CHAPTER I
CHAPTER I

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Primary education constitutes a very important part of the entire structure of education. Generally, a child starts going to a formal institution and formal education starts at this stage. The education they receive in these formal institutions provides the foundation of their physical, mental, emotional, intellectual and social development. Education at this stage contributes a lot to foster values of emotional and national integration. So the country under any circumstances cannot ignore the primary education of the children or education of the masses up to primary level. The progress of primary education is one index of the general, social and economic development of the country as a whole. However sound primary education gives a fillip to sound secondary and higher education. At present the world is going through rapid changes in all dimensions of development. So education has become the corner stone and main machinery of development in every country in this era of rapid social transformation and technological development. Therefore, every human being especially children have a right to education, to knowledge and to learning to improve their own quality of life.
as well as to participate meaningfully in social life. Elementary education
deserves the highest priority, not only on grounds of social justice and
democracy, but also for raising the competence of the average worker and
for increasing national productivity.

Free and compulsory education to all children up to the age of
fourteen years is a constitutional commitment. The Government of India has
initiated a number of programmes to achieve the goal of Universalisation of
Elementary Education (UEE) among which the Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan
(SSA) is the most recent one. It aims at achieving universal primary
education by 2007 and universal elementary education by 2010. Achieving
universalisation means achieving universal access, universal enrolment,
universal retention and universal quality of education. The recent
amendment to the constitution has made elementary education fundamental
right to every citizen. But a serious problem that is encountered in achieving
the goal of universalisation of elementary education is the high dropout rate
of children from different classes. Drop-out is a worldwide problem and it is a
universal phenomenon in Indian educational system at all the levels, which
results in considerable wastage of resources.

Drop-out is one who drops out from a course of study or from
completing primary course at any stage and at any time without certificate. A dropout is defined as a person who withdraws from a programme of study before completing the same. It differs from wastage where a student takes longer time to complete a course than the prescribed one. For example, at the primary level all those children who are admitted to class I and who do not complete class IV or V, are taken as dropouts. Dropout is most serious at primary school level. A number of studies have shown that dropout is higher in case of disadvantaged poor students. The major reason given usually is that the children are an economic asset to the parents. The problem of dropout happens to be a common feature for both scheduled tribes and other students. It is a crucial indicator in the field of educational development: reveals that there has been a steady decline in the rate of drop-out in respect of both ST and all categories during the period 2001 to 2004 ² The following table shows the clear picture:

Table 1.1

Rate of drop-out in respect of ST and ALL categories in India (2001-2004)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>2001-02</th>
<th>2002-03</th>
<th>2003-04</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ST</td>
<td>52.34</td>
<td>51.37</td>
<td>48.93</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ALL</td>
<td>39.03</td>
<td>34.89</td>
<td>31.36</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

² Source: Educational profile of States/Uts, Department of education MHRD, GOI, New Delhi
Rate of drop-out in India - ST and ALL categories (2001-2004)

![Bar chart showing rate of drop-out in India for ST and ALL categories from 2001-2004.](Image)

**Figure 1.1**
The Table 1.1 shows that the drop-out rates for ST are significantly higher than the overall drop-out rate. A large number of ST children discontinue their studies prematurely before completing the level for which they were enrolled. The gap in dropout between STs and the rest of the population is comparatively wider. So in order to achieve the constitutional commitment of universalisation of elementary education, from 6-14 years of age, the problem of drop-out must be removed from the elementary level.

India is a class as well as caste ridden society. Two thirds or more of the population of India are very backward and the members of these groups of population suffer from economic as well as non-economic, that is, social, religious and educational disabilities. This unprivileged section that is often treated as 'the backward classes' in general consists of three main divisions:

i) The Scheduled Castes (Harijans)
ii) The Scheduled Tribes (Girijans)
iii) The Other backward Classes

The second largest group of the backward classes of the unprivileged section that is the Scheduled Tribes consists of about 8.2% (according to 2001 census) of the total Indian population. The scheduled tribes, generally called tribal people, survived with their unchanging ways of life for centuries. The tribal people were the earliest among the present inhabitants of India. Mahatma Gandhi called them

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'Girijans' and the constitution of India has referred to them as the 'Scheduled Tribes'. According to Article 342 of the Constitution, Scheduled Tribes are the tribes or tribal communities or part of or groups within these tribes or tribal communities, which have been declared as such by the President through a public notification.

1.1. TRIBAL POPULATION SCENARIO IN THE COUNTRY

According to 2001 census, Scheduled Tribes account for 8.2 percent of the country's population. Following table shows the demographic changes of the total and ST population in India-

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table -1.2</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Total and ST population from 1951-2001 in India</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Population in millions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Census Years</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1951</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1961</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1971</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1981</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1991</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2001</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The above Table 1.2 shows that the ST population has increased from 5.29% in 1951 to 8.2% in 2001. The tribal situation in the country presents a varied picture. The North-eastern states have a predominant tribal population, the West-east central belt have a high tribal concentration and still other areas like those in the southern states the tribal population forms only a small percentage or even zero percentage of the total population.

The...
following table shows the total & scheduled tribe population and the proportion STs in different States and Union Territories in India according to 2001 census.

Table 1.3

The total & scheduled tribe population in different states and U.T.s in India according to 2001 census

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>States / U.T.</th>
<th>Total pop.</th>
<th>ST pop</th>
<th>Proportion of STs</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mizoram</td>
<td>888,573</td>
<td>839,310</td>
<td>94.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lakshadweep</td>
<td>60,650</td>
<td>57,321</td>
<td>94.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nagaland</td>
<td>1,990,036</td>
<td>1,774,026</td>
<td>89.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Meghalaya</td>
<td>2,318,822</td>
<td>1,992,862</td>
<td>85.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Arunachal Pradesh</td>
<td>1,097,968</td>
<td>705,158</td>
<td>64.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dadra &amp; Nagar Haveli</td>
<td>220,490</td>
<td>137,225</td>
<td>62.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Manipur</td>
<td>2,166,788</td>
<td>741,141</td>
<td>34.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chhatisgarh</td>
<td>20,833,803</td>
<td>6,616,596</td>
<td>31.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tripura</td>
<td>3,199,203</td>
<td>993,426</td>
<td>31.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jharkhand</td>
<td>26,945,829</td>
<td>7,087,068</td>
<td>26.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Orissa</td>
<td>36,804,660</td>
<td>8,145,081</td>
<td>22.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sikkim</td>
<td>540,851</td>
<td>111,405</td>
<td>20.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Madhya Pradesh</td>
<td>60,348,023</td>
<td>12,233,474</td>
<td>20.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gujrat</td>
<td>50,671,017</td>
<td>7,6481,160</td>
<td>14.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rajasthan</td>
<td>56,507,188</td>
<td>7,097,706</td>
<td>12.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>State</td>
<td>Population</td>
<td>Capital</td>
<td>Capital Growth</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>------------------------</td>
<td>------------</td>
<td>-----------</td>
<td>----------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assam</td>
<td>26,655,528</td>
<td>3,303,570</td>
<td>12.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jammu &amp; Kashmir</td>
<td>10,143,700</td>
<td>1,105,979</td>
<td>10.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maharashtra</td>
<td>96,878,627</td>
<td>8,577,276</td>
<td>8.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Daman &amp; Diu</td>
<td>158,204</td>
<td>13,997</td>
<td>8.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Andaman &amp; Nicobar Island</td>
<td>356,152</td>
<td>29,469</td>
<td>8.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Andhra Pradesh</td>
<td>76,210,007</td>
<td>5,024,104</td>
<td>6.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Karnataka</td>
<td>52,850,562</td>
<td>3,463,986</td>
<td>6.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>West Bengal</td>
<td>80,176,197</td>
<td>4,406,794</td>
<td>5.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Himachal Pradesh</td>
<td>6,077,900</td>
<td>244,587</td>
<td>4.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Uttarakhand</td>
<td>8,489,349</td>
<td>256,129</td>
<td>3.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kerala</td>
<td>31,841,374</td>
<td>364,189</td>
<td>1.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tamil Nadu</td>
<td>62,405,679</td>
<td>651,321</td>
<td>1.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bihar</td>
<td>82,998,509</td>
<td>758,351</td>
<td>0.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Uttar Pradesh</td>
<td>166,197,921</td>
<td>107,963</td>
<td>0.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Punjab</td>
<td>24,358,999</td>
<td>Nil</td>
<td>0.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chandigarh</td>
<td>900,635</td>
<td>Nil</td>
<td>0.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Haryana</td>
<td>21,144,564</td>
<td>Nil</td>
<td>0.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Delhi</td>
<td>13,850,507</td>
<td>Nil</td>
<td>0.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Goa</td>
<td>1,347,668</td>
<td>Nil</td>
<td>0.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pondicherry</td>
<td>974,345</td>
<td>Nil</td>
<td>0.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>India</td>
<td>1,028,610,328</td>
<td>84,326,240</td>
<td>8.2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The above table shows a varied picture of tribal population situation in the country. Illiteracy is a major problem of the tribals. Many of them do not know anything about education, schools, colleges etc. Even they feel no urge to educate their children. Due to illiteracy and ignorance the tribals are not able to appreciate modern concept of health and sanitation. After independence, following the provisions of the constitution the central and the state government have come forward in the tribal areas for the purpose of educational development. As a result, the literacy among the tribals has been achieved to some extent, but still far away from the national literacy rate. The following table shows the progress of scheduled tribes on literacy over the years.

Table 1.4

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Total population</th>
<th>ST</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>M</td>
<td>F</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1961</td>
<td>40.40</td>
<td>15.35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1971</td>
<td>5.96</td>
<td>21.97</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1981</td>
<td>56.38</td>
<td>29.76</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1991</td>
<td>64.13</td>
<td>39.29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2001</td>
<td>75.26</td>
<td>53.67</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Literacy rate between Total and ST population (1961-2001)

Figure 1.4
The Table 1.4 shows that the difference between the literacy rate of ST and Total category has been around 18%. Though there has been a gradual increase in their literacy rate since independence, the present is far from satisfactory. Realizing that the Scheduled Tribes are one of the most deprived and marginalized groups with respect to education, the Govt has been initiated a host of programmes and measures since Independence. Elementary education is a priority area in the Tribal sub-plans from the 5th Five Year Plan. Education of ST children is considered important, not only because of the Constitutional obligation but also as a crucial input for total development of tribal communities.

Under Article 342 of the constitution, the president of India notified a number of communities as Scheduled tribes in order to avail constitutional safeguards and governmental facilities as they are considered a weaker section of the society. In 1950, after independence the first notification of STs was issued. The President before notifying a community as ST considers some characteristics like the tribes’ primitive traits, distinctive culture, shyness with the public at large, geographical isolation and social economic backwardness etc. There are 698 ST spreads all over the country, at present having their own languages different from the one mostly spoken in the State where they live. There are more than 270 such languages in India. (India Education Report, 2002). Out of the 698 STs, 75 are identified as primitive tribal groups considering that they are more backward than other scheduled tribes. They continue to live in a pre-agricultural stage of economy.
and have very low literacy rates. Their populations are stagnant or even declining. As the tribal are the citizens of India hence promotion of their welfare is of equal importance.

1.2 AN INTRODUCTION TO THE TRIBES OF ASSAM

Assam, a state of India situated in the North eastern part of the country with an approximate population of 2.66 cores according to 2001 census is a very beautiful state. It is blended with hills and plains and its scenic beauty is very eye catching. The tribal communities of Assam constitute 12.4% of the total population of the state as per 2001 census. These tribal communities are hill dwellers as well as plain dwellers. In the plain areas there are 9 communities and in hill areas 14 communities are enlisted as scheduled tribes as per Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes orders(Amendment) Act 1976. These nine Scheduled Tribe communities in the plain areas are-Barmans of Cachar, Boro, Boro-Kachari, Deori, Hoja Kachari, Sonowal, Lalung, Mech, Miri and Rabha. The Scheduled Tribe communities in the hill areas are- Chakma, Dimasa, Kachari, garo, Hajong, Hmar, Khasi& Jantia, any Kuki tribes, Lakher, Man, any Mizo, Mikir, Any Naga tribes, Pawi and Syntheng.5

Each tribal community in Assam has its own distinct, ethnic identity

expressed through its customs, religion, language/dialect, dresses and ornaments, dance and music, value judgment, cultural heritage and a distinct way of life. But the pace of development is not at all uniform and it differs from tribe to tribe and from region to region.

The tribal communities of Assam are traditionally agriculturists. As such their economy, which is at subsistence level, is dependent on land. But due to some historical and socio-cultural reasons, these communities have remained still very poor in possession of agricultural land. Sericulture is a very important cottage industry among all the tribal communities of Assam. They have a corporate life where people think in terms of the whole community rather than individual family.

1.3. CONSTITUTIONAL SAFEGUARDS TOWARDS SCHEDULED TRIBES

The constitution of India incorporates several special provisions for the promotion of educational and economic interests of scheduled tribes and their protection from social injustice and all forms of exploitation. The constitution has devoted more than 20 articles to uplift the scheduled tribes. Following are some of the provisions of the constitution to safeguards the interests of the scheduled tribes-

1. Article 14 confers equal rights and opportunities to all.

2. Article 15 prohibits discrimination against any citizens on the grounds of sex, religion, caste, race etc.

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3. Article 15(4) enjoins upon the state to make special provisions for the advancement of any socially and economically backward classes.

4. Article 16(4) empowers the state to make provisions for reservations in appointment or posts in favour of any backward class of citizens which in the opinion of the state is not adequately represented in the services under the state.

5. Under Article 19(5) the tribal can own property and enjoy it in any part of the country.

6. Article 46 consists of provisions to protect the economic and educational interests of the tribal, in particular, the scheduled tribes and promises to protect them from social injustice and all forms of exploitation.

7. Article 164 empowers the State Govt. to appoint a separate minister to look into the welfare of the tribal.

8. Under Article 275(1) the center is required to give grants-in-aid to the states for approved schemes of tribal welfare.

9. Under Article 330, 332 and 334 seats have been reserved for them in the legislative (in Loksabha ad State Bidhan sabha).

10. Under Article 335 the scheduled tribes can claim to appointment in services.

11. Article 338 empowers the president of India to appoint a commissioner to look after the tribal welfare activities.
12. Under Article 339(2) the central govt. can give directions to the states in the formulation and execution of tribal welfare plans, projects and programmes.

13. Under Article 340, the constitution empowers the state to appoint a commission to investigate the conditions of the socially and educationally backward classes.

14. Article 342 gives power to the president of India to declare on the recommendation of the Governor some group or communities as 'Scheduled Tribes'.

1.4. UPLIFTMENT OF SCHEDULED TRIBES THROUGH FIVE YEAR PLANS –

Right from the beginning of country's developmental planning launched in 1951, high priority has been given to the welfare and development of Scheduled Tribes. Accordingly, the first plan (1951-56) clearly laid down the principle stating that 'the general development programmes should be so designed to cater adequately to the backward classes and special provisions should be used for securing additional and more intensified development for Scheduled Tribes'.

The second plan (1956-61) laid emphasis on economic development gave a special focus on reducing economic inequalities in the society. Further, development programmes for ST had been planned for based on respect and understanding of their culture and traditions and with an
appreciation of their social, psychological and economic problems based on 'Nehrubian Panchasheel'- the philosophy of tribal development as enunciated by the first prime minister of the country, Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru in 1952. And important landmark during this second five year plan period in tribal development was opening of 43 special multi purpose tribal block(1961) which is known as Tribal Development Blocks(TDBs) at present.

The Third plan(1961-66) advocated to reduce the inequalities through various policies and programmes to provide equality of opportunity to Scheduled Tribes.

The Fourth plan (1969-74) proclaimed that the basic goal was to realize the rapid increase in the standard of living of the people through measures, which also promote equality and justice. Accordingly six pilot projects were set up in 4 different states of the country with a separate tribal development agency for each project.

The Tribal Sub Plan strategy (TSP) was launched in the fifth five year plan(1974-78) for the direct benefit of the development of tribal with two pronged strategy, namely

i) Promotion of development activities to raise the level of living standards of Scheduled Tribes and

ii) Protection of their interest through legal and administrative support.

As a result in Assam the tribal Sub-plan area covered 71.94% of the total tribal population. In 1977 for welfare of the scheduled tribe community
The Sixth plan (1980-85) ensured a higher degree of devolution of funds to at least 50% of tribal families to cross the poverty line. During sixth plan period, the TSP area was increased to 80.57%. Some small packets were included to this area under Modified Area Development Approach which is commonly known as MADA. The entire sub-plan of Assam was constituted into 19 Integrated Tribal Development Projects for proper implementation of tribal developmental schemes. To achieve the level of development of these areas with adjoining advanced areas with a limited period of time some objectives were visualized. Such as socio-economic infrastructure development in the form of education, health, water supply, housing, nutrition, communication electrification etc., diversification of occupation from agriculture to secondary sectors by developing human resources through vocational education and training, modernization of traditional agricultural methods by providing required infrastructure and strengthening and toning up of the administrative machinery for the effective implementation of tribal development programmes.

In 1977, a Centrally Sponsored scheme under 'Research & Training' was set up in the capital district of Assam, which is known as The Assam of Research for tribal & schedule Castes to function on research, evaluation, planning and training etc. for tribal welfare and development.

Another strategic approach was launched by the Govt. of Assam with the formation of Tribal Development Authority in 1983 with a view to prepare short & long term plans for all round socio-economic
areas, to formulate schemes for the development of the area within the frame work of the state plans, to review the schemes time to time and to report them for proper implementation of the schemes.

In the seventh plan (1985-90), emphasis was laid on educational development of Scheduled Tribes.

In the Eighth plan (1992-97), efforts were intensified to bridge the gap between the levels of development of Scheduled Tribes and the other section of the society. This plan not only emphasized elimination of exploitation, but also paid attention to the special problems of suppression of rights, land alienation etc. However, attention on priority basis continued to be paid on the socio economic upliftment of Scheduled Tribes.

The Ninth plan (1997-2002) aimed on creating an environment for i) social empowerment ii) economic empowerment and iii) social justice of the Scheduled Tribes. For this purpose the ST related ministry and department implemented general development policies and programmes and the nodal ministry of tribal affairs implemented certain ST specific innovative programmes.

The Tenth plan (2002-2007) approach to the tribal development focuses on tackling the unsolved issues and problems on a time bound basis, besides providing adequate space and opportunity for the tribal to empower themselves with the strength of their own potentials.

Along with core economic sector, elementary education has been accorded priority in tribal sub-plan approach. Elementary education is
considered important, not only because of constitutional obligation, but as a crucial input for total development of tribal communities, particularly to build confidence among the tribes to deal with outsiders on equal terms.

1.5. NATIONAL POLICY ON TRIBALS

This National Policy recognizes that a majority of Scheduled Tribes continue to live below the poverty line, have poor literacy rates, suffer from malnutrition and diseases and are vulnerable to displacement. It also acknowledges that Scheduled Tribes in general are repositories of indigenous knowledge and wisdom in certain aspects. The National Policy aims at addressing each of these problems in a concrete way. It also lists out measures to be taken to preserve and promote tribal cultural heritage. The main objective is to facilitate the overall development and welfare of the tribal people through empowering them – educationally, socially, economically and politically while recognizing their special identity - culturally, traditionally and in terms of their age old rights and privileges. The National Policy on Tribals aims at socio-economic and educational empowerment of ST, preservation promotion and support to tribal art, culture and tradition. It also aims to provide adequate health care for the tribal people, development of political leadership and participation in governance, to protect the tribals' intellectual property rights and their rich biodiversity etc.
Another important development in the policy towards education of tribal the National Policy on Education (NPE), 1986 which specified among other things the following measures to be taken urgently to bring the scheduled tribes (STs) on par with others.

I. Establishment of primary schools in tribal areas on priority basis.
II. Development of curricula and instructional materials in tribal languages at the initial stages. III. Training of the Educated and promising scheduled tribes youth to take up teaching in tribal areas. IV. Establishment of Residential schools, including Ashram schools in different parts of the country. V. Incentive schemes will be formulated for the scheduled tribes keeping in view their special needs and life styles. VI. Anganwadis, non-formal adult education centers, will be opened on a priority basis in areas predominantly inhabited by the scheduled tribes.

NPE, 1986 and Programme of Action (POA), 1992 recognized the heterogeneity and diversity of the tribal areas, besides underlining the importance of instruction through the mother tongue and the need for preparing teaching/learning material in the tribal languages. Education being the most effective instrument of empowering the socially disadvantaged groups, all out efforts should be made to improve the educational status of these groups.
1.6. NEED AND SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

Scheduled Tribes form one of the most backward sections of our country. The literacy rate amongst schedule tribes has no doubt increased over the years but the levels are still very low. A large number of schedule tribe children discontinue their studies prematurely before completing the level for which they were enrolled. But the drop-out rate which is another crucial indicator in the field of educational development. The problem of drop-outs happens to be a common feature for both general and ST students. However, the problem still appears to be the worst with regard to STs as they hold comparatively high drop-out rate. So there is the necessity and urgency of an effort to reduce drop-out rate from the scheduled tribe community.

The study is intended to investigate the causes of drop-out among scheduled tribes at primary school stage in undivided Kamrup district. In Kamrup district we find mainly five scheduled tribe communities. They are I) Boro-Kachari, ii) Rabha, iii) Garo, iv) Karbi and v) Sarania. The study is designed to find out the drop-out rate and to identify the causes of drop-out belonging to these communities as a whole and to determine the interrelationship between socio-economic condition of parents and drop-out and school factors and drop-outs.

The study is considered significant on the ground that in the state of Assam particularly in Kamrup district on this problem of drop-outs among scheduled tribes is the first one. Like all other sectors of socio-economic life
educationally the tribal people are at different levels of development but on the whole formal education has made very little impact on tribal groups. The Government has initiating a number of programmes to universalize the elementary education within a particular period, it will equally be important to reduce drop-out rate to 0%. Education being the most effective instrument of empowering the socially disadvantaged groups, all out efforts should be made to improve the educational status of this group. In fact, the educational backwardness, prevalent amongst these people, necessitates an added thrust on their education, training and skill up gradation, as it will bring forth not only social empowerment but also economic empowerment.

1.7. STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM:

The main problem undertaken in the study is to investigate the causes of drop-out among scheduled tribes in Kamrup district of Assam—hence the study has been entitled as "A study on drop-out among scheduled tribe children at primary level with special reference to Kamrup district of Assam".

1.8. OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY:

The main objective of the study is to investigate the causes of drop-out among the children of scheduled tribe communities at primary school level

The specific objectives of the study leading to the main objective are-
1. To find out the rate of drop-out of Scheduled Tribe children at the lower primary school stage.

2. To find out whether there is any difference between boys and girls in the rate of drop-outs.

3. To identify the causes of drop-outs among scheduled tribe children as perceived by drop-out themselves, parents of drop-outs and teachers.

4. To categorize the causes of drop-out under socio-economic, academic, and personal causes.

5. To suggest remedial measures to tackle the problem of dropout from scheduled tribe community in the light of the main findings of the study.

1.9. HYPOTHESIS:

The following hypothesis are formulated to test the objectives of the present study –

1. There is a drop-out problem among children of scheduled tribe at the lower primary school level in the district.

2. There exists difference in the rate of dropout between boys and girls.

3. There are socio-economic, academic and personal causes of drop-out.

4. There are no correlation among the respondents regarding various causes of drop-out given by them.
1.10. VARIABLES

Keeping the objectives of the study in view, following variables have been studied:

1. Sex of drop-out children.
2. Occupational level of parents.
3. Educational level of parents
4. Economic level of parents
5. Material condition of the school

1.11. TOOLS TO BE USED

A pilot study was made in 15 schools of the district to collect data about the drop-outs and analyzed. Using these data, the interview schedules were improvised to explore more information about family and school factors leading to drop-out and finalized with the help of discussion with supervisor and colleagues. A School Information Blank was prepared to collect information about the school from where the children left the school, and three interview schedules were prepared to collect data about the socio-economic and academic condition of parents, school condition and causes of drop-outs given by the respondents as a whole. So the tools used for the study were:

(i) School Information Blank
(ii) Self Developed Interview schedule for Dropouts
1.12. ORGANIZATION OF RESEARCH WORK:

By considering the objectives of the study, the proposed thesis is divided into seven chapters. An outline format of the thesis is as follows--

Chapter I - INTRODUCTION:

This chapter includes a brief introduction to the importance of universalisation of primary education, problem of dropout among scheduled tribes in the country, constitutional provisions, policies, schemes under different five year plans, National policy on Education regarding scheduled tribes in India, need and justification of the study, statement of the problem, objectives of the study, hypothesis, description of the scheduled tribes selected for the study, major key terms used in the study, variables, tools used and organization of the whole research work.

CHAPTER II - REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE:

This chapter reviews the important literature related to the study or the problem of dropout at the primary and elementary level. A large number of studies have been conducted so far on the problem of drop-out wastage and stagnation by different scholars in India and abroad. Some of the
important studies done in the elementary level have been abstracted.

Chapter III- METHODOLOGY

In this chapter different types of research methodology and the method used in the present study has been discussed. Descriptive survey method and its different types, and the statistical techniques used in analysis is discussed.

Chapter IV- CONSTRUCTION AND DESCRIPTION OF THE INSTRUMENTS

This chapter includes the tools for data collection, and description and construction of the tools such as School Information Blank, Interview schedules for drop-out, parents of drop-out and teacher

Chapter V - SAMPLING AND FIELD STUDY

This chapter deals with the sampling procedure and administration of the instruments that is School Information Blank, Interview schedules for drop-out, parents of drop-out and teacher and a brief description of the area under investigation.

Chapter VI - RESULTS AND ANALYSIS OF THE DATA

This chapter deals with the analysis of the primary data.
Chapter VII - SUGGESTIONS AND CONCLUSIONS

This chapter includes a summary of the entire study. It also contains the findings and conclusions of the study and some remedial measures to solve the dropout problem at the primary level from the general as well as scheduled tribe community. It also includes suggestions for further research in this field.

1.13. OPERATIONAL DEFINITION OF TERMS USED IN THE STUDY

The key terms used in this study that need to be defined for a clear understanding of the report are: Primary school or primary education, Dropout, Scheduled Tribe, the Boro, the Rabha, the Garo, the Sarania, the Hajongs and the Karbi. They may be taken to mean as follows:

**Primary school or primary education**: Primary school is the first stage of formal education. In India primary schooling starts at 6 years of age and continues up to 11 years of age. This school provides the foundation of a child’s physical, mental, emotional, intellectual and social development. So these terms are used to denote four years course of grade-I to grade-IV in Assam. After completion of this stage a child enters to a secondary or middle school. Because in most cases primary stage and secondary stage are not in the same school. Class V to VIII though it is called upper primary are in secondary schools or middle schools. Elementary education is from class-VII of which I-IV is termed as lower primary stage. This study confined to
lower primary stage, which referred in the study as primary stage and primary education.

**Drop-out**: Drop-out means children leaving school without completing primary course at any stage and at any time without certificate. A drop-out is considered in this study as a child who had been admitted to 1 standard of school and who left school before completing a four year term of lower primary education. He (she) might have left school just one month ago and has no intention to go to school or he (she) might have left it even within a period of four years age from the date of admission. He might have dropped out at the 1 standard stage or the II, III, or IV standard stages.

**Scheduled Tribe**: Anthropological literature used the term 'tribe' for those group of human beings, whose place of residence is situated in remote areas like hills, forest, sea coasts and islands and whose style of life is quite different from the present day civilized men. Local indigenous people residing in these places or world are termed as tribe or tribal, to distinguish them from other people of the world.

The term 'scheduled tribe' first appeared in the constitution of India. Article 366(25) defined scheduled tribes as 'such tribes tribal communities or parts of or groups within such tribes or tribal communities as are deemed under article 342 to be scheduled tribes for the purpose of this constitution'. Scheduled tribes under this investigation denotes- 1) The Boro-kachari

The Boro-kachari: The Boro-kachari are one of the indigenous ethno-linguistic groups of present North-Eastern India belonging to Indo-Mongoloid origin of Tibto-Burman language family. The word ‘Boro’ has been derived from the word ‘Bod’ which means Tibet. They are called Kachari because they lived in the ‘Kassar’ or below the Himalaya range. The Bodo-Kachari are numerically the largest plain tribe of this region. The Boro people form the largest indigenous group in the present demography of the region. Majority of their population are found in Assam. In Assam they are largely concentrated in Kokrajhar, Kamrup, and Darrang district.

The Rabha: The Rabhas are one of the nine scheduled tribes in the plain district of Assam and an important tribe belong to the Mongoloid stock. The Rabhas are widely scattered in the district of Goalpara, Dhubri, Barpeta, Sonitpur, Darrang, Lakhimpur but mostly concentrated in the undivided district of Goalpara, Kamrup and Darrang.

The Garo: The Garos are one of the scheduled tribes in the two Autonomous Hill districts of Assam, in Karbi Anglong and in North Cachar Hills. Ethnically the Garos belong to the Mongoloid race like most of tribes of North-East India. Like the other tribes of Assam the Garos belong to the Tibeto burmans families of Bodo linguistic group. In Kamrup district of
Assam majority of the Garo population is found in Boko and North Guwahati.

**The Saranias:** The Saranias who constitute a splinter group of the Boro-Kachari do not know the Boro language. All saranias are tribal but all of them are not boro-kachari. When a tribal takes ‘Saran’, he has to discard certain of his old habits, adopts Hindu usages and becomes a sarania. Some rabhas also became sarania in this region by taking saran from the Goswamis and Mahantas. Although this group is not directly included in the list of Scheduled Tribe but they are also a group of tribal taking all facilities given by the Government to the Scheduled Tribes.

**The Hajongs:** There are some tribal communities which did not originally belong to the North Eastern region and are comparatively late entrants. They had migrated to the region under certain compulsions—economic, political and demographic. The Hajongs, being one such tribe, came to the area from the then East Pakistan. They first came to Goalpara and Kokrajhar district of Assam. The Hajongs belong to Tibeto-Burman Mongoloid featured Bodo group. They have their own language that is a mixture of Assamese and Bengali. Numerically the Hajongs population in Assam is very small. They are scheduled as a tribe in the two Autonomous Hill districts Karbi Anglong and North Cachar Hills. Of course the major portion of the Hajongs population live in the Garo Hills of Mghalaya, a small number of them live in Assam. In plain districts of Assam, their main concentration is however confined to Lakhipur area of
Goalpara district and Boko area of Kamrup district.

**The Karbis:** The Karbis belong to the Mongoloid group and linguistically they belong to the Tibeto-Burman group. The Karbis, mentioned as the Mikirs in the constitution order, Govt. of India, constitute an important ethnic group in the hill areas of present Assam. However they always call themselves Karbis. They are found to inhabit in the Karbi Anglong and North Cachar Hill districts, kamrup, Nagaon and Sonitpur districts also.

Scheduled Tribes form one of the most backward sections of our country. The literacy rate amongst schedule tribes has no doubt increased over the years but the levels are still very low. A large number of scheduled tribe children discontinue their studies prematurely before completing the level for which they were enrolled. But the drop-out rate which is another crucial indicator in the field of educational development. The problem of drop-outs happens to be a common feature for both general and ST students. However, the problem still appears to be the worst with regard to STs as they hold very high drop-out rate. A majority of ST children who enroll in class I drop out within a few years of entering school. From the secondary data collected from DEEO office, the total rate of drop-out at the lower primary level in the district was found 22 and against this the rate is 26 among scheduled tribes children. Dropout rate is high among tribal girls(27) in the district. So there is the necessity and urgency of an effort to reduce drop-out from the scheduled tribe community. On the other hand it is also true that this section of the population in our country has long been
subjected to various kinds of deprivation and discrimination. But the children of these communities have also the right to complete at least primary education. Thus, the study aims at finding out causes of drop-outs and solve the problem and help them to take full advantage of the socio-economic development taking place in their areas as well as in the country. Like all other sectors of socio-economic life, educationally the tribal people are at different levels of development but on the whole formal education has made very little impact on tribal groups. The special commitment of the National Policy on Education, 1986 (revised in 1992) to improve the educational status of scheduled tribes continues to be the major strength in launching special interventions and incentives to improve the accessibility for the tribes who live in the far flung remote areas and remain isolated.

Therefore efforts for universalizing primary education continued specially through the programme of Sarba Siksha Abhiyan. One of the special features of this programme is the participation of ST parents in the activities of schools, which ownership of the programme, even by the most disadvantaged. The national programme of Nutritional support to primary education or the Mid-Day Meals act as a support service to increase retention rates. The Government has initiating a number of programmes to universalize the elementary education within a particular period, it will equally be important to reduce drop-out rate to 0%. Education being the most effective instrument of empowering the socially disadvantaged groups, all out efforts should be made to improve the educational status of this.
group. In fact, the educational backwardness, prevalent amongst these people, necessitates an added thrust on their education, training and skill upgradation, as it will bring forth not only social empowerment but also economic empowerment.

1.14. DELIMITATION OF THE STUDY:

As in most non-experimental research using descriptive survey method there are certain inherent delimitations. There are few limitations in the study of drop-out among Scheduled Tribes. These are –

1. It is limited to govt. provincialised lower primary schools only
2. It is limited to Scheduled Tribe children only.
3. It is limited to eight blocks only.
4. It is limited to 54 schools only although there are a number of schools in the district where scheduled tribe children are studying.

Other limitations could be lack of co-operation from the school authorities, parents, from the students and drop-out towards the relevant topic.