CHAPTER II

METHODOLOGY

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In tune with the philosophy of educational development and with a view to fulfilling the Constitutional obligations, the Central and the State Governments have been making continuous efforts to spread education among the tribals including the Bodo-Kacharis of Assam. But, notwithstanding what has been done in this regard, it is found that the percentage of literacy among the Bodo-Kacharis is very poor. With regard to the educational development among the population, there exists a wide gap between the Bodo-Kachari tribe and the other communities. It is a matter of surprise that the Bodo-Kacharis, being the earliest settlers of Assam, remained backward not only educationally, but also socially and economically. I became curious and my curiosity has inspired me to know about various constraints which stand on the path of progress and development in the life of the Bodo-Kacharis. So, I took up the work of studying the problems of educational development among the Bodo-Kacharis. It requires a systematic research to understand the
variables that have impeded the progress of education among the Bodo-Kacharis. With this end in view, I proceeded with my work in the fields using different methods.

The main emphasis here is on the formal, informal and non-formal education, the extent of spread of such type of education among the Bodo-Kacharis. I have used those methods as mentioned below keeping in mind three specific objectives of the study of different variables which influence the educability. To mention here, these objectives are:

(1) To assess the existing pattern of education and the educational facilities available to the Bodo-Kacharis;

(2) To examine the differential educational attainments of the Bodo-Kacharis; and,

(3) To identify the structural variables which become obstacles to education among the Bodo-Kacharis.

I have started research work since 1977 to obtain a clear perspective of the progress vis-a-vis backwardness of the Bodo-Kacharis. My interest is to study the effects of the total environmental and structural factors on educational opportunity and
educability of the Bodo-Kacharis. The main pre-occupation with the objects is to analyse the social resource variables responsible for differential educational attainments. It is necessary to stress on the use of the status-structural framework in this study. Because the structure of the village communities, the tribal groups, the families and the school system are relatively more concrete to conceptualise the attitude and values. Moreover, a structural analysis of the ecological entities and the degree of their exposure to modern influences, and the extent of availability of educational facilities in the tribal areas will throw light on the patterns of enrolment and spread of education. The socio-economic status of the family influences the educability of the children. The structural perspective also helps us in the analysis of the internal structural elements of the school system and their impact on the educational attainments of the people whom they serve. It is also to be noted that the effective functioning of the school system depends on its internal structural variables, viz., the teachers, the curriculum, the medium of instruction, the school hours, administration and supervision, etc. The structural variables which influence the educability can be represented diagrammatically in a flow chart as shown below (Figure I).
Note: The above diagrammatic representation has been adopted from the book "Structural Constraints in Tribal Education" by E.V. Rathnaiah, 1977.

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The structural variables shown in the above flow chart (Figure I) have been discussed in different Chapters of this thesis. To collect data for framing references and variables, I have used different methods. I have selected the entire north bank of the Brahmaputra Valley stretching from Sadiya to Dhubri inhabited by the Bodo-Kacharis, and particularly, my study has been concentrated in the Mangaldai Sub-division for the purpose of research.

I have collected data relevant to the study from various sources such as Census Reports, Reports of the Commissions/Committees, periodicals, journals, Departmental publications, and various other personal sources. While I was visiting the places inhabited by the Bodo-Kacharis, I got myself acquainted with the modes of living, habits, customs, manners, etc., of the Bodo-Kachari people with a view to knowing them closely to read their mind and attitude, specially towards education, which is the subject of my present work.

SAMPLING:

The project of my research work is largely based on field works for collection of data and source materials regarding the educational development, socio-cultural aspects of the Bodo-Kacharis. Findings of my
research should accompany a certain amount of generalisation. Without such scope for generalisation, the scope of research as well as its practical utility becomes limited. Sampling is an important consideration for the researchers in wider application of the findings. As mentioned earlier, the area of my research consists of the entire northern region of the Brahmaputra Valley. So, it is simply but difficult to study the entire area, and therefore, at some stage, sampling must be undertaken. There are several ways of selecting a sample, and the sampling method used depends on the objective and assumptions of the investigator. During the initial stages of the study when nothing is known, a stratified random sampling method is very useful. Stratified random sampling assumes that all social strata are proportionately represented in the study. Such representation of all strata is essential since such background factors as religion, class, age and locality are likely to influence the attitude of the people towards education. In order to determine the general trends as well as the sub-group differences, this type of sampling is essential. Random sampling method also constitutes an effective method of eliminating bias in the results. The places of my visits in the Districts of Kamrup, Goalpara and Lakhimpur were selected through the random sampling method.
SURVEY METHOD:

The survey method has also been used in my research. The purpose of survey research is to collect data on some important aspects on a representative sample of areas. When data have to be collected from a larger area, survey is the most suitable method. This method is also most suitable for investigation which involves collection of objective information. The necessary conditions for efficient survey research are the preparation of reliable and valid instruments for data collection, appropriate sampling and relevant methods of data analysis. The area for my research is a large one. Therefore, I have used survey method in field investigation in relation to education, health and economic development of the Bodo-Kacharis.

DATA COLLECTION:

Developments in research technology have provided several techniques of data collection such as questionnaires, scales, case histories, interviews, reports, hospital records and so on. The technique to be used depends on the purpose of investigation. I have used questionnaires, case histories and interviews in my research for data collection.

(a) **Questionnaire**: I have prepared a comprehensive questionnaire for the purpose of collection
of data and other relevant information for my study. The questionnaire was prepared on the basis of socio-economic status, religion, education, cultural background, etc., of the Bodo-Kacharis and distributed among the heads of the families and the teachers as well as other distinguished persons for furnishing necessary information and data. I also engaged a number of persons for collecting information and data through the use of the said questionnaire. The data and information thus collected have been properly tabulated and the tables so prepared reveal information regarding socio-economic and socio-cultural background of the Bodo-Kacharis which provide the basis of study for educational development of the Bodo-Kacharis. The questionnaire or the checklist is aimed at discovering facts about any matter being investigated. No attempt is made to control the situation; the purpose is to study and interpret the situation by describing what has been discovered. The procedure followed is first to formulate question that will assist in discovering the facts desired or to use a set of questions that has served a similar purpose. The questions then are submitted to the persons selected for the study. The answers become the raw material which is used to determine pertinent conclusions or generalisations relative to the purpose of the questionnaire. In some areas of investigation,
the questionnaire method can be used effectively. An evaluation of an individual's observable behaviour characteristics that represents the pooled judgements, obtained from the questionnaires of many associates is likely to be more valid than the opinion of any one person. Moreover, it is a relatively easy and quick method of accumulating data, since questionnaires can be distributed to many people who probably could not be reached otherwise.¹

(b) **Interview**: Interview as a research technique requires skill of the investigator. In order to obtain fresh and first-hand information about the Bodo-Kacharis and their attitude towards education and modern way of living, I arranged a number of personal interviews with some eminent Bodo-Kachari persons in different places of the Districts. I have recorded the opinions in my thesis. Interviewing is a technique that should be used in conjunction with other techniques whenever and wherever possible. The value of the questionnaire is greatly enhanced if the answers to it can be amplified by the facts obtained through a personal interview. The skilled interviewer can

discover many facts about the person interviewed that can not be obtained by more impersonal measuring techniques. During the interview, the interviewer not only obtains specific data that can be subjected to statistical treatment but is afforded an opportunity to study subtle behaviour responses of the person interviewed.

(c) Case History: The case history usually is limited in its application to attempted solutions of serious learner difficulties. Its purpose is pre-eminently diagnostic, although, as case histories are constructed and studied, certain cause and effect behaviour trends among young people may be revealed. A case history includes the past history of an individual as well as his present status. It also points the way towards remedial treatment. A carefully organised and completed case study includes data concerning family and social background, physical health, and emotional and educational development. Moreover, it includes individual's interests, hobbies, and present activities, as these may have a bearing upon the problem to be studied. An analysis of the data accumulated in the form of a case history should result in the discovery of pertinent causes for behaviour, recommendations for guidance and the application of remedial
measures. Through the utilisation of this technique, emphasis can be placed upon significant underlying factors rather than upon displayed symptoms of overt or observable behaviour alone.  

I utilised case history technique to collect data regarding socio-economic background, educational developments, present activities, interests and health of the Bodo-Kacharis when I visited different places as a research worker in connection with my present work.

**DATA ANALYSIS:**

The techniques used in data analysis constitute another important aspect of research. While any amount of reliable data may be collected through sound research techniques, unless the data are properly analysed, the research effort is futile. Analysis of data helps to study the significant variation or variability which influences the educability of the people. Proper interpretation of results depends considerably on the methodology of data analysis. Unless suitable methods are employed for data analysis, results with a deeper interpretation of the data are lacking. In data analysis, the first step,

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therefore, in interpretation of results and proper conceptualisation, is the planning of the design of data analysis. One way to develop more effective approaches to conceptualisation is to start with a conceptual framework, based on a systematic interpretation of the previous findings and then to establish hypotheses to be tested by the investigation being planned. After the data have been analysed and hypotheses tested, the findings may be reinterpreted to suggest any modification in the original conceptual framework. I have shown the conceptual framework of references diagrammatically in Figure I at page 13.

During my field investigation, different methods were applied depending on the nature of the information required. In certain cases a single method was used to collect the information, while in some other cases, more than one method had to be adopted on the same topic. In order to obtain the authentic information, proper care had been taken with a systematic and scientific approach to the subject.