CHAPTER - I

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1.1 GENERAL BACKGROUND OF INDIA AND THAILAND

It is evident that Thailand and India are, geographically, quite close to each other. They are separated by only a small land-strip of Burma, and the sea-route is completely open. Although they are different in size and population, it is obvious that Thailand and India are, nevertheless, similar in many aspects including social and cultural conditions. History reveals that the Northeastern part of India is the gateway between India and South-East Asian countries, especially Thailand. It is aptly called the "Anthropological Museum" for her providing shelters to a population of numerous ethnic affiliations, having different social structures and cultural heritage. The people steadfastly retain their culture well into the past amid such mass infiltration. Both regions of North-Eastern Thailand and North-Eastern India suffer from lack of exploitation of natural and human resources.

It is said that the social and cultural link between these two regions is more a phenomenon of the past. Burma or Shan State is the medium through which this contact was carried out. The relationship is more
prominent before or in the early phase of conversion of the Shan and its various groups into Buddhism.

1.1.1 NORTH EASTERN INDIA

The present North-Eastern India comprises of seven states, which include Assam, Manipur, Meghalaya, Tripura, Nagaland, Arunachal Pradesh and Mizoram. Before independence, these states were loosely administered by the British. After independence the whole region was called under a single state named Assam.

North-Eastern India has become a geo-political concept. In the wake of this development, the social scientists too are now trying to conceptualize the area as an integrated research terrain. This sort of conceptualization, however, ought not to make us feel that anthropologists, or other social scientists, have suddenly discovered a regional vision for giving a new meaning and content to this research. That is yet to come, and when that comes we may claim, with justice, that North-East India is a valid socio-anthropological concept.

A review of the state social anthropological research in North-East India, therefore, concerns us with the region which, in the not too distant past, was
known as Assam. From the geographer's point of view, it is rather easy to demarcate the physical boundary as a separate state. The area is hemmed in by foreign territories on all sides except for a narrow corridor in the west which connects with the rest of India. The region can be easily divided into two parts, namely 20,000 square miles expanse of the Brahmaputra Valley and the much smaller Barak Valley on the one hand, and the 68,000 square miles of the essentially hilly and mountaneous terrain on the other hand. Thus if we go for regional considerations, it is evident that we have to satisfy with a vast area of considerable physio-graphic diversity. The population, which is around 20 million in North-East India, is extremely heterogeneous in terms of race, language, economy, religion, culture and social organization.

Basic ethnographic research is not very new in North-East India particularly in the north-east hill areas. It goes back right up to the second quarter of the last century, corresponding with the annexation of Assam by the British, in retracing the history of ethnical studies in the hill areas. The early British administrators, missionaries, explorers, soldiers and tea planters often took interest in the life and manners of the hill dwellers.
and were diligent enough to leave accounts of their views and impressions. A soldier like John Butler, a traveller like Thomas Cooper, a tea planter like Gray, a missionary like Nicholas Krick, or administrators like Needham, Robinson, and Wilcox, fighting, working, travelling or evangelizing in the frontier hills, can hardly be designated as field researchers intent on learning for posterity objective anthropological accounts. In most cases, their reports are sweeping, impressionistic accounts about the tribal people they happened to come across. As such, the reports are often tainted by their personal bias (Elwin, 1959). However, one must bear in mind that the age of formal social anthropological research had not yet begun in Britain, Europe or America when these people made their sojourns in the rugged hills of the North-East. Even E.T. Dalton, who immortalized by his magnificent publication of 'Descriptive Ethnology of Bengal' in 1872, was not an anthropologist in the modern sense of the term. But his work bears the testimony of good findings and is still worthy of consultation for anthropological research. In fact, the note of social anthropological research in North-East India reaches back to a period well before the publication
of Note and Queries in Anthropology in 1878 or the inauguration of anthropology as a distinct discipline at the Oxford University in 1884.

Under the auspices of an honorary director of ethnography of the Government of Assam, a series of sixteen detailed, factual monographs were prepared by a number of British Civil Servants, and occasionally by missionaries, on various tribal groups. Thus, in the course of the first three decades of this century, many tribal groups came to be widely known to scholars all over the world through these monographs. Hodson's account on the Meteis was published as early as 1908. But the pursuit of ethnography with a clear theoretical perspective was completely unknown to these administrator-turned anthropologists.

Then the next step heralded with the coming of other civil servants in the North-eastern hill areas, some of them trained in anthropology, like J.H. Hulton, who copiously wrote on the various Naga groups, Lt. Col. J. Shakespear who wrote a monograph on the Lushai clans (1912), Col. N.E. Perry who prepared a very thorough report on the Lakers, and so on. As for the plains-dwelling tribals, Rev. Endle prepared a full-scale monograph on the Kacharis. Even occasional notes and official diaries
left by the administrators were brought up-to-date and published by their successors. For example, the unfinished work of Lyall on the Mikirs was later on finalized by Stack and a monograph, even if somewhat sketchy, was published. Many of these monographs are useful ethnographic source-books, at least when judged by the standard of times when the studies were undertaken.

Apart from satisfying the intellectual curiosity of western anthropologists on art, culture, customs, and religious ideas, these monographic accounts served a more useful purpose nearer home: as reliable guidelines for administering the frontier tribesmen. But the fact remains that in a way, applied anthropological and socio-graphic research in the north-eastern region of India were initiated together, and that too at a fairly early date. Outside of the administrator-turned ethnographers, Professor Furer-Haimendorf was perhaps the first and the last professional social anthropologist to be commissioned by the governor of Assam prior to Independence to explore and establish friendly contact with the tribes of the present Subansiri District of Arunachal Pradesh (Furer-Haimendorf, 1955).
Physical Map of North-East India
Some scholars belonging to the Department of Anthropology, established in 1921, at Calcutta University made some works on the tribal population of this area. Tarak Chankra Das undertook five month-long field work between 1931 and 1936 among the Purums, a small Kuki tribal group inhabiting the shores of Loktak Lake in Manipur (1945), J.K. Bose made a study of aspects of the Garo social organization (1941), K.P. Chaltopadhyay worked among the Khasis (1941).

Since 1950s the works started taking concrete and smooth shape. These are: (i) the anthropological Survey of India which has a field station at Shillong established in 1853; (ii) the Census Organization of India especially its Social Studies Division; (iii) the Tribal Research Institute of Assam; (iv) the Agro-Economic Research Centre for North-East India at Jorhat; and, (v) the Naga Institute of Culture at Kohima.

These works have contributed to the development of Anthropological, Ethnical, Historical research in North-East India. But despite an early start of research activities, it has been unable to build up a solid and meaningful tradition of research. The field is vast, and unresearched areas are numerous. These call for sustained and well planned strategy of research and publication.
Fig. No. 1.2
Map showing close relationship between India and Thailand
1.1.1.1 Arunachal Pradesh

Arunachal Pradesh, the land of the rising sun, is on India's eastern most frontier. It stretches from the eternally snowy mountains forming the southern limits of Tibet to the hot and humid plains of Brahmaputra valley. It is bounded by the Brahmaputra Valley in the west, and the Tibetan and the Sinkiang regions of China to the north and the east and Burma to the south-east. It is a new name added to the political map of India, comprising the territory which was included under the east North-East Frontier Agency (NEFA).

Geographical Location:

The geographical location of Arunachal Pradesh is strategically important to Indian national security as it borders with China.

Arunachal Pradesh is 83,578 square kilometres in area with a population of 628,050 according to 1981 census. The names of the present existing nine districts are: West Kameng, East Kameng, Lower Subansiri, Upper Subansiri, West Siang, East Siang, Dibang Valley, Lohit and Tirap districts. There are about 110 tribes and sub-tribes residing in the district. The major tribes are Monpa, Sherdukpen, Nissi, Apatani, Hillmori, Padam,
Minyong, Khamti, Singpho, Mishmi, Nocte, Wanchao, etc. Literary percentage is 20.09 according to 1981 census in Arunachal Pradesh.

Table No. 1.1
Important Statistical Data of Arunachal Pradesh

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Capital</th>
<th>Itanagar</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Area</td>
<td>823,578 sq.km.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Population</td>
<td>625,050 (1981 census)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sex ratio</td>
<td>870 females per 1000 males</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Density of population</td>
<td>7 per sq. km.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Literacy</td>
<td>20.09 per cent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male literacy</td>
<td>27.98 per cent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female literacy</td>
<td>11.02 per cent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Population of Scheduled Tribes</td>
<td>441,167</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hindus</td>
<td>102,832</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Muslims</td>
<td>842</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Christians</td>
<td>3,684</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sikhs</td>
<td>1,255</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Buddhists</td>
<td>614,00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jains</td>
<td>39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other religions &amp; persuasions</td>
<td>296,674</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Religion not stated</td>
<td>785</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Government of Arunachal Pradesh:1984
Map of Arunachal Pradesh
Administration:

The year 1912-13 marked further progress in the history of frontier administration of the province. A major attention was directed to North-East Frontier and several important measures were introduced.

"The year 1914 saw still greater advance and consolidation of administration in the frontier territories. In this year, the Governor of India (Foreign and Political Department) by a notification extended the jurisdiction of the Assam Frontier Tracts Regulation of 1880 to the hills 'inhabited or frequented by Abors, Miris, Mishmis, Singphos, Nagas, Khamtis, Bhutiyas, Akas and Daflas'.

"The same fateful year saw the birth of a separate administrative unit, the Lakhimpur Frontier Tract concurrently under the charge of the Deputy Commissioner of Lakhimpur Steps were also taken during 1914-15 to demarcate areas of administrative units:

i. The central and Eastern Section,
ii. The Lakhimpur Frontier Tract,
iii. The Western Section.

"... The first two sections, namely the Central and Eastern Sections, were placed under one political officer with head-quarters at Sadiya and the
Western Section under another political officer with head-quarters at Chardicar. In 1919 on the recommendations of Sri Beatson Bell, the then Chief Commissioner of Assam, the title of the Western Section was changed to Balipura Frontier Tract and the Central and Eastern Section to Sadiya Frontier Tract" (Choudhury, 1982).

Later in 1943, it had become necessary to create the additional post of an Adviser to the Governor of Assam which was mainly concerned with the administration of the North-East Frontier Tracts. The Governor of Assam, assisted by the Adviser, first acted as the agent to the Governor-General and later to the President of India.

After independence in 1948, the remaining portion of the Sadiya Frontier Tract was further divided into two divisions, the Abor Hillsand and Mishmi Hills. Then in 1954, the Frontier Tracts were again renamed a Kameng Frontier Division, Subansiri Frontier Division, Siang Frontier Division, Lohit Frontier Division, Tirap Frontier Division, and Tuensang Frontier Division under the North-East Frontier Agency.

A few important features of Arunachal Pradesh are as follows:

**Agriculture:**

Agriculture is the mainstay of the people of Arunachal Pradesh. The cultivators constitute 35.55 per cent
of the total population and 72.29 per cent of the total number of workers. About 94 per cent of the territory is rural, and consists of 3,126 villages under 48 Integrated Rural Development Blocks.

The cultivated area is estimated at about 1,33,435 hectares of which 1,01,329 hectares are under 'slash and burn' method of cultivation called 'jhum'; 24,207 hectares under wet-rice cultivation and 7,899 hectares under terraced rain-fed cropping. It has been the persistent effort of the government to encourage the jhum cultivators to adopt the methods of sedentary cultivation for more productivity.

The main crops are rice, maize, millets, wheat, potato, mustard, ginger, chilli, cotton etc. Some typical indigenous crops are ragi, job's tear, beck wheat, pear-millet and root crops, such as sweet potato, colocasia, kochu, yam, tapioca, etc.

The plan for utilization of land under different cultivation comprises food, fodder and cash crops, growing of vegetables and fruits simultaneously. Pine-apple, orange, lemon, lichi, papaya, banana, guava and temperate fruits, such as apple, plum, pear, peach, cherries, walnuts, almonds and so on are raised and being introduced progressively in different climatic and altitudinal zones.
Industry:

Industrial potentiality of Arunachal Pradesh with abundant hydro power and forest resources and the prospects of coal (estimated deposits 85 million tones) and oil (estimated crude reverses 1.5 million tones) is high.

Principal medium-scale industries producing veneers, tea-chests, ply-boards, etc., are forest-based. Small industries include, among others, saw, rice and oil mills, fruit preservation units, steel fabrication, etc. besides handloom and handicraft industries. The government is providing training facilities in various crafts under cottage industries as well as technical education through various craft training centres and the Industrial Training Institute at Roing.

A light roofing sheet factory has been set up at Pasighat and a fruit processing plant is being set up in the West Siang District.

Irrigation and Power:

Arunachal Pradesh is a mountaneous terrain, where jhum or shifting cultivation is widely practised. Area under sedentary cultivation in valleys and terraces are irrigated, usually by diversion channels.
The total number of operational holdings is 66,499 of which the number of wholly or partly irrigated holdings is 25,341 covering an area of 23,802 hectares. Schemes were undertaken to bring 5,700 hectares of land under minor irrigation during 1981-82.

Seventeen micro-hydro schemes have been commissioned since 1971, and their combined installed capacity had gone up to a total of 9,170 kw by March 1982. Power is also available from the diesel generating sets, which have a total installed capacity of 2,100 kw.

By the end of the Fifth Plan 287 villages were electrified. Now about 430 villages have electric lights.

At the end of the Sixth Plan, there was a net work of about 600 km of 33 kv and 11 kv Ht lines, which has been augmented to 883 km by 1981-82.

Training & Production Centres:

There are 21 training and 24 production centres which import training in weaving, carpentry, blacksmithy, silversmithy, wood-carving, bell-metal work, carpet weaving, cane and bamboo work, tailoring, knitting, painting, etc., besides producing articles on a mass scale. An Industrial Training Institute at Roing gives training in technical trades. Forests cover 61,000 sq km of the area.
Public Health:

During the last decade development activities under the Health Programme made rapid strides and over the years the number of hospitals increased from 96 to 120. The bed strength today is 1,270 comprising 816 general beds, 122 T.B. beds from 272 leprosy beds. In 1975 there were 217 doctors, 131 nurses and 148 pharmacists.

Rivers:

The Brahmaputra (locally known as the Siang in hill sector and the Dibang when it reaches the plains), the Dibang, the Lohit and the Subansiri are the important rivers.

Rainfall:

The monsoon sets in from May-June and continues till the end of September. The average annual rainfall at Bomdila is 1,019 mms, Pasighat - 5,792 mms, Tezu - 4,071 mms and Changlang - 1,988 mms. The snow line starts from about 3,962 metres altitude and the whole of the northern region along the international boundary is under snow during the winter months.
Places of Attraction:

Important tourist centres are: Bomdila, Tawang and the famous Buddhist monastery, namely, Itanagar with the ruins of historical Ita Fort, Malinithan and Bhismaknagar - the two important archaeological sites, and the Parasuram Kund, a place of pilgrimage.

Tribes:

About 50 distinct languages and dialects are spoken. Each tribe is divided into a number of exogamous clans. As a general rule, the tribes do not intermarry. A broad list of the main tribes in districts is given below:

Kameng District:
Monpa, Sherdukpen, Bagni, Aka, Khowa, Miji, Sulung, Bangro.

Subansiri District:
Tagin, Nishi, Aptani, Bangro, Mikir, Hill Miri, Sulung.

Siang District:
Adi, a general name for a number of tribes such as Gallong, Minyong, Padam, Pasi, Bori, Pailibo, Romo, Milang, Ect, Khamba Memba and Hill Miri.
Lohit District:
Padam, Mishmi, Singpho, Khamti.

Tirap District:
Nocte, Singpho, Wancho

Table No. 1.2
Area Population and Headquarters of Districts

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>District</th>
<th>Area (Sq km)</th>
<th>Population</th>
<th>Headquarters</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. West Kameng</td>
<td>9,594</td>
<td>62,946</td>
<td>Bomdila</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. East Kameng</td>
<td>4,131</td>
<td>42,722</td>
<td>Seppa</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Lower Subansiri</td>
<td>13,010</td>
<td>1,13,300</td>
<td>Ziro</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Upper Subansiri</td>
<td>7,032</td>
<td>39,406</td>
<td>Daporyo</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. West Siang</td>
<td>12,006</td>
<td>74,151</td>
<td>Along</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. East Siang</td>
<td>6,512</td>
<td>70,274</td>
<td>Pasighat</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Dibang Valley</td>
<td>13,029</td>
<td>27,716</td>
<td>Anini</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Lohit</td>
<td>11,042</td>
<td>69,498</td>
<td>Tezu</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. Tirap</td>
<td>7,024</td>
<td>1,28,135</td>
<td>Khonsa</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

LOHIT DISTRICT

History:

The Lohit District is situated on the north-eastern extremity of Arunachal Pradesh. The district derived its present name from one of its principal river, the Lohit (also spelt Luhit), which rises from the eastern Tibet and enters India near Dichu village in the Kibithoo area of the district. Flowing southward, it drains the eastern part of the district and meets the Dibang near Sadiya and then the Dibang (or Siang). The confluence of these rivers is known as the Brahmaputra. The name of the area now known as Lohit District underwent a series of changes. In 1914, this area was a part of the administrative unit called the Central and Eastern Sections, North-East Frontier Tract, which was renamed in 1919 as the Sadiya Frontier Tract. In 1948, the Mish Hills District was created as a result of the bifurcation of Sadiya Frontier Tract. In 1954, the Mishmi Hill District came to be known as the Lohit Frontier Division, and finally in 1965 as the Lohit District.
Fig. No. 1.4
Map of Lohit District
Physical Feature:

The district is bounded on the north by Tibet (China), on the east by Burma, on the west by the Siang District of Arunachal Pradesh and the Lakhimpur District of Assam and on the south by the Tirap District of Arunachal Pradesh.

The district occupies an area of 11,042 sq. kms. Its total population is 69,498 of which 39,024 are males and 30,474 females as enumerated in the 1981 Census. Although Lohit is the largest district of Arunachal Pradesh, it is very sparsely populated. The density of population is 3 persons per sq. km. compared to 6 per sq. km. in Arunachal Pradesh as a whole (Census of India, 1981).

The district is divided into five sub-divisions, namely Tezu, Namsai, Hayuliang, Anini and Roing which are further divided into circles. The first named three sub-divisions are situated in the Lohit and Kamlang Valleys administered by the Deputy Commissioner, Lohit District and the last two in the Dibang Valley administered by the Additional Deputy Commissioner, Dibang Valley.

Mountains are the most imposing features of topography of the Lohit District. Situated in the easternmost stretch of the Himalayas flanked by the Patkai
and other associated ranges on the east, the district
contains many lofty ranges and towering peaks, some of
which rise above 5,000 metres. The mountains are
precipitously steep with altitude varying from 610 m.
to 5182 m. The ranges along the northern border are
perpetually covered with snow. On the southern fringe
of the district, a strip of land rises gradually northward
from the plains to the foot of the hills. The man Bum
(range) spurs out from the Patkai, and descends to this
plain belt on the southeastern part of the district.

The principal river of the district is Lohit.
It rises from the mountain range across the north-east
border of the district, where it is known as the Zayul Chu.
Flowing southward, it enters the district through a gorge
approximately 6 kms. north of Kibithoo. The river has a
course of about 190 kms. through precipitous hills and
valleys before it reaches the plains at Paramuram Kund,
a place of pilgrimage near Tezu. It receives in its
course many tributaries of which Dau (Dou), Derai (Dela),
Digaru, Chulum (Kallung), Dichi, Tidding, Kamlang and
Noa Dihing are important. All these rivers are snow-fed
perennial water-channels, and before they join the Lohit
River they are also fed by many rivulets. The Dibang is
the main river of the western part of the district. It
cuts through deep gorges and difficult terrain in its upper course. Originating from the southern flank of the great Himalayan range, it flows from north to south through the district, and finally meets the Lohit near Sadiya.

The plains towards the south of the district are drained by the Kamlang and Noa-Dihing Rivers. The main tributaries of the Noa-Dihing in the Lohit District are Dirak on the left bank and Tengapani on the right. During the monsoon, the rivers overflow their banks causing serious erosions. They change their course very often and cut themselves into innumerable channels. The river Kamlang originates from the Glao lake in the Wakro circle and flows east-west to meet the Lohit River.

The Tai Tribes in Lohit District:

The Tai Khamtis, Tai Noras, Tai Aitous and Tai Rongs, like the Ahoms, were on the move from North Burma towards India probably from the forties of the eighteenth century. They migrated from the country known as Bor-Khamti (or 'Mung-Khamti-Lung') meaning vast. They are Buddhists. Their racial kinship with the Ahoms included the latter to permit them to settle on the Tengapani River in 1751 A.D. During the Moamaria rebellion, which broke out in Assam in 1779 A.D. and continued till the beginning of the
nineteenth century, the Khamtis saw a change to grab more land. Taking advantage of the internal dissensions which weakened the Ahom authority on the outlying provinces, the Khamtis advanced towards Sadiya crossing the Brahmaputra. Headed by their two chiefs Burha Raja and Deka Raja, they became the masters of Sadiya. In 1794 A.D., they deposed the Sadiyakhowa Gohain, the Ahom Governor of Sadiya. Emboldened by this success, the Khamtis threw a challenge to the authority of the Ahom king Kamaleswar Singha (1795-1811). In 1799 A.D. the Burha Raja led a large army against the Ahoms. According to some Ahom Buranjis, the other Shan tribes, such as Tai Noras and Phakials, and also the Miris, Mishmis and Adis joined the Khamtis. The Ahoms took position at Sadiya after crossing the Brahmaputra River and repulsed the combined force. Burha Raja together with a large number of his soldiers was taken prisoner. The Ahom rule in Sadiya was restored with the appointment of a new Sadiyakhowa Gohain. But the Ahoms failed to retain their hold on Sadiya for long, as it appears that the Khamtis, after a short interval of subjection, regained their grip on this area during the troubled period of the Burmese invasions of Assam (1816-1924). When the Treaty of Yandabo (1826) was concluded by which the King of Burma
handed Assam over to the British, the entire Sadiya region was found under the domination of the Khamtis.

The Tai Khamtis and Singphos settled in the lower regions drained by the Tengapani and Noa-Dihing. The area lies to the south of the Lohit River contiguous to the Tirap District of Arunachal Pradesh Lakhimpur District of Assam.

1.1.2 NORTH-EASTERN THAILAND:

The North-East Thailand is the largest region of the Thai Kingdom, a rolling, semi-arid plateau which also contains various valuable minerals. It covers 170,226 square kilometers (66,250 square miles), or one-third of the area of the whole country. It also comprises approximately one-third of the total 50.1 million population (Local Administration, 1985). There are seventeen provinces (which is called 'Changwat' in the Thai language) in the North-East Thailand. They are Nakhon Ratchasima, Khonkaen, Mahasarakham, Roi-Et, Kalasin, Chaiyaphum, Buriram, Surin, Sisaket, Ubon Rajathani, Loei, Udornthanai, Nongkhai, Sakonnakhon, Nakhornphanom, Yasothon, and Mukdaharn Provinces. The area is dominated by a large plateau called the Khorat Plateau, which is about 200 meters (500-600 feet) high in the west, and slopes down to about 60 meters (200 feet) above the sea level in the east. The Mun and the
Chi which are fed by tributaries flowing from the west through the middle part of the plateau are the most important rivers in the Khorat plateau. The two rivers join the Mekhong Rivers in the east. The North-East Region is separated from the Central Region by the Petchabun, the Dong Phrayayen and the Sankamphaeng Ranges in the west. The Phanom Dong Rek (Dong Rek) Ranges divide the frontier with Kampuchea (Combodia) in the south and the Mekhong River separates Laos from northeastern Thailand in the north and the east of the region.

Perhaps the most dramatic discovery has been the civilization that flourished on the Khorat plateau, first unearthed in the tiny hamlet of Banchiang communities of early farmers began to settle in this area around 4000 B.C. and flourished into the beginning of the Christian era (National Identity Office, 1984).

Most of the population of the Northeast called themselves "Thai-Isan" (Isan : pronounced Ee-saan) which means the northeasterners, and "Phak Isan" for the Northeast Region. The majority of the people in the region belong to "Phaw-Thai" (Thai-Isan) who migrated across the Northeast from Laos and the left bank of Mekhong over the past several hundred years (Seidenfaden, 1978; Schrock et al., 1968; Udom Buasri, 1980). There are seven
Map of Thailand

Fig. No. 1.5 : Map of Thailand
distinctive sub-groups, the largest being the Laos-Wieng who live in the centre and northeast of the region. The second largest group are the Thai Khorat in the southwest. The region also contains Khmer in the three southern provinces, and Vietnamese who are recent migrants and have settled in the towns or large villages. Finally, there is a large long-standing population of Chinese, again mostly in the towns and large villages. The northeasterners speak Thai-Lao (Thai-Isan); and the rest speak Yo, So, Phu Thai, Seak, Khmer, Kui (Soai), etc., which are the dialects of some minority groups in Buriram, Surin, Sisaket, Nakornphanom, Sakonnakhorn and Kalasin Provinces. In Mahasarakham Province, some of these minority people are found due to their migration from nearby places and due to the location of Mahasarakham Province at the central part of these provinces. Nakhon Ratchasima is the gateway to the sprawling Northeast Plateau which is partly bordered by the mighty Mekong River, the natural frontier with Laos.

Other major Northeast attractions include Khon Kaen and Mahasarakham (Khon Kaen, and Srinakharinwirot University) university towns and famous for its Mat Mi Silk Loei and Agricultural Fair, Loei province's Phu Kra Dung National Park, a crisply beautiful, high forested plateau where cool season night temperature falls to near
freezing point. Ban Chiang, a tiny hamlet where the world's oldest civilization flourished at least 5,600 years ago; Nakhon Phanom site of Phra That Phanom, the most revered northeast shrine; Surin, where some 200 elephants participate in the annual Elephant Round tip; Ubon Ratchathani, which introduces the annual Buddhist Rains retreat with a lovely candle Festival; and Yasothorn where each May amid much ribald revelry, villagers launch massive home made 'Bang Fai' rockets (Skyrocket Festival) into the air to 'ensure' bountiful monsoon rainfall.

The Northeast Thailand (Isan or Phak-Isan) is situated on the undulating terrain bordered on the west and south by rather hilly to geography.

The rainfall patterns of the Northeast are, to a great extent, dominated by the annual of the southwest monsoon and of tropical cyclones, which originate over the Indian Ocean and South China Sea, respectively. The rainy season, however, begins with the arrival of the Bengal cycloes from the Andaman Sea, which carry light rain during February to April. The main part of the rainy season normally occurs from May to October. During this period, the south-west monsoon and tropical cyclones bring heavy rains in the earlier and later parts of the dry
NORTH-EAST THAILAND PROVINCES

Fig. No. 1.6 : Map of North-East Thailand
and cold northeast monsoon coming to the region from the mainland of the continent.

Rice, the staple food crop in the region, is grown, on average, on 80 per cent of the total cultivated land. Of the remaining land 90 per cent is devoted to field crops. Fruit trees and vegetables occupy less than 3 per cent of the total cultivated land.

The proportion of paddy land actually planted depends on the occurrence of droughts early in the season, while the yields per rai depend on the rainfall pattern later on. Flooding, for example, may destroy the rice crop after transplanting. In the central south-eastern provinces of Roi-ET, Surin, and Srisaket, conditions in the flood and non-flood plains are normally favourable for full planting each year, but floods later in the year may greatly reduce yields. However, in provinces such as Khon Kaen, Nakhon Ratchasima, Mahasarakham, and Brirum, although flooding may reduce yields on the plains, there appears to be a compensation effect, the higher rainfall benefitting rice growing in the mini-water-sheds of the undulating land.

The people dress much like the northern Thai (the women wear simple blouses and knee-length sarong; the
men wear loose trousers and cotton jackets called "Mohom") except close to the Cambodian border, where the "Pha Chong Kraben" a side-rolled skirt for women, a broadly bloused and belted pantaloon-like garment for men - similar to the Hindu dress in India, worn instead of trousers. The dialect is like that of Laos, although very similar to that of the central Thai. With some attention, however, the northerners and the northeasterners can understand one another. A glutinous rice is consumed in most of the Northeast, except near the Cambodian border. Besides rice, various kinds of timbers, jute, and cattle constitute important exports. In general, the people depend on agriculture, but the scanty rainfall and sandy soil make the living in the region difficult.

1.1.2.1 MAHASARAKHAM PROVINCE:

It can be said that the area of the North-East Region of Thailand, which covers seventeen provinces, can be divided into three major sub-areas: the areas along the three main rivers of the region: (i) the Mun; (ii) the Chi; and (iii) the Mekhong. According to some archaeological studies, it has been found that there are some historical objects which give the evidence of the presence of the Buddhists and the Hindus in the areas at the northern part of the region and around the Mun Plain in the southern
part; and in the Chi Plain, there exists a number of essential Buddhist evidence in "Muang Fa Dad Song Yang" (the present Kamalasai District of Kalasin Province) and "Muang Kanthara Wichai" (the present Kanthara Wichai District of Mahasarakham Province). Regarding such historical evidence, it can be noted that there existed some civilized communities for years in the area of the present Mahasarakham Province (Mahasarakham Office, 1984).

Geographical Location:

Situated at the middle of the northeastern region of Thailand, Mahasarakham is about 469 kilometres from Bangkok by bus route. The area of this province is approximately 5,760 square kilometres. Listed clockwise, bordering on Mahasarakham are Khon Kaen and Kalasin on the north, Roi Et on the east, Surin and Buriram on the south and Khon Kaen on the west.

Without mountain, the topographical features of Mahasarakham are mostly plateau lands. The plateau in the north and the south, slopes towards the lower plains in the east. There are also plain areas in the western part and its soil cannot keep enough humidity.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table No. 1.3</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Important statistical details of Mahasarakham Province</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Capital : Muang District</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Area : 5,760 sq. km.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sex ratio : 503 females per 1000 males</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Density of Population : 139 per sq. km.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male literacy : 97.84 per cent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female literacy : 93.90 per cent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Literacy : 95.84 per cent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Population of scheduled tribes : -</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hindus : 0.01 per cent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Muslim : 0.08 per cent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Christians : 0.4 per cent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sikhs : 0.01 per cent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Buddhists : 99.48 per cent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jains : -</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other religions &amp; persuasions : 0.01 per cent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Religion not stated : -</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Buddhist monasteries : 1,028</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Christian monastery : 1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Referring to the linguistic evidence, it is said that the Thai-Isan people speak the Thai-Isan language which has been historically descended from the Vientiane people of Laos. When there was a riot in Vientiane, some Laotianes migrated across the Mekhong River to Thailand, and later on settled down in the plains around the Mekhong, the Mun, and the Chi Rivers. During the reign of King Rama I of Thailand, a number of residences were constructed for them and some leaders of these groups were assigned under the condition that these communities ought to render services to the king regularly.

In 1890, King Rama IV divided the Hua Muang I-San (the North-East Territory) into four main administrative sub-divisions each of which was governed by an assigned governor under the control of the high commissioner at Nakorn Champrasak. Regarding the mentioned sub-divisions, Mahasarakham was assigned under the North-East Lao Division which comprised six towns (muangs) in control: (i) Muang Tha Khon Yang (established from the former the village of Ban Tha Khon Yang in 1870); (ii) Muang Kanthra Wichai (established from the former Ban Khantararat in 1874); (iii) Muang Phayakhaphum Phisai (established from Ban Na Kha in 1879); (iv) Muang Mahasarakham (former Ban Lad Kud
Yang Yai or Ban Nang Yai, established in 1865; (v) Muang Wapipathum (Ban Nang Bua Phothanalaw, established in 1881); and (vi) Muang Kosum Phisai (Ban Wang Tha Hua Khwang, established in 1881). At the mentioned period of time, Mahasarakham was firstly assigned under the administration of Phraya Cha Sena (Thad Krairuk), the governor of the North-East Lao Division who set up the administration office at Muang Ubon Rajathani; and Phraya Maha Amataya Thibodi (Run Sriphen), the high governor at Nakhon Champasak.

Muang Mahasarakham was established on August 22, 1865 by Thao Maha Chai and Thao Buathong who were the nephews of the Roi-rt Muang-Leader which firstly gathered about 2,000 people (and later in 1869 migrated 7,000 more) from Muang Roi-Et to settle a new town in Mahasarakham. The groups firstly settled the administrative centre on a hillock near Ban Lad Nang Yai (present Kud Nang Yai), and later on moved to Nong Kra Thum (the North side of the present Pho Sri Monastery in 1882. There were two towns in control: Muang Wapi Phatum and Muang Kosum Phisai. In 1900, the towns were turned into districts and names of the towns were also changed into Uthai Sarakham District and Prajan sarakham District (the present Muang Mahasarakham
District and Borabu District of Mahasarakham Province). In addition, in 1901, two districts were added under the administration of Mahasarakham: Phayakhaphum Phisai District (former Ban Nakha which used to be under Muang Suwannaphum administration), and Kanthara Wichai District (used to be under Kalasin Province administration). In 1913, the administrative office of Mahasarakham was moved to be centred at Tambon Talad (present Muang Mahasarakham District).

Regarding the mentioned migration and the settlement of the Province of Mahasarakham, it is noted that, up to the present time there have been thirty governors governing Mahasarakham, and at present the province has, according to the administrative divisions, been divided into 10 districts, 98 tambons (groups of villages or sub-districts), 1371 mubans (villages), 1 municipality, and 7 public-health-centres. The names of the present existing ten districts are: Muang Mahasarakham, Borabu Wapi Pathum, Na Chuak, Phayakhaphum Phisai, Kantharawichai, Kosum Phisai, Chiang Yun, Na Dun and Kae Dam districts.

Apart from these, there are 120 health-centres, 11 hospitals, 110 banks, 1 provincial administrative offices, 1 municipality and sanitary districts.
Mahasarakham Province comprises 841,553 (including 421,045 males and 420,578 females) population. It can be said that there are 130 people living in a square-kilometre area. It is also noted that there are 361,690 people who have right to vote for the national representative, and according to the number of the population, the province has 6 members of parliament (Mahasarakham Province Office, 1985).

Mahasarakham Province has the area of 3.6 million rais or 5,760 sq. kms. It is equal to 3.4 per cent of the whole region. It is the 15th largest province area of the North-East. About 60 per cent or approximately 2.2 million rais of the Agricultural areas are very dry. In some areas, the soil on the surface cannot hold water. The forest area covers only 2.74 per cent of the whole province. The natural water resource has almost dried up. These problems result in poor crops. Besides, insufficiency of water for drinking and using causes another serious problem for the people in the province. This is due to not having enough facilities in storing water as well as not having enough roads connecting the villages.

The highest percentage of the population in Mahasarakham is engaged in agriculture; the next three predominant
industries are services, commerce and manufacturing respectively. The highest ranking industry for male and female is agriculture; the next ranking industries for male are services, commerce and manufacturing.

Cassava milling is another important processing industry. The mills slice and dry cassava before making feed pellets. The farmers are thus not burdened with storage and post-harvest crop preparation.

Table No. 1.4

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>District</th>
<th>Area (sq kms)</th>
<th>Population</th>
<th>Headquarters</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Muang Mahasarakham</td>
<td>604</td>
<td>135,296</td>
<td>Muang</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wapi Pathum</td>
<td>589</td>
<td>106,744</td>
<td>Nong-Saeng</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kosum Phisai</td>
<td>148</td>
<td>97,608</td>
<td>Hua Khwang</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Borabu</td>
<td>1,050</td>
<td>127,463</td>
<td>Ban Ko</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kantharawichai</td>
<td>412</td>
<td>69,445</td>
<td>Khok-Pra</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chiang Yun</td>
<td>445</td>
<td>76,385</td>
<td>Ban Chiang Yun</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Na Chuak</td>
<td>560</td>
<td>50,117</td>
<td>Ban Kud-Rang</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Na Dun</td>
<td>229</td>
<td>33,438</td>
<td>Ban Na Dun</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Phayakhapum</td>
<td>1,200</td>
<td>111,975</td>
<td>Palan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Phisai</td>
<td>165.5</td>
<td>25,659</td>
<td>Kae Dam</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Most of the manufacturing and primary processing of the North-East is focused in Mahasarakham province. Rice mills, as to be expected are predominant. Most of them are small and diesel powered and do custom grinding. In the irrigated parts of the province where rice is grown for the market larger mills are fairly common. Most of these larger mills do not only provide custom grinding but are local collection points for rice exports located in Bangkok. The charge for the service by the small rice mills is the by-products which they keep. Such by-products—the rice bran actually—are used for animal feed. Some of the mills sell the bran in the local markets, but most of them raise livestock—brood sows and poultry.

In addition to farming, other occupations bring in small amounts of income. These include seri culture and silk weaving, itinery trade, fishing, etc. Ordinarily the household is involved in a couple of these activities, the husband, for example, being engaged in fishing and the wife taking care of the silk worms, spinning and weaving.

Industry:

There are no large industrial factories. Only medium and small mills can be found, and most of them
produce agricultural products.

Public Utilities:

In the fiscal year, 1985, the total number of doctors was 33, meaning that there was one doctor for 64,245 persons. The number of hospital beds was 270 or one bed per 2,855 persons. There was one private hospital, 14 private clinics, 10 district public health centres, 181 nurses, 3 dentists and 5 pharmacists.

Agriculture:

Agriculture is the mainstay of the people of Mahasarakham Province. The cultivators constitute 90 per cent of the total population and 10 per cent of the total number of workers.

The forest, which offers many species of wood of some economic value, is one of the important natural resources. What remains is less than 10 per cent of the total area of this province only.

Some small water reservoir, canals and swamps, which supply water to a few per cent of the agricultural area, cannot supply enough water all the year round.
The important occupations of the people in Mahasarakham Province are glutinous rice growing; planting kenaf and cassava; livestock raising and inland-water fishery, but the crops' yield are very low because of the unfertile soil and less than enough quantity of water supply. The other occupations of the population are trade, agroindustry and employee.

**Rivers, Stream and Reservoirs:**

The most important river is the Chi River which starts from the Petchaboon Range. It flows through Chayaphum, Khon Kaen, Mahasarakham (Kosum Phisai, Kantharawichai, and Muang Districts), and into the Mua River in Ubon Ratchathani Province. The length of the Chi River just running in Mahasarakham area is estimatedly 60 kilometres.

There are streams which are useful for farmers such as Lam Nam Phong: which divides the south of Khon Kaen and the north of Mahasarakham, Lam Pac: runs between the south of Kalasin and the north of Mahasarakham, Lam Tac: the east of Roi-Et and the south of Mahasarakham is divided by this stream, Lam Phang Soong: divides the south of Mahasarakham and the north of Buri Ram, Lam Sia: runs from the central of Mahasarakham through Borabu and Wipipatum Districts.
Besides, there are some more reservoirs such as Nong Bua Reservoir: It is the biggest reservoir in Kantharawichai District, Kang Loeng Chan Reservoir: the large reservoir for fish breeding, irrigation, and recreation, near Mahasarakham town, Bung Kui Reservoir: it is for agriculture in Kosum Phisai District, Huay Chanuan Reservoir: which is in Phayakhaphum Phisai.

**Rainfall:**

In Mahasarakham it rains mostly during the months of July, August and September. The number of the most rainy days is 44, or 54.1 per cent all year round. The maximum temperature is 42.8°C, the minimum is 7.2°C and the average temperature is 28.9°C. The climate of Mahasarakham is hot in the hot season and rather cold in the cold season.

**Irrigation and Power:**

In Mahasarakham the Chi River, Kang Loeng Chan Reservoir and some canals help in agriculture to grow rice and vegetables. The 2,000 kilowatts of electricity from Nam Phong Dam in Khon Kaen can help electrify this province.

Agricultural production in Mahasarakham is severely hindered by the lack of irrigation facilities; at the same time, the drainage system is poor to the extent
that the monsoon rains tend to cause severe flooding resulting in crop damage. Recently there has been a conscious attempt at crop diversification and the cultivation of cash crops - cassava, kenaf, sugar cane, to mention a few - are not an uncommon sight on forest land which, because of the lack of irrigation facilities, is most unsuited for rice, the staple grain.

Agricultural production is supplemented by livestock rearing, especially cattle and buffalo, the former for meat and the latter predominantly for draft animal since farm mechanization has yet to be widespread in the northeast.

Places of Attraction:

The province is situated in the middle of the north-east region. There are some important spots to visit on tour of this province. About 4 kilometers from the town, there exists the Kaeng Lerng Chan Reservoir. It is a popular holiday spot, with peaceful and beautiful atmosphere. Kosumpi National Park in Kosumpisai District is an attractive place with hundreds of monkeys, birds, and other animals. It is on the bank of Chi River. Besides, there are also many religious monuments such as, Phra Buddha Ming Muang and Phra Moongkhon Standing Buddha. Both
are located in Kantharawichai District. They are made of red sandstone, and are of the style of Dvarawati Period.

KANTHARAWICHAI DISTRICT

History:

The Kantharawichai District is situated on the north-eastern extremity of Mahasarakham Province. The district derived its present name from the name of the chief of the town governor in the past.

Kantharawichai has a long history with many historical places, ruins, and antiques. It used to be a town founded and independently ruled by governors. The name of the town was Khanthathirat and today the evidence can be seen about the town erection at Khantha village near Nong Bua Reservoir. Unfortunately, after 1328 A.D. no governor ruled this town and it became weaker and weaker. In 1891 A.D. in the reign of King Chulalongkorn it was re-erected and its name was changed from Khanthathirat to Kantharawichai. Phra Protumwiset was the new governor who ruled Kantharawichai. In 1900 A.D. it became one of all the districts under Kalasin Province authority. In 1908 A.D. it was changed from Kalasin to be under the authority of Roi-et Province. In 1913 A.D. Kantharawichai was changed again from Roi-et Province to be one of the districts under Mahasarakham Province
authority, and the District Office was moved from Kantha village to Khok Phra village. In 1917 A.D. Kantharawichai was renamed as Khok Phra District, but in 1939 A.D. its new name Khok Phra was changed back to its old name Kantharawichai again. The reason was that they wanted to maintain its history and its old name. Later in 1957 A.D. four sub-divisions were separated from Kantharawichai to be under Chiang Yun a new district authority, ruled by Mahasarakham.

The beginning of the long time of development that accounts for the emphasis on a tall, tower like, monument all over Laos and Isan can be found in the Dvaravati of the 5-6th centuries A.D. The northeastern Dvaravati stupa stands on a double base. The tumulus dome or "bell" element is a round earthenware pot with a constricted neck and a flaring mouth. The chatra (parasol) spire is a long, tall, tapering cone or triangle.

Dvaravati Silver plates were found at Kantharawichai District. These silver plaques were discovered in 1972 in the ruins of a building which might be ubosot (ordination hall) in the ancient town of Kantharawichai. They probably belong to the late Dvaravati art about the 10th 11th century A.D. and show strong ethnic influence.
Fig. No. 1.8 : Map of Kantharawichai District
All of them including the containing terracotta bowl and Buddhist votive tables of Indian Para style which was unearthed at the same site are now displayed in the Konkaen National Museum.

**Physical Feature:**

The Kantharawichai District is bounded on the north by Yang Talad District and Kamalasai District of Kalasin Province, on the south by the Muang District of Mahasarakham, on the east by Kamalasai District of Kalasin, and on the west by Kosumphisai District and Chiang Yun District of Mahasarakham.

The district occupies an area of 412 sq. kms., and its total population is 69,445 persons of whom 34,964 are males and 34,481 females as enumerated in the 1985 census.

The district is divided into seven sub-divisions, namely Khanthara Rat, Kham Riang, Na Si Nuan, Khwao Yai, Makha, Khok Phra, and Tha Khon Yang. There are 126 villages in the entire district.

The Chi River which is an important river for all people here runs through five tambon (sub-divisions) and sixteen villages. Moreover, there are some 25 reservoirs, swamps, and canals which help farmers with agriculture,
their chief occupation. This district has a high plain without any mountain, hill or forest.

Table No. 1.5

Some facts about Lohit District and Kantharawichai District

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No.</th>
<th>Items</th>
<th>Lohit</th>
<th>Kantharawichai</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>Total population</td>
<td>69,498</td>
<td>69,445</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>39,024</td>
<td>34,964</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>30,474</td>
<td>34,481</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>Area</td>
<td>11,042 sq.km.</td>
<td>412 sq.km.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td>Number of household</td>
<td>12,294</td>
<td>14,920</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.</td>
<td>Sub-divisions</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.</td>
<td>Villages</td>
<td>182</td>
<td>126</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.</td>
<td>Number of Buddhist monasteries</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>85</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.</td>
<td>Monks</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>173</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8.</td>
<td>Nuns</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9.</td>
<td>Novice</td>
<td>175</td>
<td>204</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10.</td>
<td>Hospital</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11.</td>
<td>Dispensaries</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12.</td>
<td>Health Units</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13.</td>
<td>Higher Secondary Schools</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14.</td>
<td>Secondary Schools</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15.</td>
<td>Middle Schools</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16.</td>
<td>Primary Schools</td>
<td>90</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17.</td>
<td>Pre-Primary Schools</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18.</td>
<td>Adult Education Centres</td>
<td>137</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
1.2 EMERGENCE OF THE PROBLEM

The socio-cultural history of North-Eastern India is the history of an ancient civilization evolved through centuries, in some measure different from those of other states of India; its differences were mostly due to the complex nature of North-Eastern India's socio-cultural and political conditions. But, particularly Arunachal Pradesh, with varied socio-religious systems, the continuous process of the different stages of her history has been closely linked up with the Indian mainstream on the one side, as on the other with South-East Asia. The culture of Arunachal Pradesh or North-Eastern India as a whole are but the sum-total of the primitive and the advanced, contributed by Mongoloids and Aryans. The history of India would remain incomplete without a thorough understanding of the origin and development of the civilization of this region. With the dawn of history the link of Arunachal Pradesh became closer, political, socially, and culturally with the rest of India. Except for stray references to the colonisation of South-East Asia from Arunachal Pradesh, it is yet to be proved that North-Eastern India had effective political, social, cultural relations with Burma, Thailand and other regions in South-East Asia. But no concrete step has so far been
taken to show the real relation between North-Eastern India and the rest of India on the one hand and South-East Asia on the other.

The glories of Arunachal Pradesh or the Tai races that have spread over North-Eastern India remain buried, because no vigorous investigations have been carried out here to discover the hidden treasure and reveal them to the rest of India.

It is noted that there are some similarities among the Tai races including among the people of the North-Eastern regions of Thailand and that of North-Eastern India. It is evident that these people have been related to each other for generations as they are believed to have descended from the same ethnic and linguistic groups.

It is worthwhile to be noted that though the tribes of these two regions originated from the same ethnic stock, the present situation is quite different from each other. Topographical factors help in making this gap. The socio-cultural and educational conditions of these two regions differ from each other and as such the balance is tilted.

The researcher selected only Mahasarakham Province in the North-East of Thailand because it is the central
province in the North-East where the socio-cultural and educational conditions are prominently and overwhelmingly found in which case the researcher finds it convenient to go in details in this particular province without much expanding the territorial area. As such the study of only Mahasarakham constitutes into the study of the whole region of North-East Thailand and there lies the importance in the selection of Mahasarakham Province.

From all such findings, the following questions might be interesting to be answered: (i) What else do these groups of people have in similarities or differences in various aspects of life: social, cultural, religious, educational conditions?; (ii) Do they still consider themselves as the descendants or the relatives of the Tai races?; (iii) Do they want to maintain the socio-cultural and educational relation?; (iv) Is it the paucity of sources or the lack of exploration and exploitation of natural and human resources that constituted in making a gap between the people of these regions or in slowing down the process of development?; (v) Will it be possible to explore the sources of our study in the midst of such bewildering diversities?; (vi) Have any scientific anthropometric measurements been made to identify a particular element in the general population of these two regions?;
(vii) Will it be possible to find out a pure original element after a lapse of centuries?; (viii) Is this the dearth of educational facilities that hampers the process of development of these two regions?, and, (ix) Can socio-cultural and educational guidelines help in the acceleration of development in these two regions? The answers to these questions might prove important evidence which can possibly lead into essential finding of the historical origin of the Tai races thereby helping to locate the measures of development of these two regions.

In the attempt to answer the questions mentioned above, the researcher tried to locate field of researches and studies. But due to lack of specific researches these two regions only could be located which could help throw light on the proposed questions. Therefore, the known depth of the pertinent research motivated the researcher to take up these problems.

1.3 JUSTIFICATION

Human societies show similarities and differences in occupation, language, traditions, customs, beliefs and even culture. But the neighbouring areas show more similarities than differences. Sometimes they are so
similar to each other that it is difficult to distinguish them. In certain cases even geographically far off countries show signs of identicalness in various ways of life. In such cases there is always a signal that those groups of people belonged to the same stock or descended from the same stocks somewhere in the past. They retain the same basic attitudes of life wherever they are notwithstanding the geographical and topographical conditions. But these similarities are more prominent if they were diverted or separated in the near part.

Since the present study is geared towards the comparative study of the socio-cultural and educational conditions in the North-East Regions of Thailand and India, this study, therefore, attempts to reinforce important effects upon the study of the relationship of the so-called Tai races in the two mentioned regions by means of comparing and contrasting the various aspects - social, cultural, and educational, among the two groups of Tai Khamti and Thai I-san people.

As a result, the finding of the present study can be extended to reliable explanation of the history and development of these Tai races. It may, furthermore, be applied and generalised to the explanation of the
other groups of the Tais living in different places and to the whole group of the races thereby providing an incentive light for further studies on the more specific scope of the other groups of the Thais.

The study of relationship between these two regions often needs to take references to Burma, China and its people. The study is more interesting as the Shan people too belong to the same stock of the people of these two regions.

Both India and Thailand are developing countries and likewise both are facing problems such as overpopulation, unemployment, unhealthy inflation, inadequacy of education, etc. There are many ways to solve these problems but the most cardinal factor that can help towards finding a solution is education.

It is taken for granted that education not only solves problems but also plays a great role in the national development. The developing countries nowadays are planning in mounting a heavy offensive to expand educational facilities qualitatively and quantitatively. But the result is not satisfactory and paradoxical to its aims and objectives. This is due to overwhelming increase in quantity, not in quality, such as lack of right education,
training and skills. Such odd situation is not only unprofitable but creates social and psychological damage disturbing the balance of the society.

So the education system needs to be remodelled and modernised to meet the requirements of development and as such to keep pace with every changing pattern of society. The problem is more acute in North-Eastern India as well as in North-Eastern Thailand.

National development is an all-inclusive concept. It is in this context of political, social, cultural and economic aims of development that we should bring in the correct role of education.

For convenience to detail and thorough study the present research work is confined to North-Eastern Thailand and North-Eastern India. Its aim and objectives is to draw a social and cultural link between these two regions thereby exploring the measures of development of educational systems.

1.4 STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

The present study is precisely stated as:

"A COMPARATIVE STUDY OF SOCIO-CULTURAL AND EDUCATIONAL CONDITIONS IN THE NORTH-EASTERN REGION OF THAILAND AND INDIA".
1.5 **OBJECTIVES**

The main purpose of the present study was to compare and contrast the socio-cultural and educational conditions in the North-Eastern Region of Thailand and India - Kantharawichai District in Mahasarakham province and Lohit District in Arunachal Pradesh state. The following objectives, therefore, were specified for the study:

1. To study in brief the background of the following social conditions of the Tai Khanti and Thai I-san in the North-East of India and Thailand in the following aspects:
   a) Social set-up
   b) Physical environment
   c) Settlement pattern
   d) Kindreds
   e) Status of men and women
   f) Marriage
   g) Recreation and music
   h) Games
   i) Way of life
   j) Supernatural being
2. To study in brief the following background of cultural conditions of the Tai Khamti and Thai-I-san in the North-East of India and Thailand in the following aspects:
   a) Religious practitioners
   b) Festivals
   c) Art and crafts
   d) The typical of house
   e) Food and drinks
   f) Language

3. To study the educational system of the Tai Khamti and Thai I-san in the North-East of India and Thailand in the following aspects:
   a) History of Education
   b) Organisation and Management
   c) General Education
   d) School System
   e) Curriculum
   f) Evaluation
   g) Methods of Teaching

4. To compare and contrast the socio-cultural conditions of Tai Khamti and Thai I-san in the North-East of India and Thailand.
5. To compare and contrast educational systems of Tai Khamti and Thai I-san in the North-East of the two countries.

1.6 HYPOTHESES

The following hypotheses were formulated for the present study:

1. The social and cultural conditions of life in the Thai I-san of Thailand and in the Tai Khamti of India are different from each other.

2. The status of men and women is different in Thai I-san of North-East Thailand and Tai Khamti of North-East India.

3. At present the scripts used in both areas are different although they had more or less the same script in use in the past.

4. There are no differences in the educational set-up in the two regions.

1.7 DELIMITATION OF THE STUDY

The scope of the present study has to be delimited so that the researcher can examine the problem closely.
minutely and deeply. In connection with the delimitation of the subject the following observations were considered:

1. The study was conducted only on socio-cultural and educational conditions of the Thai I-san in the North-East regions of Thailand (Kantharawichai District in Mahasarakham Province) and Tai Khamti in the North-East of India (Lohit District in Arunachal Pradesh State).

2. To study the socio-cultural and educational conditions of all the states including innumerable ethnic groups was considered a stupendous and formidable task in a vast country like India. Thus the study was conducted only on the limited areas, namely Arunachal Pradesh, Lohit District. The same was the reason for selecting Mahasarakham Province Kantharawichai District, a province in the North-Eastern region of Thailand. The historical akinness of the two regions was considered to provide ample justification for a study of these regions of India and Thailand.
3. The collection of the data for this study was made through books, prospectuses and syllabi, Government Reports and records, slide films, personal observations, structural interviews and questionnaires.

1.8 DEFINITION OF TECHNICAL TERMS

Social:
The Advanced Learner's Dictionary of Current English (1972) defines the term Social as "living in groups, not separately". It means social way of living, custom and system whereby people live together in an organised community.

Culture:
Taylor (1980) defines culture "as that complex whole which includes knowledge, belief, arts, morals, law, custom and any other capabilities and habits, acquired by man as a member of a society".

Culture is the major way in which human beings adapt to their environments. Cultural anthropologists attempt to understand culture in this general sense: they study its origins, its diversity as it changes through time and among peoples (Nanda, 1980).
Cultural Anthropology:
The study of human behaviour that is learned, rather than genetically transmitted, and that is typical of a particular human group. These learned and shared kinds of human behaviour (including the material results of this behaviour) are called culture.

Anthropology:
The comparative study of humankind; its aims are to describe, analyze, and explain both the similarities and differences among human groups ... The groups traditionally studied by anthropologists are called Societies (Nanda, 1980).

Socio-Cultural:
The term socio-cultural in this study means the complex whole which includes knowledge, social set-up, physical environment, settlement pattern, kinreds, marriage, recreation and music, games, the way of life, supernatural being, religious practitioners, festivals, art and crafts, typical of house, food and drinks, language, customs and other capabilities and habits, acquired by Thai I-san people in the North-East of Thailand (Maha-sarakham Province: Kantharawichai District and
Tai Khamti people in North-East of India
(Arunachal Pradesh : Lohit District).

Education:

Education is the process of enabling people not merely to live but to live adequately. There are various facts of education in the two districts including educational policy, administration, aims, curriculum, methods of teaching, methods of evaluation, human relationship.

Tai:

According to the related studies of the Tai races living in the Northeast of India, they all are called "Tai", with different names, though they are different in many aspects also.

Tai Khamti:

In the group of Tai Race in the North-Eastern of India, there is one Tai tribe called "Tai Khamti". They live in Lohit District of Arunachal Pradesh State.

Thai:

In Thailand, the people are called "Thai" and among them there are people who are called the
"Thai I-San", who live in the North-Eastern region of Thailand. This region consists of Seventeen provinces made up of various villages."

Thai I-San:

They are the group of Thai people who live in Kantharawichai District of Mahasarakham Province, the North-Eastern Region of Thailand.