This Chapter describes the setting up of the methods on which the research was carried out. It was considered for the collection of research tools that:

(a) A child between the age of 3 to 6 years would be considered as a pre-school child.

(b) A well organised planned survey would be carried out on properly selected samples of pre-schools in 5 representative regions of the country.

(c) The survey should provide factual information on pre-school institutions of the state, present condition of pre-school teacher education, status of pre-school with teachings and methods to be followed. Views from teachers as well as parents have also to be considered.

3.1 Background of the State.

A brief history: Assam first became a British Protectorate at the close of the first Burmese war in 1826. In 1832, Cachar was annexed; in 1835 the Jaintia hills were excluded in the East-India Company's dominions, and in 1939, Assam was annexed to Bengal. In 1874, Assam was detached from Bengal and made a separate chief commissionership. On the partition of Bengal in 1905, it was united to the Eastern District of Bengal under the Lient Governor. From 1912, the Chief Commissionership
of Assam was revived and in 1921, a governorship was created. On the partition of India almost the whole of the predominately Muslim district of Sylhet was merged with East Bengal (Pakistan), Dewangiri in North Kamrup was ceded to Bhutan in 1951. The Naga hill district administered by the Union Government since 1957 became part of Nagaland in 1962. The autonomous state of Meghalaya within Assam comprising the district of Garo hills and khasi and Jaintia hills, came into existence on 2nd April, 1970, and achieved full independent statehood in January, 1972 when it was also decided to form a Union Territory, Mizoram, from the Mizo hills district.

Area and population: Assam is in Eastern India, almost separated from Central India by Bangladesh. It is bounded on the west by Bengal, north by Bhutan and the territory of Arunachal Pradesh, east by Nagaland, Bangladesh and Tripura. The area of the state is now approximately 78,523 sq.km. Its population (1981 census) is 19.9 million; density 254 per sq.km; growth rate since 1971, 36.09 per cent. Principle towns with population (1971) are Guwahati, 122,981; Dibrugarh, 80,344; Tinsukia 55,392; Nowgong 52,892; Silchar 56,612. The principal language of the state is Assamese.

Education: The 1971 census showed 28.74 per cent of population to be literate.

In 1976, there were 285 pre-primary schools; 26,00 primary schools; 2,504 middle schools; 1,657 high schools; 70 higher Secondary schools; in 1977, there were 25,768 schools altogether, 126 general colleges and institutions for professional education; 507 vocational and technical schools; 31 teachers-training colleges and 3 universities (Year book 1986).
3.2 Centres of the study

Taking into account the need for covering as many regions in the state as possible and also the practical considerations of availability of adequate facilities, it was desired the following five regions for carrying out the study (Figure 1).

Kamrup
Karbi Anglong
Darrang
North Lakhimpur
Sibsagar

The reasons for choosing these particular areas are as follows:

From each district, pre-primary institutions were selected firstly the place having maximum number of samples, covering the categories as desired.

The area includes various models of pre-primary institution with varied media of instruction.

No such studies had been carried out in the area on "Evaluation of Pre-primary Institution with special Reference to Teaching Methodology".

In the selected districts the different pre-primary institutions are functioning under different types of programmes:

Pre-schools functioning in the rural areas.
Pre-schools functioning in women's welfare branches.
Pre-schools functioning in family and child welfare projects
Pre-schools functioning in the integrated child welfare service project.
Pre-school functioning in the voluntary welfare institutions with Social Welfare Board assistance.
To locate the samples for the study, a quick survey of different locality of the districts were carried out. Moreover, the list of pre-schools have also been collected from Directorate of Panchayat and Community Development, Directorate of social Welfare, Social Welfare Advisory Board, Municipal Board and Directorate of Public Instruction, etc. (List Annex-III).

It was found that pre-primary schools located in the urban areas mainly based on philosophy of western educationists with some delicate play materials. These pre-primary institutions are named as Kindergarten, Montessori and Nursery schools and the medium of instruction of these schools is in English. It has also been observed that the pre-primary schools in rural areas based on indigenous play materials are Balwadi; Anganwadi, Buniadi schools etc. and are assisted by government, semi-government and voluntary organisations. In these schools, the medium of instruction is in local language.

Thus, to have a comparative study on different pre-primary schools, urban and rural background of the schools have taken along with teachers and parents. The economic status of parents and teachers' training or experience with teachers without training and experience have taken as variables of the study.

3.3 **Sampling procedure and sample selection**

Several alternatives were considered before deciding upon the sample design, finally adopted for the study. The main premises deciding the sample design are -

a) The sample should enable the study to assess the organisational and administrative of all those involved and administer the pre-school functioning and identify the factors which would influence the operation and functioning of these pre-primary institutions.
b) The sample design should be able to strike a balance between the requirements of reliability and representativeness of the date required for the study.

The following variables have been included for the study.

1. Pre-school:

Two types of schools have been selected for this purpose.

(150 sample each) i) Urban oriented pre-primary school.
30 samples in each category from each district.

ii) Rural Oriented pre-primary school.

2. Teacher:

Consisting of two groups viz:

(100 sample each) i) Trained/Experienced teacher
20 samples in each category from each district.

ii) Untrained/without experienced teacher

3. Parent/guardian:

Consisting of two groups viz:

(100 sample each) i) Higher Economic status
20 samples in each category from each district.

ii) Lower Economic status

3.4 Selection of the method

In view of the nature and complexity of the study involving several categories of respondents and several dimensions of the study, it was decided to use several methods and techniques for data collection in the study.
An interview-cum-questionnaire and observation method was selected after reviewing related literature, several journals, articles and research reports. The objectives of the study were kept in mind while forming the tool of the study.

Questionnaire method, which refers to a device for securing answers to questions by having a form which is usually filled by the respondent himself (Chaudhari, 1976; Sukhia et al., 1976). This method is useful and can provide reliable and valid information when it is used skillfully (Thomson, 1969).

Interview has been defined as a systematic method by which a person enters more or less imaginatively into the inner life of the comparative stranger and can be successfully employed to collect a wide range of information (Rangaswamy, 1976). Hence, the method is used for those who are illiterate and cannot read or write.

Observation as scientific techniques, planned systematically to serve a formulated research purpose. It is one of the most useful method for collecting information of young children (Muralidharan, 1969).

After constructing schedule, a pilot study was done on 30 samples. The pretest was greatly helpful in modifying the questions which are not intelligible to the respondents. The questionnaires used for the research has been given in Appendix I (1, 2, 3, 4 & 5).

3.5 Hypothesis to be tested

The definite hypothesis about the sample ratio, the purpose of the sampling are listed as below:
A. Major hypothesis:

It is assumed that the pre-school institutions do not have a proper method of teaching and the responsible factors congenial for the growth of pre-primary education are not satisfactory for successful implementation of the programme.

B. Minor hypothesis:

The situational background of the young children is in a deplorable state of condition that effect in the growth of present generation.

ii) There is a dearth of trained teacher in the pre-primary institutions.

iii) Pre-school institutions have limited facilities for total development of the children.

iv) The curriculum of many pre-schools include mechanical method with formal teaching of 3R's,

v) More play equipment and enough of space are more stressful for children in the pre-school.

vi) Teachers' viewed pre-school education as informal learning for children.

vii) Parents conceive of a pre-school as formal learning centre of 3 R's.

The area of enquiry in the schedules was circumscribed by the hypothesis of the survey as considered relevant to each category of respondents.

3.6 Analysis and interpretation of data

The bulk of data of various schedules were checked, rechecked and codified before the tabulation work. Content analysis of various
questions was done while manually tabulating the schedule. Manual tabulation helped in getting a good feel of the overall situation and many variables could be taken up simultaneously whenever the need for that is indicated.

The findings are based on overall analysis of the data processed minus the peripheral and inconsequential aspects of data. This study has utilized a combination of research methods including analysis of field data as well as observation made on the different pre-primary institutions and teachers as well as parents involved in the programme. The findings of the study reflect a combination of methodologies used in research.