Chapter-1
CHAPTER I
INTRODUCTION

Education is not confined to simple literacy. It aims at making everyone functional. Everyone is to be able not only to read documents, reports and such other materials that one in everyday use, but also to earn his/her living. The type of job one may get depends today on the type of education one has received. Education in the emerging Indian society has to become comprehensive to focus on the totality of the environment and the process natural influence has to be given due consideration. Education is also closely related to social stratification and national integration. The emerging society expects education to facilitate social and cultural mobility and provide the right kind of direction for the coming generations to follow. Education should be truly an investment in future.

A society which holds, high the promise of ‘Equality of status and of opportunity’ for all and assure, ‘The dignity of individuals and the unity and integrity of the nations’ has to attend to the mass spreading of learning much in the interest of making the appropriate ground work for the social advancement. Educational opportunities for a child is generally determined by his family, class, neighbourhood conditions and even by the attitude of the school authorities. A comprehensive school system, free from these undesirable consideration, is the demand all over.

BACKGROUND OF NORTH-EAST INDIA AND ASSAM:

North-Eastern status deserve to be regarded not as an isolated topographical entity with backwardness as its economic hallmark any more. No doubt, because of enormous difficulties and obstacles in communication with the capital of the country an account of geographical distance and other
factors the seven states of the North-East now eight including Sikkim have
lagged behind in economic development so far. The eight states of North-
East India, viz Arunachal Pradesh, Assam, Manipur, Meghalaya, Mizoram,
Nagaland, Tripura and Sikkim which covers an area of (Excluding Sikkim) 2.55
lakh sq km according 7.8% percent of the total land space of the country.
The Total population of the region is 384 lakh which is about 3.75 percent
of the total population of India as per 2001 census report. The major portion
of the region is surrounded by mountains and covered with thick forests. The
majority of the workers are engaged in the agricultural sector and the process
of industrialization is very slow. In Assam also only 6% of the total workers
are engaged in industrial sector.

As a consequence, the growth and development in the North-Eastern
states from all points of view has been sluggish. But after fifty-five years
of independence India can not effort to allow any part of the country to
be weak in any aspect. Hence, the North-East with the vast geographical body
can not be allowed to remain stagnant or even sluggish in development. The
central key to development lies in the educational development of the area.
Therefore, the higher education development in the North-East at present and
in immediate future is of paramount important and significance in the context
not only of the North-East but also of the entire country.

North-Eastern states are not be represented only by their capital town
like Guwahati, Shillong, Agartala, Imphal, Kohima, Itanagar, Aizawl and Gangtok.
The capital with their modern amenities do not reflect the actual living
conditions in various parts of the states. North-Eastern states have vast remote
areas. People do live there. Sophisticated elites living in the capitals do not
represent the grassroots really in the North-Eastern states. Educational planners
must take these phenomena into account while we envisage the total development of the states. Distance mode of education and teleconferencing are absolutely essential for the dissemination of knowledge in the remote areas. As the terrain in the North-East is difficult, craggy, inaccessible in many areas, subject to frequent natural calamities like floods and earthquakes, the mode of dissemination of knowledge at the higher education level in the North-Eastern states has to be reexamined in order to make it more effective. Setting up of institutes of Higher Education in various urban locations is no doubt important but they should not concentrate on catering to the needs of the urban population only. Therefore, the financial investment and logistic support for the promotion of knowledge and education in the North-East should be provided by both the central and state governments in a large measure.

ASSAM:

Assam is the gateway to the North-East is a state of endowed with greats natural beauty. Assam is one of the most important and greatest migration routes of man kind since time immemorial. The Austro-Asiatic, The Negroids (as suggested by J. H. Hutton), the Great Mongoloids (Kiratas, Kacharis, Karbis, Morans, Borahis, Chutiyas, Khasi- Syntengws, Dimachas, Baras, Lalungs, Garos etc). The Later Mongoloids (Tai-Ahoms) Tai-Khamtis, Singphos, Tai-Phakes, Tai Khamynags, Tai-Turungs, Tai-Aitons, Tangchas, Noctes etc.) all came dominated the area, as rulers, conquerors, professionals, and merged to and form one great culture that in called ‘The great Assamese culture’, side by side keeping their own cultural heritage and languages through centuries
Assam is the land of mighty red river Brahmaputra, the abode of the pre-historic living fossil giant Rhino, the largest tea production state, the most sacred Pithas of Mother Goddess Kamakhya and of course, the ethereal romance Bhagawan Sri Krishna- Rukmini and the birth place of Vaisnavite saints Sankardeva and Madhevdva.

It is a state of breathtaking scenic beauty, largest flora and fauna, lofty green hills, vast rolling plains, mighty waterways, emerald deciduous forest and all combine to make the a prestive jewel in 24° to 28° N latitude, Assam is the anglicized form of the name of the premier state of North-Eastern region of India and is boarded in the north and east by the kingdom of Bhutan and Arunachal Pradesh along with the south lies Nagaland, Manipur and to the extreme south Mizoram, Meghalaya lies to her South-West and west-Bengal to her west.

The capital of Assam is Dispur, the city Guwahati of Assam is called the gateway to the entire North-East. It is well connected with the rest of the country by road ways, railways and airways. The area of the state is 78,438 sq km and its population is 2,66,55,428. The density Assam is 340 persons per sq. km. It has 27 districts at present. Assamese is its major language. Assam can be broadly divided into three geographical units. They are the alluvial Brahmaputra valley covering large parts of the state in the north, The Barak valley in the southern part of the state, and hilly region that separates the two valleys. The eastern and western parts of Brahmaputra valley are called Upper Assam and Lower Assam respectively while the area in between is often referred to as central Assam. Close to India’s borders with as many as two countries Bhutan and Bangladesh, Assam is of great strategic importance.
Assam is often described in academic circles as an anthropologist's paradise. All the major races of the world, the Austro-Asiatic, the Indo-Aryans, the Into-Tibeto Burmese, the Mongoloids have combined to make the great Assamese people. In ancient times, Assam was known as the kingdom of Kamrupa and Pragjyotispur (city of eastern light), which was situated in or near modern Guwahati, was the capital. From the seventh to thirteenth century, Assam was ruled by different dynasties the Palas, Koches, Kacharis and the Chutiyas who constantly raged was among themselves till coming of the Ahoms in the 13th century who then became the dominant power. After the treaty of Yandabo in 1826, Assam became a part of British India. Assam becomes a constituent state of Indian union after the Indian independence.

TRIBES OF ASSAM:

The below mentioned tribal communities are scattering in different parts of Assam.

I. Plain Tribes

(i) Ahom  (ii) Kacharies
(iii) Chutias  (iv) Mishings (Miris)
(i) Rabhas  (ii) Phakeals
(iii) Khamtis  (iv) Dowanias
(v) Singphos  (vi) Khamyangs
(vii) Aitonias  (viii) Turungs
(ix) Koch  (x) Lalungs (Tiwas)
II. Hill Tribes

(xi) Dimasa Kacharis  (xii) Karbis  
(xiii) Dafla  (xiv) Mikir  
(xv) Garo  (xvi) Man (Tai Speaking)

In the following paragraphs of this chapter, the investigator gives a brief account about the above mentioned tribal communities.

i) Ahoms: The Ahom tribes known as the ‘shan’ family which as the last ruling race gave name to the Assam Valley and about 1925 A.D. extended their role over the Hinduised Kacharies along the river as far as Gauhati to lower Assam. Ahoms are chiefly inhabitant of Upper Assam.

ii) Kacharies: The proper name of this large semi-hindunised Mongoloid tribe involved in much obscurity. They called themselves as Boro or Bodo. The Cacharies are found in every district but occur in greatest numbers in lower and middle part of the Brahmaputra valley namely in the district of Goalpara, Kamrup, Darrang and Nowgang where under the name of Koach they began to mix-up with the hindu population.

iii) Chutias: The Chutias are believed to have been member of the great Bodo race. Entering Assam through the North Eastern passes, the Chutias established independent principles in the upper regions of the Brahmaputra. The Ahom records show that when they (Ahoms) entered Assam in 1224 A.D. the chutias were established at Sadiya and were master of the country. Westwards as far as the Desang river.

Chutias are divide into four sub-division:

(a) Hindu chutia  
(b) Borahi chitia
iv) Michings (Miris) : The Mishings or the Miris were originally a hill tribe within the ranges of the Abor, Miri and Mishimi hills in the North East Frontier Agency who came down to the plains before the region of the Ahom kings and since then began settling in the riverine areas of the Brahmaputra and Subansiri rivers of Assam. They belong in General to the Tibeto-Burman family of Mongoloid group.

v) Rabhas : Rabhas are mostly concentrated in the undivided districts of Goalpara, Kamrup and Darrang. The origin of the Rabhas in the Tibetan region wherefrom migration has taken place to Garo Hills area now in Meghalaya and then distributed in Assam Plains.

vi) Phakeals : ‘The Phakeals or popularly known as Phakials were originally a hill tribe within the famous Tai family. The Phakeals call themselves Tai Phake. They entered Assam through Patkai in the later half of the 18th century.

vii) Khamtis : The Khamtis are a section of the great Thai or Tai race who are regarded as shanghai, i.e. the greatest of the shans. Their original habitat was Mung Khamti hong or Bor Khamti or Manshi in Upper Burma.

viii) Dowanias : Anthropologically speaking there is no original tribe like Dowania. The Dowania, now known as a plains tribe is composed of several Assamese communities. They are found in Margherita and Ledo areas of Dibrugarh sub-division.

ix) Singphos : According to A.F. Hanney the Singphos were the original inhabitants of the Shan states in Upper Burma and they came to Assam in 1893. ‘The Singphos are of the race called by the Burmese Ka Khyan or
Kaku whose original settlements were on the great eastern branches of the Irrawaddi river. It was only on spreading into the valley of Assam that they assumed the name of Singphos which in their own language means ‘Man’.

x) Khamyangs: The Khamyangs who are popularly known as Noras are a section of the Great Thai or Tai race. They had their independent principality in Mung Kung up to the 18\textsuperscript{th} century. The Mung Kong means the country of drums.

xi) Aitonias: The Aitonias are a small section of the great Thai or Tai race. Their original habitat was in the Action part on the upper region of the Singwin river in Burma. Their entry into Assam may be dated towards the latter part of the 18\textsuperscript{th} century. The present abode of the Aitonias is spread in the Sarupathar and Barpather of the district of Golaghat.

xii) Turungs: The Turungs are a small section of the great Thai race. Their entry into Assam may be dated sometime in the middle part of the 19\textsuperscript{th} century. At present the Rurungs are found in a few villages at Titabar and Sarupather in the district of Jorhat and Golaghat.

xiii) Koch: This scheduled tribe people are occupying the plains of the Brahmaputra between lower Assam and north eastern Bengal. There are some divisions of the Koch race, these are mainly –

(i) Rajbanshi
(ii) Kamtali
(iii) Heremia
(iv) Madhai etc.

xiv) Lalungs: The Lalungs introduce themselves as Tiowa. According to the popular belief prevalent among the Lalungs, it was Lord Mahadev who created
Lalungs. There is a mythological story behind the legendary origin of the Lalungs.

According to the Lalung dialect Tiowa means superior or elevated (Te means water an Wa means superior). As the people were coming to Assam following the course of the holy river Brahmaputra, they might have introduced themselves as ‘Tiowa’.

xv) The Dimasa Kacharis : ‘The Dimasa Kachari belong to the Boro group. People which besides the Dimasas includes the Boro Kacharis, the Mechies, the Rabhas, the Lalungs and the Koches of Assam. Linguistically he Dimasas belong to the Tibeto-Burman group.

The Dimasa Kacharis constitute an important ethnic group in the autonomous hill district of Assam. The present abode of the Dimasa Kacharis is confined mainly into the North Cachar Hills District.

xvi) Karbis : Racially the karbis belong to the Mongoloid group and linguistically they belong to the Tibeto-Burman group. ‘North-East India, specially Assam, was subjected to successive waves of migration from the central Asia beginning from several hundred years of B.C.

The Karbis, mentioned as the Mikirs in the constitution order, Govt. of India, constitute an important ethnic group in the hill area of present Assam. Although at present they are found to inhabit the Karbi Anglong district, nevertheless, some Karbi inhabited pockets are found in the North Cachar Hills, Kamrup, Pragjyotishpur, Nagaon and Sonitpur districts also.
xvii) Dafla: This tribe inhabited in the north side of the Brahmaputra between the Miris and the Akaa to the north of where the Darrang and Lakhimpur districts adjoin each other.

EDUCATION IN ASSAM:

No one can deny the fact that education is the key factor for development and this development is utmost necessary for the prosperity of a country. Thus, education and development always go together.

The education of Assam generally refers to the history of Indian education. The development of modern education in Assam took place only with the helpful hand of missionary and British people. But prior to the Britishers the educational scenario of Assam was not at all satisfactory. Of course, the static and unorganized type of Indigenous primary education was sufficient for meeting up the limited need of the people.

During the post independence period qualitative development was also brought about by some important attempts like establishment of an University in the year 1948 application of Modalier Commissions recommendation (like state Board, Multi purpose school etc.) Assam Secondary Education Act 1961, Organization pattern of Kothari Commission, Assam higher secondary education council (1999), National Policy 1986, etc. Here too different statistical records indicate only the increasing rate of both schools and enrollment of students.

In the higher level the role of different junior and degree colleges can not be minimized. Till now different higher secondary school, colleges and institution are providing different types of education under Arts, Science,
Commerce and various technical faculties. Here it is found that even the satisfactory enrollment can not show the expected educational progress in Assam. It is due to a large number of problems attached with the system. To keep pace with the globalised world we must start from the very beginning organizing the recent form of education in a planned manner to promote further game of knowledge.

**EDUCATION FOR TRIBAL DEVELOPMENT:**

The Tribal societies are extremely closed and isolated societies, living in compact groups. The society being closed and isolated and having continuously lost the game of power with the advanced communities, is withdrawn, and continuously seeks to candidate its existing potential. Alienated of land, chronic indebtedness, labour with low remuneration alienated educated youth (which neither fits in with the society within nor with the advanced societies) have all become a way of like for them. The Tribal's skill endowment is altogether different from that of the outside world, and is sufficient only for him to eke an existence in poverty. His assimilative power is low because he has no access to outside experience and has not himself gone through the processes of beneficial charge. Change for the tribal community has invariably led to destruction of his property or alienation of the same or a further retreat into yet more inaccessible areas. His natural resources in most places have been depleted or exploited by the advanced communities. In areas where the opening up has not yet taken place, the tribal continues at the level of isolation and a skill endowment which is sufficient to permit him to eke a living from the land and the
forest. This situation is true of almost all areas, of tribal concentration in the country.

For a country like ours where a large majority of the population is dependent upon physical rather than mental achievement, there is a crying need for co-relation and adoption of educational technology for the immediate economic activity in hand. At a stage where the bulk of the country's populace still remains illiterate, to keep waiting for literacy levels to rise and thereby lead to increased economic growth is too optimistic, an approach to the realities of planning. While higher coverage and extension of formal institution with planned linkages with higher institutions is a positive must for spreading education, the immediate goal of educating the majority of the population for obtaining specific and increased benefits from the existing economic activity can not be ignored. It is needless to say that literacy and education are not synonymous, nor are they entirely exclusive of one another. Literacy to a large extent is a means to education and not an end in itself. Education on the other hand can lead to a direct economic benefit due to the increased ability to process and utilize information, knowledge and experience. The economic co-relation and expectation from formal education have been correctly delimited to urban areas. While the extension of formal education to rural areas is expected to continue to provide coverage so as to ensure universal literacy and formal education, alternative educational programmes outside formal institutions are being envisaged in order to ensure that the growth impulses created by investments are utilized to their maximum. In such a situation the role of education for tribal development becomes extremely significant.
1.1. HISTORICAL BACKGROUND OF SINGPHOS:

According to the Singphos, their ancestor migrated from "Majoi Singra Bum or Kaang Singra". "Majoi Singra Bum" means naturally flat mountain. But till now nobody can indicate the actual location of the Bum or the mountain. It may be somewhere in the high lands of Mongolia or it was the birth place of Mongolian race.

(I) THE SINGPHOS:

The Singphos are Mongoloid in physical features. The colour of the skin varied from light to medium brown. The average height of men is about five feet six inches. The face is generally broad and prominent cheek bones and broad nostrils give it an appearance of flat nose. Most individuals have a fair growth of hair, though beards and moustaches are practically absent. Their eyes are brown and seldom large.

E.L. DALTON OBSERVED:

"The feature are of the mongolian type, very oblique eyes and eyebrows, mouth wide, cheek bones high and heavy square jawbones. Their complexion never ruddy, varies from a tawny yellow or olive to a dark brown. Hard labour tells on the personal appearance of the females, rendering them coars in feature and awkward in gait but in the families of the chief, light complexion and pleasing features are sometimes seen. They are generally a fine athletic race above the ordinary standard in height and capable of enduring great fatigue."

The mother-tongue of Singphos called Singpho, grouped under Tibeto-Burman family of languages, has many similarities with the Burmese.
and Manipuri languages. Indeed a good number of basic words of both Singpho and Manipuri are same and both of their myths trace, their original home to the north. These would allow one to speculate that they might have their origin at least from an allied stock.

(II) ORIGIN OF SINGPHOS:

Traditions about the origin and migration of the Singphos are many and inconsistent. The most commonly accepted tradition, however, claims that they were formerly inhabitants of Upper Burma.

The original homeland of the Singphos according to their own tradition was in the Hukang valley, a vast tract lying towards the North-East of the Patkai ranges. Hukang is itself a Singpho word which means "a fence of human heads" (Hu-human heads, Kang-fence). The name refers to a great massacre of the Singphos by the Burmese. It is said that the carnage was so great that the heads of the slain would have raised a barrier against any further advance of the Burmese. South of the Hukang valley stretches a vast plain inhabited by the Burmese. Being obstructed by the Burmese in their southward migration, the Singphos turned towards south-east crossed the Patkai ranges of the Indo-Burmese border and entered Assam in the early part of 18th century. In course of time they occupied a large area of Upper Assam region. This is also evident from the fact that many a place name of this region is Singpho in origin. Bangsu is derived from Singpho Pangsun which means an open area. Similarly, the word Tipam is from Dibam is the name of a Singpho spirit and the place is believed to be its abode. Diyun is said to be the original name of the river Dihing which names "a water-source in the hills" in the Singpho.

The habitat of the Singphos in Assam lay to the east of Muttock and
was bounded on the north by the *Lohit river*, and on the south by the *Patkai range*.

There is a great degree of cultural homogeneity between the Singphos living in Assam and the Kachins of the Hukang valley. The Singphos in many respects have assimilated themselves with the local people by adapting their religion and culture to a considerable extent. They worship their own spirits, as well as observe the religious practices of their neighbours - the *Kamptis*.

A Singpho tradition states that one in the Hukang valley the flowering of the bamboos was followed by a famine, which was believed to have been caused by the wrath of a spirit called kivagung who descended to the earth in the shape of a wild fowl and sent hoards of rats to destroy the crops. Soon afterwards these occurred a terrible fire which spread through the whole valley. These calamities scared the people and they deserted the valley and took refuge in the neighbouring countries. Some of them migrated to the Patkai Hills and from there came Assam through the Naga Hills. This group of Singphos opened the way to Assam for others who followed them.

**(III) THE HISTORY OF THE SINGPHOS:**

Singphos first made their appearance in Assam in the year 1893 during the Moa-Mariah rebellion. The Moa-mariah or Matak country, inhabited by the Moran, Kacharies and the Assamese, lay between the Brahamputra and the Buridihing. Its ruler was called the Barasenapati, whose independence was first acknowledged by Purnananda Buragohain. During the Burmese invasion, the then Barasenapati protected his people from the inroads of the Burmese. The reference to the Singphos in the old Assamese chronicles as inhabitants of the Patkai hill shows that even before the Moamariah
rebellion they had close contact with Assam. Settlement by them in this
country in proved by the fact that the khamptis who has migrated to Assam
and settled in the Tengapani area were pushed back to the right bank of
the Brahmaputra by them. The Ahom Government had friendly and political
relations with the Singphos, as well as with other frontier tribes. A class
of envoys known as Katakis were engaged by the Ahom Government for
conducting negotiations with these tribes inhabiting along the frontier.

The Singphos were the most troublesome neighbours on the Sadiya front
of Assam. They first came in to prominence during the weak rule of
Govrinath Singha (1780-95). They drove out Khamptis from the low lands
under the Patkai hills and settled themselves on the Tengapani, east of Sadiya
and on the upper Buri Dihing in the tract called Namrup. They thus brought
under them the whole country watered by the Buri-Dihing, the Noa-Dihing
and the Tengapani rivers. The soil of the tracts occupied by the Singphos
was extremely fertile consisting almost entirely of rich alluvial soil.

MYANMAR : In the 16th - 17th centuries, the British, Portuguese and the
Dutch carried out trade activities in the area. The Modern day state of
Myanmar (then Burma) was founded in the 18th century but was annexed
by the British in 1885. Therefor it became a province of India. The Govt.
of India Act of 1935 seperated Burma from India. During world war II, Japan
occupied the country.

Singphos are known as Kachin in the hilly region of Northern Myanmer,
inhabiting the upper reaches of Noa-Dehing valley in North-East, India, who
are their main economic source. Yet the Socio-economic life of the Singphos
is fundamentally religious in nature. The Singphos who came down into the
fertile Noa-Dihing basin across the Patkai range brought along with them their religious adherence to Hinyana Buddhism. When and who converted them to Buddhism is a subject of separate study. Inspite of their conversion to Buddhism, the fading glimpses of their martial character can still be seen in their physical sturdyness, uncommon courage of co-habiting with the life of the untamed Patkai range and the unity of the spartun society.

When the Singphos immigrated into this border region of India, they not only brought their religious faith along with them but also a cultural heritage which can, without any reservation be defined as rich, refined and inferior to none.

At the time of immigration in later part of 18th century, their primary objective was to find suitable land for permanent agriculture with a well developed knowledge in wet rice cultivation. A strong social system supported by their martial character, the Singpho soon became a powerful element in the region into which other sub-tribes of the great Tai people had come to settle ahead of them.

Although these warlike tribes lived in closed proximity of each other in a compact region, yet there is no record of any major hostility among them. They lived a life peaceful co-existence and life of martial self-sufficiency. As a result of this peaceful co-existence and martial self-sufficiency, the Singphos, along with other sub-tribes of the region naturally developed a sense of selfish isolation. Beside that, the other reasons for referring a life of self-isolation was perhaps their pride in their own cultural heritage. Moreover prior to the amalgamation of Noa-Dehing valley into British Assam after 1830, the communication facilities in this isolated area
almost next to nil. The tamed elephant and the dug out country boats of the bamboo rafts were the only means of transport available to the local people. These factors, which included the cultural pride, encouraged them to remain more isolated from the changing scenerios of Assam after the occupation of Assam by the English people. It will not be proper to categorise the Singphos with the indigenous people of Assam. Although the Singphos brought with them their own language, the culture and religion, yet they are not prepared to abandoned their age of tribal superstitions. Added to these their extreme aversion to unfamiliar people continued to raise the barrier of isolation became catastroptic in course of time. Within a span of one hundred years the Singphos living along the course Noa-Dihing river were viewed by the local administration as a dying tribe, child mortality increased, the traditional economic self-sufficiency became a thing of the past in the context of the fast changing life style of the majority people.

Singpho, meaning man, are a small tribe of Arunachal Pradesh. Their tradition places their original home to the Hukang valley, the tract lying north east of the Patkai Ranges. Their habitat lies to the east of Muttock and was bounded on the north by the Lohit river. presently they are distributed in the areas that come under Bordumsa circle and Miao sub-division of the the Tirap district and the Namsai subdivision and Chowkham circle areas of Lohit district. Their habitat lies in thick forests of tropical deciduous type.

1.2 ORIGIN OF SINGPHO FAMILIES :

As the prevailing legend among the Singphos reveal the story that
once in the very past before the existence of human being in the world a certain semi-mythological figure came down from the heaven, splited into two and six brothers came out of it, one of them died in the explosion, the remaining brothers were named Gam, Nong, La, Du, Tang and Yawang. Respectively and thus till now the nomenclature of the Singpho goes on accordingly.

The Singpho believes that the Caucasian who migrated to Europe were generated from the eldest brother Gam. The Chinese from the second brother Nong. The Siamese from the third brother La. The fourth brother Du died and became the God of protection for the living brother. The Kyein (including Burmese and Naga tribes) from the fifth brother Tang. The sixth brother Yawang, also known as Daru Tsinli Yawang or Shapawang Yawang became the forefather of the Singpho or the Kachins.

1.3 THE ORIGIN AND DISTRIBUTION OF SINGPHOS IN ASSAM:

The Singphos, who were racially identical with the Kakhus or Kachins of Burma drove away the Khamptis from the lands below the Patkai Hills during the Moamaria rebellion in the reign of Gaurinath Singha (1780-94) and settled themselves on the east of the Tengapani river east of Sadiya and on the Upper Buri Dihing in Namrup. According to Robinson the Singphos are the most powerful amongst the tribes bordering on the Assam Valley.

The Singphos come under two district administrative divisions, the Singpho area of the Tirap district and the Khampti-Singpho area of the Lohit District. The Singphos were the most difficult neighbours on the frontiers of Assam. When the Burmese invaded the province three times during the
first quarter of the 19th century, the Singphos joined hands with them. In fact, the 2nd invading force of the Burmese consisted of a large number of Singphos from the immediate border of Assam.

Even at the time of their advance against the Burmese in 1824, the British had foreseen the eventuality of Singpho hostility. The Singphos, taking advantage of the anarchy and confusion, made frequent inroads into the neighbourhood of Rangpur (present Sibsagar Town) devastating villagers and carrying off the inhabitants into slavery. Though attempts were made by the British to win over the Singphos, the main difficulty in coming to an understanding with the Singphos was the strong attitude taken up by the British on the retention of Assamese slaves by the Singphos and the plundering raids conducted by them in the plains of Assam. In June 1825, capt. Neufville advanced up the Noa-Dehing and by a series of expeditions, evicted the Burmese from the villages of the Beesa and Duffa Gam. These Singpho Chiefs who had sided with the Burmese openly, fled to the hills fearing serious British action against them. Their villagers were destroyed and 3000 Assamese captives were restored to freedom. Though capt. Neufville was not successful in freeing all the slaves, the operations led to the surrender of Beesa Gam and other Singpho Chiefs. The Beesa Gam was now permitted to move the site of his village from the pass on the Noa-Dihing, to a more accessible place near Borhat near the Buri-Dihing.

In June, 1826 Mr. Scott, the Governor General's Agent, visited Sadiya, and Sixteen out of twenty-eight Singpho Chiefs entered into engagements with the British Government, agreeing to give up the captives, assist the British troops in case of future need, and promised to refer their disputes
to the arbitration of the local officer. Hostages were given for the fulfilment 
of these agreement. However the release of 6000 slaves severely affected 
the Singpho economy. To compensate them, Mr. Scott proposed to establish 
a regular trade between Assam and the Upper Irrawaddy basin, which would 
pass through the hands of the Singphos. It was settled that the Beesa Gam 
would have general control over the rest of the tribes who had submitted 
unfortunately idea of trade across the Patkai never materialised as the British 
Government took no active steps to develop it.

1.4. AHOM AND SINGPHO RELATIONS

The Singphos one another vigorous warlike tribe on the Sadiya frontier. 
Colonel Hanney, whose knowledge of the North-East Frontier and Burma war 
singularly extensive, considers them to be identical in race with the Kakus 
or Kakhyens of Burma. The Singphos of Assam, however, would never call 
themselves. Kakus or Kakhyeans though they do in fact call their eastern and 
southern brethren by that name. They also maintain the same family titles 
and divisions of clans as prevail among the more remote tribes. The Singpos 
of Assam, with the conception of a few, belong to the Tesan clan of the 
Kakhyems. The chief habitat of the Kakhyens was on the great eastern branch 
of the Irrawaddy. With the break up of the Northern Shan kingdom, the 
Kakhyens entered on a career of conquest and aggression, which practically 
placed in their hands the whole country lying between upper Assam and 
Burma

The Singphos first came to prominence in Assam during the weak rule 
of Gaurinath Singha (1780-95) when the Moamaria rebellion was in its full 
swing. They drove out the Khamtis from the lowlands under the Patkai hills,
and settled themselves on the Tengapani, east of Sadiya, and on the Upper Buri Dihing in the tract called Namrup. They thus brought under them the whole country watered by the Buri-Dihing and the Tengapani rivers. The soil of this tract occupied by the Singphos is extremely fertile, consisting almost entirely of rich alluvial earth. It yields two crops annually and is adopted in an admirable degree to rice cultivation, being watered by numerous streams.

The Moamorias as formed ready allies in the Singphos. In the reign of Kamaleswar Singha (1795-1810) in 1787 A.D., the Singphos, in conjunction with the Moamarias releets who had fled to Namrup being defeated at the hands of the Ahoms, ravaged a number of villages in the eastern part of Assam. They also imported troops from Burma. Receiving the news of the ravages caused by the Singphos to Assamese villager, Kamalaswar Singha, in consultant with his ministers and other higher officials, commanded the Deka Phukan and some other officers to march against the Singphos. The Ahom army besieged the enemy in their fort who remained inside the fort by mounting guns round the palisads. In the first attempt the Ahoms could not win over the enemy and they had to disperse with the loss of fifteen sepoys. But subsequently, the Ahom renewed their attack with great vigour and succeeded in breaking the fort of the Singphos by causing explosion to one of the gun mounted on the surrounding palisade of the fort. At this, the Morans and Singphos formed themselves into two separate groups and dispersed in opposite directions. The Ahom soldiers then entered in to the fort of the enemy, destroyed the houses that were within the fort and looted the properties. The spoils obtained consisted of men, provisions, buffaloes, cows, copper, brass and cloths. The Singphos appeared on this occasion as
tame and submissive. In order to placate the Singphos leader Bichanong, Prime minister Parnananda, Burhagohain presented to him an Ahom girl named Rangili, together with numerous slaves and attendants. She was the sister of Baram Dhara Bahua's as father. Bichanong in his turn presented Rangili to the Burmese king Bodawpaya with the object of strengthening his friendship with the Burmese monarch. The Singphos, however, violated their pact with Purnanda Burhagohain. During the Burmese irrasions of Assam, they made constant raids on the helpless Assamese, carried off thousands of slaves and reduced the eastern part of the country to a state of depopulation. About 1,3000 of these Assamese subjects, carried off by the Singphos, were subsequently recorded by captain. Neufuille, the first British Political Agent of Upper Assam.

1.5 MISSIONARY CONTACT WITH THE SINGPHO:

At the close of the Burmese was in 1826, Assam having become a part of the British dominions, Major Jenkin, the Commissioner of Assam and the Agent to the Governor General of India, asked the English Baptists of Calcutta to start a mission on the frontier with Chief reference to the Shan and Khampti tribes. The Calcutta English Baptists in turn asked the American Baptist Mission in Burma to take up this work suggesting that they could thereby connect their Assam field with their northern Burma field. On the receipt of this invitation the American Baptist missionaries at Burma accepted the proposal for they believed that Assam would provide a gateway into northern Burma and thereafter into China. Accordingly Nathan Brown was set apart for the new Mission to the Shan's, a name used by the missionaries to identify the Khamtis with the Shans of North-Eastern Burma. Brown at
once began a study of the Shan language and acquired a vocabulary to two to three thousands words in two months before he left Burma. The Browns and the Cutters set out from Calcutta on November 20, 1835 and reached Sadiya only on March 23, 1836. Going out soon after his arrival at Sadiya, Mr. Brown discovered to his surprise and disappointment that only Shan within reach "were a few scattered hamlets" and that the Khamptis among whom they originally planned to work lived further east and were hardly related to the Shans of northern Burma as they believed. They further discovered that the Shan language used in northern Burma is not understood by the Khamptis and the Singphos. Having no other alternative, a new language had to be learnt and Mr. Brown started studying the language while Cutter worked on the printing press.

The history of Christianity which has been viewed in India as an integral part of the socio-cultural history of the Indian people, was applicable also in the case of Arunachal Pradesh. Though initially brought by persons of other countries in this country Christianity has an authentic existence of its own and while trying to discuss the role of the missionaries as regards to the Singphos, this perspective has been kept in view. Though the missionaries lived amongst the Singphos of the present Tirap district only for a very brief period between 1837-40 they provide a relatively detailed description of the socio-economic conditions of the Singphos of the early modern era. In a long conversation with Captain Hannay regarding the prospect of a mission amongst the Singphos and explaining why a mission to the Nagas was preferred rather than to one amongst the Singphos, Bronson writes that Capt. Hannay "does not think them a promising people for missionary effort at
present. They are now in an irritable state. They do not look to us as superiors. They are very treacherous and revengeful". Their reports on this tribe are of added importance as they were describing conditions as the time of their arrival at Sadiya and Jaipur in 1835 and 1837 respectively.

1.6 CULTURAL BACKGROUND OF THE SINGPHOS:

The Singphos were orginally naturalist. Peace loving as they have always been. They are however a very colourful people, being racially and culturally close to the Kakhus or Kachins of Myanmar.

1.6.1. RELIGION:

A study of the Singpho religion reveals that the people have no notion of a Supreme God, a being who is eternal, all powerful and omniscient guardian of morality. The Singphos have no concept of a deity having the characteristics of omnipotence, omnipresence, creativeness and complete beneficence which are the attribution of a Supreme Being of general conception.

The Singphos believe in a great number of spirits, hovering all around whom they term as Nats. They are conceived of having anthropomorphic figures, as well as, lacking many of the attributes given to an idealised God. A tradition describes that in the early days there does not seem to have been any distinction between men and Nats.

A study of the Singpho Religion suggest that it is based on fear. The Nats, as they are conceived, are the sole repositories of powers superior to men who direct and control the courses of nature and of human life. Thus it is seen that the Singpho religion consists of two elements, namely belief in powers higher than man and an attempt to propitiate them to
promote human interest. It is therefore, a Singpho is constantly under emotional pressure to please the nats and win their favour by prayer and sacrifice.

At present, various religious reformations influenced the customs, beliefs of the Singphos living in various places of the world. Due to the religious reformations which brought a vast changes in the customs, thoughts and in the society, the tradition of pleasing the gods slowly began to disappear. Yet the central idea of celebrating the festival held on within the new look of Manau Poi.

The Singphos of Assam are Buddhists. Therefore this festival, "Shapawng Young Manau Poi" is sought to be a way of memorising the ancestors and praying "Mathum Matha" for betterment of all creatures.

1.6.2. FESTIVAL :

The "Shapawng Yawang Manau Poi" is the most important folk dance festival of the Singphos. The Singphos residing in the states of Assam and Arunachal Pradesh of North East India celebrated this festival together every year on 14th Feb.

According to the Singphos, their ancestor Tingli Yawng's father was Shapawng Yawng. Tingli Yawng in order to get the blessing of his father Shapawng Yawng and the creator of world "Mathum Matha" celebrated the first Manau Poi as praising of Gods (Chikan Gundan Poi). Later, the festival came to be known as "Shapawng Yawang Manau Poi" in memory of their ancestor "Shapawnng Yawang."

The festival is open up by the establishment of "Shadung" which is
regarded as the symbol of the festival. During the putting up of "Shadung" the dance of unity (Gidhing Gumdin Manan) is performed to proclaim praise, unit and prosperity. At the end of the dance war winning dance (Padang Manau) Celebration Dance (Shut Manau) Farewell Dance (Kumran Manau) etc. are performed.

The two poles of equal length at the centre of "Shadung" are held as the main poles. One of them is called, the "Dunguri" and the other "Dungla" is the male person. One of them is the Moon and the other is Sun drawn on them. "Mathum Matha" created the Sun and Moon for all creatures. They made the world beautiful with flowers and fruits. So the Sun and Moon are given place in the main pole. The pole across them has a kind of bird sculpted on one end. The Singphos believe that after the creation of the world, when the plants first bore fruits and flowers, the birds were overjoyed. They held a dance festival under the leadership of "Dhanesh" to praise "Mathum Matha" in order to get the teste first of the newly flowers and fruits. A human child "Many Dingyaw" observed the festival hiddenly. Later Manau Poi was held under his direction to recognise the first propagator of this dance festival. "Dhanesh" is given the central portion of "Shadung". The three poles have various plants, animals drawn on them which show the equal importance of the various creations of "Mathum Matha".

The festival in its earlier stage was held to gain the blessings of "Mathum Matha" and the ancestors of Singphos through dance and songs. Later, around 500 A.D. and 800 A.D. in order to pray various "Nats" (Gods) whose importance was assigned, prayers were offered and sacrifices were
made, the Manau Poi were held importance being given to drinks. Later for many centuries, Manau Poi has been celebrated to please the Gods.

At present, various religious reformation which brought vast changes in the customs, thoughts and in the society, the tradition of pleasing the Gods, slowly began to disappear. Yet the central idea of celebrating the festival held on within the new look of Manau Poi.

The Singphos of Assam are Buddhists. Therefore this festival "Shapawag Yawng Manau Poi" is thought to be a way of memorising the ancestors and praying "Mathum Matha" for betterment of all creatures.

1.6.3. LANGUAGE :

The word "Singpho" or "Jingpaw" means "Man".

The Singpho language serves as a lingua franca among the Kachins comprised of Zi, Lisaw Maru, Lashi and Nungs. The Singphos are of Tibeto Burman Group.

According to a Tibeto Burman linguist James A. Matisaff "the Jingpaw or Singpho, which consists of a single language with only relatively slight differentiation among its dialects, is of paramount historical significance, it seems to lie at the linguistic, as well as geographical cross roads of the entre Tibeto Burman family showing special lexical and morphological affinities will all the other nuclei simultaneously."

There is a similarity between Singpho and Tibetan language which proves that both the Singpho and the Tibetan are from same ancestral home. Some examples are given below:
The Tibetan and Singpho (Kachin or Jingpaw) languages, though of same stock, belongs to different branches of it the parent of all these languages. Which we call "Turanaín" is believed to have been of some ancient Mongolian tongue from which are derived three groups namely, the Tibetan group, the Chinese group and the Burmese group. According to Dr. Ola Hanson, the author of the Kachin dictionary, both the Singpho or Kachin and the Tibetan (language) to be sister groups. Having a common source is some Mongolian mother speech now extinct.

The Singphos have no written language of its own, at present they use Roman script, which was developed by Dr. Ola Hanson a Baptist Missionery in 1895.

The language of the Singphos belongs to the Kachin group of the Tribeto-Burman family. Tone is a distinctive feature and the meanings of some words are dependent on tone. It appears that in some words the Singphos have dropped from the Kachin word [ the Kachin words are taken from the Kachin grammar by Hertz ]
SCHEMATIC CHART SINO - TIBETAN GROUP

- Sino Tibetan
  - Tibeto-Karen
    - Tibeto-Kanauri
    - Lepcha
  - Tibeto Burman
    - Gyarung(?)
  - Karen
    - Burmese-Lolo
    - Nung (ish)
    - Trung
    - Luish, Tamang

- Kachin
  - Jingpaw or Singpho
    - Abor-Miri-Dafla
    - Bodo Garo
    - Konyak kuki
    - Naga
    - Mikri Meithei & Mru
ai, sa and na are the suffixes for the present, past and future tenses in Kachin whereas in Singpho tai, ha and go are the corresponding suffixes. u and khum, the imperative and negative suffixes, are common both in Kachin and Singpho.

Chriously enough, the Manipuries who claim their descent from one Mairobi clan coming from the North, have some sort of basic linguistic similarity with the Singphos. The broad conclusion that these Languages are to some extent allied is obvious from the correspondences that emerge from comparision of the basic words in these languages, as the following comparative words:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>English</th>
<th>Manipuri</th>
<th>Singphos</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Rice (boiled)</td>
<td>chat</td>
<td>Chat</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fish</td>
<td>Nga-chan</td>
<td>Nga</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Match</td>
<td>Mekhet</td>
<td>Mekhet</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eye</td>
<td>Mee</td>
<td>Mee</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ear</td>
<td>Na</td>
<td>Na</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cane</td>
<td>Lee</td>
<td>Lee</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Umbrella</td>
<td>Chang</td>
<td>Chang</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Four</td>
<td>Mali</td>
<td>Mali</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Five</td>
<td>Manga</td>
<td>Manga</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

It may not altogether be improbable that as both the Singphos and the
Manipuries claim to have originally come from the north, there may be some relations between them, or that they may have originated from an allied stock.

1.6.4. SOCIAL LIFE :

The Singpho Society can broadly be divided into three groups, viz the Chiefs, the Plebeian and the Slaves. The former is called Ddufan, which literally refers to the royalty. It is reported that the members of the superior most Ddufan clan namely Dalup-dumsakumlao. Which is held to be the real owner of the Singpho country commoners are known as Mrengdong and those of slave origin are called Mayam. Of late, the earlier practice of slave keeping has greatly reduced and is on its way out. There are six large clans among them, viz, Mirip, Sisen, Yapang, Impan, Tingem, Ingkhum and Lafai, East of these is again divided into different subclans. Clan exogamy is a rule and violation of this rule is considered incest. The members of a clan are bound by mutual co-operation, help and concern for each-other. Clan solidarity is most visible during life-cycle crises. Their kinship terminology is classificatory in nature.

Junior levirate and Junior sororate are allowed. Marrying one's mother's brother's daugher (MBD) is mostly desired. For some reason if marrage with MBD is not possible, the maternal uncle would help find/negotiate the bride for the nephew. Singpho practice the Greeneralized Exchange system of marriage as the Kachins of Burma do-by this if a man marries into a particular clan, his descendants too would, by all mead, marry into that particular clans. So each clan through its marriage relations joins specific clans thus allowing the formation of alliance groups.
The village chief is held in high esteem and any dispute between the villages is settled by him with the help of village elders. His dress is different from that of a commoner. Normally, a Singpho village is named after the clan-name of its original founder, the first head-man of that village, and as such, the chieftainship of that village is vested to the people belonging to that particular clan only. Among the Singphos, chieftainship is hereditary, and corresponds to the general system of inheritance of the society. When a chief dies leaving behind no son to succeed him, the chieftainship may pass to one of his nearest agnates, no matter, even he belongs to some other village. The village chief is called *Agi* or *Mireng*. He is the political and social controller of the village. In legal matters he is assisted by a few counsellors usually chosen from within the village on the merit of their personal influence and wisdom. He may accept certain principles recommended by his counsellors to deal with the specific problems.

The Singphos are patriarchal, patrilineal and patrilocal. The family is headed by the father who holds the rights over common property. Male equigentiure is being practised, but earlier the youngest son in royal families used to have little larger share. Majority of the singphos are monogamous. Polygamy is resorted to when a wife is considered barren. But in case of wealthy Singphos, more wives mean more prestige and also additional hands to shoulder the family responsibilities.

1.6.5. MARRIAGE:

Both polygamy and monogamy system of marriage is accepted in the society. Some polygamy marriages arise from the obligation of a man to assume the responsibility from his brother's widow.
Marriage is preferred with a mother's brother's daughter or with a daughter of any man of the Ego Mother's sib. Marriage is strictly restricted from own patril ineal sib. The mother's sib is called "Mayu" and the father's sib as "Dama". There is an institutionalized circular exchange among five sib. The bride price is paid by the bridegroom's father and his local sibmate. A man may marry his stepmother after the death of his father. Step-brother and sisters if any, maintain the old relationship and address him as "aphu" brother. If the stepmother refuses to remarry, she or her father must pay back the bride price. In days when slavery was practised, slaves have a low status in society and as a rule, a slave had to marry a slave girl. The chief had the obligation of arranging such marriages. Exchange marriages between two families are not permitted. A family which has supplied a bride to another can not take bride from it. Divorce and remarriage on divorce or after the death of a spouse are allowed. Widow inheritance is reported.

1.6.6. FOOD AND DRINK :

(a) FOOD :

The Singphos are very particular for their food. The principal items of food are rice, sago, millet, maize and pulses like beans, roots and tubers like yam, arum, sweet potato, topioca, meat and fish. The vegetable, one like mustard leaves stems of red and bottle broung, edible leaves of wild plants and trees, pumpkin, ginger, garlic, sesame, bamboo shoot, plantain and banana flowers, stems of plantain and banana trees, caneshoots etc. The fruits are jungle barries, mango, jack fruit, pine apple.
Singphos though Buddhist don't abstain from meat. They eat the meat of all kinds of domestic and wild animals. Only dog and cat are forbidden as food as these people believe that these animals guide them in their journey from "Saikhu Major" (a place in the heaven) to the earth.

Rice is a staple food of the Singpho. They take rice throughout the year. Rice and millets are boiled with vegetable to which chillis and salt are added for flavour.

The jungle provides the Singphos with ample of vegetables. Vegetables are always boiled in water and never fried. Fish also is boiled with the vegetables. Other vegetables of common use are the banana flower (Ngujja-ci), cane shoots (Rri-ci), arum tubers (Naifa Nai) and the young spikes of various kinds of palm. Another favourite relish is the bamboo shoot (Kowa-makru Kru) which is either pounded or cut into pieces and dried in the sun, and then eaten along with rice.

Edible oil is rarely taken. Everything is boiled whether meat, vegetable or fish. Milk is taboo, but nowadays many have started taking, especially by the young educated group.

(b) DRINK:

Rice beer, tea are two beverages without which the Singphos can not pass their time. Taking tea frequently and rice spirit now and then have become a part of their life. It is almost a tradition for these people to produce tea leaves and manufacture tea themselves to suit their requirements. Many of them, particularly the old people prefer the strong liquour which testes bitter and drink without sugar or milk. However, the younger ones
prefer a mild liquor with sugar and milk which is often very sweet and fills the air with an enticing smell, as if, budding tea leaves have just been plucked afresh and put into the cup.

There are 3 kinds of rice beer prepared by the Singpho. 1. Tsa, 2. Sing Kong Khu 3. Lalo. The method of preparing the rice beer is the same with the other tribes. Tsa is a raw rice beer. It is brewed from boiled rice and not very strong. Sing Kong Khu is prepared from Tsa and is the refined product of it. Laho is the strongest of all the home made liquor of the Singphos. Rice beer is a common drink of the Singphos and also offered to a visitor as a mark of hospitality.

(c) NARCOTICS:

Opium and tobacco are two drugs common among the Singphos. They cultivated them in their own fields. But now-a-days opium cultivation is very rare and if somebody cultivates also it is very secretly. Of course, smoking is still very popular among the people.

1.6.7. ORNAMENTS AND DRESS:

A man wears a home-spun lungi (babu) woven in various colours. Ear ornaments (khaici) decorate his ears. Men and women wear the hair long. Man ties the hair in a knot on the head and wraps a turban round it. A woman also, wears the hair in a knot (njo) but fixes pins on it an encircles it with a chain of silver. She wears a turban but does not cover the knot as does the man. She puts on a skirt (bukang) and ties a strip of cloth (mugot) over the breast over which she has a blouse. A necklace (Khaici) decorates her neck. Formerly she used necklaces of beads only but nowadays
necklaces of silver and gold are used. She wears armlets (*lokhan*) on both arms and a nakan of stone of rather long size as ear ornaments. Singpho women often wear finger rings called *Lap-chop* which are made of either brass or silver. Ornaments are family property, a woman has no right to dispose them up to any person other than her rightful heirs.

**1.7 POSITION OF SINGPHO WOMEN:**

Education has not yet entered in the inner apartments of the village homes. The woman folk are generally responsible for their home affairs. Their superstitions, ignorance and illiteracy have covered them from ages to ages. Also the woman who have come in the big towns and cities could not come over from age old traditions. The women's mind is very self centered. They don't like to know much about the outside world. Their whole atmosphere is based on age-old tradition. They would fear to go out from the family bondage. Weaving and dyeing are done by the women only, the men never weaves nor-dye cloth. It is a taboo for them and is believed that a man weaves may suffer from loss of sexual urge. A Singpho woman is supposed to weave the cloths needed by the family.

Women had certain important responsinilities and duties. They had the right to participate with the male members of the family in earning a livelihood. Except for agriculture and construction of houses men did not have works. Women were responsible for all household work including collecting firewood and carrying it home, cooking, taking care of children and weaving. The mother or the eldest women of the house hold cooked on a common household. They were thus an economic asset.

However, a woman was deprived of all rights to inherit property, whether
Symbol Indicates different Singpho villages under Margherita Civil Sub-Division.
it be from her parents or her husband. She was only permitted use of the property, but could not own it. Neither could she purchase or sell property, polygamy was permitted, but it was largely avoided.

1.8 DESCRIPTION OF MARGHERITA CIVIL-SUB-DIVISION:

Margherita is aptly called the Eastern Sentinel of our country. Margherita is an industrial town under Tinsukia district. The name Margherita has been derived from the celebrated British Doctor John Berry White's Lovely daughter Margaret who died in most tragic circumstances in the wilds of this area in the late seventies of the last century. One T. Kinny's theory that Margherita was named after Margaret, the queen of Italy is hardly accepted. It means that the word Margherita has been derived from the Italian Margaret. It has occupied an important place in our eco-social environment in addition to the linguistic culture of Assam.

The Margherita constituency of Legislative Assembly consists of three Maujas namely-Buri-dihing, Tirap and Makum. At present these three Maujas, the villages and the population stand as symbol of historical and pre-historical cultural co-ordination of the region, Margherita constituency has as many as 210 village, 10 tea gardens, 4 collieries and 2 town. According to 2001 census report the total population of Margherita is 3,19,491 of which the male population is 1,67,127 and the female population is 1,52,364. The number of S.C. population is 6127 and that of S.T. is 7134. The total singpho population is 6442.

Arunachal prodesh borders the East, North and south of Margherita sub-division Tinsukia district touches the Western border of Margherita sub-division. The total land area of this sub-division is 921671 Bigha 2 Kothas
12 lachas. Margherita is inhabited by Assamese, Bengalis, Nepalese tea-garden workers and other tribes.

The pioneer educational institution of Margherita was established in 1934 named 286 No Margherita primary school which was later on upgraded to first M.E. school of that locality. The first High School was set up in 1938, the first Secondary school in 1963 and the first college in 1978.

During the Second World War the Margherita and its neighbouring areas were highly sensitive and busy region. During that time people of other places of India started migrating to that area. The activities of foreign Militaries kept Margherita fully alive. The war-devasted refuges came to India from the then Burmah through the famous steelwell route constructed during the war-period. This steelwell route established the international link and communication with Margherita. For all these reasons there was a heavy pressure on the population structure of that locality.

Today, the Head office of the North-Eastern coal fields is situated at Margherita. The villages have three markets for buying and selling their goods and services.

In Margherita there is a state dispensary, E.S.I. dispensary, T.B. Hospital and a few teagardens Hospitals in addition to the coal India central Hospital. In order to facilitate the rural people there is a public Health Hospital at Ketetong. There are a few central Govt. and state Govt. offices located at Nothen and Southern Margherita.

In view of the industrialisation, growing population and strategic geographical consideration the people were demanding Margherita as a sub divisional H.Q. since long. In 1989 on 15th August, Margherita was declared
as a sub-divisional town and accordingly on 1-10-89 comprising 15 gaon panchayats Margherita was given the status of sub-divisional town.

In Margharita sub-division one may pass through Bogapani, Tingrai, Pengeri, Bordumcha, Jangon, Tirap, Tipang, Namtak, Dirak and covering many villages inhabited by Agro-based workers along with the small and medium industries of more than hundred years old and side by side the labourer, employees, traders and others are enriching the reputation of Margharita in name and fame.

It can also be claimed that one day the educational institutions, the cultural organisation, business organisation and religious centres with their rich heritage and diversities, shall contribute to enlighten and strengthen the sectors of agricultural, commercial, educational and cultural map of Margherita and place it on its worthy and right position of pride and glory.

1.9. NEED AND JUSTIFICATION OF THE STUDY:

A developing society, in so far as it is developing, must necessarily be in a state of change. The changes may be responsibly planned or randomly accidental, cautiously evolutionary or precipitously revolutionary, evenly progressive or periodically reactionary, but eventually the diffuse impact of change touches the most traditional aspects and the most remote groups of the society. Parsons and Platt held that the "development of modern society included three process of revolutionary structural change: the Industrial Revolution, the Democratic Revolution, and the Educational Revolution." Today we would add that cybernetic revolution in electronic communications and automation. The first revolution brought the promise of economic wealth, the second the demand for political freedom, the third presaged the triumph over human ignorance, the fourth has precipitated the global village.
EDUCATION that is true, acknowledges the mind to be a living thing and therefore, stimulates it to give out more quality and quantity than is imparted to it from outside. The real meaning of education is an approach for harmonious development of an individual in the context of the culture of the community to which he belongs.

Since education has an intrinsic relation with the culture, the need for a anthropological approach to the education, particularly in tribal areas, is a must. The interaction between individual and his environment is of crucial importance in the process of education.

The individual is, to a great extent, guided by the cultural environment around him. Education is therefore, dependent on culture and is related to cultural studies.

The tribal societies in India have distinctive cultural features. Although "The Tribal" can be distinguished from the dominant non-tribal, cultures, yet within the "tribal" there are clearly distinctive cultural identities of each at the tribes. There are significant ethno centric cultural variations from tribe to tribe which are significant from the point of educational planning and approach.

The spread of education among the weaker sections of our society is vital as education is a prime requisite for socio-economic development. Formal education has been considered the main instrument of modernization. It is education that determines the level of prosperity, welfare and security of the people. It is felt that progressive utilisation of modern science and technology can ensure economic abundance and the natural comforts that the more advanced counties enjoy.

A view is sometimes expressed that there is nothing special about education for tribals and the real need is of intensification of effort for spread of education
in tribal area. The view is correct in so far as illiteracy has to be wiped out and literacy ushered in on a larger and wider scale in tribal areas. But there are several other dimensions of education for tribals which need to be considered carefully. Tribal societies are different from non-tribal societies in some respects. In the techno-economic race, they have been left behind. On account of paucity of interaction over time with societies outside tribal enclaves, they have developed their own culture, ethos, language, socio-political organisations, economic system, sub-system etc. The evolution of many of them has been on distinct lines, calling for apt educational approach and contents.

The Education Commission (1964-66) under the chairmanship of prof. D.S. Kothari stated that of the important social objectives of education is to equalize opportunity, enabling the backward or under privileged classes and individuals to use education as a lever for the improvement of their condition. Every society that values social justice must ensure progressive equity of opportunity to all section for an egalitarian and human society in which exploitation of the weak will be minimised.

The Singphos were originally naturalists, peace-loving as they have always been, they have an interesting legend regarding their origine. From the anthropological point of view, Singpho tribe may be defined as a group of indigenous people living interior places. They are backward due to their geographical isolation and therefore they have not been able to come up to the socio-cultural level as the general people have been. Although the Singphos brought with them their own language, the culture and religion, yet they are not prepared to abandon their age of tribal superstitions. The traditional economic self-sufficiency became a thing of the past in the context of the fast changing life style of the majority people. The absence of modern educational facilities and their unwillingness to develop the spirit of competitive
existence in the present day world, they became increasingly alienated from the changing society around them.

Therefore the investigator felt the need of a systematic geographical study of the problems faced by the Singphos. The study on impact of education among tribes is in infancy stage in this region. Because of their socio-economic backwardness, the tribals of this area have always posed a problem in matters of development and planning. Many plans and programmes have been chalked out for social, political and economic upliftment of the tribal population of India. In many cases it has been noticed that the achievement falls short of goal. It may be mentioned that a plan to develop a tribe in its socio-political, customs, traditions, their difficulties must be realised clearly. The implementation of the plan, otherwise would not be feasible. Since no significant study has been done on education among Singphos, the investigator feels the need of a systematic study on this particular tribe. In this context the present study is considered to be contributing to other studies. This will help in redesigning, replanning of whole educational system with special emphasis on their cultural and social system and their philosophy of life. The investigator thinks the study will help in accelerating the development of the Singpho society as a whole.

1.10. STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM :

On the basis of the framework of the concept and the Review of Related Literature the present study intends to highlight the impact of education among the Singphos tribes in Margherita civil-sub- Division. Hence the study has been entitled as "IMPACT OF EDUCATION ON THE SINGPHO TRIBE IN THE MARGHERITA CIVIL-SUB-DIVISION-A STUDY."
1.11. OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY:

The following are the main objectives of the study.

(i) To study the lifestyle of Singphos on social, economic and religious aspects of life.

(ii) To study the impact of education on life style of the Singphos who have formal education in comparison with those group of Singpho people who do not have formal education.

(iii) To study the influence of formal education in comparison with religious education on Singphos.

(iv) To study the problems of Singphos in receiving education and to give remedial measures.

1.12. HYPOTHESIS:

$H_1$: There is a positive relationship between life style of Singpho people and education.

$H_2$: There is significant difference on life style between formally educated and formally non-educated Singphos.

$H_3$: Influence of formal education is more in comparison with religious education among Singpho tribe.

$H_4$: There is some problems in receiving education among the Singpho people.

1.13. AREA AND LIMITATION OF THE STUDY:

The area of the study is the Margherita Civil-Sub-Division, Assam.

Though Sigphos are living in various parts of Assam and Arunachal Pradesh
and some other countries of Asia, but due to constrains of time the investigator confined the study only in Margherita Civil-Sub-Division as most of the Singpho villages are situated in this sub-division.

1.14. KEY TERM DEFINITION:

(i) Impact: The word "Impact" means powerful effect that something has on somebody or something.

(ii) Education: The word "Education" means a process of teaching, training and learning specially in school or college to improve knowledge and develop skills. (According to Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary)

(iii) Tribe: Etymologically the term "Tribe" is derived from the Latin word "Tribus" - a division of the Roman people. A tribe is defined as -

(a) "A set of people, theoretically of common descent: an aggregate of families, forming a community: a race: a class or set of people: loosely, a classificatory division". (Oxford Dictionary)

(b) "A social group comprising of numerous families, clan, or generations together with slaves, dependants or adopted strangers" (Webster's New Collegiate Dictionary).