

# CHAPTER I

## INTRODUCTION

### 1.1: Introduction:

India is a land of villages and villages are the backbone of the country. Villages, in India constitute the basic element of our social structure.<sup>1</sup> They play a vital role in nations' development. The growth of villages' reciprocates the development of the country. Villages existed in India even during the Vedic period and also prior to that.<sup>2</sup> Villages enjoyed autonomy, independency and self-sufficiency in most of the parts of India before the advent of the British. The study of the Indian society becomes meaningful and fruitful only if its villages and their problems are studied carefully. According to the 15<sup>th</sup> Indian Census Report of 2011, 72.18% of the total Indian population lives in rural areas where else only 27.82% constitutes the urban population.<sup>3</sup>

The Indian society consists of rural, urban and tribal societies with their unique characteristics. This division of Indian society is based on the socio-economic and political variables. Rural society in India can be placed in the most under developed and the most backward strata at the hierarchical strata of development. In terms of methods of production, social organisation and political mobilization, rural sector is extremely backward and weak. Moreover, technical development in field of agriculture has

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<sup>1</sup> Shankar Rao, C.N., 2012, Sociology of Indian Society, New Delhi, S. Chand.Pg-376

<sup>2</sup> *ibid.*Pg-375

<sup>3</sup> censusindia.gov.in>india\_at\_glance, 4<sup>th</sup> February, 2020

increased the gap between the rich and poor. The Indian Villages are now undergoing a fast change but there are large numbers of villages which still suffer some major problems such as poverty, unemployment, illiteracy, indebtedness, superstition etc.

Rural Development has been receiving increasing attention of the government across the world. In the Indian context rural development assumes special significance for two important reasons. First about two thirds of the population still lives in villages and there cannot be any progress as long as rural areas remains backward. Secondly, the backwardness of the rural sector would be a major impediment to the overall progress of the country's economy. For India's economy to be strong the first attention should go to the development of the rural economy. Rural Development is utilization, protection and enhancement of the natural, physical and human resources needed to make long-term improvements in rural living conditions. It involves provision of jobs and incomes opportunities while maintaining and protecting the environment of rural.

In rural India, the Panchayati Raj Institution as grass roots unit of self-government, have been working as the vehicles of socio-economic transformation. Panchayati Raj Institution aims to democratize the local administration to make it participatory, responsive, accountable, need based, efficient and prompt at providing service to the rural masses. The history of Panchayati Raj in India is as long as the Rig Veda which is believed to have been composed more than 1000 years before Christ. The self-governing character of Panchayats was slowly lost under the British rule. The state authority began to take over the villages directly. After the First War of Independence in 1857 local-self government received some attention from the British

Government. District Funds were set up in several states with the power to levy land revenue, road tax etc. The year 1870 marks a further stage in the evolution of Local government, Lord Mayo's resolution advocated a measure of decentralisation from the centre of the provinces, emphasized the desirability of associating Indians in administration and indicated the municipal government as the most promising in field for this purpose.<sup>4</sup> In 1882 Lord Ripon, who is regarded as the father of local-self government in India passed a resolution to put into practice the intentions of Lord Mayo. He stressed on the importance of both administrative efficiency as well as political education at the local level. Ripon Resolution mostly focused on towns.

The next landmark in the history of Municipal Administration was in the publication of the Report on the Royal Commission on Decentralization.<sup>5</sup> In 1909 the Royal Commission on Decentralization, headed by C.E.H. Hobhouse, revived the old institution of Panchayats by starting local-self government again at the village level instead of the district level. Montague-Chelmsford reforms initiated the establishment of village Panchayats in different provinces. The Government of India Act of 1919 began a new era of responsible government by introducing a dyarchical system of government. The Act transferred certain developmental functions to the popularly elected ministers who were responsible to the legislature and thus inaugurated local governance during the colonial period. Simon Commission of 1927 entrusted with the task of enquiring the working of local-self government pointed out the inadequacy of

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<sup>4</sup> Maheshwari, S. R., 2002, Local Government in India, Lakshmi Narain Agarwal, Agra. Pg. 16

<sup>5</sup> Rao, V.V., & Hazarika, Niru, 1980, Local Self-Government in India (With Special Reference to Assam and North East India.), S. Chand & Company LTD, New Delhi.Pg.56

financial resources, lack of public spirit among voters and the absence of control over the local self government authorities by the provincial governments.

After independence, Panchayati Raj institution was placed under the Article 40 Directive Principle of State Policy (DPSP). The article stated that state shall organise and empower village Panchayats with powers and authority necessary to function as a unit of local self-government. A three-tier Panchayat System was recommended by Balwant Rai Mehta Committee in 1958: the *Zila Parishad* at the District level, *Panchayat Samiti* in Community Development Block Level and *Gram Panchayat* at the village level. In 1992, the 73<sup>rd</sup> Amendment gave new dimension in local governance by strengthening the Panchayati Raj System. It defined the provision for constituting panchayats and highlighted the role of the panchayats in promoting the services which are essential for the betterment of the community life economic development and social justice in the villages. The amendment removed the weakness of local-self government and efforts were being made to bring about democratic decentralization of power in the country. Various committees were set-up with mandatory provisions where states were given the power of discretion in implementation.

The 73<sup>rd</sup> Amendment Act became the guardian act and provided with guidelines and directives for Panchayat Raj Institution all thought out India proving for a three-tier Panchayat system. Assam Rural Panchayat Act of 1948 established two tiers of Panchayats – Primary Panchayat at village level and Rural Panchayat at Mouza level. In 1994 the Assam Legislative Assembly passed the Assam Panchayat Act of

1994, which introduced three-tier system – *Gaon Panchayat* at the Village level, *Anchalik Panchayat* at the Block level and *Zilla Parishad* at the District level.

## **1.2: Statement of the Problem:**

Development of rural areas has drawn attention of all the national leaders and civil society as well since independence. As we know that India is a country of villages thus the development of the country depends on the development of the villages. Government through different public policies, schemes and programs have been working to provide developmental governance in the country. It is realised that rural development has now become planning concern of the government and without proper planning the attempts of rural development remained largely ineffective in poverty alleviation and inequalities in rural areas. Along with efforts in increasing agricultural and industrial production in rural area to boost its economy an overall attention is now given to address the other socio-economic problems in rural areas like the problems of education, health services and employment.

Assam is home to different tribal population like the *Bodos, Rabhas, Mishings, Tiwas, Karbis, Garos* etc. Among the different tribal population in the region the 'Bodo Kacharis', are described as the earliest known settlers of the Brahmaputra valley. The Bodo tribe falls in Mongoloid and Tibeto-Burmans group. Bakul Chandra Basumatary in his book 'Bodo Civilization in India', pointed out that the Bodos and /or the Boros belong to Kirata Mongoloid group of people who spread far in corner of

Asia many years before Lord Buddha was born. Boro language falls under the category of the Kamrupan Tibeto-Burman languages.<sup>6</sup>

Bodos are one of the major tribal community and a composite part of the greater Assamese society. The Bodo population is found to be scattered all over Assam and the larger portion of the Bodo population is found to be concentrated in the lower plains of the Brahmaputra valley. Different names are used to identify them in different regions. In Bengal and in the lower range of the Himalayas coming within the territory of Nepal, they are known as *Meches*. In upper Assam they are identified as *Sonowal* and *Thengal Kacharis*, while in the western Assam they are known as *Boros*. In the Southern districts of North Cachar they are designated as *Dimasa* and *Barmans*. Rev. Sidney Endle observes in his book 'The Kacharis' that the Bodos kachari race is found in the scattered hamlets along the foot-hills of the Himalayas in Northern Bengal and Assam. In Assam the Hindus call them Kacharis; in Bengal they are known as Meches. The Bodos migrated to the valley from their homeland Tibet and China.<sup>7</sup> Like the other tribal society Bodo society is also dependent upon agricultural and allied activities for their livelihood. They live in villages and the villages are administered by the village council headed by the village headman called the '*Gaonburah*'.

Among the other tribes of North-East India the Bodos are one of the last tribes to receive autonomy in the later years after long years of political struggle. The Bodoland Territorial Area District (BTAD) was established on 10<sup>th</sup> February 2003

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<sup>6</sup> Basumatary, Bakul,C. 2009, Bodo Civilization in India, Published by Mr. Daorao Dekhred Narzary, Ganda Offset Press Kokrajhar, Pg 54-55

<sup>7</sup> Endle, Sidney, 2012, The Kacharis, Bina Library, Guwahati, Pg.3

under the provision of sixth schedule of the Indian constitution with Kokrajhar as its headquarters and with basic objectives of creating an autonomous body to fulfil the aspiration of the people relating to their cultural identity, languages, education and economic development. Establishment of BTAD and creation of Bodoland Territorial Council (BTC) after a long agitation has fulfilled the aspiration of Bodo people and it paved the way for all round socio economic development of the area.

The region suffered severe poverty and remained deprived of development for many years in compared with the other parts of Assam which already had accesses to the process of modernisation. People of this area were socially, economically and culturally deprived. The prime objective of the creation of BTAD was to bring about socio-economic development in the area. BTC was entrusted with certain amount of legislative and executive power to administer the process of overall development in the area under the provision of the Sixth Schedule. The system of Panchayati Raj ceased to exist and was replaced by Village Council Development Committee (VCDC) at the village level and Territorial Constituency Level Coordination Committee (TCLCC) at the Block level. Thus, BTAD being rural based society the role of development is totally vested upon the local governance. VCDC plays the vital role in planning and implementation of the developmental programmes and policies in the area. Thus, study of the working and the challenges faced by VCDC has become important to understand the role and function of VCDC to strive for greater socio-economic development of the area.

### 1.3: Area of the Study:

The Bodoland Territorial Area Districts (BTAD) can be located between 26°7 to 26°48 N Latitudes and between 89°46 to 92°19 E Longitude. Its total area covers 8821.68 sq km. BTAD comprises of four districts namely Baksa, Chirang, Kokrajhar and Udalguri. These districts were created out of eight districts of Assam namely Nalbari, Kamrup, Kokrajhar, Bongaigaon, Barpeta, Darrang, Dhubri and Sonitpur. The four districts are divided into 10 Sub-division and these 10 Sub-divisions are further divided into 25 Development Blocks and these Development Blocks are further divided in to 415 Village Council Development Committee(VCDC) which are in charge of developmental works over 3066 villages of BTAD.

**Table 1.1: Administrative Units of BTAD**

Sl no.	Name of District	Sub-division	Development Blocks	VCDC	No. Of Villages
1.	Kokrajhar	03	08	134	1068
2.	Chirang	02	04	67	508
3.	Baksa	03	06	104	690
4.	Udalguri	02	07	110	800
5.	Total	10	25	415	3066

Source: Population Census, 2011

The working of VCDC in rural BTAD will be analysed by focusing the study on the developmental works of Gossaigaon Development Block. Gossaigaon Development Block is one among the 8 Development Blocks in Kokrajhar District.



Under Gossaigaon Development Block there are 19 VCDCs and this 19 VCDCs are responsible for the administration and developmental works of 114 villages there are 20630 house hold in these villages and its population is around 102,689 according to the 2011 census report.

**Table1.2: List of VCDCs under Gossaigaon Development Block.**

SI No.	Name of VCDC	No. Of Village	Total house hold
1.	Satyapur	11	1061
2.	Panbari	15	1395
3.	Guwabari	2	432
4.	Babubil	5	1369
5.	Harbhanga	4	1732
6.	Bhumka	13	1486
7.	Kartimari	9	1866
8.	Padmabil	2	416
9.	Habrubil	4	1034
10.	Dhauliguri	6	1142
11.	Rimijhimi	8	1035
12.	Joypur	8	1167
13.	Kartimari	5	652
14.	Milan Bazar	2	669
15.	Bhowraguri	8	1860
16.	Tulsibil	5	1963

17.	Kamalsing	4	780
18.	Serfanguri	2	525
19.	Pakriguri	1	46
Grand total		114	20630

Source: Population Census, 2011

#### **1.4: Theoretical Framework:**

India due to its historical, geographical and political factors is a highly distributive unequal country and its inequalities continue to be largely along regional disparity. Such circumstance can be assist from the view of the theory of Distributive Justice. The study of the role VCDC and Rural Development in Gossaigaon Development Block has been studied based on the theory of Distributive Justice. John Rawls theory of justice is thus, applied to analyse and understand the situation.

Rawls' principle of justice is classified in two principle of justice.

“First Principle

Each person is to have an equal right to the most extensive total system of equal basic liberties compatible with a similar system of liberty for all.

Second Principle

Social and economic inequalities are to be arranged so that they are both:

- (a) to the greatest benefit of the least advantages,
- (b) and attached to offices and positions open to all under conditions of fair equality of opportunity.”<sup>8</sup>

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<sup>8</sup> Arora, N.D. & Awasthy,S.S., 2005, Political Theory, Har-Anand Publications, New Delhi.Pg-300

The first principle calls for equal allotment of the basic freedoms uniform to all. This includes freedoms like freedom of speech, freedom of thought and conscience, freedom of assembly, political liberty, freedom of person, right to hold property, right against arbitrary arrest. The first principle calls this freedom as extremely vital for all and may not be violated under any situation.

The second principle implies to the equal distribution of material goods like income, wealth, food, clothing shelter, education, health, social security etc. According to Rawls, social and economic inequalities are to be arranged so that-

- a) They are to be of the greatest benefit to the least-advantaged members of the society (the difference principle).
- b) Offices and positions must be open to everyone under conditions of fair equality of opportunity.<sup>9</sup>

Rawls' argues that the primary goods which a rational man wants can be justified only if they improve the condition of the people who are in worst condition under the existing distribution system in comparison with the previous, equal, distribution. He asserts that equality cannot be attended only by mere distribution which may worsen the position of the least advantaged.

Rawls regards "inequalities" as just as long as they work in favour of the least advantageous groups of society.<sup>10</sup> In India, there are diverse communities, such as Tribal and Dalits who had been suffering from historical injustice.

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<sup>9</sup> Dutta, Akhil Ranjan, 2011, Political Theory Issues, Concepts and Debates, Arun Prakashan, Guwahati.pg-258

<sup>10</sup>Ibid pg-258

The Tribal's have seen several instance of discrimination on the grounds of social, political, economical, cultural, historical and regional factors. From the very beginning of the advent of the colonial rule tribal were been treated indifferently. This historical injustices inflicted upon them cannot be compensated by giving them equal distribution of goods and services. Due to this historical injustices and exclusions they have been lagging behind and they are now at a disadvantageous position in compared to other groups and communities.

The granting of equality to all cannot make them equal. Therefore, they require some additional advantages to compensate the historical injustice –which is called Rawls theory of unequal treatment. These unequal treatments can be reflected in some additional benefits in patronage, empowerment, autonomy, education, employment, social security, healthcare, infrastructure, housing etc. According to Rawls such unequal treatment of the under privilege can bring these groups or communities up to the equal stage where they can compete with other equally.

The provision of Sixth Schedule of the Indian Constitution can be regarded as compensation to the tribal of the North East India. The origin of the Sixth Schedule can be traced back during the colonial rule with the British policy of exclusion. The Govt. of India Act, of 1935 divided the hills from the plain into two categories – Excluded and Partially Excluded Areas which deprived the hills from the process of development unlike the rest of British India. Constituent Assembly on the advice of the Bordoloi Sub-Committee under the chairmanship of Gopinath Bordoloi incorporated the Sixth Schedule to the constitution of India providing special arrangement for the administration of the hill people of the region. Under the schedule

special administrative machinery for administration in the form of District Council and Regional Councils were to be formed to administer the special needs of the tribal's preserving their land and traditions by providing them with local self-governing institutions.

Sixth Schedule gives provision for the establishment of Autonomous District Councils (ADC) in the four states of the region namely, Assam, Meghalaya, Tripura and Mizoram. The establishments of these ADCs aim at protecting and preserving tribal land, people and their cultural heritage. Ensuring control over land and natural resources can determine the factors of identity, culture and lifestyle of the indigenous people.

After years of struggle the Bodoland Movement resulted to the signing of the memorandum between the Government of Assam, Government of India, All Bodo Students Union (ABSU) and Bodoland Liberation Tigers (BLT) on 10<sup>th</sup> of February, 2003, which concluded with the signing of the Memorandum of Settlement. The Autonomous Bodoland Territorial Council (BTC) was formed which was to administer the specific areas under BTC called the Bodoland Territorial Area Districts (BTAD) as a self-governing body. BTAD comprises of four districts namely Baksa, Chirang, Kokrajhar, and Udalguri. BTC was created under the special provision of Sixth Schedule of the Indian constitution to provide constitutional protection to its land and people, to accelerate the socio, economic and political development of the region. The MoS vested upon BTC some extend of legislative, executive and financial powers with respect to 40 subjects.

## 1.5: Review of Literature:

Saurath (2012) in *Rural Development Planning Strategy and Policy Imperatives* presents in a realistic manner the planned strategy and policy imperatives for rural India. It throws light on understanding Indian rural perspective, Eight Plan approach, Organisational and Financial Reform, Agrarian Development, Panchayati Raj and issues in Rural Health and Community Education etc. He also believes that, “There was also the positive evidence of alleviation of the worst forms of poverty and destitution from many developing countries and from many pockets within India itself. It is the combination of effective State intervention from above the social initiative and mass mobilisation from below which had produced significant results in pulling sizeable sections of the poor out of age old poverty, in many parts of the developing world.”<sup>11</sup> He asserts that had the policy makers fully absorbed the valuable insights and information that are made available from recent social science research. Thus according to Saurath, research work of a multi disciplinary nature and of sufficient empirical depth and regional specificity is required to provide adequate scientific support to the action programmes.

Barik (2014) in *Rural Development in India* states that even though rural infrastructure in India is now much more improved than prior to economic reforms, is not commensurate with emerging challenges of globalization to rural economy. Globalisation has created new problems like in the face of consumerism; traditional

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<sup>11</sup> Saurath, Vivek , 2005, Rural Development Planning Strategy and Policy Imperatives, Dominant Publishers & Distributors, New Delhi, Pg- 2

rural activities are losing their importance. Here the major issues pertaining to the impact of globalisation on rural sectors of India are discussed.

*Panchayati Raj System: Towards Sustainable Rural Livelihood and Development* edited by Biju (2008) is a collection of different articles regarding the governmental programmes and policies implemented in India for all round sustainable rural development. The book also lays emphasis on the importance, active participation and co-operation of local people along with the Panchayati Raj institutions for sustainable rural development and it also discusses the new paradigms of developments.

Rao (2012), in the book '*Sociology of Indian Society*' stresses the importance of rural study. He states that, India is a land of Villages and villagers continue to dominate the Indian way of life as they have done before. Villages constitute one of the basic elements of our social structure. Thus to understand the Indian Sociology, understanding the villages of India is must.

Singh (2013), in the book *Panchayati Raj and Rural Development* has given stress upon the need of decentralisation for the all round development of the nation. He states that decentralisation is a concomitant of democracy and the underlying idea behind democratic decentralisation is to widen the area of democracy by granting both authority and autonomy to the people at the lower levels. According to him democratic decentralisation is not merely devolution of power. It must also comprise devolution of responsibility.<sup>12</sup> The writer asserts that the two major responsibilities of democratic institutions are – firstly its financial discipline and second responsibility

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<sup>12</sup> Singh, V.K., 2013, Panchayati Raj and Rural Development, ALP Books, New Delhi.Pg-2

which devolves on Panchayati Raj institution is protecting and safeguarding the interest of the weaker sections of the society. He gives import ants to targeted developmental schemes to weaker sections of society such as Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes, the minorities, Women and other disadvantaged or potentially disadvantaged sections of society.

Mantrawadi (2012) in '*Public Policy and Rural Development*' focuses upon the need of proper Public Policy for rural development. Along with the improved policy making improving the performance of governmental services in view of their increasing importance and role played by them in the strategies for national development is highlighted. The author asserts that "Public policy is an important mechanism for moving a social system from the past to the future."<sup>13</sup> It's the policy which determines the future of a society, thus a scientific and rational knowledge about policy making is quite relevant for rural development. Wrong policy at a right time and right policy at a wrong time has no value, thus he asserts the need seeking proper information, strategies and formulating right policies at the right time is necessary for the overall development of the society and to satisfy the aspirations of the people.

Rao & Hazarika (1983) in *Local Self Government in India* deals with both the theory and practice of local self- government. Local self-government existed from the Ancient and Medieval India. Dynasties were over-thrown and the map of India changed its colour frequently by invasions and succession but the local self-

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<sup>13</sup> Mantrawadi, Hemanth Kumar, 2012, Public Policy and Rural Development, Atlantic Publihers & Distributors, Delhi,Pg-1



government survived. The authors assert that, “Local Government is close to the people because it is smaller in Size.”<sup>14</sup> The smaller the unit of Government larger is their number and larger the number of units greater the degree of democracy. The factor that determines the character of Government and its success does not only depend on its size. Along with its structure and size the success of a government also depends upon other criteria that have to be taken into account like the nature of popular participation, the character of the representatives of the local authorities, the basis of franchise and the periodicity of election.

In the book *Women and Panchayati Raj* the writer Meenakshi (2007) states that the mandatory participation of women in Panchayati Raj Institution has resulted in emancipation and empowerment of women. Only by constitutional provision it is not possible to uplift the status of women in a traditional society like India an effective measures should be followed with full involvement of women. The writer admits that enormous work remains undone to make women’s participation a reality in politics and society.

*Tribal Development in Western India* edited by Saha & Pathak (2014) is a collection of papers which accounts the status of tribal development in light of the policy diagnosis and interventions. The tribals in Gujarat have faced increasing marginalisation, as reflected in terms of the widening poverty gap.<sup>15</sup> Policies to exploit recourses in tribal areas by profit driven corporate sector players is the another reason behind the widening gap. The book represents a comprehensive accounts of the ‘what,

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<sup>14</sup> Rao, V. Venkata & Hazarika Niru, 1983, Local Self-Government in India, S. Chand & Company, New Delhi, Pg-322

<sup>15</sup> Shah, Amita & Pathak, 2014, Tribal Development in western India, Routledge, New Delhi.Pg-xxiii

how and why' of the process, opportunities and challenges of tribal development in western India.

Phadke (2008) in the book *Women's Status in North- Eastern India* asserts that the vast socio-economic and cultural diversity of the north-east India creates a unique economic, socio, educational and cultural dimension of the plight of women in the states. Every tribal society is unique in its terms does they calls for customized polities and schemes for their upliftment.

Brahma's (2006) book *Religion of the Boros and their Socio-Cultural Transformation: A Historical Perspective* is a study that reveals the entire development process-the religious movement, upward social mobility, ethnic crisis, etc. are inter-related to each other and their roots were laid in the Brahma dharma movement or the spread of Christianity in the early part of twentieth century. The book presents a systematic analysis of how different religions, which came among the Bodos, moulded the Boro society and how far these religious were responsible for creating social tensions and urge for political aspiration among the Boros.

In the book, *The Kacharies (Bodo)*, Endle (1997) has given a vivid monographic description of the Kachari race which are found to be scattered in the hamlets along the foot hills of the Himalayas in the Northen Bengal and Assam. The book speaks of the physical and moral characteristics and of the historic summary of the Kacharies.

The book, *The People of Assam, Origin and Composition* by Das (2003) deals with the various factors causing population variation in Assam. The book provides a holistic perception of population dynamics in Assam in particular and Northeast India

in general and it also gives an idea about the various population groups of Assam and their socio-cultural background.

*Social Mobility: From Tribalism to Indianism: The Bodos (The Aboriginal people of Eastern India)* by Brahma (2008) gives a detailed description of the historical and racial affirmatives of the Bodos and other sub-tribes. It also analyses the affinities of the Bodos primarily to Indo-Aryan speaking people of India linguistically, historically and socio-culturally.

Basumatary (2009) in his writing *Bodo Civilization in India* has given a vivid description of the origin and the routes of migration of the Bodo people. He has given detailed information of the history of Bodos and their relationship with the other kingdoms. He has also given a probable terminological sources giving birth to the term 'Bodo' and 'Bodosa'. Basumatary also asserts that the Kiratas who followed Buddhism preferred to be identified as the sons of Buddha i.e., Bodochcha Bodosa and in the later years the followers of Lord Buddha were called 'Bodosa' meaning sons of Buddha.

*A Short Profile of Human Development in BTAD of Assam* by Basumatary (2014) is a comprehensive assessment of the economic and status of human development in BTAD of Assam after the creation of BTAD. The study is based on detailed and case study carried out in different villages of the area. District wise close examination shows poor performance and large variation in human development level in BTAD. The role of every individual in decision making has also been emphasised in such a manner that everybody recognizes his or her pence in developmental process.

The book '*Tribes of Assam Part-I*' by Bordoloi, Sharma Thakur and Saikia (1987) is an ethnographic write-up on seven scheduled tribes of Assam covering both plains and hills with sufficient number of plates representing their life and culture.

The *Hill politics in Northeast India* by Chaube (1999) argues that the 'tribal' situation in northeast India can only be understood by viewing its historical perspective. The contradiction of demand for 'regional' autonomy within the framework of the nation-state was triggered by the British policies, the impact of administration and its corollary, the church, internal system of tribal authority, etc. Later the modernistic middle class and the friction between the tradition and modernism gave rise to the slogans of primordial freedom of these tribes. The evolution of the provision of the Sixth Schedule in 1950s later provided accommodation of such aspiration of the people of Northeast India.

*North-East India Politics & Insurgency* by Singh (2011) presents an overall politico-historical account of North-East India from the advent of the British till date. The administrative provision and the politics of Northeast India witness the impact of British rule in the region.

*North-East India: Problems, Policies and Prospects* by Barpujari (1998) seeks to identify the problems and prospects of the northeast region and analyse and assess the policies of the union and state Government to ensure peace, stability and security of this strategically important region. The reconstruction of the states on linguistic basis did not succeed in both the hills and the plains of this region. Different movements demanding autonomy continued to echo the region and the situation were aggravated by the unending influx of migrants of the post independent era. The influx

problem has created another explosive situation upsetting the demographic balance of the entire region.

The book *Why Bodo Movement?* by Sonowal (2013) is an in-depth study of the causes and consequence of the Bodo self-determination movement. The writer gives a detailed study of the Bodos as an ancient ethnic group of Northeast India belonging to Tibeto- Burman Mongolid group, had once dominated the area and how later were sidelined and neglected by the larger communities. Historical background, socio-political status, phases of the autonomy movement among the tribe, the leadership of the movement, the mass participation and support of the people is being detailed in this book.

Knight (2014) of University of Glasgow in the article, “*Theories of Distributive Justice and Post Apartheid South Africa*” asserts that South Africa is a unequally distributed society and such circumstance calls for assessment from the perspective of contemporary theories of Distributive Justice. The preamble to the Constitution of South Africa aims to establish a society based on democratic values, social justice and fundamental human rights. But there is no fixed view of social or distributive justices in the society of South Africa due to numerous historical factors. Three theories of justices- Rawlsian justice, Utilitarianism and Luck Egalitarianism are described and applied to understand and predict the situation.

*The Tribal at the Threshold of the Millennium;* this book is edited by Brahma (2013). This book is published by Publication Cell, Bijni College, Assam in the year. This book serves as introduction to the problems, prospects and the remedial issues prevailing in various indigenous people of the North-East states of India. This book is

divided into four different sections, Impact of Modernity on Tribes of Assam, Language and Culture, Religion and Youth, Students and Women.

From the above literature review, it has been found that Rural Development is essential for overall development of the country. Active participation and co-operation of local people along with the Panchayati Raj institution is necessary for sustainable rural development and successful implementation of the governmental programmes and policies. Every social set has their own unique problems and solution, Sixth Schedule is one of its kind which aims in giving more autonomy to the local tribal population to help them fight their social-economic problems which were inflicted among some tribes of North-East India during the colonial rule. This research study tries to find the gap and to understand how far has the provisions incorporated in the Indian constitution has been successful in the development strategies taken up for the socio, economic and political development of the India.

#### **1.6: Objective of the study:**

- 1 To study the administrative working and organisational structure of BTAD.
- 2 To analyse the organisational structure and working of Village Council Development Committee in BTAD.
- 3 To evaluate the implementation of various schemes and programmes under Gossaigaon Development Block.
- 4 To measure the level of awareness, satisfaction and dissatisfaction of the people towards VCDC's activities.

### **1.7: Research Questions:**

1. How far has the special powers vested upon BTC from the day of its commencement has been successful in bringing positive change in BTAD?
2. Is VCDC successful in implementing and distributing the plans, programmes, and schemes for developmental works in BTAD?
3. Are the programmes and policies of rural development in the area commensurate with the emerging challenges of contemporary rural economy?
4. Has the developmental work of VCDC in BTAD succeeded to overcome regional imbalance in the region?

### **1.8: Importance of the Study:**

India is regarded as land of villages and about 3/4th of Indian population lives in the villages of the country. Villages are the basis of the Indian society. According to C.N. Shankar Rao, the renowned sociologist of Indian Society says that, "The study of Indian Society becomes meaningful and fruitful only if its villages and their problems are studied carefully".<sup>16</sup> Villages are the main component of rural society.

A holistic development of the country is possible only with the all round development of the rural India. Only a proper designed and well planned rural development programmes can improve the living standards of the people in the rural area. This can be possible only by providing them opportunities for the fullest utilization of their capabilities with their active participation in the process of goal-oriented change.

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<sup>16</sup> Shankar Rao, C.N., 2012, Sociology of Indian Society, New Delhi, S. Chand.Pg-375

Ever since the country's independence, rural development is one of the most important developmental policies of the government. Rural development is a target oriented approach which aims at improving the living standard and economic wellbeing of the people in relatively underdeveloped, sparsely populated and isolated areas. Rural development programmes mainly aims at socio-economic development of the rural areas. The fundamental objective of rural development is to provide improved facilities like electrification, irrigation, communication, education, health care productivity, increased employment and higher income for target groups and technological changes in agriculture and allied sectors.

### **1.9: Research Methodology:**

The study is based on both primary as well as secondary data collection from different available source to answer to the research question and fulfil the research objective.

Firstly, Primary data has been collected from different official records, governmental statistical reports, personal interviews and field survey through both Structured and unstructured interview schedules. Primary data has been collected taking Stratified Random Sampling; size of sample collected is 200 from respondents of 6 different VCDC under Gossaigaon Development Block taking a household as a unit of sample proportionally according to the population structure of the area. The required information has been obtained from secondary sources like books, journals, articles, published as well as unpublished thesis of different research works, magazines, pamphlets and other archival. Data has been collected from various Government, semi-Government and non-Government organizations.



Secondly, the data collected through primary and secondary data collection method are analysed by using simple statistical tools and interpreting in forms of maps, tables, diagram etc.

The research is both analytical and descriptive in nature.

### **1.10: Conclusion:**

India since time immemorial has enjoyed local-self governance. It was due to the advent of the British that villages slowly lost their autonomy of self-rule during the time of colonial rule. The government of independent India re-established this provision with due course of time and through the 73<sup>rd</sup> amendment act Panchayati Raj Institution became a permanent nature of Indian Administrative System. Since an overwhelming majority of population in India lives in villages a holistic development structure is required to accelerate the pace of overall economic development of the country.

Due to late colonisation and indifferent attitude of the colonial administrators towards the tribal communities of North-eastern region of India it remained socially, politically and economically backward. Even after independence the trickle down developmental processed faced lots of hindrances to reach the region due to its geo-strategic location. Thus, the special provision of Sixth Schedule was incorporated in the Indian Constitution to address the needs of the tribal communities of this region. The provision of local self-governing unit called Village Council Development Committee (VCDC) was made to establish in the village level as a grass root government to plan and implement the governmental development programmes and

policies in the area. These local units intend to foster all round development, reduce poverty, and consolidate democracy at the grassroots level.

The research is organised into five chapters. In the beginning an overview of the research, its scope and importance are discussed.

The Chapter I contains the introduction of the topic and the background of the study. The area of study, theoretical framework to understand and explain the phenomenon, review of literature to give insight to the topic, objective of the study, research questions, importance of the study and research methodology comprises the chapter.

In Chapter II the socio-economic condition of the area is analysed in detail. The chapter includes the study of the Bodo community, Bodo movement and formation of BTAD, the socio-economic status of the BTAD areas and the problems and challenges of socio-economic development in the area.

Chapter III deals with the provision of Sixth Schedule and the working of VCDC in BTC under this provision. The evolution of the provision of Sixth Schedule is discussed in this chapter, the report of the Bordoloi Sub-Committee, Administrative structure of BTAD, Composition of BTC with its power and functions, Provision of VCDC in BTC and its working.

In Chapter IV the various schemes, programmes and policies for development are discussed. Detailed analysis of implementation of various schemes, beneficiary works programmes undertaken by the VCDCs of Gossaigaon Development Block is examined in this chapter.

Chapter V deals with the findings and suggestions of the study. The success and failure of the developmental works of VCDC is analysed. The awareness of people, level of satisfaction of the people towards the role of VCDC is discussed in this chapter.