CHAPTER II

THE STUDY

1. Review of Literatures

Voluntary organisations attracted the attention of social scientists from an early period. Earlier writers attributed great importance to the shift from involuntary to voluntary kinds of groupings in human societies. Anthropologists and sociologists like Maine (1875), Schrutz (1902), Lowie (1935), Williamson (1939), Nadel (1942), Lloyd (1951) et al. made a number of observations on voluntary organisations in their various writings (cited in Banton, 1968:358-362). Of late, researchers from different disciplines have focused on studying voluntary organisations as agencies for social development in modern societies. In India too, many studies have been undertaken to analyse various aspects of voluntary organisations working in different fields for welfare and development of people. An attempt has been made to discuss some of the earlier studies on voluntary organisations in India in the following few paragraphs.

Early in 1963 the Institute of Social Sciences of Kashi Vidyapeeth conducted a study of voluntary organisations in Varanasi. The study was basically an account of the activities of voluntary organisations of Varanasi in different fields. Erstwhile Central Institute of Research and Training in Public Cooperation (presently known as National Institute of Public Cooperation and Child Development) carried out a study covering 158 voluntary organisations spread all over the country (1967). The study examined the
background, objectives, activities and approaches of the voluntary organisations. Chowdhury (1971) carried out a study based on data collected from about 6000 voluntary organisations working at different levels in India to examine the growth, extent and forms of voluntary efforts in India and the contribution of voluntary organisations in the field of social welfare. He observed that the growth of voluntary organisations in India was rapid during the decade 1951-60. The study revealed that about 80 per cent of the organisations came into existence after independence of India. Growth of VOs was also not uniform in the entire country. Voluntary organisations were mainly manned by individuals inclined to offer their services to the needy and qualified and experienced social workers were almost non existent. These organisations carried out a variety of activities aimed at different categories of disadvantaged people. Ramdev et al. (1971) conducted case studies of seven voluntary organisations in and around Delhi. Besides, describing the activities and organisational aspects of each agency, the study attempted to analyse the factors which promoted or hindered the process of people's participation in the organisations' activities. The study brought to light that none of these agencies had well defined public relations programmes for eliciting public support. However, in the course of rendering services to the community, these voluntary agencies did adopt some methods to achieve community's involvement in some way or the other. The organisations also did not make any systematic effort to identify or prioritise needs of the community. The study also focussed on measures taken by the organisations for motivating and encouraging the spirit of work. Lalitha (1975) in her study of 390 voluntary organisations and 856 operating volunteers in nine major cities of India examined in depth the socio-economic profile of volunteers, the nature of work they were
engaged in their motivation and aspirations. The study also focussed on policies and attitudes of the organisations towards the role of volunteers, problems faced by the VOs in recruitment, placement, training, supervision and retention of volunteers. The study findings showed that volunteers belonged equally to both the sexes and with majority being in the age group 25-54 years of age. People from diverse walks of life with different motives joined voluntary agencies. Though altruism was the major driving force, yet large number of volunteers worked for realising various personal aspirations. The study found that VOs mostly did not have any policy towards the volunteers. Voluntary organisations also did not put much efforts to locate potential volunteers. Likewise not much importance was laid on appropriate supervision and training of volunteers for their development. Mukherjee (1979) also studied recruitment pattern of voluntary workers by VOs engaged in the field of rural development. In his study of 1850 organisations spread all over the country, Mukherjee found that most of the voluntary agencies did not follow any formal procedures for recruitment and selection of workers. A large number of organisations recruit their workers through personal contacts.

Fernandes (1981) analysed projects undertaken by ten voluntary organisations in South India to understand economic, technical and ideological factors that determine the nature and scope of people's participation in development. The study showed that the 'entry point' or origin of a programme influences the growth of a people's programme, its developmental effectiveness and potential for replication. Where techno-economic inputs are emphasised without commensurate stress on education, awareness building and training, people's participation tends to diminish. Lalitha and Kohli (1982) carried out a study of 151 voluntary organisations working in the four states of the country, viz.
Assam, Maharashtra, Tamil Nadu and Uttar Pradesh. The study was carried out to determine the status of voluntary efforts in social welfare, trends of growth or decline in the organisation of welfare services and to explore the reasons for such growth or decline. The study findings showed that growth of voluntary organisations within the period of about 30 years after independence was uneven. The period from 1953 to 1961 experienced highest growth rate which gradually slowed down in the next two decades till 1980. Most of the organisations were operating at local level with some operating at state level and a few having their network countrywide. Child welfare, welfare of women and community welfare were the main agenda of the voluntary organisations. VOs were entirely managed by volunteers or honorary workers in the pre-independence era. However, gradually percentage of paid personnel rose and by 1980 it came to be as high as 72 per cent. Majority of the VOs were in favour of the government providing financial assistance to the organisations. Increasing financial burden and difficulty in raising funds from the community seemed to turn the VOs for seeking state funding. The organisations had divided opinions regarding whether voluntary work was declining or growing. One group argued that voluntary work was declining due to changing value system, pursuit for material benefit, prevailing socio-economic condition, etc. Those who refused to agree that voluntary work was declining pointed towards manifold increase in number of VOs, expansion of areas of operation, increased professionalism as evidence of their strength. About 60 per cent of the respondents of the VOs of the study were of the opinion voluntary work was not declining. In a comparative study of voluntary organisations and governmental agencies engaged in social welfare, Pathak (1983) made attempt to identify social welfare manpower requirement in Delhi and Uttar Pradesh. The study also
highlighted the position of trained and untrained manpower and carried out simple job analysis. The study brought to light that the field of social welfare is dominated by the government both in Uttar Pradesh and Delhi. In Uttar Pradesh there were less number of professionally qualified personnel than in Delhi. While professional social workers considered training as essential for performing their roles effectively, those without professional training thought contrarily. In both Uttar Pradesh and Delhi there was no well defined manpower policy in government as well as in voluntary sector.

Rao (1984) studied the impact of the activities of a voluntary organisation in raising the awareness of beneficiaries. Through his study of the organisation engaged in rural development programmes in Andhra Pradesh, he found that the beneficiaries of the organisation had become more confident and articulate. The beneficiaries became motivated to unite and formed groups to fight against exploitation. Rajashekharan (1984) also did a case study of a VO in Karnataka which was working for mobilising people to take initiatives for their own development. The VO organised and promoted community based institutions at village level and helped in making them legal entities by registering these institutions with the appropriate authority. The VO acted as facilitator to bring these village level institutions in contact with government agencies and financial institutions like banks. The VO organised meetings of villagers and government functionaries at different levels. Such interactions between the villager and concerned government functionaries helped in formulating microlevel plans for development of the villages. The study proved the point that with proper guidance and mobilisation, the members of a community can effectively participate in programmes for their development.
Charyulu, et al. (1985) conducted a study of two voluntary organisations, one in Kerala and the other in Karnataka, implementing rural development programmes. The study reported that activities carried out by these two organisations under Integrated Rural Development Programme (IRDP) were showing good results. The villagers were benefitted by receiving the services and their incomes increased under the impact of the programme. Both the organisations involved the people in planning and implementation of the programme. The Gram Sabhas at village level were given the responsibility of selection of beneficiaries as well as in purchase of assets. Thus, community's participation in the programmes was achieve through the strategies adopted by the organisations. Srinivasan and Natarajan (1986) studied the activities of 20 voluntary organisations working in the field of health and family welfare. The study found that the organisations planned and implemented their programmes of health care and related services in a systematic manner. The organisations established hospitals, health centres and launched mobile health care units. The VOs organised health and nutrition education for community and carried out maternal and child health programme.

Kumar (1988) conducted a study covering 81 VOs of Bombay (Mumbai) and 64 VOs of Delhi. The study sought to examine the financial assistance given to the VOs by government fund giving bodies and its impact on the agencies and their services. The study brought to light that a large number of agencies depended very heavily on government grants and did not make any serious efforts for generating their own income. These VOs kept on changing their priority areas of work in keeping with the changing policies of the governments to ensure continuation of flow of fund. The study also revealed that rules and regulations of grant giving bodies were vague and loose, as a
result of which VOs often faced difficulties. The relationship between the VOs and the
grant giving bodies was also not always congenial and functional for various reasons. The
funding agencies generally insisted on correct paper works and other formalities which
the VOs could not follow all the time. The government agencies emphasized on private
fund raising by the VOs rather than depending solely on government assistance. But the
VOs found it extremely difficult to raise fund from private sources and insisted more on
state funding of VOs for their activities. The study made a number of recommendation to
improve the situation.

A study of 809 voluntary organisations spread all over India was carried out by
Gomes (1989). The study focussed on the programmes and the problems faced by the
VOs. He found that the VOs accorded higher priorities to activities for social
development and were mostly engaged in the field of education, health, relief and
rehabilitation, slum development, etc. Activities for economic development came next in
their priorities. Dearth of fund, non availability of qualified workers, inadequate
infrastructure and absence of coordination between the VOs and government agencies
were reported to be the major problems faced by the VOs. Khan and Thomas (1989) also
did a similar study of VOs working in the field of rural development. The study found
that the range of activities of the VOs was diverse. The VOs generally acted as partners
of the government in implementation of programmes for rural development. They also
some times took the mantle of working as advocates, critics and pressure groups on
behalf of the community. The VOs in question aimed at bringing about structural changes
in rural areas. This study also reported that voluntary organisations depend too much in
government grants. These VOs also suffered because, sometimes vested interests created
hiderances in different manners and often bureaucracy developed a negative attitude towards the organisations. Dearth of committed workers and poor rapport with the people added to the woes of the VOs.

Suresh (1990) studied 25 voluntary organisations in Kerala working in different fields. The study focussed on participation of beneficiaries in the activities of the VOs. It was found that the VOs were not working as community based organisations to the desirable extent. The quantum of participation of the beneficiaries were found to be very less in most of the organisations. The beneficiaries were only the receivers of the services offered by the VOs. Functionaries of the organisations did not consult the community while planning and implementing programmes for their development. The beneficiaries too, were only interested in receiving whatever the VOs had to offer and did not show much enthusiasms in getting involved in decision making and planning process.

In an another study Narayana (1990) analysed the functioning of voluntary organisations engaged in rural development in Andhra Pradesh. The study covered 33 VOs operating in different areas of the state. It made an attempt to find out the extent of bureaucratization of the voluntary agencies. The findings revealed that voluntary organisations faced compulsions from external and also internal environment to be bureaucratic. However, the bureaucratic characteristics of the VOs were not as prominent as in governmental organisations. The study brought to light that many VOs functioned under the rubric of a family operation. The political environment also influenced the functioning of these organisations. Building a viable organisational base turned out to be problematic for many VOs. Lack of commitment and expertise on the part of the personnel of VOs also weakened the functioning of VOs. That absence of requisite knowledge and skills
amongst the workers of some VOs had affected the quality of their activities was also highlighted by Charyulu and Seetharam (1990) through their study of a VO in Goa. The organisation did not undertake any preproject assessment work like baseline survey before planning and implementing their programme and also did not make any attempt to do any mid term evaluation.

Oza (1991) conducted a study of three infamous voluntary movements in modern India- the Chipko movement to preserve the nature and environment, Baba Amte's work amongst the lepers to fight against injustice to people afflicted with leprosy and initiative for upliftment of the status of women by SEWA, an organisation working for women in Gujrat. The study analysed the significance and impact of the these voluntary actions and also highlighted the spirit of selfless service for common good and its importance in the present socio-economic and political scenario in India. Rao and Francis (1993) undertook a study of a VO working in the field of adult and informal education in Andhra Pradesh. The basic concern of the study was to understand the strategies adopted by the VO for motivating and mobilising the people to take part in the adult literacy programme. The study observed that the VO adopted both inter-personal and mass appeal to contact and built rapport with the people. To attract the attention of the target learners and to motivate them, the performing arts of the community like songs, dramas were extensively used. The experiences of the organisation amply proved that there were some sections in society who posed a lot of hurdles to stem the success of the VO. Sachidanandana and Prasad (1994) studied a VO working for development of tribals in Bihar. The study examined the mode of operation of the VO. It was found that the organisation intervened with developmental inputs like educational services and also motivational and awareness
building programmes through village level women’s groups called Mahila Sabhas, youth clubs, sports clubs and local performing arts groups. The programmes of the organisation were mainly introduced with the help of 52 Mahila Sabhas of the area. Like many other organisations for this VO too the biggest problem was lack of adequate funds. Receiving funds from the government was a bit difficult for their lengthy and cumbersome procedures and unhelpful attitude of government functionaries. Though receiving funds from foreign funding agencies was stated to be comparatively easier, the amount thus received was not sufficient to meet the requirements of the VO. Similar innovative strategies were also adopted by a VO working in South Gujrat as revealed by the study of Vijaya (1994). The concerned VO was operating in tribal areas of Gujrat. In this case, the VO worked in collaboration with local tribal cooperatives and developed a Tribal Village Worker Education Programme. The programme aimed at providing training to school drop outs in basics of veterinary and animal husbandry thus enabling them to work as veterinarians in the remote tribal villages. The VO produced more than 100 such ‘barefoot veterinarians’ in those remote areas:

Shripathi (1995) undertook a study of voluntary agencies working in Karnataka. The study was an attempt to evaluate the workings of voluntary agencies and to assess the pre and post project conditions. The study concluded that voluntary agencies were playing a significant role in rural development. However, there was scope for voluntary agencies to improve their work performance. There was also a need to conceptualise and define the role which these VOs could play as a part of total delivery system. This could ultimately help the organisations to improve their capabilities to meet the emerging need. Smith-Sreen (1995) studied four NGOs in Bihar, Madhya Pradesh and Uttar Pradesh
engaged in income generating activities for women. The study mainly focussed its attention on accountability of these organisations to their members/beneficiaries. The study revealed that there was a strong relationship between the degree of accountability of the organisations and economic and social benefits received by the members. Organisations with higher levels of accountability to its members accrue higher economic and social benefits to their members.

Chander (1996) carried out a study of some selected NGOs operating in Central Himalayan Region of Uttar Pradesh to know how and how much and how far the NGOs were able to ensure the participation of farmers at whom the developmental efforts were directed. The study led to the conclusion that NGOs had really made good efforts towards ensuring farmers' participation in planning and implementing rural development programmes. Singhal (1998) conducted a study of volunteers of 21 voluntary organisations spread all over the state of Assam. The study focussed on revealing the personality profile and and level of satisfaction and motivation of volunteers at senior, middle and grass root levels. The study findings showed that the top level volunteers were more dominant, emphatic and self confident than other two groups. The middle level volunteers showed higher mean score on ego-ideal and introversion in comparison to top and grass root volunteers. The grass root level volunteers had higher mean score on neuroticism, need achievement, pessimism and dogmatism in comparison to other two group of volunteers. As regards job satisfaction, the higher the rank of volunteers, higher the level of satisfaction with their job. Majority volunteer's main motive behind joining the voluntary organisations was altruistic followed by personal factors. Mathiot (1998) studied 33 grass root level organisations of Tamil Nadu. The study aimed at
understanding perspectives of small grass root level NGOs on development work. Most of the organisations directed their efforts towards women centred development, primarily because they perceived women to be more responsible towards their families and also because they were more oppressed. These NGOs believed that grass root development work can succeed only when women are the central actor. The study also presented several problems experienced by development workers like poor remunerations, job insecurity, long hours of work and even personal danger to the workers, etc. The study also pointed that women workers experience an additional dimension of difficulties resulting from commonly held patrilineal beliefs. Lawani (1999) conducted a study of voluntary organisations of Solapur district in Maharashtra engaged in social welfare and social development activities. The study examined the background of the voluntary organisations, their objectives, policies, programmes, nature of membership, financial status, etc. It also attempted to evaluate the contribution of these voluntary organisations in the field of social welfare in the district. The study brought to light that welfare of women and children was the main concern for most of the VOs. It was found that the VOs carried out their activities based on three principles - needs of the area, philosophy of the organisation and ongoing government programmes and schemes. The study reported wide gap between policies and programmes of the organisations. Most of the VOs depended primarily on government funds. A large number of VOs also did not have any manpower planning. The study finally brought to light the diverse contributions made by these agencies in different fields of social welfare.
Sawhney (2000) studied the activities and mode of functioning of the Punjab State Branch of a national level organisation- Indian Council for Social Welfare. The study highlighted the various programmes of the VO like income generating activities, creches, vocational training center, etc. The study showed that the organisation hardly had a base at the grass root level and lack of rapport with the people at the grass roots often created hurdles for the VO in implementation of its programmes. The organisation was almost entirely dependent on government grants for funds. Dearth of trained manpower was a major problem for the VO. Negative attitude of the government functionaries towards the VO and their activities also posed obstacles for the organisation. Inspite of the constraints the VO made positive contribution towards socio-economic development of target beneficiaries. Bhatia (2000) carried out a study of voluntary organisations in Kamrup district of Assam working for women’s education and welfare. The study covering 45 VOs basically analysed the contribution of voluntary organisations in advancing women’s education and cause of women in need of support. The study concluded VOs working for women in the district were contributing in two broad areas. Firstly, the VOs were organising the women of the community towards greater awareness, self reliance and social consciousness and secondly the VOs were acting as effective instruments for delivery of benefits of various socio-economic schemes and programmes of the government for empowerment of women. Soundarapandian (2000) did a case study of a voluntary organisation working for street children in Tamil Nadu. The study focussed on socio-economic condition of street children and efforts made by the VO for rehabilitation of street children and also the problems faced by the organisation for rehabilitation of these children. The VO adopted various measures like arrangement for accomodation,
identification and reunions with parents, health care, formal and non-formal education, vocational training and recreational activities, etc. for street children. The major problems faced by the VO were lack of adequate funds, anti social and delinquent behaviour of the children, apathy of parents and families of street children, etc. Munirathnam and Reddy (2000) also did a case study of Rastriya Seva Samithi, a pioneer VO working in the states of Andhra Pradesh, Orissa and Tamil Nadu. The organisation was implementing Integrated Child Development Services (ICDS) scheme sponsored by the Government of India. It is one of the very few NGOs in India having the overall responsibility of implementing this programme in selected Community Development Block. Besides, the organisation was also working in other areas such as non-formal education, promoting SHGs and was making significant contribution for welfare and development of women and children. Joshi (2001) in his study analysed in detail the work done by Ramkrishna Mission in Bastar district of Madhya Pradesh in the field of education, health, nutrition, economic development, etc. It described the multifarious activities undertaken by the Mission in an interior tribal area. A considerable part of the study dwelt on activities aimed at welfare and development of children. Sarkar (2001) studied the contributions of NGOs in development of Barak Valley region of Assam. The author analysed the activities of about 30 NGOs in this region and found that only a few of the organisations were innovative, financially viable and possessed expertise in their areas of interventions. NGOs in Barak Valley were mostly engaged in stereotyped activities and were not making substantial contribution to sustainable development of the region.

Through the above review is not exhaustive by any means, yet the studies discussed here indicate, by and large, the aspects on which studies on voluntary
Organisations in India have focussed on. Programmes and activities of voluntary organisations, their mode of operation, strategies adopted by the VOs for planning and implementing their activities and the impact of these activities were of utmost interest for the researchers and thus one finds majority of the studies analysing these issues. Such studies threw light on contribution of VOs in different fields, the factors behind success of some VOs where the government agencies have failed and through some studies it could also be learnt why some VOs have also failed. People's participation in programmes of the VOs was another area to which a large number of studies have devoted to. As community based organisations VOs are expected to work with over all cooperation of the community amongst whom they operate. Some voluntary organisations adopt innovative methods and make unconventional approaches for mobilising and involving community in their programmes which become the basis of sustainable developmental initiatives. Thus, a large number of studies have focussed on this particular aspect of operating VOs. Members, volunteers and other personnel manning the voluntary organisations have always attracted the attention of the scholars. A good number of studies have dwelt on the profiles of members and volunteers, their motivation for joining the voluntary sector, status of training, pattern of recruitment, job satisfaction, etc. A few studies of voluntary organisation have also attempted to trace growth and development of VOs in India. Again, almost all the studies of voluntary organisations have highlighted the problems faced by the VOs and discussed the ways and means to alleviate these problems. Some authors, of late, argued that voluntary sector in India is gradually losing its distinctive characteristics due to over dependence on government for financial assistance. It has prompted some authors to examine the implications of growing State
sponsorship for VOs through their studies. A few studies of VOs in India have also focussed on the issue of accountability of these organisations to the people and the state.

2. Need and Importance of the Present Study

The foregoing brief review of studies on VOs makes it clear that although a good number of studies have been conducted on voluntary organisations from different angles, yet there are only a few studies focussing on voluntary organisations in India from an anthropological perspective. As has been discussed earlier, voluntary organisations are, in fact, associations of groups of people formed with definite objectives of achieving some purposes useful for society. Voluntary organisations have been an important institution in human societies right from the early periods and more so in modern times. The study of voluntary organisations, thus, essentially form part of the study of man in groups and is of immense anthropological value. At the same time, in human societies children are considered supremely important asset and in all societies besides the family some other institutions play important roles in upbringing of children. Voluntary organisations are one such institution in modern societies which undertake some responsibilities for well being of children. Therefore, the study of voluntary organisations who are engaged in activities for welfare and development of the children of a society assume even more importance. However, the above review reveals that only a very few studies have focused on role of voluntary organisations vis-à-vis child welfare and development in India.

Most of the studies of voluntary organisations in India are based in states outside North-Eastern India. Although few all India studies have encompassed VOs of Assam as a part, these do not give a fair idea about functioning of voluntary organisations and their
contributions in the field of child welfare in Assam. So far, authors have given much less attention to study voluntary organisations working in the remote North Eastern States including Assam. On the other hand, understanding of nature and extent of voluntary work in an important field like child welfare in a relatively backward state like Assam would benefit planners, administrators and others concerned with welfare of children. Thus, there is an emerging need for a thorough study of voluntary organisations engaged in child welfare activities in Assam.

In the light of the above, the present study entitled 'Role of Voluntary Organisations in Child Welfare in Kamrup District of Assam' has been undertaken. The study seeks to focus on voluntary organisations working for welfare of children in Kamrup district of Assam. Ideally, a study covering the whole of the state of Assam would have been much more comprehensive and enlighting. However, due to the limitations of the researcher the study is being confined to only one district of the state. The findings of the present study will add to the existing knowledge about voluntary organisations in the district of Kamrup and their role in welfare of children. Since the physical, demographic, political and socio economic set up of Kamrup district is not vastly different from most of the other districts of Assam and as this district has the highest number of VOs, some of which operate for the whole state, the findings of the study can also expected to be relevant for other parts of Assam. The study would make attempt to analyse different aspects of functioning of the voluntary organisations and therefore, besides providing valuable data to the researchers, academicians and planners it would also give feed back to the organisations on their functioning. This should ultimately help the VOs in evaluating their own performance and deciding
on necessary corrective measures. The study would also be useful in evolving future strategies for utilisation of services of voluntary organisations for child welfare.

3. Aims and Objectives

The specific objectives of the present study are:

(i) To know the activities undertaken by the voluntary organisations for child welfare;

(ii) to study the strategies adopted by the organisations in formulation, implementation and evaluation of the programmes undertaken by them for child welfare;

(iii) to examine the problems faced by the voluntary organisations in carrying out activities for child welfare;

(iv) to understand the motivational factors for the functionaries of joining the organisations and their levels of satisfaction;

(v) to explore the views and opinions of the community members about the organisations and their activities;

(vi) to know the extent of participation of members of the community in the activities of the organisation; and

(vii) to understand the contributions made by the organisations for child welfare.
4. Scope

The study is confined to the voluntary organisations located within Kamrup district of Assam. The study covers only those organisations in the district which are carrying out activities for welfare of children. The study focuses its attention mainly on the following areas:

(i) Emergence of the voluntary organisation and their organisational structures;
(ii) activities undertaken by the organisations for child welfare;
(iii) strategies adopted by the organisations in planning implementation and evaluation of the programmes of child welfare;
(iv) identify and analyse the problems faced by the organisations;
(v) mode of induction and motivational factors for the functionaries to join the organisations and satisfaction derived;
(vi) participation and involvement of members of the community in the programmes/activities of the organisation, method and techniques adopted by the organisations for mobilising the community and their resources;
(vii) analysing community opinions about the organisations and their roles for welfare of community’s children; and
(viii) an assessment of contributions made by the organisations and their roles for welfare of children.
5. Assumptions

The present study is basically a descriptive one and does not intend to test some pre-formulated set of hypothesis. However, the study has been designed based on a number of assumptions. These assumptions have been arrived at after having a cursory view of the activities of voluntary organisations and a review of available literatures on voluntary organisations. The assumptions are as follows:

(i) Voluntary organisations can play an important role for well being of children by carrying out different activities for children.
(ii) Voluntary organisations depend very heavily upon the government for financial and other assistance.
(iii) Voluntary organizations face several problems while undertaking programmes for welfare of disadvantaged section. These problems put limitations in the functioning of the VOs.
(iv) People join voluntary organisations not only for altruistic reason, but also because of other reasons.
(v) As community based institutions, VOs involve the community members in planning and implementation of their programmes.
(vi) VOs and their members are accorded a revered status in society.

6. Methodology

From the title of the study it is conspicuous that the present study has been confined to Kamrup district of Assam. The district of Kamrup has been selected taking
into consideration a number of factors. Firstly, in Kamrup district highest number of voluntary organisations are working in the field of child welfare as well as in other fields amongst the 23 districts of Assam. Though very accurate data on the number of voluntary organisations working in the state of Assam in general and in the district of Kamrup in particular is not available, yet, out of 421 voluntary organisations working in various fields in Assam as listed in the Directories of Social Welfare Agencies in India published by Central Social Welfare Board (CSWB), 164 were in Kamrup district (Lalitha and Kohli, 1982:34). Again, according to the Directory of Voluntary Organisations in North- Eastern Region compiled by NIPCCD, N. E. Regional Centre, in 1985, out of 140 VOs listed in Assam during early eighties, 70 were operational in Kamrup district alone. As per a latest estimation made with the help of data available with Assam State Social Welfare Advisory Board (ASSWAB), Directorate of Social Welfare and Probation, Government of Assam and NIPCCD, N. E. Regional Centre, at present there are about 200 voluntary organisations in Assam engaged in diversified activities for welfare of children alongwith other developmental works and out of 200, more than 50 such VOs are located in Kamrup district. Secondly, it is also the most populous district of Assam. As per 1991 census the total population of Kamrup district is little over 20 lakhs which is highest amongst the districts of Assam. (This figure has further increased to more than 25 lakhs according to 2001 census and still ranks highest). Besides, branches of many international and national level voluntary organisations and most of the state level organisations are based at Guwahati, the district headquarter of Kamrup, which is also the capital city of Assam. Thus, presumably the
quantum of voluntary actions for child welfare is more in Kamrup district in comparison to that of the other districts of Assam. For these reasons Kamrup district has been selected for the present study.

(a) Methods and Techniques of Collection of Data

Data for the study have been collected by utilising the standard anthropological methods and techniques. Observation, interviewing with the help of semi structured interview schedules and case studies were the main methods and techniques used. Observations have been useful in collecting information about the functioning, activities and infra-structures of the VOs. Interviewing, both semi structured and open was extensively used for collection of data from members and functionaries of VOs and community members.

(b) Sources of Data

Primary data for the study were collected mainly from two sources - (i) A sample of voluntary organisations of Kamrup district working for welfare of children and (ii) Community members for whose children the organisations in the study sample were working. Besides, information were also collected from the officials from the Department of Social Welfare and Probation, Government of Assam, ASSWAB, NIPCCD, N.E. Regional Centre, etc.

Secondary data for the study were collected from the records of voluntary organisations, Department of Social Welfare and Probation and ASSWAB, NIPCCD,
N.E. Regional Centre, National Institute of Rural Development (NIRD), N.E. Regional Centre and other sources.

(c) Selection of the Voluntary Organisations

As has been mentioned above, data for the present study were collected from a sample of those voluntary organisations at Kamrup district, who were implementing one or other kind of programme(s) for welfare of children. Prior to selection of the organisations for collection of data, efforts was made to create a universe of all such voluntary organisations of Kamrup district who were carrying out activities, the beneficiaries of which were in the age group of 0-14 years. It needs to be mentioned here that many of the voluntary organisations working for children were also active in other fields such as rural development, women empowerment, etc.

The process of creating a realistic universe of the study involved a number of steps. In the first step, attempt was made to compile a list of voluntary organisations in Kamrup district working for children as comprehensive as possible. For this purpose information were collected from the Directorate of Social Welfare and Probation, Government of Assam, Office of the District Social Welfare Officer, Kamrup, ASSWAB, NIPCCD, N.E. Regional Centre, NIRD, North-Eastern Regional Centre, Indian Institute of Bank Management, Voluntary Health Association of Assam and Council for Advancement of People's Action and Rural Technology (CAPART), North-Eastern Zone. Directories of Voluntary Organisations published by some of these organisations were also consulted. On the basis of information collection from all these sources a long
In the second step, therefore, a preliminary inquiry was made amongst the enlisted organisations with the help of a mailed proforma. Through the proforma certain basic information about the organisations including their activities, target groups, year of establishment, etc. were sought to be collected. The proforma was mailed to the organisations with a covering letter and self addressed stamped envelop requesting the organisations to send back the filled up proforma. The letter also explained the purpose of the study. A copy of each of the covering letter and the proforma is shown in Appendix-I. Some of the organisations responded to the queries, some organisations were untraceable and some simply did not answer though they were existing and (later on it was learnt that some of them did not receive the letter). A scrutiny of the information received from organisations who responded revealed that many of the organisations included in the original list did not have any ongoing child welfare programmes. Some of them had carried out some activities in the long past. The names of such organisations were deleted. The names of those organisations which were untraceable or those who did not respond even after reminders were also deleted. However, utmost caution was exercised in doing so and care was taken to retain those organisations which were known to exist.
and active in this field but did not respond for some reason or other. The whole exercise resulted in compilation of a list containing the names of 76 organisations. This list of voluntary organisations working for welfare of children in Kamrup district became the universe of the study. It may be mentioned here that the universe included voluntary organisations working exclusively for children as well as some organisations which were active in diverse fields including child welfare.

Keeping in view the limitations of the researcher it was decided to collect data from a 50 per cent sample of voluntary organisations of the universe. The sample was selected using purposive as well as stratified sampling methods. Most of the data for the present study were collected between the years 1999 and 2000. Therefore, those voluntary organisations which were formed after December 1995 were not selected as it was assumed that organisations require minimum three years to be fully functional after formation. Again, only those organisations were selected for data collection which were carrying out activities for welfare of children for at least the last three years. The organisations included in the universe were heterogeneous in terms of some features such as their lengths of existence, levels of operation i.e. international, national, state or local, area of coverage, i.e., rural and urban, nature of location, types of activities for child welfare, etc. To make the study sample a representative one, effort was made to include in the sample VOs with diverse features. While selecting the organisations their spatial distribution was also taken into consideration (A list of selected voluntary organisations is annexed at Appendix-II).
(d) Respondents of the Study

In each voluntary organisation of the study sample two categories of persons were primarily selected for interviewing for collection of information:— (i) one office bearer of the organisation like the president, chairperson, secretary, joint secretary, etc. and (ii) three functionaries of the VO who are directly involved with implementation of the programmes of child welfare. These functionaries included executive members, general/ordinary members and such other personnel like project in-charge, programme coordinators, etc. wherever such designated workers were available. Thus, in each selected VO data were collected from four persons. A total of 38 office bearers and 111 functionaries were interviewed.

Again, for each of the selected voluntary organisation six parents of beneficiary children were selected randomly for interviewing. However, while identifying the parents efforts were made to include persons from different socio-economic background in the sample. Again, only those parents were selected whose children had been receiving the services of the concerned VO for at least last six months. For those organisations of study sample which were running only orphanages or institutions for destitute children, such interviews were not possible for obvious reason. Altogether 204 parents of children were interviewed for the study.

Over and above, the researcher, at times, discussed various issues relating to voluntary organisations with some other members of the community where a VO was working. Discussions were also held with officials of some concerned government and other agencies on matters pertaining to voluntary organisations and their role in welfare
of children. Such exchanges did provide the researcher with a lot of useful insights into the subject.

(e) Tools of Data Collection

Interview schedules were the major tools utilised for collection of data for the present study. Three semi structured interview schedules were developed for administering to the three categories of informants, viz., office bearers, other functionaries of the VOs and the parents of beneficiary children. The interview schedules contained both non-structured and structured queries with multiple choices. Besides, the researcher also used an observation and data sheet for each of the selected voluntary organisation. This particular tool was used to collect and record information on various aspects of the organisations like their objects, organisational structure, assets and infrastructures, ongoing activities, financial matters, etc. based on the observations of the researcher and from the records and other documents like Constitution, Memorandum of Association, Annual Reports, Souvenirs, etc. of the concerned organisations. Before finalising all these tools were field tested and necessary restructuring and revisions were made (copies of all these tools are annexed at Appendix-III).