Methodology is the way one goes about the investigation under question. Here, the investigator attempts to elucidate his methods and procedures for evolving the design of the study undertaken. This chapter thus describes the setting up of the methods and the various steps along with the logic behind their choice that have been adopted by the researcher in carrying out his research.

The present study falls under the category of descriptive survey method which is a method of investigation that attempts to describe, analyse and interpret the conditions, practices, trends etc. of a problem under investigation. According to C.R. Kothari (2004) the survey method gathers data from a relatively large number of cases at a particular time. It is not concerned with individuals as individuals. It is concerned with the generalized statistics that result when data are abstracted from a number of individual cases. It requires expert and imaginative planning, careful analysis and interpretation of the data gathered and logical and skilled reporting of the findings.¹

According to Cohen and Manion (1985) survey method is the most commonly used descriptive method in educational research and its purpose is generally to obtain a snap-shot of conditions, attitudes and/or events at a single point of time.² In this method as Jaeger (1988) states, unlike in the experimental method the researcher does not manipulate anything; rather he assumes an objective stance with the objects or subjects of research and simply observes
them or asks them to provide data. The research consists of collecting data on things or people as they are, without trying to alter anything.³

Three main stages of the study:

The study is divided into the following stages –

Stage – I:

During this stage the researcher studies relevant books, journals, related theses, dissertations, periodicals, government reports and other forms of related and relevant literature in recommended libraries and centres of studies. This helps not only in collecting secondary data but also in gaining ideas and insights to construct and design the tools and the procedures to collect primary data for the study.

Stage – II

Stage – II consists of constructing and designing of the survey tools or instruments and procedures, conducting the survey, administration of the tools to the various sections of the sample population followed by the collection of the primary data required.

Stage – III:

Stage III of the study comprises collection of data, their compilation, analysis and interpretation both qualitatively and quantitatively and finally writing the thesis.

SELECTION OF SAMPLE:

Schools: For the purpose of the study 64 (23.97%) Secondary Schools out of the total of 267 Assamese Medium Secondary Schools of the
provincialised category in the district of Kamrup have been selected on the basis of Random Sampling as Random Sampling has been followed in selecting all the samples for the study. In random sampling, selection of the population is done in such a manner that every unit in the population has an equal chance of being selected. This is considered the most popular and trustworthy method of sampling in terms of securing representativeness of the whole population. Besides this method has the following advantages as well — 1. It is most representative of the population, 2) It is simple to use and 3) It is free from any bias and prejudices. And it is in consideration of these advantages that the Random Sampling method has been followed in the selection of the samples for the study. Thus the 64 schools for the study have been chosen from ten out the total of seventeen Block areas and four municipal and town areas of the district representing both the rural and the urban areas of the district. Of the 64 schools selected for the study 51 are from the rural areas and 13 from the urban areas. But of course in selecting the ten Block areas as also the schools therefrom care had been taken to see that they are scattered across the length and breath of the district, and hence ensure a better and wider representation of the population rather than being concentrated in a limited geographical area of the district convenient to the researcher.

**Teachers:**

Teachers selected for the sample of the study are those teachers who have been teaching English in classes VIII, IX and X in the schools selected for the study. 200 such teachers including both male and female were selected for
the study out of whom 172 were found responding, the response rate being 86%.

Students:

The student sample chosen for the study consists of 1245 students selected from classes VIII, IX and X from the sample schools with an equal number (20) of them taken from each school. The classwise distribution of students was as follows – 10 students from class X and five students each from classes VIII and IX chosen from the first twenty students of each class. Such a distribution represented students from both the sexes as also from different class categories like General, SC/ST and OBC etc. Thus there were 618 boys and 627 girl students in the sample while the general and SC/ST (combined) fractions were 1044 and 201 respectively. Again the rural-urban fractions were 981 and 264 respectively.

Heads of institutions:

All the Heads of Institutions i.e. the Headmasters and principals of the sample schools are also chosen for the sample of the study. However, of the total number of 64 Heads four abstained from responding to the questionnaire given to them though they extended their cooperation in the other aspects of the work. Therefore the total number of Heads of Institution in the sample is considered to be 60.

Tools used:

Tools used in the study include questionnaires, interviews, and classroom observation. Three questionnaires have been used in the study. These are –
Preparation and Administration of tools:

The questionnaires have been prepared on the basis of knowledge, skills and insights gained from a study of standard books on research methodology, previous literature in the field and with proper inputs and guidance from the research supervisor and in keeping with the objectives of the study. As for the construction of the tools of interview to be used with teachers and Heads of Institutions they required no additional pre-determined questions or schedule as they were of an informal, unscheduled and semi-structured nature, the objective being with both subjects to validate the data or responses supplied by them in the questionnaire as also to elicit some extra data, that might get generated spontaneously during the process. The particular questionnaires themselves served the above purpose in this respect. Classroom observation as a tool of research has been used in the present study also to validate the responses of the teachers to certain questions in the teacher questionnaire relating to some basic pedagogic and classroom practices characteristic of an ideal ESL class.

As far as administration of the tools is concerned the procedure detailed below was followed. The researcher personally visited the schools selected for the study for the purpose of distributing the questionnaires to the subjects i.e. the teachers, the students and the Head of the Institution concerned. First of all the researcher met the Headmaster or Principal of the particular school with a
formal letter explaining the purpose of the visit and requesting his /her help and cooperation in the matter. At the same time the objective of the visit was also verbally explained to his satisfaction; and once his assent of help and cooperation was obtained the questionnaire meant for him was delivered to him with the request to return the same properly filled up with the required data / opinion on a date mutually agreed upon. After this the names and other relevant information of the teachers teaching English at the high school (junior secondary) level i.e. in classes VIII, IX and X in his school were collected and with his due permission they were personally met in the school itself and given a copy of the teacher questionnaire each after they were thoroughly explained the purpose of the visit. A mutually acceptable date for return (collection) of the filled-in questionnaires was fixed on which the researcher himself personally turned up and collected the same. Questionnaires for those teachers who could not be met personally on the day of the first visit were left with the Head of the Institution to be delivered to them at his earliest. After all this was done, a date after an interval of ten days or so was fixed with the Head of the Institution for meeting the students for the purpose of administering the student questionnaire. It was this same date on which it was mutually agreed that the filled-in questionnaires from the Head of the Institution and the teachers would be collected. On the day of the second visit the students were met in a class as scheduled earlier. They were first explained the purpose of the visit and the objective of the work. Then they were distributed the questionnaires and as these were written in English these were thoroughly explained in Assamese to the best of their understanding. Though in a controlled situation the students
were made to feel free, relaxed, comfortable and homely in the situation. They were motivated to provide true and correct data by explaining to them how they could play a very significant and crucial role in the work by supplying true and authentic data that would lead to correctness and authenticity of the study undertaken. The work required 45 minutes after which the filled in questionnaires were collected and the students thanked for their cooperation. It must be noted here that the researcher was present in the room like as an invigilator during the time the students filled in the questionnaire so that the individual opinions of the students could not be affected or manipulated through cross-copy or cross discussions among them. After this the filled in questionnaires were collected from the Head of the Institution as well as the teacher respondents. And it was on this very day that the Head of the Institution and some of the teacher respondents were made to undergo an oral interview of an informal and semi-structured nature without their being aware of the fact that they were being interviewed and the subjects chosen for the interview were those of the respondents who could be caught for the purpose. The numbers of subjects thus interviewed are 50 Heads of Institutions and 60 teachers where the teacher interviewees represent 40 schools.

Similarly classroom teaching of 30 teachers representing 27 schools and inclusive of both rural and urban schools were observed with the objective of validating some of the responses made by the concerned teachers in the teacher questionnaire as regards some of the basic pedagogic and classroom practices characteristic of a true ESL class as also to gain some further data if possible for the study. Teachers selected for the purpose were again those who could be got
motivated and agreed to the proposal. The classroom observation work thus required prior consent and approval of both the teacher and the head of the institution concerned. The process was such that the researcher personally observed the class taught by the teacher concerned during the class period and noted gaps or whatever he noticed between the teacher's claim in the questionnaire and his actual behaviour in the class with regard to some of the basic pedagogic and classroom practices as noted earlier in the chapter. The basic aspects in the light of which the classroom observation was carried on included, use of teaching method, amount and quality of target language input, interaction, learner participation, learner engagement, communicativeness, feedback, teacher's attitude to learner errors, teacher's sensitivity to learner needs, teacher's general attitude to learners.

The above procedures in the administration of the tools and techniques were followed in each and every school brought under the purview of the study.

KEYWORDS, CONCEPTS, USED IN THE STUDY:

Teacher:

The word teacher in the study is used to mean the English teacher i.e. the teacher who teaches English in a secondary school.

Class, Head of Institution:

'Class' here refers to the English class while 'Head of Institution' stands for the Headmaster or principal of a secondary school.
Statistical Support:

Simple statistics like percentages, averages etc. have been used to interpret numerical data in the study.

Chapter-Scheme of the Study:

The study comprises seven independent chapters as described below-

Chapter one is entitled 'Introduction' and deals with the historical overview of the global perspective of teaching of English followed by a brief historical note on the English Language Teaching practices in India as well as in Assam with reference to the district of Kamrup. This chapter also comprises the statement of the problem, its objectives, hypotheses, delimitation and justification. Chapter two is titled 'Theoretical Foundation of the Study'. This chapter presents a discussion on the dominant theoretical concepts and insights of second language learning and teaching with particular focus on the factors or variables that influence the teaching and learning of English as a second language. A critical exploration into some expert views on the problems of teaching English as a second or foreign language is also attempted here which is expected to give the present investigation into the problems of teaching English in the chosen universe the proper direction. This is followed by the third chapter entitled 'Review of Related Literature'. In this chapter a review of similar studies done in the field or some related areas is undertaken. Studies reviewed in this chapter include a number of studies done in India, few others done abroad and a few done in Assam and the Northeast. Chapter four of the study describes the research design, methodology, construction and administration of tools, sample
selection etc. and is titled ‘Methodology and the Research Design’. Chapter five is named ‘Analysis and Interpretation of Data’ where the data collected for the study have been analysed and interpreted quantitatively and qualitatively in the light of the objectives set forth for the investigation in order to arrive at results and findings. Chapter six is entitled ‘Findings’. This chapter provides a comprehensive summary of the findings of the study. The seventh and last chapter is entitled ‘Conclusion’. This is the concluding chapter of the study where an effort is made to establish the need of the investigation on the strength of its findings and outcome. This chapter also contains the recommendations and suggestions made towards negotiating the problems and improving the situation of teaching English in the schools of the area under study, suggestions to future researchers and problems faced during the investigation etc.

References:

