This thesis "Tribal Movement in Assam - Its Dimensions and Solution" deals with the Movement of the Scheduled Tribes highlighting their dimensions and trends. No detailed and systematic study has so far been conducted on the problems of the ethnic groups living in Assam although there is widespread unrest since last four decades. The significance of the study lies in the fact that it seeks to analyse the causes and dimensions of the Movement along with the safeguards provided under the Constitution, the various schemes of the Government initiated for their all round development and their implementation in reality. In particular the investigations relates to -

(1) An assessment of the various measures of Assam Government and District Councils with regard to land, trading and money-lending in hills areas and belts and blocks in plains areas of the state;

(2) The causes of simmering discontent of the various ethnic groups and articulation of the problems by their various organisations veering round autonomy with separate administrative unit;

(3) An analysis of the demands and movements launched by them and (4) A study of the type of autonomy that has already been granted and the problems arising out of it.

The Scheduled Tribes in Assam numbering 23 belong to Mongoloid racial stock and speak Sino-Tibetan and Tribeto-Burman
family of languages. Their socio-economic lives were tribal in nature which was mainly agrarian. They, therefore, Labour under acute socio-economic disabilities. Socially, culturally and economically they remained backward during the British Period. The British Government did not formulate any rational policy for the development of the Tribal Communities of the North-east India. However, organisations like Tribal League, Mising Panchayat, Karbi-A-Durbar attempted to organise the tribal groups for the preservation of their identities and independence.

With a view to uplifting the tribesmen various safeguards have been incorporated into the Indian Constitution. Besides, the Government of Assam has initiated a number of developmental schemes and measures for their protection and development. For instance, the Hills Tribes are protected under the sixth schedule while belts and blocks are created in the compact areas inhabited by the Plains Tribals for their protection. Although land alienation, trading and money-lending are prohibited by legislation, it is a fact that these provisions are often been violated. The various development schemes initiated from time to time are not effectively implemented. The result is widespread tribal unrest in Assam.

After independence the tribal life in North-East India has been changed which developed political awareness among them. Christianity has emerged as a strong factor of modernisation and has given the tribals a sense of identity. Education and
emergence of middle class have contributed in developing a sense of larger tribal identity. The tribal problem though apparently political in nature, agrarian issue and economic aspirations give a new dimension to the Movement.

The study also deals with the causes of discontent and disenchantment of the ethnic groups and the articulation of the various demands by their political and socio-cultural organisations. By and large, their demands were socio-cultural before 1980's. But after 80's they have become restive for autonomy with separate administrative unit. They have become more assertive to protect their identities and launched strong agitations - violent, peaceful and combination of the both. Significantly, the Government of Assam has to grant autonomy by creating autonomous councils to Bodos, the Rabhas, the Tiwas and the Mising. But this step also fails to satiate the desires of the larger section of the ethnic groups. Consequently, the unsatiated sections have been continuing their agitations either for real autonomy with legislative and financial powers within definite boundary or for a separate state. So the Tribal Problem is multi-dimensional and still dangling.

An attempt is also made to analyse the movements of the various ethnic groups. While the movements of the Bodos and Karbis have been more assertive and reached the momentum others are not so. The Bodos have taken recourse to violence while others including the Karbis are peaceful and tolerant.
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It also seeks to analyse the feasibility of the various demands including autonomy and the problem arising out of it.

This study has been completed on the basis of primary and secondary sources. The primary sources include Government Publications, Reports of the Committees and Commissions, Publications of the various Tribal Organisations, Political Parties and Assembly Debates. Besides, data are also gathered from discussions, interviews with some Tribal Leaders and public persons, Journalists, Government Servants, etc. Secondary sources include books, articles newspapers and journals.