CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

The North Eastern region is a very rich and fertile place for the study of the Tribal culture. Various ethnic group of people having rich culture and tradition of their own still follow their own traditional customs, rules, beliefs and practices. On the other hand Tribal education in North Eastern region specially in Kokrajhar District is confronted with or large number of problems in different tribal areas. In this regard the problems of their education, ways of lives, their progress in social, economical, cultural, traditional etc. of these various ethnic groups of the North Eastern region specially of Kokrajhar district are still unknown and untraced.

In this Kokrajhar district, there mainly two types of Tribal people viz. 'Boro' and the 'Rabha' are inhabited along with some other non-tribal people.

It is evident that Kokrajhar is the top most Bodo populated area or district. Its total population is now studied as 800659 out of which these two tribes Rabhas cover 6840 and Boros cover 1980841 in this (According to 1994 census) district.

The present work is an attempt to trace out and to bring to light
the various problems of their education (Tribal) which is also part and parcel of their traditional, cultural, economical as well as social development. It is because, no other development is possible unless the Tribal is developed in their educations. The Boro are one of the aboriginal Tribes of the North Eastern region, specially of the district of Kokrajhar, Assam. It is an extensive attempt relating to the topic and title - "Problems of Plains Tribal Womens' Education in Kokrajhar District" to trace out and provide information regarding the major factors behind their problems.

The thesis is incorporated to various chapters and sub-chapters relating to these tribes, Boro and Rabha. It is attempted to give a clear picture of their problems of education along with racial, food habit, agriculture, language, dwelling, social structure etc. etc.

In the second chapter the aims and objectives of the study are clearly explained. The Boros and the Rabhas are less advance people. They are educationally too backward comparatively than other non-tribal people. Though the manfolks of the Boros and the Rabhas are receiving education to some extent, the women folk have yet to go a long way to achieve equality in a real sense. The vast majority of Tribal women are very backward in all fields. From all points of views they are far behind to those who belong to the upper class. Even among some of their families, there is no environment of education. So, to make a thorough investigation as well as to find out the root causes of their backwardness in education, culture etc., this study made an attempt keeping these views in aims. These aims and objectives are
Problems of Plains Tribal Women's Education in Kokrajhar District explained and aimed at to find out causes as well as ways for measure.

In the third chapter, the report has been prepared under several sub-chapters with penetrating analysis to the origin of the Boro, their racial background, their affinity, population in Assam and Kokrajhar district.

Ethologically, the Boro-Kocharies belong to a racial stock known as the Mongoloid, which forms one of the important social elements in the basic population structure of India. They are the descendents of the Mongoloid family. According to the report of some historians "the Boros" are the branch of people who lived in Siberia around 2000 B.C. In course of time these Mongoloid people were divided into various groups and went into different directions. That is one of the groups, who enter through North and North-East to settle over the fertile valley of the mighty Brahmaputra, This Boro-Kochari race, is much more widely distributed in Assam, Coach-behar within the limits of Assam boundary at least 10,00,000 people probably many more, who belongs to the Kachari race, though many of the number in the later years have become Hinduised and have lost the use of their mother tongue. Boros are populated in different districts of Assam viz. Kokrajhar, Dhubri, Goalpara, Barpeta, Nalbari, Kamrup, Darrang, Sanitpur, Lakhimpur, Dibrugarh, Jorhat, Sibsagar, Nagaon, Cacher, Karimganj, Karbi-Anglong and North Cacher Hills. The total population of the Tribe in Assam is 6,10,459 as per 1994 census, and out of Seventeenth districts of Assam, Kokrajhar is the highest Boro populated areas where 1,90,841
Boro people live there.

Regarding the social structure and organisation of the Boros, it is clearly explained in the Chapters of forth. From the point of physical features, complexion, language, the Boro-Kocharies have close affinities with Dimasas, Tipras, etc. They are to some extent differ in some material ways from their Hindu and Muslim neighbours alike in things material and moral. They are not a tall and handsome and in general appearance bear some resemblance to the Nepali. The Social structure of the Boro is primarily patriarchal in character. In this system Father is the head and sole authority of the family. Like other Hindu family, in the Boro Society daughter do not have the right to property when there are sons. The Boro villages are not very big in size and have there head man called Gamibrai (Gaon Bura) and responsible in different village developmental activities.

The mode of living of the Boro-Kachari in compact villages and putting barriers all around the Homestead is a common. They construct their houses by maintaining some traditional rules and regulations where they establish "Khofra" (drawing room), "Okhong" (confidential room) and "Ishing" (Internal room). They use "Ishing" as also kitchen room. They also construct granary, cowshed etc. in the family. They are expert in agriculture also. Agriculture is the chief occupation of the Boros. They mainly depend on the paddy cultivation. They cultivate rice, jute, mustard seed, various kinds of pulses along with various vegetables. The "Endi" and "Muga" are another traditional culture of the Boros. In this regard, the Boro women are expert weavers. They
prepare their "Dokhna", "Fashra" and other necessary clothes. They are also expert in spinning and producing cotton. In food habit, rice is the stable diet of the Boros. They supplemented it by plentiful supply of vegetables. They use to eat almost every kind of flesh i.e. pork, goat, cock, duck etc. The rice-beer has a great importance in the Boro society. They worship their chief God "Bwrai Bathou" and other Goddesses like "Mainaou Bwrai" etc. They have their own language, culture, religion and perform various religious festivals along with some ceremonies like birth ceremony, marriage ceremony and rites relating death. They are very simple and straightforward in different manners viz. ways of living, fooling etc.

Another separate chapter is added in this study regarding other Tribe "Rabha". In these chapters five and six Racial background of the Rabha, their origin and affinity, population, social structure, dwelling, agriculture, food habits, language, culture, religion etc. are discussed clearly. According to Lt. Col. Wadel Rabhas were one of the branch of Kachari group that is great Boros. Like the Boros, the Rabhas are populated in different districts of Assam, viz. Kokrajhar, Goalpara, Dhubri, Nalbari, Kamrup, Darrang, Lakhimpur, Sibsagar etc. The total population of this Tribe in Assam is 1,38,630 as per 1994 census and 6,840 in Kokrajhar district. The Rabhas are not differ from Boros in different aspects. There are a similarities between these two Tribes in fooling, agriculture, social structure, dwelling etc. But in some ways like, language, literature, religion, they have their own identity, culture and tradition. They use their own Rabha language. Regarding religious and cultural life of Rabha, it is found that they perform or
celebrate the various festivals like "Baikhow", "Langa Puja" etc.

In the seventh chapter various problems of Tribal women education are discussed. After a thorough analysis and field investigation, various root causes came into the light. Economically they are very poor. It is observed that despite of all the privileges in financial and others that the Government has given to them in the field of education, majority of the tribal women section is still illiterate. Under their compulsion of poverty, their girls have to work at home or at the family farm for earning something to their parents. Because the financial condition of the tribal people is so miserable that even if provision is made for free education of the tribal women, the families find themselves unable to meet other expenses connected with the education. In this situation, if the parents think about their child's education then they will think for their male child's not for female. As because they use their female child's a earning source for the family. Another various causes are find out behind their cultural and tradition. They have their cultural attitude that education is received only for professional or practical gain and they are of the view that it is proper to educate the boy but it is useless to educate the girls. Because after their marriage they have to look after domestic works. As a matter of fact, this type of wrong attitude is proving to be detrimental for the expansion of tribal women education and created problems in many ways. Culturally, they are also too backward. Even today many parents are strongly against co-education as well as mixing up with other male child and think that mixing girls with other boys is their out of culture. It is obstructed and vehemently criticised and also treated as traditional crime. Like these
drawbacks, the tribal people have other social obstacles for which their question of education is not so easy process. In this regard relating to these problems various suggestions are put forward from this studies.

In Chapter eight, the role and status of the tribal women in their societies are discussed elaborately. Although they are deprived and backward, yet they have an important role in social, cultural, traditional as well as economical grounds. Their role and status of the tribal women is determined by a number of parameters which include interalia, property, inheritance, quantum of work load, social life, social norms and observation agriculture, animal husbandry etc. Tribal society being mainly male dominated paternal society, where girls are naturally less importance members of the family. The women has always to perform a secondary and less important role in the family. However, the tribal women have their important role in various ground.

At last a comparative study of the Boro and the Rabha is also added in this study. The report of this study is concluded by a suggestion for the betterment of the Tribal Education specially for women and in this connection it is expected that Government will pay more attention for the development of tribal women education.