commitment to society and value their membership of it.

(172)
Immigrants express their commitment to society in several ways. They should cherish its integrity and well-being, respect its structure of authority and laws, and in general discharge their obligations as citizens. In principle no more and no less can be demanded of them than of their fellow-citizens. To demand more is to place a greater burden on them, to demand less is patronizing and condescending, and both are discriminatory. Although immigrants might find it politically prudent to be more explicit than the rest in their professions of loyalty and patriotic sentiment, this should not be a moral, or even a political requirement.

Immigrants also affirm their commitment to society by participating in its common life, discharging their share of collective responsibility, being productive workers, not abusing the available welfare provisions, and so on. Participation in common life does not mean that they may not marry among themselves or carve out communal cultural spaces of their own.