CHAPTER – I
INTRODUCTION

Introduction :

A tribe is a group of people speaking a common language, sharing the same customs and working together for common purpose, like agriculture, trade and warfare. According to some anthropologists, a ‘tribe’ means a small scale of culturally distinct and economically self-sufficient community with a language of their own along with an autonomous political organisation. Tribalism is considered as one of the stages of human civilization. It is that stage where some of the groups are socially, economically and politically backward in comparison to other groups. Because of this, these groups are unable to look after their wellbeing. Hence it won’t be right on our part to classify the tribals as ‘tribal’ forever.

The term ‘tribal’ or ‘tribe’ was introduced by the Britishers. These tribal people have been living in India even before the arrival of the Aryans. After the arrival of the British, they started to term these people as the ‘tribes’. The British used this term to differentiate these people from the ‘Jati’ or caste-based Aryans or the Hindu people of India. It is found that there is no such term such as ‘tribe” mentioned in any ancient literature. In Sanskrit literature the term

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1 Encyclopedia Britannica
‘Jana’ is used for the non-Aryan people. The meaning of this term refers to the community of people who generally had a non-monarchical institution with a fixed territory, common kinship, common ancestry and common cultural pattern.

In the past, due to geographical and physical factors in this tract of land, the Indo-Mongoloid people or the present Scheduled Tribes lived independently in small groups under their own chiefs or the head-man. There was no strong national spirit or other cohesive elements among them. They are intolerant to any kind of external hegemony and they strongly oppose the idea of unification, because it could jeopardize their independence. This is the main reason behind their preference for living in isolation and having a stagnant lifestyle.

According to some Anthropologist, Assam is a “Museum of Nationalities”. Almost all of the major races such as Caucasides, Mongoloids, Astroloids and some traces of Negroids (in case of the Nagas) are found among the diverse population of Assam. Assam is located in ‘one of the greatest immigration routes of mankind; since ancient times, Assam has been routes for people of different origins to migrate either from the Gangetic valley or from the South Asian countries to different parts of India or to the other countries of South East Asia.

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4 Playfair.A,109, PXM
5 Das, B.M 1997, pp. 1-2; Borpujari H.K. (ed); 1990, pp. 12, 24
While they were passing through Assam, they came across certain hurdles where they had to leave their originality and cultural legacy which led to the formation of and development of various ethnic groups. These ethnic groups used to speak in different languages and used to have different social structures, cultural patterns and religious beliefs. As a result of all these factors, Assam has become a meeting point of various racial groups. Though all the elements of major races are present in Assam, all the major tribes in this region belong to Mongoloid origin. According to S.K Chatterjee “Assam is the tract where the Indo-Mongolid elements are present in their largest number in India. These groups dominated the political and cultural scene of Assam (although in matters of culture, including religion the composite Hindu culture of the Ganges valley always had the outward victory) barring some higher castes.

Linguistically the Indo-Mongoloid tribes of Assam belong to Sino-Tibetan family, the Khasis and Jaintias are exception to this and they speak the non-khmer.

The Britishers had brought these diverse ethnic groups of the North- East under one political roof and made them politically united. The British followed the policy of ‘divide and rule’ and from the very beginning, they segregated the tribal people from the general masses. They developed a highly personalised administrative system “of a kind peculiar to their customs and prejudice” under

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8 Chatterjee, S.K.,1951, p. 3
regulation X of 1822 to administer the indigenous people. This system of administration outside the purview of the Bengal Regulation came to be known as non-Regulation system and the areas covered by this system were known as non-Regulated areas. These non-Regulated areas later brought under the Scheduled District Act of 1874. This Act authorizes the local Governments to administer these areas by issuing regulations instead of the laws that were in force in other parts of the country. People living in the Non-Regulated areas and then in the Scheduled Districts were called by the colonial rulers as tribes. According to census report of 1891, these people had been termed as the ‘Forest Tribe’ and according to the census report of 1931, they were renamed as the ‘Primitive Tribes’. The Government of India Act of 1935, renamed these people as the ‘Backward tribes’ for the first time. In the post independence era, Article 342 of the Indian Constitution termed these people as the ‘Scheduled Tribes’ for the first time. These Scheduled Tribes of Assam are basically a distinct politico-administrative category, and they are created for the purpose of special protection and devoid of the classical consideration of sociology and anthropology. The recognized scheduled tribes of Assam are not isolated from the other Assamese societies.

In the internal economy matter, the class interest has a pivotal role. In case of some tribes, legacy of animism is seen, but large number of tribes are brought under the influence of Christianity, Hinduism and Islam.

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9 Datta, P.S., 1993, p. 1
There are 23 numbers of constitutionally recognized Scheduled Tribes in Assam at present. It is around 12.82% of the total population of Assam. Before the re-organization of the state, the numbers were much higher. Apart from these tribes, some other ethnic groups belonging to the Mongoloid race have not been recognized as Scheduled Tribe yet.

According to geographical features, the tribes of Assam have been classified into two broad categories. These two categories are mainly the Plains tribes (residents of the plains) and the Hills tribes (residents of the hills). At present there are nine recognized Scheduled Tribes in the plains districts of Assam. They are-

1. The Bodos
2. The Rabhas
3. The Mishings
4. The Deuris
5. The Sonowals
6. The Tiwas
7. The Barmans
8. The Hojais
9. The Mechs

It is worthwhile to mention here that all the tribes living in the plains and hills are not accorded the same status. A scheduled tribe recognized in the plains may not be treated as same in the hills and vice-versa. This type of unequal treatment to the same tribe, living in the plains and hills created a sense of discontentment amongst the tribe itself.

Since independence, Assam witnessed a number of movements of the tribes. The special provisions mentioned in the constitution were not able to full fill the aims and aspirations of the tribal people of Assam. Gradually, they started to felt neglected and oppressed in the new socio-political set-up of the state.

In order to get rid of these situations, the tribals of the state resorted to a series of movements demanding autonomy for themselves within the state itself. As a result of this, Assam was reorganized a number of times and thus a number of full-fledged new states came into existence.

With regards to the issue of autonomy within the state, the hills tribe first took the initiative, and this had an immediate impact on the leaders of the plains tribes also. The plains tribes gradually organized themselves and led movements for attainment of autonomy for their respective tribes. The Bodos, the Rabhas, the Mishings were all demanding autonomous states for their respective tribes, independent of each other. The autonomy movement of the Bodos was the most prominent and powerful movement among the plain tribes of Assam. As a result of the movement, almost all the tribes have been granted Autonomous Councils
of their own. The tribes did not regard these Councils as being able to safeguard their interest and as a result they started to demand a separate state for their respective tribes. As a result of these facts, the autonomy movement by the tribes of Assam had assumed the character of the movement for separate statehood. It can be mentioned here that these movements have created a serious threat to the unity and integrity to the state of Assam. Though the autonomy movements of the plain tribes of Assam are of recent origin, its causes are deeply rooted in the past.

The Rabhas are one of the distinct plain scheduled tribes of Assam belonging to Mongoloid origin. According to some scholars, the old name of the Rabha tribe is Koch>Kocha>Kubas. The Rabhas, who are an integral part of Assamese society, constitute a section of the major ethnic group, the Bodos. The Bodos constitute a substantial portion of the Assamese population. Although the Rabhas are scattered all over Assam as well as some of the other adjoining states, they are mainly concentrated on the southern bank of the river Brahmaputra in Kamrup (Rural) and Goalpara district of Assam. At present the Rabhas are one of the nine scheduled tribes in the plains distinct of Assam.

Diverse views have been expressed by different scholars regarding the ethnic individuality of the Rabhas; its origination of abode; and its relationship with other tribal groups of the region. Major Playfair tried to trace the origin of the tribe in the Tibetan region and then migrated to the Garo hills, now in
Meghalaya, and then distributed it in the plains of Assam. Hence, we find certain linguistic and cultural similarities between the Garos and the Rabhas.

Rabhas form a major part of the Bodo linguistic group. They further testified their affinities to other members of the Bodo group like the Garos, Kacharis, Mech, Hajong, Koches etc, who also share common ancestral origin, i.e. Mongoloid origin. Lt. Col. Wadel was of the opinion that Rabhas were one of the Kacharis and had become almost Hinduist, although the process of conversion was of lesser integrity than that of the Koches. On the other hand, Sir Edward A. Gait indentified the Rabhas as a distinct tribe and was of the opinion that they were also known as Totlas and Datiyal Kacharis\(^\text{10}\). Prof B.M Das in one of his works, scientifically established the fact that the Rabhas were more closely related to the Garos rather than any other tribe of the Bodo group. He also supported the view of Sir E.A Gait that the Rabhas were ethnically and culturally a distinct tribe.

**Review of Literature:**

In our country’s politics, the issue of identity politics is a dominant theme. The identity movement started in India simultaneously along with the attainment of freedom. It also started the process of establishment of the Nation State. Gradually this autonomy movement gained momentum. It gained momentum particularly from 1980’s. These identity assertions have multiplied both at national, regional and even at the local level also. The issue of

\(^{10}\) Census Report, 1891
development and modernization has nurtured the growth of ethnic identification. The concept of democracy and the process of democratization initiated the political awareness and aspirations for political power among various ethnic groups of Indian society.

‘In fighting Identities : Race, Religion and Ethno-Nationalism’ (2000), Leo Panitch was of the view that, in some specific socio-cultural context, the communal conflict is only a colonial legacy, but it is an inevitable result of the penetration of the capitalist logic. The concept of liberal Democracy, contributes to universalize the communal conflicts by fragmenting the society.

Erikson in ‘Ethnicity and Nationalism: An Anthropological Perspective’ (2000), was of the opinion that the issue of ethnic identity has become crucially important. He was of the opinion that modern education and technology plays a significant role for creating opportunities. Again, he was of the opinion that the concept of identity movement gained momentum as a result of the power configuration on regional basis.

In ‘Realm and Religion in Traditional India’ (1977), author Richard G. Fox has expressed the same view. He has discussed the consequences of new regional arrangement on the traditional India in mind. In India, the new wave of freedom started along with the growth of new nationality consciousness among the people of different communities. This has acted as the harbinger in various movements by the various communities in different parts of the nation.
‘In Ethnicity and Nation Building in South Asia’ (2001), Urmila Phadnis was of the opinion that the higher the stakes of community and its leadership in the power structure, the greater the probability for strengthening the building of nation as an amalgam of ethnic pluralities and yet to be composite as well as secular in its totality, secessionist manifestation and autonomists of ethno-nationalism.

P.S Gosh in ‘Ethnicity vs Nationalism’ (2003) was of the view that, devolution of power is the only remedy to cope with the destructive pressure of separatism. This is an excellent work on the Sri Lankan Government’s confrontation with the LTTE led political regionalism. He further comments that the Indian Government probably committing a mistake by treating the issue of ethnic identity as a surgical problem and looking for a quick remedy. According to the author’s realization, the regional movements with high flares particularly in the north-east periphery still are not getting the proper attention from the central authority.

The issue of ethnic consciousness in India started in the British Period. The administrative system introduced by the Britishers hardly provided any scope to the indigenous population to venture into a radical social transformation. In that period the money economy replaced the traditional self-sufficient economy, and gradually shattered the vary basis of traditional economy of both tribal & non-tribal society. During the colonial rule the native societies were not accommodated in the modern economic sectors. The
moderation efforts undertaken by the British colonial rulers during those days only served the interest of the colonial rulers. As a result of this, there arose a crack between the rural and urban areas. This process continued even after the independence. As a result of this uneven socio-economic condition the concept of ethnic identity movement gained momentum. A number of works have been done on this topic from the discipline of Political Science.

Ethnic identity movements can be classified into two broad categories. The purely economic ones are the product of economic planning in post-independent India and the developmental measures carried out by the Central Government. The others had their origin in the pre-independent era. Besides these two, some more of this kind are there which are actually inspired by the new situation of democracy and freedom as has been mentioned above.

The identity movements in India have brought their sustenance from ethnicity. Various ethnic factors such as language, religion, caste, race, culture etc. have added a new dimension to the identity politics of the country. The works like ‘Indian Politics Since independence’ (1994) by Paul Brass deals on the politics of the country since independence; In ‘Ethnicity and Nationalism : Theory and Comparison’ (1991) by the same author presents a clear view of the inter relationship between nationalism and ethnic pressures in India. The issue of politics of identity can be best expressed in ‘Punjab Crisis’ during the Prime Ministership of Mrs. Indira Gandhi. The scholars have observed that politics at times accentuates to communal conflicts for their narrow interest in India.

‘Ethnic Diversity and National Integration (1996)’ by M.G Hussain attributed the incidences of communalism, social tension, secessionism and terrorism to the lack of political knowledge and opportunism on the part of the ruling politics of India.

The ethnic scenario of the North-East is somewhat different from the rest of the country. Ethnic movements are connected deeply with a search for identity in this part of the world. The various ethnic groups of the region have gone through a chequered process of political evaluation. Before the penetration of the Britishers, various ethnic groups of Assam used to maintain independent political status. For example, despite interaction with mainland India, the Ahom Kingdom never became its part politically. The subsequent change in the connotation of Assam came during the British reorganization of states. The Britishers made Assam an Indian province and brought it under one political formation. During the British rule, various ethnic groups developed their own identity consciousness. The main aim behind any identity assertion here is to preserve the language and culture along with political power which is considered
necessary for acquisitions of economic equality as well as opportunities for their respective communities.

“Hill politics in North-East India” (1973) by S.K Chaube was of the view that the major factor behind the political turmoil in North-East India has been basically the concept of nationalism which partially ignored the smaller identities, territorial boundaries that criss-cross various ethnic consolidations and the process of industrialization which practically has no relation with the traditional economy. According to the writer, these facts are the root cause of the present crisis among the tribal communities.

“North-East India-Quest for Identity” (1988) by Udayan Mishra contains two parts which deals with the contemporary development of the time. The first part deals with the Naga national question and the second part is on the Assamese nationality question. The emphasis is on the typology of Naga nationalism which stands as the major force behind the sustenance of Naga secessionist movements for such a long time. The author keenly observed that their poor assessment of the content of insurgency in Nagaland by the Government of India in a sense let the situation go out of control and hence despite the banning of NNC by the govt., the movement continued. The author opined in his book that the ongoing movement in the North-East is basically the quest for identity among different communities of the region. The same author has authored “The Periphery Strikes Back” (2000). This volume contains two parts – the first one deals with secessionists movement by ULFA at the end of
Assam movement and the second one deals with Naga secessionism. The study analyses in detail the social, historical and political factors which led to secessionists’ insurgency in Nagaland, which never had any political or cultural link with Indian mainland and Assam shows how the future of the nation state in India depends a lot on the ability to resolve the questions that are being thrown upon by the struggles for a Swadhin Assam and independent Nagalim.

Much work has been done on insurgency in North-East such as “Nexus web: Insurgency in North-East India” (1996) by Kiron Sankar Mitra, “Insurgency in North-East India “(1997) by B. Pakem.

The ongoing ethnic identity movements in North-East India are the problems associated with change in socio-economic cum political relations in the region itself.

“Reorganization of North-East since 1947” (1996) by B. Dattaroy reveals the historical background of the problems in North-East region in post independent period and the valuable data with systematic analysis and it is largely informative.

“Ethnic Movements in Poly-Cultural Assam” (1990) edited by P.S Dutta contains four articles, three of which deals with the people of Mongoloid origin and the question of identity crisis with variation in the degree of assertion within the state of Assam. The most impressive feature of the book has been its emphasis on ethnic connotation inherent in these movements which have
hitherto been in a sense trapped in a stereotype formwork of tribal movement ignoring the ethnic context.

“India Against Itself” (2001) by Sanjib Baruah presents an original and lucid interpretation of the political and economic history of Assam since it became a part of British India. The author has also traced the history of tension between Indian nationalism and Assamese sub-nationalism since the days of India’s resistance to colonial rule. He has made the somewhat formal federal but centralized government structure responsible for today’s human rights violation, abuses by security forces and by insurgents, ethnic violence and slide towards illiberal democracy. According to him, the apparent amnesia about identities that compete with official nationalism is the legacy of the cultural standardization particularly associated with successful state building endeavors.

Girin Phukan in ‘Politics of Identity and Nation Building’ (1997) argues that the trend of identity crisis in north-east is mainly the result of wrong model of nation building process. The work is a good one to understand the nature of identity politics in this part of the country. Studies on different regional movements in north-east India from different approaches reveal the similar type of factors responsible for these movements but with varying degree of manifestations. These require greater attention on the part of the Government and the scholars.

‘Kacharir Buranji’ (in Assamese) edited by S.K. Bhuyan is a chronicle dealing with the Kacharis, a branch of the Bodo race. It contains legends about
the origin of the Kachari kings and their kingdoms. The book also contains a thorough history of the Ahom-Kachari relations from the end of the 14th century up to the beginning of the 18th century. This is regarded as one of the main source books to understand the history of the Kacharis.

As the above studies are not extensive, the present work is an attempt to fill the vacuum. This study has been undertaken to study the society and politics of the plain tribes of Assam. In Assam it has been found that the society plays a vital role in determining the politics of the tribes. The Rabha tribe is also no exception to this trend. The emergence of the concept of autonomy movement carries a new dimension. The failure of the institutional political organizations also has a special significance in this study.

**Theoretical Framework:**

For the whole research work, the following Theoretical Framework has been adopted.

1. **Theory of Deprivation by Morrison**: According to Morrison, relative deprivation explicitly or implicitly continues as a central variable in the explanation of social movements, and thus also to explain the process of social change that are engendered by social movements. The basic notion is that the feeling of deprivation, of discontent over one’s situation depends on what wants to have; that is deprivation occurs in relation to desired points of reference, often ‘reference groups’, rather than in relation to how little one has. In turn the social movements are thought to
emerge and flourish, when groups of persons experience relative deprivation. Indeed much evidence supports this view. For instance, it is clear that the persons who have experience, steady and abject poverty are not as likely as others to be involved in movements of protest and change, particularly others who have experienced some improvements in their situation and who assumedly wants those improvements to continue.

2. **Theory of Ethnicity and Nationalism by Paul Brass** : Ethnicity and Nationalism, inter ethnic conflicts, and secessionist movements have been major forces shaping the modern world and the structure and stability of contemporary states. In the last decades of the 20th century, such forces and movements emerged with new intensity. Drawing examples from a wide variety of multi ethnic situations around the world, with special emphasis on South Asia, Eastern Europe and Soviet Union, it presents a distinctive theory concerning the origins of ethnic identity and modern nationalism.

The theory is based on two focal arguments; one, that ethnicity and nationalism are not “givens” but are social and political constructions; and two, that ethnicity and nationalism are modern phenomenon inseparably connected with the activities of modern centralizing state. The theory of elite competitions presented to show how both ethnicity and nationalism arise out of specific types of interactions between the
leadership of centralizing states and elites from non-dominant ethnic
groups, especially in the peripheries of those states

3. **Theory by Rajat Ganguly**: The issue of ethnic movement for political
right is a common issue in the countries of the South Asian region. More
particularly the ethnic conflicts in Sri Lanka between the Sinhalis and the
Sri Lankan Tamils has showed the dangerous face of this issue to the
entire world. Most of the South Asian nations are ‘multicultural’ having
plural character. In the multicultural plural societies, the key factor behind
the various ethnic or the secessionist movements have been the post-
colonial states desire to produce a pulverized and uniform sense of
national identity to coincide with artificial and arbitrary state boundaries,
which seldom overlap with the real ethnic divisions on the ground. The
nation building process in these countries typically legitimised the over-
centralization of the states power in an effort to safeguard the territorial
integrity and achieve political stability. This, in turn, resulted in the
neglect or ill treatment of ethnic minorities and the denial of minority
ethnic nations political rights thereby producing an ‘ethnic backlash’ in
the form of ethno nationalist and secessionist movement (Rajat Ganguly,
2002, Autonomy and Ethnic Conflict in South and South-East Asia,
“Asian Security Studies, Routledge Publication 1st edition). Thus, the
problem of ethnic movement in the South Asian countries is a
‘governance problem’ which demands for greater public accountability on
the part of the government, better delivery of goods and services and quicker response to the citizens needs and aspirations. It is in this context that the concept of ‘autonomy’ has gained momentum in the discussion on ethnic conflict resolution in South Asian countries (Rajat Ganguly, 2002). The post colonial states of South Asia are multinational, meaning that they comprise many ethnic nations. An ethnic nation is a group of people who inhabit a defined territorial homeland and share as a group, a common cultural heritage and tradition, a sense of common history and ancestry, possibly a common religion and a common will of not only belonging to the group but to exist as an independent and sovereign nation state. The ethnic nations right to independent statehood (or defined territorial right) is the manifestation of the ideology of national self determination.

Scholars have described the ethnic political assertion through the term ethno-nationalism. The term refers to the phenomenon of political movement launched on the basis of ethnic identity. Carmen Abubakar defines ethno-nationalism as “Ethnic groups claiming to be (or to possess) nations and states in the past or that have the potential of becoming are now demanding and asserting these claims as (historic) rights to self-determination for local autonomy or independence. (“Manipur on line, Tribal identity and ethnic conflict in North-East India! A Christian Response”, viewed on 1st December 2012).
Today there are two models of nationalism that are in interaction and contention in many parts says Stanley Tambiah of Harvard University. One is ‘ethno-nationalism’ and the other is ‘nationalism’ of the state. Nowadays Democracy has been considered as the most accepted way of Government by almost all the countries of the modern world. In a democratic regime, more particularly in the multi-ethnic states, the diverse ethnic groups got the opportunity to assert their rights and able to preserve their language, culture, religion and consolidate their identity. But there are failures of democratic practices in the multi-ethnic countries of Asia, Africa and Latin America, which were characterized by the attributes of social injustices, unemployment, underdevelopment, problem of exclusions, lack of good governance and centralized power system. Such failures of democratic regime have fuelled the marginalized ethnic groups to mobilize their demand for political autonomy to have an equal share in the political process. Scholars have argued that to reconcile a state’s legitimate aspirations to preserve its territorial integrity and sovereignty with non-state ethnic nations’ legitimate aspirations for self rule in its ethnic homeland, the concept of territorial or regional autonomy holds centre stage. Because it has the potential to accommodate two paradoxical objectives-

a) The preservation of the territorial integrity and sovereignty of the state.

b) The satisfaction of ethnic minorities right to national homeland, a greater voice and participation in the governance of that homeland and equal opportunity to participate fully in all respect of life within the state. (Ruth

In the context of democratization and deconstruction of the post-colonial over centralized states in South Asian region, if the non-state ethnic nations are not allowed to lead an autonomous self-rule in their homeland, could provide a way forward to finally resolving the decade old ethno-nationalist and secessionist insurgencies that have ravaged the states in these regions. An increasing number of ethno-political conflicts over territory have been settled through administrative-political dispensions evolving regional autonomy, such as the provisions of autonomy to the Basques of Spain in 1980, the Miskitos of Nicaragua in 1990, and Afars in Ethiopia in 1977. The popularity of autonomy as a solution undoubtedly stems from its being of the few conceivable compromise solutions in conflicts over the administrative control of a specific territory.

**Objective :**

The aim of the present study is to make thorough, historical investigation in the background of the Rabha Hasong Autonomous Council and the Rabha movement that was started in the 1990’s in Assam and unveil, if possible, the reality. This study proposed to investigate following objectives

- To study the role of society in determining the politics of the plain tribes of Assam and to study the organizational structure associated with the tribes and to discuss how these factors influence the politics of the tribe
• To study the role of students organizations in determining the politics of the Rabhas along with the emergence of autonomy movement among the Rabhas of Goalpara district of Assam.

• To assess political participation as well as involvement in the mainstream political discourse by the Rabha people.

• To investigate the challenges faced by the Rabhas in the social arena while dealing with other communities living in the Goalpara district of Assam.

• To examine whether the Rabha Hasong Autonomous Council is able to fulfill the hopes and expectations of Rabha people or not.

**Research Questions:**

• To study the organizational structure associated with the tribes and to discuss how these organizations influence the politics of the tribe.

• To study the question that whether nearly seven decades of implementing reservation policies have paid off in terms of giving a bigger share to the plain tribes of Assam in state Politics.

• To study, whether there is any emergence of new political trends among the Rabhas of Goalpara district of Assam.

**Methodology:**

For the entire study the historical method of research has been adopted. Primary and Secondary sources have been complemented by field work in the form interview, Government reports including the census report is considered as one of the important primary sources. Again, interview with knowledgeable
persons including the leaders in both structured and unstructured manner is used to carry on the study.

**Chapterization/Organization:**

The work has been organized into following chapters:

In the introductory chapter, the concept of politics of identity has been briefly discussed and also the background of the politics of identity in India as well as in Assam has been discussed in this context.

In the Second chapter, the political movements among the plain tribes of Assam have been elaborately discussed.

In the third chapter, the recent political movements or trends among the Rabhas of Goalpara district have been discussed and highlighted.

In the Fourth chapter, the nature of Rabha movement from its first stage, when the Rabhas started to demand the territorial autonomy under the provision of Sixth Schedule of the constitution of India has been analyzed. In the latter half of the chapter, the formation of Rabha Hasong Autonomous council and its impact has been highlighted.

In the fifth chapter, there is an attempt to examine the socio-political changes after the formation of democratically elected Rabha Hasong Autonomous Council in 2013. A pilot survey was also conducted in order to arrive at some conclusions. This chapter mainly deals with findings and inferences.

In the concluding chapter, the important findings of the whole study have been summed up.