INTRODUCTION

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM:

Golaghat is an important District of upper Assam having its own historical and cultural heritage. It has been declared as a district on 23rd October '1987. The Headquarters of the district is situated at Golaghat. The district covers a geographical area of 3,548.7 sq. kilometers. According to the Census of 1991, its population is 8,28,096 out of which 4,31,346 are male and 3,96,750 are female. Of course, its population is more than 09 Lakh now, out of which 72,277 are ST and 50,000 are SC.

Golaghat district covers 729 revenue villages, 102 Gaon Panchayats and 8 Anchalik Panchayats. It lies in between 25°40' and 26°45' North latitude and 93°15' and 94°35' East longitude and an altitude of 71 metres from the sea level.

Golaghat is a rural based district of Assam. A vast majority of its population lives in villages. According to the census of 1991, 94.1 percent of the total population of the Golaghat district is rural. Only 5.9 percent population is urban. As far as the socio-economic condition is concerned; the rural people of Golaghat district have been the worst sufferers in every aspect of their lives from the time immemorial. Most of the rural people of Golaghat district live below the poverty line. A vast majority of its people depend for their livelihood on farm and non-farm activities. Many of them do not have access to necessary food, shelter, drinking water and sanitation facilities. As a result, they have been suffering from poverty. It has been realized that to have national development, the rural development at the grass root level is necessary. Therefore, the rural development schemes and policies launched by the Central and the State governments have been implemented by the development blocks of the Golaghat district also to raise the standard of living of the rural people.
At the grassroots level, the Development Block is the basic administrative unit to implement the rural development schemes successfully and bring the rural people above the poverty line.

**SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY:**

The first and foremost necessity of India today is rural development. It has emerged as a new force and occupies the topmost position in the agenda of Indian national policy. The basic aim of rural development is to improve the socio-economic life of the vast number of people in rural area. Any aspect related to socio-economic development of the rural people received the attention of the planners and policy makers and the number of schemes and projects have been undertaken plan after plan.

It is well known to all that the successful implementation of the rural development schemes and projects depends upon the sound development block administration. Precisely speaking, the development blocks have to play a very significant role in achieving the required socio-economic development in rural areas.

As far as the Golaghat district is concerned, it has three sub-divisions. They are - Golaghat, Bokakhat and Dhanshri. Golaghat is the biggest sub-division in the district. In Golaghat sub-division, there are six developments blocks. The blocks of Golaghat sub-division have implemented various schemes and policies introduced by the government for rural development since 1952 to assist the families living below the poverty line in rural areas. However, poverty still exists among the rural people of Golaghat district. Viewing an actual state of affairs in rural areas, the desired impact with which the schemes and projects are taken up has not been seen. Therefore, it deserves serious study to find out the reasons of persistently prevailing problem of poverty. The role of the blocks as the agencies of rural development is to be critically analyzed with equal importance.
For proper investigation, the development blocks of Golaghat sub-division have been selected and studied. A dispassionate study can disclose the lacunae in the implementation of rural development schemes and projects in rural areas. The conclusion derived can be the feedback to the planners and administrators and appropriate and reinforcing measures can be initiated.

**AIMS AND OBJECTIVES:**
The following are the basic objectives of the present study --------

1. To make an analysis of the central rural development programmes before and after independence to fight against rural poverty.
2. To examine the role of the development blocks in implementing these programmes with special reference to the blocks of Golaghat sub-division during 1991 to 2001.
3. To examine the extent of benefit derived by the beneficiaries from these programmes under the blocks of Golaghat sub-division.
4. To examine the extent of people’s participation in rural development administration in Golaghat sub-division.
5. To find out the reasons why poverty is increasing in rural areas. In addition, to bring out few suggestions to eradicate the obstacles detrimental to implement the development programmes and policies to remove poverty from the rural areas particularly in Golaghat sub-division.

**HYPOTHESIS**
The following hypotheses have been proposed to make an analysis of the role of the development blocks of Golaghat sub-division in implementing the rural development programmes in order to improve the socio-economic conditions of the rural people and to eradicate poverty from this sub-division in the light of above-mentioned objectives.

It is expected that that the development blocks, particularly of the Golaghat sub-division would be able to achieve the broad objectives of improving the living condition the rural people and help them to cross the poverty line
through the proper implementation of the schemes and polices adopted by the National and the State government.

With a view to removing poverty in rural areas, the government has adopted a large number of development schemes and policies. In all the Five Year Plans, specific schemes and policies have been proposed and the National and the State government have laid out money for this purpose. From the information of the official data and other reliable sources, it has been assessed that the rural people of Golaghat sub-division have been benefited to certain extent by the development policies and plans proposed by the Planning Commission under the Five Year Plan with the special component plan for the development of rural people. In spite of the attempts made by the government to implement these programmes through the development blocks poverty exist in rural areas of Golaghat Sub-division.

The eradication of poverty in rural areas may be possible only with the proper use of money released by the government, sufficient inspection from the higher authority, abolition of undue political interference, active participation of the village people in preparing development plans and policies for the rural people. Mass awakening is also necessary in this field.

**LOCATION OF THE STUDY:**

The present study proposes to investigate the role of the development block in implementing the rural development programmes with special reference to the blocks of Golaghat sub-division.

There are six development blocks in Golaghat sub-division. They are:

1) Golaghat North Development Block, Dergaon : Area-11855 hectares.
3) Golaghat Central Development Block, Kathalguri : Area-00160.77 hectares.
4) Kakadonga Development Block, Sital Pather : Area-11835.00 hectares.
5) Gomariguri Development Block, Gomariguri : Area-24635.00 hectares.
6) Morangi Development Block, Doigrong : Area-26900.49 hectares.
METHODOLOGY

The method of study is mainly analytical, based on primary and secondary data. Historical method is also followed to analyze the rural development programme in India before and after independence. Field study has been conducted in order to collect data and other relevant documents. The technique of random sampling is followed among the beneficiaries in a few specific villages under six development blocks of Golaghat Sub-division.

The population census of 1991 has been taken as the base year with a view to analyse the demographic features as well as economic and infra-structural development in the rural areas.

For a proper investigation, a few villages have been selected for the study. In order to collect the actual data on development because of implementation of various schemes and policies, the people of selected villages were interviewed.

A brief description of the comparative study of development achieved by the development blocks under Golaghat sub-division is included in this work. Materials for this work have been collected from both primary and secondary sources.

Primary sources include the information collected from the individual beneficiaries of the selected villages with the help of interview schedule within the sub division.

The secondary sources include:

1) The data and information collected from the offices of the development blocks within the sub division.
2) Various governmental departments.
3) Literature available on Rural Development programmes in India and Assam, particularly of Golaghat sub division.
4) The library journal, periodical and published paper on rural development
CHAPTERISATION OF THE STUDY:

The entire work is divided into eight chapters. The study begins with the introduction, which includes the statement of the problem, significance of the study, aims and objectives of the study, hypothesis, methods used and chapterisation of the study. The first chapter deals with the analytical concept of development in general and rural development in particular. The central rural development programme before and after independence to eradicate rural poverty are highlighted in the second chapter. The third chapter deals with the administrative set-up of the rural development process from top to the bottom i.e. the central level to the local level. The fourth chapter contains the profile of the development blocks of Golaghat sub-division. The role of these development blocks in implementing the rural development programme in their own jurisdiction has been explained in the fifth chapter of the study. In the sixth chapter, an attempt has been made to depict a picture of the benefits achieved by the beneficiaries from the rural development schemes in 30 sample villages of Golaghat sub-division. The seventh chapter of the study deals with the extent of the people's participation in rural development administration. Finally, the concluding chapter delineates the constraints brought out by the study in rural development process. Further, it includes a few suggestions for successful implementation of the rural development programmes so that the rural poor could elevate their economic standards up to their satisfaction.