NEED OF THE STUDY :

The history of adult education in India is very old. History reveals that the importance of education for social, economic and cultural development of the country was felt by the great leaders from the time of pre-independence. So there were efforts to make people literate and after attaining independence the efforts were intensified with the launch of different adult education programme and literacy drive under different five year plans by the Government of India.

In spite of these efforts, India failed to achieve its cherished goal of cent percent literacy even after 48 years of attaining independence. The literacy rate which was low in 1951 could be raised to 52.11 percent in 1991. It is realised that in case the country is to achieve success in drive against illiteracy, it will have to move forward with all its segments of the society. But in India there is a large section of the population who are still backward educationally, economically and socially. They either fail to get motivated to get education or fail to avail opportunity of being educated because of economic or other economic reasons. About 52 percent of urban males and 29 percent urban females could not avail of the educational opportunity because of participation in household economic activities or other economic reasons. Scheduled Castes, Scheduled Tribes constitute the backward and weaker segments of the society.
The women also may be included in the weaker section, as 9.9 percent of them in rural and 10.7 percent of them in rural sector are denied access to education because they have to look after their little siblings as well as perform a variety of domestic chores (1).

The Indian society is stratified and hierarchical and the difference between different social classes and castes is large and the gap is widening gradually, inspiring continuous efforts to heal it up. The real social revolution in the eradication of social inequalities started in the shape of special provision for the education of the Scheduled Castes. (2). There is a sizeable population of Scheduled Castes in India. According to 1991 Census the population of Scheduled Castes in India was 138.2 million, 16.33 percent of the country's total population. Hence the progress and development of the country is impossible with such a section of the society remaining illiterate.

The caste system in India is deep-rooted, age old and extremely powerful and it influences almost all the activities in the society. The scheduled Castes are socially and economically the most deprived class of the society. Due to their inherited and economic backwardness they are exploited by the upper classes, who had almost monopolized the educational opportunities during pre-independence days.

(2) Nirupama Praksh - 'Perception of Scheduled Castes in Education' - The journal of Sociological studies, Vol. 3 of Sociology, University of Jodhpur - P 109).
After independence the Govt. of India made liberal allocation under the five year plans, in order to fulfill constitutional obligations by improving the socio-economic educational status of the Scheduled Castes. Inspite of this, there is still a significant gap between the Scheduled and non-Scheduled Castes regarding educational attainment. According to 1991 Census the literacy rate of Scheduled Castes population is 34.41 percent as against 52.11 percent non-Scheduled Castes population.

Since the independence there has been a substantial increase in enrolment at all levels of education. Enrolment at primary stage increased from 19.2 million to 101.6 million in 1991-92, the increase in upper primary stage is far behind which reached from 3.1 million to 34.4 million. Still far behind the expected target. (shown on table No. 2.1) proportion enrolment of Scheduled Castes children are less than their population proportion except in the case of primary education. Because of the affirmative policies of the Government the enrolment of Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes has increased considerably at the primary stage. Therefore, at this stage the enrolment ratios are comparable to general enrolment. The enrolment rate of Scheduled and Shceduled Tribes are shown on Table 2.2.

But the problems gets more complicated as the dropout rates, inspite of a declining trend, continue to be high. Nearly half the children who entered Class-I drop out.
TABLE 2.1
Enrolment
(in millions)
(Provisional Figures)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Years</th>
<th>Primary</th>
<th>Upper Primary</th>
<th>Enrolment</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1950-51</td>
<td>19.16</td>
<td>3.12</td>
<td>22.26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1960-61</td>
<td>34.99</td>
<td>6.70</td>
<td>41.69</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1970-71</td>
<td>57.05</td>
<td>13.32</td>
<td>70.37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1980-81</td>
<td>73.78</td>
<td>20.72</td>
<td>94.50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1990-91</td>
<td>99.12</td>
<td>33.28</td>
<td>132.40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1991-92</td>
<td>101.58</td>
<td>34.45</td>
<td>136.03</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source - 'Education For All' - Government of India 1993

reaching Class-V and two-thirds of the children before reaching Class-VIII. The drop-out rate is more in the case of Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes children. The drop-out rates of SC, ST and general children at primary middle stages of education for the years 1980 to 1989 are shown on Table No. 2.3. In case of SC children the dropout rate at primary level which was 60.16 in 1980-81 declined to 49.62 in 1988-89, whereas in case of general children the rate dropped from 75.66 in 1980-81 to 64.53 in 1988-89. It proves the drop-out rate still continues to be very high. (3)

(3) Education for All - Government of India, Department of Education 1993
## TABLE - 2.2

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Scheduled Castes (in 000s)</th>
<th>Scheduled Tribes (in 000s)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Primary</td>
<td>Upper Primary</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Boys</td>
<td>Girls</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1980-81</td>
<td>7213</td>
<td>3768</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1987-88</td>
<td>9083</td>
<td>5593</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1991-92</td>
<td>9709</td>
<td>6328</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source - 'Education For All' - Government of India 1993.

To popularise education among the SCs, STs and weaker sections of the society, the Government launched a nationwide Adult Education Programme since October 2, 1982. The Government became more serious about removing disparities and inequalities regarding educational opportunities from amongst the SCs, STs and other weaker sections of the society. Through the National Policy on Education 1986, the Government suggested some strategies...
### TABLE - 2.3
Drop-out Rates

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Scheduled Caste Primary</th>
<th>All Communities Primary</th>
<th>Scheduled Caste Primary</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1980-81</td>
<td>60.16</td>
<td>75.66</td>
<td>58.70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1981-82</td>
<td>59.21</td>
<td>74.00</td>
<td>53.50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1982-83</td>
<td>60.27</td>
<td>72.44</td>
<td>52.10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1983-84</td>
<td>57.84</td>
<td>70.63</td>
<td>50.26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1984-85</td>
<td>55.40</td>
<td>69.40</td>
<td>47.93</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1985-86</td>
<td>52.53</td>
<td>65.56</td>
<td>47.61</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1986-87</td>
<td>50.79</td>
<td>66.12</td>
<td>48.60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1987-88</td>
<td>51.38</td>
<td>65.21</td>
<td>46.97</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1988-89</td>
<td>49.62</td>
<td>64.53</td>
<td>47.93</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source - 'Education For All' - Government of India - 1990

accelerating the enrolment and retention of more and more children of primary stage. The central focus in the educational development is their equalisation with the population at all stages at and all levels of education, areas and in all the four dimensions - rural male, female, urban male and urban female. (4).

The National Literacy Mission (NLM) was launched by the Government of India with the main objective to expedite the literacy drive in the country. This project.

intended to focus on rural areas, particularly women and those belonging to Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes categories. The main objective behind this programme is to impart functional literacy to 80 million illiterates in the age group by the end of 1995. This age group constitutes the work-force of the nation, hence is more crucial for the country's development. Most of the scheme of the National Government including development and social welfare have failed to achieve success upto a desired level so far because of ignorance, illiteracy and rapid population growth.

Caste system in India seems to have played dysfunctional role in the field of education. The Scheduled Castes community may be regarded as the most deprived and backward in socio-economic grounds, had suffered a great deal in educational sphere. As these people fail to availing opportunity of formal education at proper time, it is expected that the programme of adult education will be helpful in imparting the necessary education to them, which will help in improve their social status and living condition.

The main objectives of the adult education programme is imparting of functional literacy and to arouse consciousness among the deprived and backward sections of society. The term functional literacy implies:-

1) Achieving self-reliance in literacy and numeracy
2) Becoming aware of the cause of their deprivation and moving towards amelioration of their condition through organisation and participation in the process of development.

3) Acquiring skills to improve the economic status as well as general well-being.

4) Imbibing the values of national integrity, conservation of environment, women's empowerment, observance of small family norm etc.

As against India the caste system scenario of Assam is very much different. In Assam it is not deep-rooted as it is in other parts of the country. But they are backward educationally and socially, the main reason for which is cited as large scale poverty among them. They have an important role to play in the developmental process of the state. But they fail to play their role due to lack of education and social consciousness. Hence it is realised that a suitable educational programme will be helpful in integrating them to the main stream of the society. The Scheduled illiterates are being covered under the adult education programme on priority basis. That is why it is felt worthwhile to assess the impact of adult education programme within the community.

The term 'Scheduled Castes' includes several castes in the Hindu Society, whose names vary in different parts of the country. In Assam they are known by the name of Khetra.
Namasudra, Bania, Hira, Mali, Dhobi etc.

The district of undivided Kamrup comprising of Barpeta, Nalbari and Kamrup districts, used to be one of the advanced districts of Assam. There is a sizeable number of Scheduled Castes in this district which according to the Census was -

Barpeta - 93,523  
Nalbari - 1,01,325  
Kamrup - 1,51,786

Total - 3,46,634

This group of people being significant has an important role to play in different developmental processes in the state. The present study is an attempt at evaluating the impact of adult education programme within the Scheduled Caste population of Kamrup district with particular reference to the improvement in their literacy standard and functional skill. Number of general population and SC population according to 1971 Census and 1991 Census is shown on Table - 2.4 and 2.5.

TABLE NO.-2.4

1971 Census

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Districts</th>
<th>Total Population</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Barpeta</td>
<td>51,452</td>
<td>5.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kamrup</td>
<td>80,038</td>
<td>8.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Guwahati &amp; Rangia)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nalbari</td>
<td>33,372</td>
<td>3.6%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Number of Population in Barpeta, Nalbari and Kamrup districts,

**TABLE NO.- 2.5**
As per 1991 Census

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name of Districts</th>
<th>Area</th>
<th>Population (Total)</th>
<th>SC Population</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Barpeta</td>
<td>3245 km²</td>
<td>1,382,715</td>
<td>93,523</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nalbari</td>
<td>2257 km²</td>
<td>1,012,608</td>
<td>1,01,325</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kamrup</td>
<td>4345 km²</td>
<td>19,86,824</td>
<td>1,51,786</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**SAMPLING -**

Area has major role in research study. Sampling is an important aspect of evaluation. In order to come out with finding of a research study, it is necessary to choose an area carefully. Study of the entire population is not possible in many ways. It is, therefore, convenient to pick up a part out of the population proposed to be covered by the study.

The primary purpose of research is to discover principles that have universal application. The researcher is concerned with the generalizability of the data beyond the immediate sample. To study a whole population in order to arrive at generalization will be impracticable. Survey by use of any other procedure will help a little in achieving...
specific goal, if the population is very large and compact analysis. Fortunately the process of sampling makes it possible to draw valid inferences or generalization on the basis of observation of variables within a relatively small proportion of the population. So long as the population from which sampling is drawn is uniform, will give almost same results.

The present study is completed through an intensive study with some specific areas. Here, specific areas have been selected at random on the basis of areas having more number of illiterates and SC population. The district of undivided Kamrup comprising of present Barpeta, Nalbari and Kamrup has been selected for the study.

75 centres of adult education in the Scheduled areas of the districts were identified on the basis of Report of the Directorate of Adult Education and were selected at random for the study.

For purpose of the study four projects from Karmukha, three from Barpeta and four from Nalbari districts were selected. The number of Adult Education Centres in the districts respectively are 22 from Kamrup, 29 from Barpeta and 24 from Nalbari. The details of project wise distribution are presented below in table No. 2.6.
TABLE No. 2.6

Sample Projects with total Number of AECs.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sl. No.</th>
<th>Districts</th>
<th>Projects</th>
<th>No. of Centres</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>Kamrup</td>
<td>Guwahati</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Kamalpur</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Chaygaon</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Sonapur</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>Nalbari</td>
<td>Tamulpur</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Samata</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Mukalmua</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Dhomdhoma</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td>Barpeta</td>
<td>Barpeta</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Barpeta Road</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Chenga</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Tools Used for Data Collection -

For every research work there is need of instruments to gather new facts or to explore new fields. Instruments thus employed as means are called tools.
selection of suitable instruments or tools are of primary importance for successful research work.

In this study both the source of data collection, primary as well as secondary have been used.

Questionnaire is a primary source. It is a form prepared and distributed to secure responses to certain questions. It is a systematic compilation of questions that are submitted to a sampling of population from which information is desired. It is an important instrument in normative survey research. It is used to gather information from widely scattered sources. A device normally comes into use where one cannot readily or personally all of the people from whom responses are to be obtained by the researcher.

In this study two sets of questionnaire - one for adult learners and the other for the instructors of the education centres, choses for the study were used. The questionnaires for the adult learners were filled in by the researcher herself after personally interviewing them, whereas the questionnaires meant for the instructors were distributed among the instructors to be filled in by themselves.

The other tool, used for collecting data is interview. Here the investigator gathers data directly from either face to face contact. Instead of writing the responses, the subject or the interviewee gives the needed information.
verbally in a face to face relationship. It is a method which is unique in that it involves the collection of data through direct verbal interaction between the interviewer and the interviewee. In this study this tool was used to collecting data from the adult learners.

Besides these primary sources, secondary sources like books, journals, Census Reports, Government Reports, Reports, Commissions' Reports etc. were also used to gather information regarding the implementation of different adult education programmes in India.

HYPOTHESIS -

1) Participation in adult education programme helps the illiterates to read and write with understanding.

2) Participation in adult education programme motivates the adult learners to acquire knowledge beyond reading and writing.

3) Participation in adult education programme improves their functional skill.

4) Participation in these programmes improves their functional awareness about health and living practices.

5) Participation in these programmes make them conscious about their civic responsibilities.

6) Adult education programme motivates to improve their economic condition and standard of living.
7) Participation in Adult Education Programme promotes greater acceptance of a small family and acquaints them with different methods of family planning.

8) Adult Education Programme makes the adult learners aware about the environment.

9) Adult Education Programme (AEP) makes them aware of the benefit of banking system.

10) AEP makes the adult learners aware about the role of co-operative society.

11) AEP encourages the adult learners to continue education.

12) AEP makes the adult learners aware that education help them to get social recognition.

Review of Literature.

There are several areas of research in the field of adult education, viz. motivation, needs and interests in adult education, impact of adult education on the life of adult learners, preparation of reading and teaching materials, evaluation of adult education programme, need for participation in continuing education, selection and training of Adult Education instructors, administration and management, media and technique of teaching etc. Studies carried in different fields of adult education in the country make
reviewed to take guidance for this study. Few researchers carried out on different areas of adult education are reported here.

1. A Study on 'Impact of Adult Education on Scheduled Castes Population' in Barabanki district of Lucknow undertaken by State Resource Centre, Literacy House, NPL in 1991. An effort was made to assess the impact of participation in adult education programme, with regard to acquisition of literacy skills, acceptance of small family size and knowledge about health and hygiene practices.

   The study revealed that the programme was successful in making the respondents aware about the legal age of marriage, also making them conscious about maintaining a small family norm. The programme was also successful in increasing learners' knowledge regarding health and hygiene. The programme was found to be effective in imparting knowledge of 3'Rs as well.

2. M.S. Saiyadain, Nirmala Murthy and J.P. Singh undertaken a study on the impact of adult education in (1989). The study revealed that Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes population as compared to other categories seem to have been equally enrolled in adult education centres. The labourers seemed to be more attracted by the AEP who comprised 70 percent of learners. About 5-15 percent learners attended to 4 years of schooling before joining the centres.
percentage was much lower in case of SCs and STs. Majority, the learners joined the centres to learn to read, write and sign their names only. Majority of the learners found instructor's house a convenient place for the centre. This seems to have made an impact as far as 3'Rs is concerned but has not made much impact in the areas of social awareness and functionality. Post literacy activities are not sufficient for all ex-learners.

3. M. R. Nimbalkar's study on 'Adult Education and evaluation system in Goa (1984) showed that 11 percent learners attended school before joining the centres. Average attendance was eight days a month. 68 percent learners joined the centre to learn 3'Rs and 26 percent for fun or skill, 53 percent of the AECs had high range of drop-out reasons for drop-outs were family problems, instructor's inability to make classes interesting and their inability to concentrate after a day's hard work. 61 percent said the programme did not help them in increasing their earning.

4. S. Lakshmi and M. Kalaimathic's study on 'Economic impacts of adult education in Tamil Nadu'(1990) revealed that adult education programme has assisted in removing illiteracy among the sample household. Adult education had provided employment as a result of training in new skills at the AECs. The functional literacy learnt at the AECs have enabled participants to perform their economic functions more effectively. On the whole it is revealed that the benefits...
households were in a better position in the matter of per-capita income than the non-beneficiary households. The impact of adult education on the borrowing habits of people had not been keenly felt.

5. Yet another study on 'Impact of Adult Education Programme on the Social, Economic and Political Awareness of Rural Adults of Punjab' undertaken by Singh, Harjinder singh (1993) showed that participation in adult education programmes not only enhances the social and economic awareness of people, but also enhances their economic status.


The awareness of the learners was examined in terms of social and recreational factors, economic awareness, awareness about health and sanitation, political awareness, adoption of family planning etc.

After attending the AEC 65-69 percent have experienced an increase in their social status. More than 89 percent have gained how best leisure time can be used. More than 90 percent knew the exact marriage age for men and women. The impact was also very positive regarding the knowledge of family planning. 47.55 percent were aware about the different methods of family planning. The awareness about health and sanitation was also impressive. The programme was successful in making the learners conscious about cleanliness, health, and sanitation.
and nutritious food.

7. A study of certain factors relating to the achievement in literacy, undertaken by P. Adinarayana Reddy and K. Reddy, revealed that -

i) Two thirds of the learners were having average attendance. 17 percent were poor in their attendance and one percent of them were regular attenders to AECs.

ii) There is a close relationship between the sex, attendance of the learners with their achievement in literacy. The result clearly demonstrates that the sex, caste, income and attendance of the learners are related to literacy achievement. The result of the reading test indicates that Young Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes, middle income group and regular attenders scored better than other groups. While in writing test the forward and less income group and regular attenders did well. The elders, scheduled castes, scheduled tribes, middle income group and regular attenders had scored well in arithmatic test.

iii) The trend of the mean achievement scores demonstrates that women learners have proved to be better scorers than the men learners.

The programme was successful in spreading literacy among the scheduled castes, scheduled tribes and the women.

8) Inder Prabha Sharma and Sushil Kumar Pates evaluated
education programme in Chandigarh (1986). The findings of the study were --

a. The male and female adult learners showed no difference in their attitude towards adult education programme.

b. The female learners reacted more favourably towards literacy than male learners. But there was no significant difference in the attitudes of the male and female learners towards awareness and functionality.

c. Male learners reacted more favourably towards awareness and functionality as compared to literacy.

The attitude of the whole group of adult learners towards adult education programme and its three components i.e. literacy, functionality and awareness was found favourable.

9. B.S. Vasudeva Rao's study on women's performance in adult education programme in Visakhapatnam reveals that:

a. The literacy skill of female were best in writing names, reading signboards and poor in reading newspapers and filling up forms.

b. The impact of AEP proved to be the best in the area of knowledge in banking service and advantages of saving. 67.73 percent adult learners had information on bank service and 55.49 percent informed to have the habit of saving.
c. Majority of women learners were keenly aware of issues relating to availability of medical facilities, vaccination, certain social problems and family planning.

The study also points that there are significant differences between men and women with regard to most of these issues.


Regarding facilities available in NFE centres the study revealed that about 60 percent had proper buildings, electricity and water, 90 percent had open space and blackboards and 70 percent did not have mates and benches for children to sit. There were no chairs for instructors in 60 percent NFE centres.

57 percent of the instructors passed Senior Certificate examination, 30 percent instructors passed intermediate. A few were graduate. formal school teachers were working as part-time instructors in NFE centres. About 13 percent instructors had qualifications below the specified qualification.

Among the children attending NFE centres 36 percent belonged to backward castes, 24 percent scheduled castes...
40 percent were scheduled tribes comprising of agriculture or agriculture labour. 88 percent children were satisfied with the teaching of NFE centres.

11. R. Natarajan (1982) had undertaken a study titled "Evaluation of National Adult Education Programme in India". The evaluation was primarily based on the three essential components of the programme, namely literacy, functional skills and awareness. The findings of the study were:

1. Nearly 85 percent of the learners were found to earn their livelihood from agriculture. The percentage of learners belonging to Harijan, Adivasi and other communities were 26, 21 and 53 respectively.

96 percent of the family members in the age group of 15-35 years were found to be illiterate. As many as 89 percent of the adult learners had never attended school before joining the AEC.

68 percent of the learners joined the centre to learn the 3'Rs., while 26 percent of them desired to acquire functional skills in agricultural activities, carpentry, child care etc.

30 percent of the learners informed that they had benefitted by the programme of adult education; while 40 percent did not feel that they had been benefitted at all. 30 percent learners stated that the programme had not helped...
in increasing their earning.

The awareness level of the learners with respect co-operative society, rural bank facilities and awareness regard to the minimum legal age of marriage and of exercise the right of franchise was found to be inadequate.

Most of the learners stated reasons like family problems, lack of time due to day's hard work and instructor inability to make the classes interesting as the main causes of their irregular attendance and dropping out of the AKC.