Human culture has been augmented by plants and plant products since time immemorial. Perhaps Ethnobiology is the first Science originated with the evolution or existence of the man in this planet. In 1985, Harshberger first coined the term 'Ethnobotany' for use of plants by aboriginals. Now it has been established that Ethnobotany deals with the natural and traditional relationship between the plants and the man in dynamic ecosystem. At the same time the use of plants as a source of medicine is as old as the human race. It is not surprising that the plants containing active medicinal properties are found to grow abundantly on this earth. One fifth of the estimated 15000 to 17000 Angiosperms found in India constitute useful plants. Nayar et al. (1989) have stated that 1600 species of the aforesaid number of Angiosperms are medicinal plants whereas Chopra et al. (1956, 69) have listed some 1400 species. Again with Wealth of India Series on raw materials Vol.1-XI(1948-1976) there are about 1500 medicinal plants. The latest count made by Asolkar et al. (1992) has been found to be 1780 species belonging to 850 genera and that too within the alphabets A-K only having significant medicinal properties. Importance of traditional and folk medicines in the treatment of various human ailments is well known. Several selected plants are used by the tribal people for curing these ailments. For many centuries the aboriginals had a traditionally self managed system of folk medicine mainly based on herbal remedies. Modern medical facilities could not reach as yet in the remote and far flung areas. Ethnic people have deep belief in the traditional system of native folklore medicine for remedies and rely exclusively on their own herbal cures.
Natural products as medicines, although neglected in the recent past but are gaining popularity in the modern era. Besides Ayurveda, the other disciplines viz. Unani and Siddha in the Indian system of medicine advocate for use of medicinal plants. Drugs prepared from plant origin occupy an honourable and formidable position in the world of pharmacopeias. Most of the life saving drugs in present day allopathic system are obtained from naturally growing plants. In this direction, vast knowledge and expertise of the tribal population will provide clue to the use of many plants or plant parts as medicine. There is a conspicuous trend to shift to natural drugs than to synthetics in the developed countries.

In this context, a number of institutions of India are now seriously engaged in research in Ethnomedicine. A few pioneer research institutions such as Botanical Survey of India (in various Regional centres), Central Council of Research in Ayurveda & Siddha, New Delhi, Central Council of Research in Unani Medicine, New Delhi; Central Council of Research in Homeopathy, New Delhi; National Botanical Research Institute, Lucknow; Central Institute of Medicinal and Aromatic Plants, Lucknow; Regional Research Laboratory (Jammu & Kashmir, Jorhat) and number of Universities and Organisations are worth mentioning, that have made significant contributions towards the knowledge of herbal medicines and indigenous way of their applications.

Plants play a vital role not only in our economy, but also as remedies of various human diseases. Study and use of Economic plants of India have been a part of Indian medicine and Indian plant lore from ancient time. Rig Veda seems to have the earliest records of use of the plants in medicine, but these references are very brief. Accordingly to Ayurvedic "Materia Medica"
there is no plant on earth which has got no medicinal value. Our ancient literature on Ayurveda such as Atharveda, Charaka Samhita, Sushruta Samhita, Dhanwantari, Nighantu, Raj Nighantu etc. contain a lot of information regarding medicinal values of plants.

We also now possess considerable recent literature on Indian medicinal plants. Much data on the uses of the plants including the medicinal ones have been systematically gathered and compiled. Worth mentioning among them are: Indian Medicinal plants by Bentley & Trimen (1880), Boddington (1927), Dictionary of Economic Plants by Watt (1898), Indian Medicinal Plants by Kirtikar and Basu (1933), "Indian Materia Medica" by Nadkarni (1954), 'Glossary' of Indian Medicinal Plants' by Chopra et al. (1956) and its supplement Chopra et al. (1969); C.S.I.R. Publication (1948-1976) on Wealth of India series on Raw Materials, Medicinal plants by Jain (1985), 'Economic plants of India' by Nayar et al. (1989), "Second supplement to Glossary of Indian Medicinal plants with active principles part I (A-K) (1965-1981) by Asolkar et al. (1992). All these works deal elaborately about uses of plants in medicine alongwith medicinal properties. Recently some pioneer research workers like Dr. S. K. Jain (1981,1985,1991) has given more emphasis on certain interesting and useful information on less known and unrecorded uses of plants including ethnomedico-botanical aspects. Alongwith them some other contributors who had done sporadic work towards the knowledge of useful medicinal plants of North Eastern Region may be mentioned viz. Borthakur (1976,1981), Majumdar et al (1978), Jain (1979) Bhattacharjee et al (1980), Kharkongor & Joseph (1981), Rao & Neogi (1980), Rao & Jasmin (1982 a & b), Islam (1983). On the other hand some research workers have chosen to work on particular ailments e.g. folklore informations from Assam
for family planning and birth control (Tiwari et al 1982) few herbal medicines used by the people of Assam against jaundice (Gogoi & Boissya 1984) and phytotherapy for child and woman diseases (Borthakur, 1992).

The importance of ethnobotanical studies in North East India has already been emphasized but such studies in Arunachal Pradesh did not receive much attention. The study of Ethnobotany has been made by workers like Mudgal & Jain (1980); Dam & Hajra (1981); Veena Chandra (1983); Hynniewta (1984, 1987); Pal (1984 & 1992); Singh & Anand Krishna (1983); Thothathri & Pal (1987); Pandey (1988); Pandey, Rawat & Singh(1990); Kohli (1992); Pandey & Rawat (1994) but not much on medico-ethnobotanical aspects. Very few plants have been identified and reported but in many cases found without mentioning vernacular name of the plant, process of preparation and mode of application, doses and uses in herbal medicine by particular tribe. Investigation on medico-ethnobotany has been found to be insignificant in the State of Arunachal Pradesh as compare to the number of Tribes and subtribes estimated to be 20 and 80 respectively (Hynniewta, 1984).

A perusal of literature indicates that the district Subansiri of Arunachal Pradesh is botanically underexplored or even certain areas remained unexplored. The district lacks industrialisation and communication and consequently is underdeveloped. The peculiar geographical position and physical contour of the district explains to a large extent the extreme isolation of the wilder Tribes. The ethnic people/Aboriginals subsist on limited agriculture and local plant products. Their immediate contact and dependance on nature developed a curious knowledge which ultimately reflected in their traditional culture, religion, local belief, folklore, taboos and dialects and found to be very interesting ethnobotanically.
Keeping this in view the present investigation entitled “Medico- Ethnobotanical aspects among select Tribes of Subansiri District of Arunachal Pradesh: A study” has been undertaken with the objective to bring out an illustrated account based on the approaches and methodologies for ethnobotanical studies including Medico - ethnobotanical aspects as suggested by Schultes (1960, 1962), Jain (1964 a, 1967 a, 1986, 1987, 1989) and Ford (1978). Emphasis has been given for the study of Folklore medicines of herbal treatment for everyday common ailments and diseases particularly used by the ‘Nishi’, the populous Tribe and its neighbouring Tribe the ‘Apatani’ of Subansiri district as they are considered the most acclaimed aboriginals of the State of Arunachal Pradesh.