Chapter III

METHODS OF DATA COLLECTION
3.1.0 INTRODUCTION

The different techniques of data collection for this study were designed in such a way as to achieve the objectives spelt out at the very outset of this study.

3.2.0 OBJECTIVES

1. To assess the impact of changing norms brought about by intercultural marriages on the family organization of the Khasis.

2. To understand whether these changes are trend-setters, and to analyse the possibility of these changes continuing to happen.

3. To identify the changes that inter-cultural marriages bring on inter-personal relationships between the non-Khasi wives and their husbands' clan members.

4. To identify the factors that are responsible for such changes.

3.3.0 SOURCES OF DATA

In the present study, data have been collected from three different sources.

3.3.1 Secondary Sources:

Literature available on the Khasi matriliney and customary practices is an excellent source of information. They are precious records of thought
and its development from the past up to the present. Ideas change with time. A hundred and fifty years ago oral tradition was the only vehicle for cultural transmission among the Khasis. The modes and ethos of the developments prior to 1841, the year Rev. Thomas Jones introduced the Roman script into the Khali language, have not been recorded and remain unknown to us. What we know today is only what writers have put into writing.

Literature can be classified as follows:

a) i) **Traditional literature**, as the writings of Sib Charan Roy, C. Lyngdoh, Dr. Homiwel Lyngdoh, etc., who wrote in the first decades of this century. They are more traditional in their outlook.

   ii) **Current literature**, like the writings of T. Phanbu, S.A. Kurbah, Kriemon Rapthap and the rest of the columnists and contributors to Dongmut, Batemon, etc. They are our own contemporaries, and their ideas and outlook have been affected to a great extent, by the winds of change.

b) i) **Khasi writers**, like D.T. Laloo, Rev. Fr. Sngi Lyngdoh, Sr. Philomena Kharakor, Darningh Stone Lyngdoh, etc. Being indigenous writers, have incomparable advantage of going deeper than the words into the thought-content. They know what exactly they are talking about.

   ii) **Non-Khasi writers**, like P.R. Gurdon, Soumen Sen, J.N. Choudhury, etc., who have to rely on translations and interpreters. They are handicapped by the fact that translators most often translate the
raw words, and not ideas, or the thought-content, and are liable to be inadequate or even misleading.

3.3.2 Primary Sources:

The primary sources comprise the people who are the subject of the study and who gave personal information about themselves.

Population: The population for this study comprises all couples who are inter-culturally married. In each case, one of the partners should be a Khasi. The following are the two possible combinations:

a) KO = nKD - a Khasi woman married to a non-Khasi man

b) KD = nKO - a Khasi man married to a non-Khasi woman.

Cases of Khasi women married to non-Khasi men are a widespread phenomenon. They are easy to come by. Such marriages, however, have not brought about significant changes in the cultural practice nor in the family set-up, except that they are cross-cultural. The only deviation is that in each case a Khasi woman is married tribe exogamously. The matrilineal character of the system is left undisturbed, and quite strictly adhered to. These marriages are not the focus of this enquiry, though some cases have been studied for the sake of comparison. Variations are taken into consideration.

Of special interest to this study are the cross-cultural marriages where Khasi men are married to non-Khasi women. Many of the male partners
in these marriages entered into such unions with a certain ideology, and most of these cases have brought about considerable changes in the cultural practices and organisation of these individual families. There is a significant tilt towards the patrilineal system.

It is thus not the cross-cultural marriages per se that this enquiry is interested in, but in their consequences, in the concomitant changes, or deviations from the traditional norms and values, in the changes in perception and cultural practices.

In marriages where Khasi men are married to non-Khasi women, cultural deviation is, for most part, on the part of the man. Many of the non-Khasi women come from patrilineal contexts, and so, as far as they are concerned, things are as they should be. It is their Khasi husbands who undergo changes both mentally as well as in real life situations. Most of the men are prepared for such changes.

Logically, then, this enquiry should interest itself also in a third type of cases which are also found but are not so common as yet:

\[ KÅ = KO \] - both husband and wife are Khasis, but have adopted the patrilineal pattern of family.

From the above description of the population, the following categories are derived:
1) (a) \( KO(m) = nK\Delta(p) \) - Khasi women married to non-Khasi men from patrilineal cultures, with uxorilocal residence.

(b) \( KO(m) = nK\Delta(m) \) - Khasi women married to non-Khasi men from matrilineal cultures (e.g., a Garo), with uxorilocal residence.

(c) \( KO(m) = nK\Delta(p) \) - Khasi women married to non-Khasi men from patrilineal cultures, with virilocal residence.

(d) \( KO(m) = nK\Delta(m) \) - Khasi women married to non-Khasi men from matrilineal cultures, with virilocal residence.

2) More weightage has been given to the following categories, because they have a direct bearing on the problem of this study.

(a) \( K\Delta(m) = nKO(p) \) - Khasi men married to non-Khasi women from matrilineal cultures (e.g., Garos, Tiwas), with uxorilocal residence.

(b) \( K\Delta(m) = nKO(m) \) - Khasi men married to non-Khasi women from matrilineal cultures (e.g., Garos, Tiwas), with uxorilocal residence.

(c) \( K\Delta(m) = KO(m) \) - both husband and wife are Khasis, but follow the patrilineal pattern of residence descent, inheritance and succession.
Sample: The sample comprises couples taken at random from the population described above:

a) 15 couples were taken -
   - from Shillong and around to study cases 1(a) and (b);
   - from Guwahati, Dimapur and Kohima to study cases 1(c);
   - from Tura, William Nagar, Resubelpara and Umswai to study cases 1(a).

b) 59 couples were taken -
   - from Shillong, Dimapur, Kohima, Calcutta, the Bhoi area and Cherrapunji to study cases 2(a);
   - from Tura, Resubelpara, William Nagar, Umswai to study cases 2(b);

c) 14 couples were taken mostly from Shillong to study cases 2(c).

3.3.3 Personal Factor

The investigator's inside knowledge of Khasi matriliny has been a good source of information and guide to its interpretation. The fact that he does not have to rely on interpreters and translators gives him that kind of advantage which cannot be ignored or belittled.

3.4.0 TOOLS

For the purpose of data collection, two tools were used: a Questionnaire,
and an Interview Schedule.

The questionnaire was designed to discover the hard facts of cross-cultural marriages, and certain conditions like religious or educational or occupational parity and origin of parents, which could be facilitating or deterring cross-cultural marriages. The questionnaire is reproduced in the Appendix.

3.4.1 The interview schedule was designed to generate information on 11 items which are pointers to:

a) the type and the extent of change in the family system;

b) deviations from traditional practices that cross-culturally married couples might have gone through;

c) the adaptation these couples have made to these changes.

The interview schedule is reproduced in the Appendix.