

# Chapter: I

## Introduction

### 1.1 Statement of the Problem

The establishment of British rule in India is an important historical phenomenon. The process of India's colonization involved many elements. Terms like colony and colonialism are commonly used in discussing the history of the developing countries of Asia, South America and Africa and generally used to describe the political and economic dominion of one country over another. The Industrial Revolution in Europe accelerated the process of politically dominating other countries.<sup>1</sup> Bipan Chandra (2006) argues that political dominance gradually spread to the economic, cultural, social and religious spheres. This process however was not uniform; it differed from colonies to colonies and was influenced by the different colonial policies.<sup>2</sup> One important element of the British colonial policy in India was the superior military policy of the British. British imperialism and expansion overseas can be largely credited to the army and different strategies adopted in different situations. With the aid of a strong military force assisted by an organized bureaucracy, the British expanded their empire in India. Like other parts of the Indian subcontinent, the North East Frontier of India was also a victim of British colonialism. As the region physically differed from other parts of India, the British adopted a multi-faceted strategy to keep the North East Frontier under their control.

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<sup>1</sup> Sharma, K. R. and Singh, A. K. 'British Colonial Rule and Ethnic Question in Manipur' in *Proceedings of the North East India History Association*, 33<sup>rd</sup> Session, 2012, p. 386.

<sup>2</sup> Chandra, Bipan *Essays on Colonialism*, New Delhi, 2006, pp. 18-19.

The term “strategy” is derived from the ancient Greek word, *strategia* (στρατηγία), which referred to generalship, that is, ‘the art of the general.’ It is generally assumed that strategy and war were atheoretical. Strategy was initially believed to be an art that could be fully understood by military personnel only. The Age of Enlightenment encouraged scholars and practitioners of war to approach the topic with reason and scientific method. In the nineteenth century, German military theorist Carl von Clausewitz defined strategy as ‘the use of the engagement for the purpose of the war’.<sup>3</sup> After the First World War military historians began to form a theoretical framework of strategy. In 1941, B. H. Liddell Hart defined strategy as, ‘the art of distributing and applying military means to fulfill the ends of policy’.<sup>4</sup> Colin Gray followed the lead of Liddell Hart and included the ‘ends of policy’ to define strategy as ‘the use that is made of force and the threat of force for the ends of policy’.<sup>5</sup> The study of military strategy was popularized in the academic field after the publication of the book *On War* by Carl von Clausewitz.

It is difficult to make difference between political and military strategy as the two have common characteristics. The definition of military strategy is put forward by Giovanni Sartori (1970) as ‘a plan that describes how military means and concepts of employment are used to achieve military objectives.’<sup>6</sup> The effective distributions of man power and of supplies of material, finance and diplomacy, which are all within the sphere of statecraft, are elements of war. War is a political act and it is the process by

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<sup>3</sup> Clausewitz, Carl von *On War*, New Jersey, 1983, p. 34.

<sup>4</sup> Bowdish, Randall G. *Military Strategy: Theory and Concepts*, Unpublished PhD thesis, University of Nebraska. 2013, p. 270.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid*, p. 271.

<sup>6</sup> Sartori, Giovanni ‘Concept Misinformation in Comparative Politics’ in *The American Political Science Review*, vol 64, No. 4(Dec, 1970) pp. 1033-1053, URL: <http://www.jstor.org>, accessed: 23-09-2016 14:29 UTC.

which political purpose is attained through military action. The military is one of the means employed by the state to achieve its aims. Strategy therefore can be defined as the art of applying national power to achieve the object of war. In general, strategy comprises of political, military, naval and air strategy. Military strategists focused on separate and distinct theories of strategy, such as annihilation, exhaustion, intimidation and subversion, as ways to achieve policy objectives. This research shall discuss how British policy in the North-East Frontier of India can be linked with these theories of strategy. In this work, military strategy of the British in the North East Frontier of India shall be discussed as an instrument used to achieve political and trade ambitions. Emphasis shall be laid on the military strength of the British and its utility in the concerned region.

The English East India Company had maintained an army shaped in the European fashion since 1652 to defend their settlements in Bengal. After the Anglo-French Wars in India, the military force under the command of the Company underwent a series of changes. Robert Clive appointed European officers to train the native troops. By this time, the objective of the Company army in India shifted from defence to attack. The Court of Directors of the Company laid emphasis on maintaining more Europeans in the troops. By 1796 the Bengal Presidency alone had an army comprising of three Artillery Battalions, six European Infantry Battalions, two Native Cavalry Troops, thirty six Native Infantry Battalions and thirty Companies of *Lascars*. The Court of Directors of the Company directed the Governor General in military matters. However, the command of the army was vested in the Commander-in-Chief. In 1786, a Military Board was formed in each Presidency. It comprised of the Commander-in-Chief as the president and other senior military officers as members. The Board was assisted by a

subordinate department called the military department. This department was brought into existence with a view to enforce matters of police and administration; but important matters continued to be decided by the Governor General's Council and the department carried on the instructions. The Military Board issued all general orders to the army including the plans for the Company's territorial defence. The Army had an engineering department, a department of survey and a medical department to assist it.<sup>7</sup> The Field Service Regulations of the British Army provided for some principles of war to form strategy. The key principles prescribed by the FSR are concentration, economy of force, surprise, mobility, offensive and security.<sup>8</sup> With the technological innovations, the army began to follow the 'OODA loop' to act swiftly.<sup>9</sup> The British thus annexed territories after territories in different parts of the Indian subcontinent with the aid of their military forces.

The North-East Frontier of India, as the British used to call it, is a highly important strategic area. The term itself was a colonial construct and it was used to signify the geographical space located in the northeastern direction of Bengal. The British first approached the region after the East India Company annexed the Chittagong Hill Tracts from the Nawab of Bengal in 1760.<sup>10</sup> The term was originally used to indicate a boundary line and later in the nineteenth century, it was used to describe the tract covered by the offshoots of the Eastern Himalayas and other hill ranges.<sup>11</sup> The

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<sup>7</sup> Singh, Madan Paul *Indian Army under the East India Company*, New Delhi, 1976, pp. 10-31.

<sup>8</sup> Field Service Regulations of the British Army. URL: <http://www.army.mod.uk>. Accessed: 15-06-2016 13:47 UTC.

<sup>9</sup> The OODA loop refers to Observe, Orient, Decide and Act. The introduction of telegraph enabled the British army to gather information and to act quickly. See Roy, Kaushik, *From Hydaspes to Kargil, A History of Warfare in India from 326 BC to AD 1999*, New Delhi, 2004, p. 155.

<sup>10</sup> Sarmah, Bhupen 'The Cauldron of Conflict: Politics of Peace, Governance and Development in India's North-East' in *Social Scientist*, November–December 2016, Vol. 44, No. 11/12 (November–December 2016), pp. 15-36, URL: <https://www.jstor.org/stable/24890258>, Accessed: 30/11/2020, 15:32 UTC.

<sup>11</sup> Mackenzie, Alexander *The North-East Frontier of India*, 2003, p. 1.

alluvial valley of the Brahmaputra lies in the centre of the North-East Frontier. The hills have given shelter to different groups of people. On the north, the Akas, the Dafalas, the Mishings, the Abors and the Mishimis have their settlements. The Khamtis and the Singphos inhabit the eastern hills. The Patkai Hills and the Naga Hills have been the homelands to the Nagas. On the south of the Brahmaputra Valley, beginning from the extreme south-west, the Garo Hills, the Khasi and the Jaintia Hills, the Mikir, Lushai and the North Cachar Hills are inhabited by different hill communities. All these hills along with the Assam Valley and the states of Manipur and Tripura formed the North East Frontier of the British Empire in India. The North East was an important strategic possession for the British as it was bordering Burma and China. Moreover, the natural resources and prospering trade in the area made it an important possession of the British Empire.

But, during their initial period of empire expansion, the authorities of the East India Company were not interested in this region. Until the nineteenth century, the North East Frontier was more or less an unknown terrain for the British. The close-door policy of the Ahom monarchs, unfriendly attitude of the hill dwellers, unhealthy climate, and the dense jungles were the reasons behind this. Some of the British officials even opined that the hills of the North West Frontier were highways in comparison with the hills of the North East.<sup>12</sup> Moreover, the Company authorities were busy in establishing their hold in the erstwhile Mughal Empire. They could not turn their attention to India's North East. In the last decade of the eighteenth century, the British had to interfere in internal affairs of Assam, when the political system of the Ahom kings began to tremble by rampant civil wars. Gaurinath Singha, the king of Assam

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<sup>12</sup> Hussain, Imdad *Problem of Defence: North East Frontier with Special Reference to Local Corps and Irregulars, 1822-1866*, Unpublished PhD thesis, Gauhati University, 1975, p. 2.

requested the East India Company Government of Bengal to help him to dominate the *Moamariya* Rebellion. Governor General Lord Cornwallis sent a contingent of six companies of *Sepoys* under Captain Thomas Welsh in September, 1792. He successfully dominated the Rebellion and restored Gaurinath Singha to the throne. But he was recalled by the new Governor General John Shore, who followed the 'Policy of Non-intervention'. However, Captain Welsh's report on Assam indicated the natural richness and possibilities of trade in the region.<sup>13</sup>

In the nineteenth century, the Burmese invasion of Assam paved the way for fresh British intervention in Assam. The Burmese were willing to expand their territory westward, attacked Assam taking the opportunity of the ongoing civil war in Assam. In 1822, they annexed Assam. It brought them into direct contact with the British as Assam was bordering the Presidency of Bengal. The Burmese plundered some villages in the Rangpur District of Bengal and they prepared for an attack on Goalpara. In the meantime, the island of Shahpuri was occupied by the Burmese. These attacks on the British territories in India were direct threats to the political and commercial interests of the Company and in retaliation the British declared war on the Burmese. The British won the First Anglo-Burmese War and in the Treaty of Yandabo (26<sup>th</sup> February, 1826), the Burmese king renounced his claim over Assam. The province came under martial law imposed by the British and Cachar and Manipur were returned to their respective rulers.<sup>14</sup>

The East India Company had to defend the North-East Frontier from further Burmese invasion. As the British got accustomed with the region, they began to

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<sup>13</sup> Baruah, S.L. *A Comprehensive History of Assam*, New Delhi, 2007, p. 348.

<sup>14</sup> Goswami, Priyam *The History of Assam, from Yandabo to Partition, 1826-1947*, Guwahati, 2012, p. 17.

understand the potentiality of the North-East as the 'highway of commerce' connecting India, Tibet, China and Burma.<sup>15</sup> Moreover the discovery of coal, oil, tea and other natural resources in the region made the British aware of the economic importance of the region. In order to consolidate their position in the North-East and to prevent more aggression from Burma, the British had to adopt some strategic policies like the strategy of subversion, exhaustion, intimidation and annihilation. The proposed research shall take the strategic policy into account. The colonial rulers marked a distinction between the inhabitants of the region. The political principalities, such as the Ahom kingdom, the state of Manipur, the kingdoms of Cachar and Jayantiya, which had a definite political system, were rather dealt with diplomacy. On the other hand, the hill communities were branded as 'marauders', 'savage' and 'fierce' 'tribes' who often resisted against colonial intervention in their political and cultural spaces. Whereas the erstwhile independent kingdoms and political principalities were gradually brought under direct British rule, the hill communities were initially left to their own. The hill people preferred the unconventional method of warfare and were armed with traditional weapons such as *daos* (short swords/daggers), spears, bows and arrows.<sup>16</sup> Their opposition was regarded as attack on colonial territories and these acts of opposition were termed as 'depredations' and 'raids'. For the defence of the British ruled territories, military outposts were erected in the areas bordering the hills. Gradually these outposts were shifted towards the hills in order to keep the hill people under scrutiny. After 1826, the duty of defending the North-East Frontier was entrusted upon the Regular troops of the Company. Gradually, local troops were raised to reduce expenditure. Artillery was used to assist the infantry as fire power was identified as an important instrument to dominate

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<sup>15</sup> M'Cosh, John *Topography of Assam*, Delhi, 1975, p. 94.

<sup>16</sup> NAI, BSPC, 10<sup>th</sup> June 1825, no.26, Letters from Neufville to Scott, 15<sup>th</sup> April, 1825.

their opponents in the Frontier. The colonial rule depended upon knowledge and therefore, the British authority conducted a number of surveys to find roads to connect the whole region. Moreover, the strength and weakness of the communities inhabiting the hills were also assessed.

After the power was transferred to the British Crown, the strategy was shifted to aggression. In the nineteenth century the British had hold over most of the territories of the Indian sub-continent and they had control over a vast number of resources. The strong military force and a 'steel framed' administrative set up encouraged the British to initiate offensive warfare in the frontiers. In the North-Western Frontier the threat of Russian invasion of India through Afghanistan was tackled with aggression. The British Government wanted to dominate Afghanistan in order to defend India from Russia.<sup>17</sup> There was no foreign threat in the North East Frontier at that time. However, the hill communities considered the growing colonial presence in their territories as a threat to their existence and therefore they continued to disturb the British administered areas through raids and attacks. In order to bring stability in the Frontier and to safeguard the economic resources of the region, the British initiated a series of expeditions against the hill communities. The fighting capacity of the British troops was tested in adverse condition while fighting against the hill people who fought in unpredictable tactics. Three major expeditions against the Lushais, Nagas and Abors respectively demonstrated the battle tactics of the British military forces in the North East Frontier.

In the beginning of the twentieth century, the North East Frontier of India faced another threat in the form of Chinese aggression. Since the time of Warren Hastings, the

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<sup>17</sup> Chand, Anup 'Beginning of the Forward Policy in North-Western Frontier of India, 1874-1876' in *Proceedings of Indian History Congress, vol 5, (1941)*, p. 541. URL: <https://www.jstor.org/stable/44304816> Accessed: 09-06-2020 15:13 UTC.



British were trying to approach Tibet for trade purpose. Tibet was considered by the British as the gateway to China and the North East Frontier was the road to reach Tibet. But the 'close door policy' of Tibet defied all British attempts. During the later decades of the nineteenth century, a fear of Russian presence in Tibet began to haunt the British Government in India. In a desperate move, Viceroy Curzon dispatched an armed Mission under Colonel Younghusband in 1903-04. The Mission successfully 'opened' Tibet but it resulted in China's aggression on Tibet. Chinese troops captured Tibet and China laid claim over Tibet. Gradually, Chinese expansion was directed towards the hills situated in the Indo-Tibetan border of present day Arunachal Pradesh. Under such circumstances, the attitude of the border communities was crucial. Their villages were the point of contact of two imperialist powers. The British feared a Chinese invasion through the territory of the border communities. The British Government wanted Tibet to be free from China's dominance. On the other hand, the political situation in Europe began to deteriorate. The British did not want military engagement in Asia at that time. Therefore, in order to avoid war with China the British invited Tibet and China to a peace talk to settle the dispute. The Simla Conference of 1913-14 could not settle the dispute between China and Tibet. However, the Conference finalized the boundary line between Tibet and India in the form of the McMahon Line. China refused to accept the boundary line and the issue has not been solved till date. The proposed research shall try to give a coherent analysis of the British strategy in North-East India.

## **1.2 Survey of Literature:**

Different aspects of the colonial rule in the North East Frontier have attracted academicians of different disciplines. British policy towards the people and the region has been discussed by many scholars and academicians. A number of books have been

studied in this research, which helped in understanding the important aspects of the topic of this research.

Carl von Clausewitz's book *On War* (Translated by Michael Howard and Peter Paret) (1983) is considered as one of the fundamental books for any discussion on military strategy. The book has influenced modern military history writing. The book integrates a vast range of military concerns within the fundamental socio-political framework. Clausewitz supports the subordination of pure military campaign planning to the judgment of statecraft. He argues that war must never be seen as having any purpose in itself, but should be seen as an instrument of politics. The book includes many aspects of war and compares offensive and defensive warfare. Daniel Sok in his article *An Assessment of the Military Revolution* (2013) traces the influence of the military revolution in European imperialism. He argues that the changes in the land warfare and the introduction of technologies in warfare gave the European armies a decisive edge over the other contemporary armies of the world. He opines that the military revolution resulted in the formation of modern European states. Sok discusses about the changes in strategy and tactics brought by the military revolution. Randall G. Bowdish's unpublished PhD thesis titled *Military Strategy: Theory and Concepts* (University of Nebraska-Lincoln, 2013) mentions about the existing theories of strategy. Bowdish discusses about the usages of different strategies in different circumstances with examples from some of the important wars. Another book titled *British Strategy: A Study of the Application of the Principle of War* (1935) by Frederick Maurice gives a general account of the British war strategy. The book analyzes the military principles prescribed by the Field Service Regulation of the British Army and their application in different wars. Maurice basically categorizes the military principles of war as

concentration, economy of forces, surprise, mobility, offensive action, co-operation and security. He argues that strategy is the proper application of these principles.

Regarding the military strength and fighting tactics of the British armies in India, many books and articles have been consulted. Madan Paul Singh's book *Indian Army under the East India Company* (1976) is a useful book for understanding the military strength of the East India Company in India. The book traces the development of the Company Army from the seventeenth century. It describes the composition, numerical strength and the fighting pattern of the Company Army. Singh also discusses about the stages through which the Company Army evolved to be one of the strongest armed forces of the world. The book also explains the usefulness of the native troops in the Company Army. The views of higher officials regarding the army find mention in the book. Singh describes the various reforms of the army. However no attention has been paid on the relation between politics and the army. Nor does the book mention about the contemporary indigenous armies of India and their fighting tactics. Kaushik Roy in his book *From Hydaspes to Kargil, A History of Warfare in India from 326 BC to AD 1999* (2004) analyzes the military development in India throughout the different periods of history. The chapter on the military strength of the East India Company helps a lot to understand the tactics of the Company army. He argues that the Company army learnt how to adapt to local conditions in India and how that helped the Company to annex kingdoms after kingdoms in India. Roy further discusses about the tactical failure of indigenous armies while fighting against the British forces.

Gunnel Cederlöf in *Founding an Empire on India's North-Eastern Frontiers, 1790-1840-Climate, Commerce, Polity* (2014) explores the process of colonizing the North eastern Frontier. Cederlöf argues that the East India Company was interested in

the trade route that connected India with Burma and China and to secure that trade route, the Company established its administration in the North East. She analyzes the impact of climate, geography and ecology of the region in formulating colonial policies. The book narrates the importance of surveys in consolidating the Company's rule in the North East.

*The Comprehensive History of Assam, volume IV* (2007), edited by H.K. Barpujari, discusses the events between 1826 and 1919 in considerable details. It is a compilation of nineteen chapters written by five authors. The authors have consulted mainly primary sources such as unpublished archival records, government procedures, minutes, official letters, reports etc. and such is a useful book for the topic concerned. The first chapter of the book titled 'The New Regime, 1826-1831' by A.C. Bannerjee discusses about the events after the Treaty of Yandaboo (1826). It gives an account of the immediate policy taken by the British after the expulsion of the Burmese from the North East. The author mentions how the British made defensive arrangements with the rulers of Jayantia and Cachar before entering in war against the Burmese. He states that the British considered the safety of the newly acquired territories as a necessity, as there was the fear of further Burmese invasion.

The second chapter, also by A.C. Bannerjee, discusses the strategic importance of Manipur and subsequent British policy towards the state. The fourth chapter of the book throws light upon the annexation of Jayantia, Sadiya and Muttock territories and the reasons behind these annexations. The fifth chapter, 'Problems of the Frontier, 1822-1860' by Imdad Hussain gives an idea about the geography of the north-east frontier. It gives an account of the major tribes inhabiting the region and their relations with the British. The British reaction to the raids of the hill tribes has been discussed

with reference to the statements of the British East India Company's officials. The next chapter is about the turmoil in hills bordering the plains of Assam and its effect on the British policy. It led to the forward policy and the chapter discusses about its execution. The author observes that the chief reason was to safeguard the flourishing trade and the budding tea, oil and coal industries. The chapter titled 'Frontier Defence: Development of Local Forces' gives an account of the development of military forces in the north-east. It throws light upon the recruitment policy of the British also. The next chapter deals with the extension of British rule in the hills. It describes the expeditions against the Nagas, the Lushais and the tribes of present day Arunachal. One section of the tenth chapter discusses about the importance of transport and communication in developing British policies in the North-east frontier. The book is a narrative account of the British activities in the North East. Moreover the objective behind the work was not to particularly analyze the strategic policy of the British in North East India. It is a comprehensive account covering all aspects.

L.W. Shakespeare's *History of the Assam Rifles* (1977) is the history of the five battalions of the Assam Rifles. It is an important source as it was written by an ex Deputy Inspector General of the Battalion. The author has gone through "...all available documents and books from the early days of Assam under British rule."<sup>18</sup> The book has nineteen chapters. The book gives an account of the province of Assam. It also provides information regarding the early British policy to protect the newly acquired territories, the formation of the Cachar Levy and the Jorhat Militia. The author points out that the aim of raising these forces was to reduce the defence expenditure of the British government and to use local people, who were accustomed with the region, to protect

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<sup>18</sup> Shakespeare, L.W. *History of the Assam Rifles*, Aizawl, 1977, p. ix.

the boundary from the hill communities. Shakespeare discusses about different expeditions sent to the hills. The expeditions are described from the British point of view and so, they are justified by the author.

The book traces the development of the Surma Valley Frontier Police and their activities are described in these chapters. The strategic importance of the Valley has been argued by the author. In the ninth chapter of the book, the author gives account of the British expeditions against the Akas, Lushais, Abors and the Mishimis. The formation of the Lakhimpur Frontier Police and its activities are also described. The author turns his attention towards the Naga Hills in the next three chapters. He discusses the events leading to the formation of the Naga Hills Frontier Police and the subsequent British expedition in the Naga Hill. Shakespeare discusses, the impact of the First World War on the troops stationed in the North-east, in the fourteenth chapter. He further gives account of the raising of the Assam Military Police and two more new battalions. The Kuki and the South Chin Hills rebellions are discussed in the sixteenth and seventeenth chapters. The book provides some general information regarding the interior economy of the Force, pay system, rationing, recruitment policy etc.

The third volume of H.K. Barpujari's *Problems of the Hill Tribes, North-East Frontier, 1873-1962* (1981) is consulted to understand the consequences of the Chinese aggression on the North Eastern Frontier and the British strategy to tackle the problem. The book discusses about the changing British policy towards the hill communities of present day Arunachal Pradesh in the twentieth century. Barpujari, without giving his own opinion, describes the events from Chinese aggression to the Simla Conference from the data collected from archives. Regarding the conflict among China, Russia and the British over Tibet, Dorothy Woodman's book *Himalayan Frontiers, A Political*

*Review of British, Chinese, Indian and Russian Rivalries* (1969) is an important work. Woodman critically examines the interests of the British Government in securing Tibet as a buffer zone and the importance of the North East Frontier of India in that design. Charles Bell in his book *Tibet, Past and Present* (2000) gives a firsthand account of the events that led to the drawing of the McMahon Line. He provides an analysis of the British policy towards Tibet and the consequences of this policy.

Some published articles related to the topic like *The British Invasion of Tibet, 1903-04* (2012) and *19th century British Expansion on the Indo-Tibetan Frontier: A Forward Perspective* (2003) by Alex McKay, *British Strategy and McMahon Line: Arunachal A Means* (2007) by P.K. Nayak, *Strategic Hypocrisy: The British Imperial Scripting of Tibet's Geopolitical Identity* (2009) by Dibyesh Anand, *Tawang- A Case Study of British Frontier Policy in the Himalayas* (1976) by Lars-Erik Nyman have been consulted. Imdad Hussain's unpublished PhD thesis titled *Problem of Defence: North East Frontier with Special Reference to Local Corps and Irregulars, 1822-1866* (1975) provides important facts about the various aspects of the military policy of the British in the North East. However, the military strategy, which was so instrumental in maintaining British supremacy in the North East, has not attracted much discussion. The colonial writers gave accounts of warfare of the different communities in their narratives of expeditions. Some works have been done regarding recruitment policy in the North East. But British strategy in the North East Frontier of India as a whole is yet to be analyzed.

### **1.3 Objectives:**

The research shall discuss the following objectives:

- To analyze how the Government of the English East India Company tackled the problem of defending the North East Frontier using different strategies.
- To examine the military strategy used by the British troops in the military engagements against the hill communities.
- To discuss how the British tackled the Chinese aggression and secured the North East Frontier of India.

### **1.4 Methodology:**

The present study is based on a critical analysis of archival records and secondary sources. Colonial records kept in the Assam State Archive, West Bengal State Archive and the National Archive of India have been consulted in order to collect the facts relating to the research topic. A number of secondary sources like books, articles, research papers and unpublished thesis have been analyzed also. The research work attempts to connect classification of strategies with the colonial policies in the North East Frontier. Internet has also been used to have access to eBooks and articles related to the topic. For convenience, the current spelling of place names has been used.

### **1.5 Scope of the work:**

The proposed research shall be confined to the erstwhile North-Eastern Frontier of India which included the Brahmaputra and Barak Valleys, the Naga Hills, the Khasi Hills, Cachar, Jayantia, the princely state of Manipur and present day Arunachal Pradesh. It shall focus on the period between 1826 and 1914. The year 1826 marks the beginning of British colonial penetration in the North East India. 1914 is important



because of the Simla Conference. It gave the border dispute between China and British India a whole new dimension by demarcating the border with the McMahon Line. Moreover with the beginning of the First World War in 1914, the military policy of the British Government in India underwent sweeping changes. By this time the Indian National Movement also gained momentum which affected the internal policy of the British in India.

### **1.6 Organization of the Chapters:**

The research work will broadly be organized into five Chapters:

Chapter I: Introduction

Chapter II: Defensive Measures in the North East Frontier under the East India Company

Chapter III: British Offensive Strategy in the North East Frontier: Method of Warfare in the Hills

Chapter IV: The Question of Tibet and British strategy in the North East Frontier

Chapter V: Conclusion

The first chapter, *Introduction* provides an overview of the topic. It discusses about the definitions and concepts of strategy. The chapter briefly discusses the circumstances leading to the British occupation of the North East. It discusses about some of the works consulted in preparing the thesis. It includes the objectives of the research and mentions the methodology followed in conducting the research.

The second chapter titled *Defensive Measures in the North East Frontier under the East India Company* discusses the strategy adopted by the East India Company to consolidate its occupation of the North East Frontier and to defend the region from possible Burmese attack. It analyzes the implementation of the strategies of exhaustion, subversion and intimidation by the Company to achieve its goals in the North East Frontier.

The third chapter, *British Offensive Strategy in the North East Frontier: Method of Warfare in the Hills* is about the strategy of annihilation. In this chapter the shift in British policy after the transfer of power to the British Crown in the region is discussed. The composition of troops and tactics of warfare in the hills are discussed with reference to three major British expeditions conducted in the North East Frontier of India.

The fourth chapter is titled *The Question of Tibet and British Strategy in the North-East Frontier*. This chapter starts with the British attempts to establish trade and political relations with Tibet since the eighteenth century. The chapter analyzes how the Younghusband Mission of 1903-04 to Tibet aggravated China to pursue an expansionist policy and its impact on the North East Frontier of India. It further discusses the British strategy to defend the Frontier from China which led to the creation of the McMahon Line.

The fifth and the final chapter *Conclusion* provides a summary of the thesis. It discusses about the execution of the strategies of exhaustion, subversion, intimidation and annihilation by the British in the North-East Frontier of India. Further, the chapter points out the major findings of the thesis.