CHAPTER-I

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1.1: Society and Social system: A Prologue:

Over the years, the social anthropologists and the social scientists have found it immensely interesting to collect the materials that comprise a society. Human society has taken the present form undergoing various processes of formation and changes. With the advancement of science and technology and modern means of communication, the old definitions of society are becoming inadequate. Today, it is also suggested that modern world is no longer divisible into distinct societies, for the groups of the world have become so interdependent and engaged in so much of interaction that it almost impossible to designate the boundaries of any particular society (Vivelo, 1984: 19). Weiss’s (1973: 1397) explanation of society has enough attributes that fits a modern society; for him a “Human society is a group of human organisms constituting a breeding population or a maximum political entity, whichever is greater in the given instance. In those cases where these two criteria coincide, where a single breeding population is controlled by a single political authority, the population is a human
society. In those cases where, as is typical among foragers, a breeding population consist of several politically autonomous but intermarrying bands, it is with the breeding population that constitutes the human society by this definition. In those cases where several breeding populations are under a single political authority, as in a caste situation or at least initially after conquest of confederation of several previously separate societies, it is the group of populations thus forming a maximum political entity that comprises the human society."

In an attempt to define society McIver (1937) sees society as a “system of usages and procedures of authority and mutual aid of many groupings and divisions, of control of human behaviour and of liberties. This ever-changing complex system is called society. It is a web of social relationship.” Other important contributors who looked upon society from the evolutionary point of view were Swiss jurist J.J. Bachofen (1815-1877), Henry Maine (1822-1888), J.F.McLennan (1827-18881). Comte’s (1896) explanation of a society highlights society’s organic aspect. Spencer’s classification of worldly object placed man at organic level but the social relationship at super organic level. Both Comte and Spencer highlighted the constant changing nature of the society. For Marx (1818 – 1883), economic forces are the basic ingredients of forming a society. A society for him is an organised multitude of productive forces. He conceived that the change in the productive techniques leads to social change. With Durkheim (1858-1917), added to the concept of society was the idea of collective
consciousness or group habits rather than individual behaviours.

Despite being an abstract concept, the sociologists and social anthropologists appear exceedingly more concerned about society. This is attributable to various factors. Jenkins, (2002: 5) explains this and serialised four points as to why society is so important. For him “society” addresses a number of important existential issues facing people:

How humans think and exchange information – the sensory world makes up only a fraction of human experience. In order to understand the world, we have to conceive of human interaction in the abstract form (i.e., society).

Many phenomena cannot be reduced to individual behaviour – to explain certain conditions, a view of something “greater than the sum of its parts” is needed.

Collectives often endure beyond the lifespan of individual members.

The human condition has always meant going beyond the evidence of our senses; every aspect of our lives is tied to the collective.

1.2: Characteristics of Society

Depending on the definitions, the characteristics of a society varies from society to society. But there are some common and essential elements of every society. Jha (1994: 49) serialises five such characteristics; some of these are i) society is a network of relationship, ii) society is based on social interactions, iii) there is a sense of mutual awareness among the members of the society, iv)
society exists only there where social beings behave. Society presents various other characteristics and various disciplines highlight various characteristics of the society. There are also debates taking into account of presence or absence of one or the other components. Traditionally, anthropologists have been concerned with the cultural characteristics of a society by which they mean a group of people who occupy a particular territory and speak a common language not generally understood by neighbouring people (Ember & Ember, 1990: 173).

1.2.1: Social Groups

Broadly, human society is said to be consists of two elements i) social groups and ii) social institutions.

Social Groups can be defined as “a collection of individuals who stand in a regular and relatively permanent relationship” (Nadel: 1951:44). Social groups are the organised expression of individuals having common interest or with common similarities in some respects. These groups are not always permanent. Some of these groups are primary groups having face-to-face contact, that is to say direct personal contact of its members with each other. Family is a good example of such a group. While in the secondary groups, members may not have direct personal contact with each other. Their contacts are categorical and they do not know each other. Labour unions are an example of such groups. Social groups are also classified according to blood relations such as family, clan, moiety, phratry, etc. A social group may also make a community.
Such a social group is self-contained and the members have a common end and purpose. Members of a community find all their social relations inside the groups. A community thus possesses a definite structure as well as a system of rules by which the members lead a common life (Roy, 2003: 519).

1.2.2: Social Institutions

Then there is the concept of institutions. The term is used variously but we will concentrate on its anthropological approach only. McIver (1937) defined an institution as a definite organisation perusing some specific interest or pursuing general interests in a specific way. Gillin and Gillin (1948) defined it as functional configuration of culture patterns including actions, ideas, attitudes and cultural equipments which possess a certain performance and which intend to satisfy felt social needs. In other words, institutions are the functional units based on standardised pattern of social behaviour that the society has accepted. This is what Jha (1994: 50) designates “norms”. Jha identifies three major components in an institution viz., norms that serves as goals, and as guidelines for behaviour and roles. The accepted behaviour in the society or the standardised behaviour in the society is also called institutionalised behaviour and the whole system of standardisation of a behavioural pattern is called an institution (ibid: 51). Another term closely associated with the term of institution is ‘Grouping’. Although both are different terms, yet both are interdependent. In fact, all social behaviour form and perpetuate by interaction
between i) grouping and institution, ii) grouping and grouping and iii) institution and institution (Roy, 2005: 520). In order to understand the social behaviour of a given community, it is necessary to understand i) the structural and organisational level of the society, ii) the levels of social stratification and iii) its changing aspect.

1.3: Social structure:

Studying and analysing the structural level of a society happens to be the most fundamental aspect of studying a society. In simple terms, social structure is a system of social relations. It gives an idea as to how a society is grouped into structures with various functions, meanings or purposes. In a society, family, religion, law, economy and class, all are identified as social structure. Spencer (1885) is regarded as the first author who used the term social structure effectively to denote his biological analogy (organic structure and evolution). Several later sociologists and social anthropologists attempted to define the term from their own angle and thus diverge widely. For Radcliffe Brown (1952: 191-192), in the study of social structure, the concrete reality with which we are concerned is the set of actually existing relations at a given moment of time, which link together certain human beings. Radcliffe Brown’s definition is criticised on the ground that it is very broad (Firth, 1954: 30). Other writers have confined their definition within the organised relationship of the society. Thus for Ginsberg (1992) social structure is the complex of the principal groups and institutions which constitute societies. This implies that
social structure can be studied in terms of institutional arrangements or of the relations between special groups or of both together (ibid: 99). We have yet another concise or restricted approach forwarded by the writers like Nadel (1951), Gerth and Mills (1946: 43) etc. Nadel (ibid) argues that structure indicates an ordered arrangement of parts, which can be treated as transposable, being relatively invariant while the parts themselves are variable. He opines that analysis of social structure in terms of social roles is not fundamentally different from an analysis in terms of social institutions for an institution is a complex and cluster of roles. Gerth and Mills (ibid) found the introduction of the concept of role and explained that it forms a major link between character and social structure.

On the whole, social structure can be defined as the complex of the major institutions and groups in society. Major institutions in a society could be i) a system of communication, ii) an economic system dealing with production and the allocation of goods, iii) arrangements for socialising of new generations, iv) a system of authority and of distribution of power and v) a system of ritual, serving to maintain or increase social cohesion and to give social recognition to significant personal events such as birth, puberty, courtship, marriage, death, etc.

Social structure can be studied in terms of microstructure and macrostructure. Microstructure is the pattern of relations between most basic elements of social life, that cannot be further
divided and have no social structure of their own (for example, pattern of relations between individuals in a group composed of individuals - where individuals have no social structure, or a structure of organisations as a pattern of relations between social positions or social roles, where those positions and roles have no structure by themselves). Macrostructure is thus a kind of 'second level' structure, a pattern of relations between objects that have their own structure (for example, a political social structure between political parties; as political parties have their own social structure). Some special types of social structures that modern sociologist differentiate are relation structures (in family or larger family-like clan structures), communication structures (how information is passed in organisations) and sociometric structures (structures of sympathy, antipathy and indifference in organisations). Sociologists also distinguish between:

- **normative structure** - pattern of relations in given structure (organisation) between norms and modes of operations of people of varying social positions,
- **ideal structure** - pattern of relations between beliefs and views of people of varying social positions,
- **interest structure** - pattern of relations between goals and desires of people of varying social positions, and
- **interaction structure** - forms of communications of people of varying social positions.

Structures are important, as the actions of people and organisations are guided partially by the structural determination.
Organisation structure determines its flexibility, capacity to change and many other factors, and is an important part of the management.

Social structure in the broader sense, known as social system can be viewed as a structure composed of the economic system, law system, political system, cultural system, etc. Thus social system is the parent system of those lower systems.

1.4: Social Function:

Closely related to the concept of social structure is the concept of social function. In the explanation of this concept too, Radcliffe Brown took the help of organic analogy. The life of an organism is conceived as the functioning of its structure. In the same way a social structure is said to have a function when it contributes to the maintenance of the structure and its continuity within that system. Thus, the function of an institution is the contribution it makes to the process of the social system as a whole. Now since, each part of the system contributes its part to the process of the entire system, there exist a functional interrelation amongst all the parts and for the continuity of the system as a whole, there must be a reciprocal involvement of the various parts, that there must be functional consistency amongst the various parts. The functional consistency varies from society to society and it is only an empirical investigation that would bring out the nature and degree of this functional consistency. The total
social system is thus made up of parts, which are interdependent—each part performing a function essential to the life of the structure.

Durkheim (1858) distinguished between “normal” and “pathological” functioning of social institutions. According to him, the division of labour was functionally helpful in preserving social unity of a complex society. He argued that religion functionally reinforced social solidarity. This is because religious norms and the values transformed the individual aspirations into a collective way of life.

1.5: Social Change:

Change means alteration, modification, replacement, and differentiation of integration within a phenomenon over a particular period of time caused by force. It refers to the amount of difference in condition of the object or phenomenon in any direction, between two points of time. Time factor is the measuring rod of the amount and direction of change.

Any change to take place needs some force operating behind it. In other words, force is a prerequisite of change. This force may either be internal or external or both. The force becomes internal when it emerges from the object itself due to inconsistencies, flexibilities or interactions among the particles within its structure. The force becomes external when it comes from environment outside the object.

In its simplest meaning, social change refers to change in the nature, the social institutions, the social behaviour or the social
relations of a society or community of people. For Davis (1981: 622), it is the alterations as occur in social organisations that is, structure and function of society. Social change thus forms only a part of what is essentially a broader category called cultural change. Lundberg (1963: 675) defines social change as modifications in established patterns of interhuman relationships and standards of conduct.

Social change could be:

i) slow, gradual, incremental, and evolutionary; in this, it might be barely noticeable.

ii) fast, radical, sudden and revolutionary; it might even take people by surprise.

iii) wide in scope, affecting almost all people in a society; limited in scope, affecting only a small number of people.

All factors that are responsible for social change can be grouped under three broad headings, such as i) geographic factor, ii) biological factors and iii) cultural factor.

Geographical environment has great impact on the life of man and society. Geographic factor comprises of climatic condition - sunshine, rainfall, relative humidity, winds, tornados, etc, and the condition of the outer crust of the earth surface, which provides man's livelihood. A change in the climatic condition may lead to a drastic change in the habitat pattern of man and compel men to be adapted to new conditions. Such changes may also lead
to change in food supply and thereby food habits of the community.

The relationship between human population, density, environment and culture is a fundamental one. Destabilisation of any one of these factors could lead to great change in the life style of a community. Increase or decrease in population has an impact on social institutions and social relations. Population explosion creates problem like lower standard of living, unemployment, higher density, etc. Similarly, inadequate population could hinder the exploitations of natural resources of a region leading to degradation of economic situation. Apart from these, fertility, mortality, sex ratio, age group, expectations of life, etc. all also have important bearing on the society and social institutions.

Modern techniques of family planning, family welfare and population control have brought about great changes in the size of family; introduction of sex education has changed the attitude towards sex morals and social values.

Biological factors may also affect a society in various other ways. Change in biological environment may lead to change in the cultural pattern of a community. People utilises the available plants and animal lives as per the mode determined by their culture and wards off their biological enemies such as bacteria, insects, poisonous plants, pests, etc, with the best means available to them. Any deviation in the biological environment may lead to a change
in the life pattern of a community. An epidemic may abruptly shift a community’s dependence on traditional medicine to modern allopathic medicine.

Scientific discoveries and technological advancement have made community life different from what it was traditionally. These have great impact on the society and social institutions. Apart from the scientific discoveries like radio, television, computer, etc., there are also other carriers of social change: the best can be named as the social legislations. Legislations banning social evils in a society or introducing some new ideas could have great impact on the social life. In Indian context, we have seen how the legislations dealing with ban of untouchability, child marriage, dowry, etc. have influenced the traditional society. Such legislations force a society to change. Other factors that also have great impact on the society and bring about social change are rebellion, revolution, agitation, etc. A detailed discussion about the social change in its theoretical aspect is made in Chapter-II.

1.6: Urbanisation and Social Change:

Urbanisation has close linkage to the social change. Various studies have been made on urbanisation or urbanism under historical perspectives, but studies conceptualising urbanisation in the ways that it actually represent social change are scanty. However urbanisation has been considered as an important vehicle for carrying out social change. Friedman (1968) advocated deliberate urbanisation as a tool to bring about social change. He
visualised urbanisation as an important development tool, which could be made to work through suitable economic and social policies and political actions. He points out that "... the creative role of cities in civilisation has been recognised and history has been reinterpreted from the vantage points of cities as agents of social change." (ibid) At the same time there are also works that visualises cities as problem creator. The roots of socio-political unrest, unemployment, delinquency, problem of basic amenities, etc. lies in the cities. Nevertheless, the new way of life that a city promotes through technology and new form of economic organisation is not to be denied. With the influence of urbanisation, the traditional patterns of life - such as cultural uniformity, beliefs, social relations, family behaviour, etc. tend to change.

He identified several areas where changes can be visualised. Changes can be observed in the family system. Usually in such situation joint family system breaks down. This happens mainly due to economic constraints and costly spaces for living, family system therefore tends to become nuclear families.

Changes also occur in the religious front with modification and simplification of religious practices and beliefs. Earlier the old cities were centred on temples; but now they centre round business areas. Although religion is still there, yet its importance has diminished due to the flourishing of business.
Changes can also be observed in relation to social stratification. In traditional societies economic status is not prominently taken in the society. But in the big cities, localities develop on the basis of economic class segregation and housing is also provided according to economic classes. Areas of rich get attention from the urban local bodies and also claim prestige in the urban society.

Urban impact on dress and food habit is also prominent. Both dress and food habit are closely associated with the pattern of occupation. Urbanisation reduces the farm sector gradually from the occupational arena and in place enhances scope for service sector. Time and place of work forces a person to change his dress and food habits.

Urbanisation also changes the role of women in the society. Urban life provides enough roles for women beyond the domestic chore and as a result apart from the traditional role of women as mother and wife, they also enact the occupational role in the process of sharing the role of bread provider in the family.

1.7: Development of Urban Anthropology:

As the present study is the study of a small society in the urban context, under the backdrop of urban influences, it would be proper to have a brief discussion on urban anthropology and its development through the ages. Urban anthropology is concerned with the origin, development and evolution of cities as well as with
the description and comparison of urban life and culture. It is mainly concerned with the comparative study of urban life through time and space. It studies the range of variability of urban phenomena with the widest possible net, to discover the recurrent behaviour patterns of communities. In recent years, the cultural anthropologists have shifted their research interests from far-flung, kin-based, small-scale, non-literate peoples to the peoples and peasants who have been affected or influenced by urban life styles. In response to the urbanization of the world, anthropologists are actively studying urban life and culture rather than expiring with the primitive past. Keeping their focus on the exotic, today it is not unusual to learn of anthropological studies of urban religious cults, the culture of skid row alcoholics or drug addicts, the education of bilingual children, the food and health customs of a variety of ethnic groups, and the operation of various bureaucratic institutions (e.g. mental health centres, hospitals, private corporations).

At its initial stage, urban anthropology relied more on sociological study of industrial societies than in traditional anthropological studies. From the 1930s to the 1950s, cultural anthropologists’ interest in the study of peasants and the impact of cities on their lives increased (Redfield, 1947:293-308). By the 1950s, a number of anthropologists and sociologists were already conducting research on urban phenomena (Childe 1950, Bott 1957, Sjoberg 1960). The expansion of urban anthropology in the 1960s reflects the recognition that traditional target groups, such as tribal and peasant people, became increasingly integrated into the
urbanized world. Particular attention was given to rural-urban migration, urban adaptation, ethnicity, and poverty (Lewis 1968, Hannerz 1969). By the 1970s, urban anthropology was already being defined as a distinctive field within cultural anthropology, and the publication of textbooks, readers, and reviews increased significantly (Chrisman and Friedl 1974, Gulick 1973,). Fox (1977) identifies five different types of cities, and discusses the relationship between cities and the broader societies in which they are embedded. Basham (1978) offers a discussion of the study of urban societies and various related topics. During the early 1980s, a second generation of textbooks and studies emerged (Collins 1980, Gmelch and Zenner, 1996).

In India, the development of urban anthropology can be traced through the studies made at different points of time. The industrial towns of India provide ample areas of interest to an anthropologist. In fact, a good number of anthropological studies have been conducted by different scholars in various urban locations in India. Ross (1961) studied the family structure of urban population of Bangalore city; Prasad (1968) conducted a study among the urban middle class in five big cities of Uttar Pradesh while Gore (1968) had studied the way in which industrialization and urbanization have modified the family relationship among the Agarwala families of Delhi. In Assam, mention may be made of the detailed study made by Kakati (1998) on the urbanisation of Guwahati covering almost all social aspects; Barooah (1993) on the problems of single women in Guwahati,
Barua (2000) on the status of working wives in Guwahati and Medhi (1999) on the problems of elderly persons of Guwahati. Thus, urban anthropology has already made headway in this northeastern State and few studies are on pipeline. Anthropologists studying the urban issues from anthropological approach have made it amply clear that the age-old concept that anthropology studies only the primitive men and their society is no longer tenable.

1.8: The Research Problem:

Assam is steadily growing more urban during the post independence period. In 1901 there were only 12 towns in Assam; but 50 years later, in 1951, the number of towns doubled. Between 1951 and 2001 there was 421 percent growth in towns - from 24 to 125 towns (Census, 2001). Today Guwahati is the main urban centre of Northeast India and its growth and development can be traced back to the mid eighteen-century. Since then Guwahati is expanding. The proposed study is mainly concerned with the analysis of social organization and social structure of a certain tribal community originally living in villages located at the outskirts of Guwahati but later had to be merged to the expanding Guwahati in course of time.

The growth of the population of Guwahati was rapid during the later part of 19th century A.D. Between 1891 and 1901, its population increased from 8283 to 11,661 (at a decadal growth rate of 40.78%) despite exclusion of North Guwahati from Guwahati
municipality area. The shifting of the capital from Shillong to Guwahati (Dispur), has contributed much towards the development of Guwahati. Development of infrastructural facilities led to expansion of trade and commerce, establishment of regional and zonal offices in Guwahati by the big business houses, and above all the functioning of the State level offices from Guwahati expanded the scope of employment. With this, people have become habituated in office work culture and Guwahati developed the typical urban character by mid-seventies. Women and girls in large numbers are found to gather before the employment exchanges in search of jobs. Female population has increased from 3889 in 1901 to 2,56,617 - registering a 66 fold increase as against the 42 fold increase in male population (details shown below.).

**TABLE: 1.8.1 Decadal Growth of the Population of Guwahati**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>YEAR</th>
<th>PERSON</th>
<th>MALE</th>
<th>FEMALE</th>
<th>SEX RATIO</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1901</td>
<td>11,661</td>
<td>7,792</td>
<td>3,889</td>
<td>500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1911</td>
<td>12,481</td>
<td>8,138</td>
<td>4,343</td>
<td>534</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1921</td>
<td>16,480</td>
<td>10,780</td>
<td>5,684</td>
<td>528</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1931</td>
<td>21,797</td>
<td>14,506</td>
<td>7,291</td>
<td>508</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1941</td>
<td>29,598</td>
<td>18,883</td>
<td>10,715</td>
<td>567</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1951</td>
<td>48,615</td>
<td>27,990</td>
<td>15,625</td>
<td>558</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1961</td>
<td>1,00,707</td>
<td>67,289</td>
<td>33,429</td>
<td>497</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1971</td>
<td>1,23,783</td>
<td>75,583</td>
<td>48,200</td>
<td>638</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1981</td>
<td>No census held</td>
<td>No census held</td>
<td>No census held</td>
<td>No census held</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1991</td>
<td>5,84,342</td>
<td>3,27,725</td>
<td>2,56,617</td>
<td>783</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2001</td>
<td>8,14,575</td>
<td>445649</td>
<td>368926</td>
<td>828</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Census of India

Gradual increase of sex ratio is yet another indicator of urbanisation. The total population of the town has been rapidly increasing since 1971 signifying that the substantial addition was
made after transfer of capital from Shillong in 1973 to Guwahati. In the following table total tribal population of Guwahati is shown covering a period of half a century. It may be observed that the tribal population is increasing almost about three fold, but not to the tune of increase in general population which rose around eight fold during the period.

**TABLE -1.8.2: Scheduled Tribe population in Guwahati**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>YEAR</th>
<th>PERSON</th>
<th>MALE</th>
<th>FEMALE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1961</td>
<td>10634</td>
<td>05546</td>
<td>05088</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1971</td>
<td>13534</td>
<td>06890</td>
<td>06644</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1981</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1991</td>
<td>23838</td>
<td>12838</td>
<td>11000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2001</td>
<td>30519</td>
<td>15815</td>
<td>14704</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Census of India

*No census held.

Urbanization of once-rural and resource-dependent communities or tribes is not a new phenomenon. Many tribal communities today operate in the midst of urban or suburban populations, both as farmers and as wage labourers. In Guwahati, there are several segments where tribal population lives on community basis since long time even before expansion of Guwahati. The urban centres in Assam are not in true sense of the term industrial centres although they present other necessary characteristics to become an urban centre. Rao (1970) writes, with the expansion in the area, the city generally absorbs the rural villages, when the village lands are sold off, at lucrative prices, for meeting the demands of urban development. The villagers devoid of land thus become landless with no work to fall back upon, move
towards cities in search of employment. As trade grows, migration from the nearby villages in search of jobs and earning cash begins enhancing the population of the area. These are exactly the characters of the urban villages where the study has been conducted. Urbanisation affects not only the family structures but also intra and inter family relations as well as the functions that the families perform. The study of the level of change, which family, caste and kinship system and religious values are undergoing with reference to rural social organization in urban situation therefore, is a matter that assumes great importance today. The tribal community taken up for this study is the plains Karbis. The community spreads over vast areas of Guwahati. They are the original inhabitants of the city as per the innumerable stories that run parallel about their habitation here. Expansion of Guwahati has repulsed many of the Karbi families from their original place of residence in the frontier areas to distant locations and many have taken their new home around the Sonapur areas — a satellite urban centre around 30 km east of Guwahati.

However, a good majority of the Karbi communities remained intact and continuing with their social life as part of the wider urban society modifying their traditional pattern of life style here and there. The target of the present study is mainly these Karbi communities who continue to live a village life amidst growing urban atmosphere. The basic attempt of this research is to analyse how they are coping with the complex socio-economic situation in the face of decaying agricultural fields and what sort of
rearrangements they had to make to fit themselves to the new situation and in the process how their social structure has undergone changes. The theme of this research in broad terms has been stated as “A Study of the Changing Social System of the Karbis of Guwahati.”

1.9: Review of literatures:

Social change as a topic of research has been dealt with by many researchers since the early seventies analysing the issue both from sociological and anthropological standpoints. Most of these studies are micro studies and highlighted the urban influence on a particular community or group. These studies have opened up new horizons in the areas in urban anthropology in India. The present study is however different from all those studies taken up so far. The most notable difference is that the target community here is not migrants but the original inhabitants of the urban locality and that they are tribal. Studies on such communities with this approach have not so far been made in Indian context. In the following paragraphs, literatures containing the basic theme of social change related to both caste and tribal population have been briefly reviewed.

Srinivas (1962) in his book “Caste in Modern India and other essays” put forward a critical analysis of caste system and the social change in India in terms of modernisation. Earlier he used westernisation to explain the process of social change in the caste but at a later stage he used the word modernisation as an equivalent
to the term ‘westernisation’ which he used to mean social change among the castes in his earlier works. His basic attention is towards caste and social change and therefore modernisation has not been given prime attention in this essay. Another publication of his, the “Social Change in Modern India” (1995) is an authentic book dealing extensively the theoretical aspects of the social changes that occurred in India. In order to explain the religious, social and cultural changes in India, he floated the concept of sanskritisation and westernisation. He defined sanskritisation as a process by which “a low Hindu caste or tribal or other group, changes its customs, ritual, ideology and way of life in the direction of a high and frequently ‘twice born’ caste.” He established that sanskritisation have occurred throughout Indian history and still continues to occur. On the other hand Westernisation refers to the changes introduced to Indian society during British rule and is still continuing. British had brought with them new technology, institutions and knowledge, beliefs and values. With these, British had produced radical and lasting changes that had occurred never before in the Indian society. In the first two essays, he dwelt at length the process of sanskritisation and westernisation in Indian society. This is a basic book that gives insight into the issue of social change in the Indian society.

Ghurye (1961) in his book “Caste, Class and Occupation” observed that the caste system had shed some of its features. He writes, “Caste no longer rigidly determines an individual’s occupation but continues to prescribe almost in its old vigour, the
circle into which one has to marry. One has still to depend very largely on one's caste for help at critical periods of life, like marriage and death.” He further said that though caste has ceased to be a unit administering justice yet, it has not lost its hold on its individual members who still continue to be controlled by the opinion of the caste. He believed that the vitality of the caste system in social life is as strong today as it was ever.

Aurora (1972) in his book “Tribe, Caste, Class Encounters” has discussed the life and culture of the Bhilala of Alirajpur in the Jhabua district of Madhya Pradesh. He describes the regional community, the kinship axis and the extension of political, economic and cultural frontiers. The study points out how tribe, caste and class encounters have led to changes among the Bhilalas. He argues that the tribal society is in a state of transformation and is moving towards a caste society. He prefers the concept tribe-caste-class continuum.

Shah (1976) in his publication “Stratification among the Scheduled tribes in Bharuch and Panchmahals district of Gujarat” has described stratification among the tribal groups in Bharuch and Panchmahals district of Gujarat. He says that due to the forces of modernisation and development schemes launched by the Government, tribal society has ceased to be homogeneous and egalitarian. Each tribal group is divided on the basis of interests. There are rich, middle and poor tribal peasants, depending on the size and ownership of land. Their level of education and life style
also differ. The rich and middle class peasants produce surplus and they have become elite and take the advantage of the Government agents and subsidies. The condition of the poor peasantry has deteriorated and most of them have become landless labourers.

Sachchidananda’s (1979) “The Changing Munda” is a detailed monograph on Mundas covering their land, history, demographic pattern, social system, political organisation and the impact of Hinduism and Christianity on the Munda. He found changes in the material culture especially the dress pattern, and food habits among the Mundas. He writes, “The Mundas, who have been in the vortex of industrialisation, have been greatly transformed. The industrial ethic changed the traditional communal goals of extended kinship groups to those of personal achievement and individual careers. The newly achieved status in industry affected the form and nature of village leadership. Vertical mobility which was unknown in the traditional Munda society came to be seen as an established norm (Pg.333)”. He recorded tremendous changes in the Munda society in various areas.

Deliege’s (1985) “The Bhils of Western India” is an important compilation on the Bhils as a whole. In his study he attempted to trace the changes among the Bhils living in different parts of western India. He analysed the tribe-caste definition and with existing facts he showed that the Bhils have transformed to a caste. He substantiated his findings analysing their present form of occupational mobility and class hierarchy in their society.
Singh (1979) in his essay "Colonial Transformation of Tribal Society" in middle India observes that the economic and political process of tribal transformation get reflected in social stratification. Social stratification among tribes has always existed in various forms such as social and physical distance, notion of pollution and purity, prestige and status, etc. The system of social stratification in the form of feudatory chief the Zaminders at the top and well to do head men in the middle and general mass at the bottom has changed since independence. Singh points out that a class of insider diku (outside exporter) and the professional tribal moneylender as a result of anti land alienation laws has emerged in the post independence period. A small section of the tribes have gone up in the socio-economic hierarchy, and they are engaged in land transaction and money lending.

Kapadia’s (1962) essay 'Caste in Transition', attempted to study the transitional nature of the different characteristics of the caste system by focusing on four characteristics: caste councils, commensal taboos, ceremonial purity and endogamy. Analyzing the functioning of the Caste councils, he found that the caste councils which were very powerful in the 1860s and in 1910s, continued to exert its influence way down in the 1960s even when they were legally deprived of their authority to enforce their traditional norms upon their members by way of excommunication, yet they continue to regulate the conduct and minds of their members. Talking on the change in the commensal taboo, he found
that though it was true that even in the rural areas, inter dining among members of all castes (including Harijans) who sat together in a row was not uncommon in the 1960s; yet, there was evidence to indicated that these inhibitions were not completely uprooted psychologically even in the urban areas. Referring to the change in ceremonial purity, he stated that the Hindu concept of pollution was very extensive in its scope and mandatory in its observance till twenties of the last century. These rules are still observed in some high caste families – more often in moffusal and rural areas. But on the whole they may be said to have been almost dispensed with. Finally, pointing to endogamy he stated that the change in the endogamy character of caste is not clearly intelligible. A number of inter-caste marriages is found to be on the increase. He concluded that whatever people may say about caste, there is yet acceptance of caste inhibition. There is unmistakable evidence that the caste has undergone significant change.

Dumont (1971) taking up the question of “what is the caste system becoming now a days” in his book “Homo Hierarchicus” holds that contemporary literature exaggerates change. What is certain is that the caste system, as an overall framework has not changed. The only change that seems to have taken place is that the traditional interdependence of caste has been replaced by a universe of impenetrable blocks, self-sufficient and in competition with one another. He calls this “the substantialisation of caste.”
Dasgupta (1978) in his study of “Impact of Industrialisation on a Tribe in South Bihar”, observed that in spite of an observed tenancy to absenteeism and lack of ability of the tribal workforce to move up in the factory hierarchy; the tribal have given evidence of proneness to adapt themselves to the factory cycle of activity and mode of living. His book is an analytical record of how this has been achieved. In addition to several other observations, his conclusion may be summarised as below: i) the main thrust of adaptation of the Ho to the industrial milieu has been to combine gaining in rural agrarian economy with the factory. This has been achieved by various means like staying in the village itself, a high degree of seasonal absenteeism etc. ii) the management has also adapted itself to the work and life style of the Ho workers.

Singh’s (1999 edition) study of interaction of modernity and social tradition in India is a full-length study. His book “Modernisation of Indian Tradition” is a classical theoretical work. It is a comprehensive sociological study of the process and problems of modernisation in contemporary India. It refers to the vast range of changes that are taking place in the form and functions of the Indian social structure and traditions. He argues that Indian society is changing and is undergoing adaptive changes towards modernisation.

Gupta’s (2002) work on modernity is a compilation of essays which he published under the title “Mistaken Modernity”. The book deals with various aspects of modernity and social change in the
contemporary Indian society. He defines modernity as “an attitude which represents universalistic norms, where the dignity of an individual as a citizen is inviolable and where one’s achievements count for more than family background and connections. Once modernity is understood in these fashions, it is apparent that India still has a long distance to go.”

Chacko’s (2005) compilation “Tribal Communities and Social Change” contains 13 essays on social change among various tribes in various fronts. Some of these are micro studies. In one of the essays, Shah elaborates how the impact of education brought about changes in the tribal economy, politics, culture and above all in the social institutions. Das in another essay discusses some eastern tribes (Angami Nagas, Purums etc.), which have undergone changes in respect of family pattern due to change in occupation. He elaborated the case of Chotanagpur tribes, which have seen a drastic change in the pattern of occupation from jhumiars to day labourers.

Natarajan’s (1977) the “Missionary among the Khasis” is an important account of the traditional Khasi religious beliefs and rituals and finally how they converted to Christianity. In the second chapter, she dwelt at length the status of the pre-missionary Khasi society. In the next chapter it is the discussion on the rules and procedure of religious and other performances and then the fourth chapter deals with the arrival of the missionaries in historical perspective. Although she has adopted the historical approach of
narrating the changes yet, the book is an authentic document on the process of gradual conversion of Khasis from an animistic society to a world religion.

Jena and Malhotra's (1993) "Social Change: Themes and Perspectives" is a complete analysis of the topic "social change" right from the definition through the growth and evolution of the topic, related theories, involved factors, process of social change to obstacles of social change. This book provides systematic data to the researchers working on social anthropological and sociological researches on social changes. It gives direction as to how to deal with the topic scientifically.

Sahay (1998) in his book "Dynamics and Dimensions of Tribal Societies: Regional and Indian Perspectives" has given an informative account of some of the Bihar tribes. He dealt at length the changing cultural scenario of the Chotanagpur area in the essay namely "Changing Tribal Identity in Chotanagpur". In this article he reported about how a group of families or one small section of a tribe in an area for one reason or the other, severe its affiliation with the parent group and gets itself culturally, formally or legally incorporated into the other tribe acquiring altogether a new tribal identity. His work was among the Kharia, Munda and the Oraons. He analysed the impact of urbanisation on occupational mobility among the tribes and also the impact of religion. In another essay, in the book namely "Trends of Sanskritisation among the Oraon" he examined the process of sanskritisation among the Oraons.
Jain (2004) in his book "Scheduled Tribes: Changes in Socio-economic Conditions" sees that the development is both a cause and consequence of change. There is a two-way relationship between them i.e. development influences and is influenced by change which is manifested in terms of physical, technological economic, social, cultural, attitudinal and organizational aspects. He highlighted the role of economic factors in social change. For him, the economic and social factors are so intermixed, interlocked, interwoven and inter related that no fruitful conclusions can be drawn ignoring either of them in a study of social change. In the second chapter of his book, he explains how social change occurs in a traditional society with the development in infrastructure and other related sectors.

Haimendorf's (1981) "Asian Highland Societies" is a collection of anthropological essays in which he accommodated the changes he observed in the highland societies since his earlier visits during the sixties. Among the Thakalis of western Nepal, he observed a large-scale migration of Thakalis from Thukche area. He wrote "the decline of the Trans Himalayan trade resulting from the Chinese occupation of Tibet had let to an exodus of the majority of the Thakalis of Thukche......Large parts of Thukche looked now utterly desolate. Many houses were locked up." He discussed in detail how the Thakalis were forced to change their occupation during the period under study.
Trivedi (1975) in his book "Urbanization and Macro-social Change" attempted to develop a general theory relating to the concept of semi urban pockets. He concentrated on the material and non-material aspects of social structure and organisation spread over rural and urban dichotomous poles. He presented three interrelated proposition of macro-social change and urbanization. According to him social change is the outcome of ongoing social process at a point of time coupled with the influence of latent historical forces or elements.

Chauhan (1990) in his book "Rural Urban Articulations" showed how the rural communities at the urban frontiers have adopted the urban materials and how these entered into their way of life. He conducted intensive inquiries in three villages of Meerut region of Uttar Pradesh. In the wake of urbanization, he observed units of social structure have shown a new vitality for dealing with the situation and further networks have been developed to meet the growing exigencies. He discussed how cultural aspect of the community has been enriched through the modern forces of education, medicine and communication.

Doshi (1993) examines ethnicity, caste and class among the Bhils of Southern Rajasthan in his unpublished mimeograph "Sociological Dimensions of Food Nutrition among the Bhils of Southern Rajasthan" He found that migration, education and employment in towns and cities, styles of life and adoption of Hindu ideology have considerably changed the traditional social set
up of some sections of Bhil society. He concludes that the macrostructural development have also induced social change among the Bhils in Rajasthan.

Sharma (1996) in his book *Ethnicity and Stratification among Tribal in Urban Setting* found that in tribal society traditional patterns, dimensions and processes of social stratification have changed in modern times due to forces of modernization and urbanisation. Working on the Bhil migrant groups living in Udaipur city, he found tremendous impact of urbanization on the Bhills who migrated to the towns. Some of them have taken the Hindu way of life and some converted to Christianity. Their housing pattern has changed and polygyny ceased to exist and so is the excessive drinking.

In this context two other studies relating to urbanisation are worth mentioning here. One is sociologist Louis Wirth's (1938) essay "Urbanism as a Way of Life". Here, he developed a theory regarding the typical influences of urban life on social organization and attitudes. In his essay he argued that urban life is marked by impersonal, instrumental contacts, which tend to free individuals from the strong controls of such primary groups as the extended family. On the other hand, however, this freedom of individual action would be accompanied by the loss of collective security.

Robert Redfield (1947) in his essay *the Folk Society* adapted Wirth's formulation of these characteristics to his idea of a "folk-
urban continuum.” He characterized the urban pole in Wirth’s terms and the folk pole as it’s opposite. He defined the folk pole as consisting of small, homogeneous, isolated, and traditional communities which were economically self-sufficient and had only a rudimentary division of labour. He went a step further by elaborating on the role of cities as a "Great Tradition" as opposed to the "Little Tradition" of local villages.

The literature on tribes of Assam and its neighbouring States is immense. Numerous references could be found about the tribes residing in North East India and hence it is not possible to get an exhaustive bibliography. About the Karbi itself there are at least four titles in circulation – and all these are in reference to hill tribes. Nothing has been done on Plains Karbis specifically in the area chosen in the present study.

The literature on tribes of Assam and its neighbouring States is immense. Numerous references could be found about the tribes residing in North east and hence it is not possible to get an exhaustive bibliography. About Karbi itself there are at least four titles in circulation – and all these are in reference to hill tribes. Nothing has been done on Plains Karbis specifically in the area chosen in the present study.

1.9.1: A Hundred Years’ of Charles Lyall’s “The Mikirs”

It has almost been a century since the Charles Lyall edited “the Mikirs” first appeared in book form in 1908. Lyall had done
his very best in editing, arranging and supplementing Edward Stacke’s ethnographic materials on Mikirs. Stack collected the information and data during mid eighteen eightees when he was the Secretary to the Chief Commissioner from 1884-1886. His sudden death in January 1887 had prevented him from putting together a complete account of the Mikirs. Lyall’s crediability lies on the fact that 20 years later when he received the materials, did not hesitate to bring these to the level of a manuscript and finally publish it. To update the data and information of Stake’s collection, Lyall visited the field again circulated the data to get authenticity and also raised further ethnographic qaries. Lyall’s account remains unmatched during all these long hundred years and no works of similar standard on Mikirs has been done in this area. The book dealt in details about the tribe’s habitat, physical characters, their origin and their material culture. The social life of the Karbis (Mikirs) has been explained in detail along with their customary laws and tradition and their language. Valuable folklore materials involving the tribe have also been incorporated. It is the only monograph of the period, which first referred about the section of the Karbis living in plains.

1.10: Objectives of Study:

The present study attempts to analyse the following basic objectives:

1. The present social system (social entity with systemic relation and inherent conflict) of the Karbis of the plains vis-à-vis the Karbis of Guwahati.
2. The nature of changes in the macro social structures of Guwahati that have impact on the Karbis of Guwahati.

3. Evaluating the change in the social structure of the Karbis of Guwahati.

4. Identifying the various components of their culture at the, and their present status to understand social change.

5. Analyse the role of women in the context of the changing process.

1.11: Definitions

It is necessary to define here certain terms used in this thesis unambiguously; these are i) plain Karbi, and ii) village.

The phrases ‘plains Karbi’ or the ‘Karbis of plains’ have been used synonymously to mean all the Karbi population of Kamrup (Metropolitan) district, Kamrup district, Nagaon and Sonitpur district who do not belong to the Chinthong clan. In the bordering areas of Nagoan and Karbi Anglong there are a few plains villages of hill Karbis who have been excluded from the definition of plains Karbis.

The word ‘village’ whenever used in the present study refers to the segment of the similar named village where actually the Karbis live. In all the villages under study, apart from the Karbis, also live other communities who are not subject matter of this study.
1.12: Methodology:

The shift of focus to large-scale societies encourages the reconsideration of traditional anthropological methodology, known as the so-called "participant observation." For a long time, ethnographic work focused on creating a close rapport with a small number of informants. However, this is impossible in an urban context. Urban anthropologists are therefore required to extend their scope, develop new skills, and to take written materials, surveys, historical studies, novels and other sources into account. The challenge for urban anthropologists is to process this array of different sources and to grasp the realities of larger groups without losing sight of the vivid description that characterizes ethnography. This includes incidents and encounters, which at first sight may seem to lack scientific value and relevance, but which give life to statistics and censuses and reflect the realities of daily social life. Traditional anthropological topics, such as kinship, social stratification, etc., have often been transplanted to the city. Along these lines, urban anthropology did not only move anthropologists to different theoretical and methodological frameworks, but also reworked those that had already existed and still exist (Foster and Kemper 1974: 1-17).

A problem of an overly strong emphasis of the participant observer approach in the urban context is the loss of the holistic perspective. Focusing on the family (such as on the tribe or other social units in traditional anthropology), leads to a fragmentary
picture of urban reality, and thus to an "urban mosaic" (Fox 1977: 2-9). In regard to methodology, an analysis in the journal "Urban Anthropology" revealed that the following types of large-scale studies dominate the field: comparative studies within a single community, multi-community studies, regional surveys, national-level analyses, comparative multi-national studies, and general theoretical and methodological studies. Smaller-scale studies mainly focused on individuals in the form of life histories, specific social contexts (such as marketplaces, gangs, and shopping centres), residential units, and workplaces (Kemper 1991: 378).

1.12.1: The Two layered fieldwork in the Present Study

The present study is also a type of large study within a single community. A two-layered research design was prepared to realise the stated objectives. In the first layer, there was the fieldwork conducted at different parts of neighbouring plains districts of Karbi Anglong namely Kamrup, Kamrup (Metropolitan) and Nagaon districts for collection of base line data on the plains Karbis. This study was extensive rather than intensive. Altogether 13 villages were surveyed to gather the actual picture of the social system of the Karbis of Plains. In the second layer there was the fieldwork conducted at the target villages of Guwahati. This survey was designed to collect the primary data for the study.
1.12.2: Identifying the villages for study

To identify the villages predominantly inhabited by tribal people, the concerning Deputy Commissioners' office was consulted. The Deputy Commissioners had directed the Revenue Circle Officers, to provide necessary information for the purpose. The land record staffs of the Circle Officer and Settlement Officer, Guwahati have provided ample information about the established tribal villages.

For the first part of the fieldwork, the villages Lungpung, Sochengdhenta of Nagaon district, villages Gumaria, Morongabari, Jogdol, Nizpanbari, Hajongbari, Thakurkuchi, Hajongborti, Gumoria, Sontoli, Hengerabari, Joporigog, Narakasur, Moinakhirung, Sorusojai and Birkuchi of Kamrup Metropolitan district were chosen at random from among the villages listed by lottery method.

For the primary field study, only the villages within Guwahati were considered. In the preliminary selection, the villages that listed are Bhaluka Chuk (now Narikol Basti), Rongkemi Nagar (adjacent to Ambikagiri Nagar), Kachari Basti (near Ulubari), Lakhra, Garbhanga, Moina Khurung, Birkuchi, Moukhuli, Japoribasti (Japorigog), Borbori (behind Japorigog), Hengerabari, Narakasur, Latakata (near Bashistha), Sartribari Kachari gaon, etc. After obtaining the names and their locations, the land records of the relevant villages have been examined so as to ascertain the actual existence of the Karbi population in the
villages. In each of these villages, population ranges from 150 – 250 and based on this information, a population of about 750 – 1000 that is, around 170 families were considered representative for an intensive study within the limited time frame. It was thus decided to take five villages for the study. Accordingly, all the village names were listed from which the names of five villages were drawn at random for the study by lottery method. The sampled villages drawn for the study are Japorigog, Narakasur, Moina-khurung, Sorusojai and Hengerabari No.1 village.

The selected villages have been visited and initial data pertaining to the villages have been collected. These include household data such as total population of the village and other village resources. The basic population data of the villages are presented in the following tables:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name of the villages</th>
<th>Total No Household</th>
<th>Total population</th>
<th>Total male Nos.</th>
<th>Total male Percent</th>
<th>Total female Nos.</th>
<th>Total female Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Japorigog</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>147</td>
<td>086</td>
<td>58.50</td>
<td>061</td>
<td>41.50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Moinakhurung</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>256</td>
<td>122</td>
<td>47.66</td>
<td>134</td>
<td>52.34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Narakasur</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>301</td>
<td>149</td>
<td>49.50</td>
<td>152</td>
<td>50.50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sarusajai</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>176</td>
<td>090</td>
<td>51.14</td>
<td>086</td>
<td>48.86</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hengerabari</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>259</td>
<td>134</td>
<td>51.74</td>
<td>125</td>
<td>48.26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td>193</td>
<td>1139</td>
<td>581</td>
<td><strong>51.01</strong></td>
<td>558</td>
<td><strong>48.99</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The total population considered under this study as shown above comes to 1139 under five villages of which 51.01 percent are males and 48.99 per cent females.
Table -1.12.2(B)
Family Types in the Villages

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name of the villages</th>
<th>Total No Households</th>
<th>Nuclear family</th>
<th>Joint family</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Nos.</td>
<td>Percent</td>
<td>Nos.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Japorigog</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>90.63</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Moinakhurung</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>76.00</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Narakasur</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>84.62</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sarusajai</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>77.78</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hengerabari</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>81.25</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>193</strong></td>
<td><strong>82.38</strong></td>
<td><strong>34</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Out of the total of 193 families 82.38 percent are nuclear families and the remaining are various categories of joint families. The family system is studied in detail Chapter V.

In the succeeding paragraphs a brief outline of the villages is given.

**Japorigog Village**

This village is located towards the east of Guwahati and just behind the State Zoological Garden. Japorigog, also popularly known as Japori basti is bounded on the east and south by Hengerabari no.1 village, in the North by Japarigog N.C. village and on the west by the Zoological Park. The village is within the administrative jurisdiction of the Deputy Commissioner of Kamrup (Metropolitan) district and the nearest police station is at Gitanagar situated about 3 km. away. It is an old established village predominantly inhabited by Karbi people. The total Karbi population of the village is 147 out of which 86 (58.50%) are males and 61(41.50%) are females (Ref: table -1.12.2A). The Karbis practice their own traditional system of administration in the village in some form but not in complete form. There is the Burha
Bangthai as the leader of the khel who plays decisive role in socio-religious activities.

Narakasur Village

The Narakasur village is located very close to the State capital Dispur and in all the other aspects is very similar to the Japarigog village. The village is bounded on the east by the Forensic Laboratory of State Home Department and towards the west lie the Narakasura Hill. On the north, the head quarter of Tenth Assam Police Battalion and on the South lie the Assam State Electricity Board’s Power Generation Station and paddy field of Dakhin Gaon. The village got its name after the hill bordering the west named after the legendary ‘Asura’ ruler of Kamrup – Narakasur. The village is within the administrative jurisdiction of the Deputy Commissioner of Kamrup Metropolitan and the nearest police station is the Dispur police station about 4 km away. The village has a Karbi population of 301, the highest among the villages under study. Out of this, 149 (49.50%) are males and 152(50.50%) are females [(Ref: table-1.12.2(A)]. The village presents an unusual demographic feature in the sense that it has more females than males. Minor disputes in the village are usually settled by the village headman Gaon Burah. The Kahilipara post office provides postal facilities for the village. The village is directly connected to Dispur and other parts of the city by good motorable roads. The city bus service also extends to the village with frequent bus service in regular intervals. Many of the
villagers also use other means of transports like bicycles, motorcycles, cars etc of their own.

**Moina Khurung**

This village is located in the southernmost part of the city. The northern and eastern part of the village is bounded by village Betkuchi, the southern parts by the Garbhanga Reserve Forest, and the western part by village Gog. The village is towards south of the National Highway No-31. In terms of Karbi population, Moina Khurung is a small village. It has 256 numbers of Karbi people in 25 households. Total male is 122 while total female is 134. [(Ref: Table-1.12.2(A)] A good all-weather road connects this village to the national highway and thence Khanapara and Jalukbari in the two opposite directions.

**Sarusajai village:**

The village is inhabited by both Karbi and Bodo people. It is located in the southernmost part of the city and is nearer to the village Moina khurung. On its north, there is the National Highway, on the south is Gorbhanga Reserve Forest, on the east lie the Borsajai village and on the west is village Betkuchi. There are about 100 households taking both Karbi and Bodos together. The Karbi population here is 176 and with 36 households. The male population of 90 comprises of 51.14% and the 86 females comprise 48.86% of the total Karbi population in this village [(Ref: Table-1.12.2(A)].
Hengrabari

The village is located towards south west of the city at a distance of about 5.5 km. The total Karbi population in the village is 259 out of which 134 are males comprising of 51.74 percent of the total population and 125 are females comprising 48.26 percent of the total population. [(Ref: Table-1.12.2(A)]

1.13: Data Collection:

In Primary research, data is collected specifically for the study in hand. The data is gathered either by the investigator observing the subject or phenomenon being studied or communicating directly or indirectly with the subject. The direct communication technique include such qualitative research techniques as in-depth interview, focus group and projective techniques and quantitative research techniques such as interview survey, telephone, self administered survey, etc. In the following paragraphs the methods used in the present study has been discussed briefly.

1.13.1: Observation Technique

This is a primary method of collecting data by human, mechanical, electrical or electronic means. The researcher may or may not have direct contact or communication with the people whose behaviour is being recorded. Observation techniques can be part of qualitative research as well as quantitative research techniques. There are six different ways of classifying observation methods.
One distinct advantage of the observation technique is that it records actual behaviour, not what people say they said/did or believe, and they will say/do. Indeed, sometimes their actual recorded behaviour can be compared to their statements, to check for the validity of their responses.

1.13.2: The In-Person Interview Survey

Face-to-face interviews are a direct communication, primary research collection technique. If relatively unstructured but in-depth, they tend to be considered as part of qualitative research. When administered as an intercept survey or door-to-door, they are usually part of quantitative research.

The opportunity for feedback to the respondent is a distinct advantage in personal interviews. Not only is there the opportunity to reassure the respondent should he/she be reluctant to participate, but the interviewer can also clarify certain instructions or questions. The interviewer also has the opportunity to probe answers by asking the respondent to clarify or expand on a specific response. The interviewer can also supplement answers by recording his/her own observations, for instance there is no need to ask the respondent’s gender or the time of day/place where the interview took place.

The length of interview or its complexity can both be much greater than in other survey techniques. At the same time, the
researcher is assured that the responses are actually provided by the person intended, and that no questions are skipped.

1.13.3: The Case Study Method

When it is deemed desirable to learn from the experience of others, researchers often resort to the case study. In this comprehensive description and analysis of one or a few situations that are similar to the ones being studied, the emphasis is on an entire organization with great attention paid to detail in order to understand and document the relationships among circumstances, events, individuals, processes, and decisions made.

In order to obtain the information required, it is usually necessary to conduct an in-depth interview with key individuals in the organization / village as well as consulting internal documents and records or searching press reports. Observation of actual meetings, sales, calls or trips, negotiations, etc. can also prove insightful, since “actions speak louder than words”, even when it comes to understanding how decisions are made in an organization or why some organizations are more successful than others.

However, caution must be exercised in transferring lessons to other situations: there is no "formula" that can be applied, but rather a context that must be understood and interaction among individuals that must be appreciated. Individual personalities, their vision and drive contribute as much if not more to the success of an organization than processes.
1.14: Techniques applied in the study:

The present study is a combination of both in-person interview survey, observation and case study method where primary data used in this thesis is concerned. The secondary data are however collected from various sources like publications, newspaper articles, government journals, reports, etc.

1.15: Scheme of Chapters:

This report is presented in six Chapters, each dealing with separately all the relevant issues that the study has generated.

The first Chapter is the Introductory Chapter. In this chapter the terms associated with the topic of research have been defined and an introduction to the research problem has been incorporated. This chapter also reviews the relevant literatures available in this field. The methodology adopted during the fieldwork and also during the collection of data has been explained in this Chapter.

The second Chapter deals with concept and application of social change in detail. Various theories of social changes have been discussed in this Chapter briefly so as to have knowledge as to how the issue of social change has been treated by various anthropologists and sociologists. The Chapter also accommodates a brief note on social change in Indian traditional society vis-à-vis Assam, tracing the path and trend.
The Third Chapter presents the social system of the Karbis of plains as compiled from the data gathered from first stage of survey in various villages. As no work on this area has been done earlier on the Karbis of plains and their social system this would be the first time documentation from the first hand knowledge. The distinguishing points between hill Karbis and the Plains Karbis are highlighted here.

The fourth Chapter deals with the macro social changes in respect of urbanisation of Guwahati and politicisation of Guwahati. Both the macro structures are dealt with in detail analysing the changes brought about by the urbanisation and implementation of legislation pertaining to Guwahati Municipal Corporation, which resulted in change in the political organisation.

The Fifth Chapter deals with the micro structural change and cultural change together. The status of various components is presented in this chapter showing linkages to each other.

In the Sixth chapter detailed discussions have been made in terms of the objectives and indicated about the findings of the research on each of the objectives.

The Sixth Chapter is followed by the Summary and Conclusion of the research.