CHAPTER - IX
TRIBAL BARAK VALLEY IN TRANSITION - SUMMARY AND FINDINGS

On the basis of analysis of the present work in foregoing chapters, we are in a position to summarise our findings and advance suggestions that might be deemed necessary in this regard.

It has been found that the Barmans alone are the main scheduled plains tribal community in the Barak Valley. From the point of view of numerical strength, however, their number is insignificantly small. According to 1971 Census the total population of this tribe was 13,2 thousand. The Barmans constitute only 0.74 per-cent of the Valley's total population but, among the Scheduled plains tribal people in totality, their number forms as much as 86.43 per-cent.

Most of the Barmen villages are situated in the interior areas or at the foot of hills or jungles. The number of Barmans living in the urban areas is very small and constitute less than even half of a per-cent, while 99.6 per-cent of them live in rural areas. There are some villages which are exclusively inhabited by Barmans only. There are, however, a considerable number of localities which have mixed population and are partly inhabited, in compact areas, by the Barman community. The surrounding areas of the Barmen habitations are populated by various ethnic communities like
Bengalees, Tea garden labourers, Rajbansis, Nepalis etc.

It is to be mentioned here that out of the two districts viz. Cachar and Karimganj in Barak Valley, the Barmans are concentrated in Cachar only. With the help of multi-stage sample survey, the author selected 19 villages with 195 households covering a number of 1139 people. The data were related to the year 1984–85. However, the data and various informations regarding socio-economic conditions of the Barmans in pre-independence era were collected through interviews with the aged persons and by consulting various books and reports.

The Barmans in Cachar belong to the Bodo group of the people of Tibeto-chinese family and particularly to its Tibeto-Burman branch. Once their seat of power was along the south bank of the Brahmaputra and the Dhansiri river. Their Capital was at Dimapur. But, being defeated and driven out by the Ahoms, they came to North Cachar and established their capital at Maibong. But here, too, they could not live in peace. In 1706, Ahom King Rudra Singha with his big army attacked the Kachari Kingdom and occupied Maibong. The Kachari King Tamradhraj fled to Khaspur in the plains of Cachar. The Ahoms, however, were compelled to return to their own kingdom as the climate of that place did not suit them. We do not know the exact year when the Kacharis shifted their capital from Maibong to Khaspur. Perhaps, the thinking of shifting capital from Maibong to Khaspur began at that time and the actual shifting
took place around 1750 A.D. The Kacharis ruled in the plains of Cachar roughly till 1832 (roughly—because they were intermittently in power at short intervals), when the British annexed Cachar, two years after the death of Gobinda Chandra.

The process of Hinduisation of the Kachari Kings began in 13th century and fuller Hinduisation of the Kachari ruling class appears to have begun from fifteenth century. In 1790, they were proclaimed to be the Hindus of the Kshatriya caste in Cachar.

The process of assimilation of the Kachari Barmans with Bengalees took its start during the Kachari reigns in plains of Cachar. The Rajdorbar was adorned by a galaxy of Bengalee scholars. The Rajas made several correspondances with the East-India Company in Bengali. Raja Gobinda Chandra issued several statutes in Bengali and some of the noblemen and also Raja Gobinda Chandra himself composed some scholarly works in Bengali.

There has emerged some changes in the life and living of the Barman community in the post-independence period. The Barmans provide an example of double descent. There are forty 'Sengfong' and forty two 'zulu' clans among the male and female sections of the Barmans and they follow the rule of clan exogamy. They do not like to break the rule of endogamy. In the pre-independence days, no instance was found to show a Barman to have married a person of non-Barman origin except Dimasa. Marriage between the Barman Kacharis and the Dimasa Kacharis is permissible
because both of them share a common origin, having the concept of zulus and Sengfongs. But in the post-independence period, the examples of Barmans' marriages with even non tribals are not rare. But this kind of marriage is regarded as a serious offence by most of the Barmans who seem to find the number of female offenders as larger than that of their male counterparts'. The offenders are, by and large, excommunicated.

The Barmans are monogamous and polygamy and divorce are rarely practised. In the past, they preferred late marriage in comparison with the other communities. In spite of that their marriageable age has increased by and by presently. The marriageable age ranges from 27 years to 36 years in case of males and from 20 years to 33 years in case of females. This system is consistent with the relevant law of the land.

Our research work has revealed that there is a decreasing trend of the percentage of married persons whereas the percentage of unmarried persons is showing an increasing trend. The percentage of female widows is on the increase as we have seen before.

Again, there are a few females who do not belong to any of the 42 zulus. No youngmen with 42 zulus like to marry such women. The marriage of a boy not belonging to these specified zulu families generally takes place with a girl belonging to a family other than these 42-zulus. So, in respect of marriage, they form another group among the Barmans. In the pre-independence days, most of the girls who were outside the
fourtytwo Zulus had to remain unmarried. Still today, most of the spinsters with in the recognised zulus do not use the belongings of those girls. Thus, we have found that social treatment towards these girls has not much changed till to-day.

The payment of 'Kalti' (bride price) is one of the important features of the marriage system of the Barmans. In the past, the amount of 'Kalti' paid was very high. But the amount was by no means fixed. However, at present, we find different fixed rates of 'Kalti' prevailing in different Barman areas. Though the amount to be paid as 'Kalti' is at present fixed theoretically, yet most of the parents of the bride take 'monetary help' over and above the fixed amount of Kalti from the parents of the bridegroom. Again, the parents of the educated girls, instead of taking 'Kalti', pay dowry to the bridegroom. This is perhaps because the number of highly educated grooms is much less than they are looked for. This is a remarkable change being brought about in their society after independence.

The usual system of marriage among the Barmans is negotiated marriage. However, so-called love marriage is not uncommon. About half-a-century ago, the wedding ceremony of the Barmans was short and simple. The ceremony was performed in a day. But, at present, as a result of the demonstration effect of the Bengalee Hindu marriage, the wedding ceremony of the Barmans which took only one day to complete, requires now even more than four days to perform. Today's Barmans's marriage rituals resemble Bengalee Hindu marriage rituals to a very great extent even in the matter of show of pomp. In the preindependence days, the
Bengalees and the Barmans did not use to invite each other in their wedding ceremonies. Now they invite each other on marriage occasions and the invitation is cordially accepted from both the camps. The expenditure of the marriage ceremony is increasing owing to the above mentioned reasons. Most of the parents having their children of marriagable age have now to run into debts or to sell some of their lands or other assets to enable themselves to meet the expenses of wedding. However, for the poorest, rites of wedding are comparatively simpler. Such type of wedding is known as 'Jukudima'.

In the matter of birth rites, no change, by and large, seems to have come into being. During child birth, the Barmans till engage 'Hajaizu' - the midwife of their society and 'Baruazu' i.e. the assistant of the 'Hajaizu'. Oftlate, however, some complicated delivery cases are found to be sent to maternity hospitals or dispensaries.

As regards funeral rites, twenty years ago, at the time of shradha ceremony, the Kirtan of Lord Krishna composed by Raja Gobinda Chandra was sung by the villagers. But this tradition is now out of vogue in most of the villages. The shradha ceremonies are performed in a Brahmanical way. However, at present, some households which are disciples of religious saint-reformers like swarupananda and Anukul Chandra, do not engage Brahmin priests at the time of Shradha ceremony. Instead, they celebrate shradha ceremony in the form of a common prayer. Thus, we find that a gradual transformation is creeping in their society in the matter of funeral rites.
About seventy-five percent of the families being nuclear, the rest comprises of joint or other types of families. In the pre-independence period, too, when a boy got himself married, he used to build his own house to live in with his family not later than 6 to 7 years of marriage. Presently, however, the boy arranges to shift to his separate establishment within 2-3 years of his marriage. Thus the joint family system in their community has, in the meantime, broken up and separate living has become the usual practice. The sentiment of living amidst parents in the married life has become short-lived and the institution of joint family in the Barman community is swiftly on the wane. This underlines one of the important transitions of the tribal life in Barak Valley. There are various reasons for this early break-up of the joint family system. Of these, paucity of means in the face of multiplying needs due to a change in the very concept of happy life is, perhaps, the most important cause of breakage of the joint family system.

The religion of the Barmans is Hinduism. They worship various gods and goddesses like Kali, Ranachandi, Swaraswati, Laksmi, Siva, Bishnu, Durga etc. They now believe their traditional god and goddess, "Sibrai" and "Gamadhi" to be the other names of "Siva" and "Durga" respectively. They engage the descendents of recognised Brahmin priests of the Kachari Kingdom days as their priests and worship different gods and goddesses in the Brahmanical way. However, they have not
fully given up the observation of their traditional tribal rites in different occasions. Thus, we have found that though different ideals of Hinduism have taken root deep into the heart of the Barmans, yet they have not completely given up their primitive beliefs and rites. In this connection, it may be mentioned here that though the Christian Missionaries have succeeded in altering religious beliefs of most of the tribes of Cachar and North Cachar, yet the Barmans have remained positively oriented to Hindu religious belief.

One of the most remarkable changes noticed in their life is that in most of the villages, their traditional communal function 'Gerba' is not in vogue today. In many villages, the villagers now perform 'Kalipuja' instead of Gerba. Since Gerba festival is traditionally an expensive religious occasion and since general poverty in the community due to increased inequality is on the rise, the community is fast doing away with this festival. But 'Gaddi Sainjara' and 'Magh Sainjara, two important festivals, analogous to 'Karthik Sankranti' and 'Magh Bihu' are still observed by them. In all these functions, feast is the main attraction. However, consumption of meat and rice-beer being an important part of the festivals still continues to exist.

In the pre-independence days, the Barmans, like all other tribal communities, believed that illness was due to the influence of evil spirits. In each village, there were a few Hojais who were believed to be endowed with the power
to channelise or control such spirits. In those days if any Barman fell ill, he seldom took medicine and invariably did engage 'Hojai'. For propitiating the evil spirits, the Hojai used to sacrifice he-goats, Drakes, cock etc as desired by the evil spirits in the person of the diseased. But presently, the Barmans do not rely only on the activities of the Hojai but also take to medical help simultaneously. This change has come into being in their life because of realisation of the effect of use of medicine on early recovery. Among the educated sections, many of them presently do not call in Hojai for the treatment of their ailing family members. However, there are still many persons who believe that low fertility of the soil, low production etc. are the makings of evil spirits. It is important to note here that the function of Hojai has never been based on commercial motive since nobody has reported these people to have demanded any benefit against their services.

Some changes have occurred in the spoken language of the Barmans. Dimasa is their mother tongue. As they are surrounded by the Bengalee people, they use many Bengali words at the time of conversation among themselves. It is also found that they cannot recollect the Dimasa words for the Bengali words which they now use even while speaking in their language. Thus, in course of time, their language has undergone some changes with the adoption of a number of Bengali terms.

There was no newspaper or magazine in the Dimasa language in the preindependence days. During the post-independence
period, however, some efforts were made for publication of magazines. A few magazines were also published after sixties of this century. But, owing to various difficulties, the publication could not continue for long time. At present, the 'kholongma' is the only monthly, published in Dimasa language and its publication has been continuing since August, 1984.

Change is also visible in their dresses. Half-a-century ago, most of the males used 'turbans' on their heads. But, now-a-days, nobody is seen with turban. Like the other sections of the people, the young and school going boys have taken to shorts or trousers and shirts when they go out of the villages. However, the majority of the aged persons wear Dhuti, Punjabi or Shirts when they go out of the village. As regards the female dresses, women, at home, wear their traditional clothings but the school goers, office goers and other young girls have taken to different modern fashionable dresses.

There has emerged a demonstration effect on the ornamental uses of the women. The Barman women had no fascination for ornaments in the old days. They used 'khadudima' a sort of silver bangle. But now, a section of them has started wearing ornaments of precious metals and stones of such designs, types and kinds as Barman women were not found to be wearing before.

In the matter of inheritance, no change has taken place at all during the post-independence period. Landed property and cash money of the father is distributed amongst his sons. Maternal property which mainly consists of hand-made clothes, looms and jewelleries are inherited by daughter descendents.
Traditional songs and dances are practised only in a few interior villages. In most of the villages, the people have come to forget their traditional songs and dances. Thus, traditional dances and songs which are characteristics of tribal life has gone almost out of vogue today. However, after the inception of Akasvani Silchar in 1972, some of the youths are trying to modernise their traditional songs and are taking part in the Akasvani's Dimasa programme. Whatever is the change, however, it has lost its original flavour.

The traditional judiciary system, however, does not seem to have undergone much changes in the meantime. The Barmans generally settle their internal disputes among themselves as they used to do earlier. The Khunang, Dilek and Habaisgao who are the three officials of their village assembly are elected by the heads of families of the village. The Khunang is all in all in socio-religious matters and his power is absolute in the village in this regard. In communal functions of the village, the Khunang takes the most important role in solemnising it. It is also to be noted that at present the village is politically included in the Gaon Panchayat consisting of a few revenue villages. The Barmans caste their votes and elect representatives but rarely go to the Gaon Panchayat for settling their internal disputes. So, the structure of village council continues to remain the same till date.
Important changes in the form of diversification of occupational pattern have taken place in the tribal community of Barak Valley. During the British period, the Barmans maintained their livelihood by hunting, fishing, hill-agriculture and plains agriculture, too. They had freedom to hunt and to collect fuel and timber. The village economy was self-sufficient in accordance with their limited felt-needs. But as a result of settlement of pattas provided to the people from then East Pakistan, the jungles have been cleared in many villages after independence. As a result, the number of games like deer, docus, wild fowl, pigs etc., is drastically decreasing and the lands so long used for Jhum cultivation have in many cases now become dwelling places. The ownership pattern of the land has been changed as a result of the laws of inheritance, and mortgage and disposal of land owing to poverty. The percentage of workers in the primary sector is increasing. This is mainly because of the lack of other gainful employment opportunities in the rural areas and the increased manpower overcrowding agriculture. However, there is apparently no problem of involuntary unemployment in the service sector particularly relating to government jobs because of the liberal provisions in regard to the tribal community. If we take a fuller view of the tertiary sector, on the other hand, we find the percentage of workers increasing over the last decades. One of the reasons, perhaps, might be the
increasing absorption of people in government services sector.

In sharp difference to this feature, the secondary sector shows a declining trend in the percentage of workers. Many of the womenfolk of earning class have given up their traditional household industry i.e. looms. Again, the percentage of owner cultivator is decreasing, whereas that of agricultural labourers is increasing. This is because of the unfavourable laws of inheritance and the incidence of mortgage and disposal of agricultural land to the comparatively big landholders.

As it has been shown before, the participation rate of the scheduled tribe is higher than that of the general population. The participation rate of the females is much higher than that of the females among the caste Hindu population. During agricultural season, the Barman males and females work jointly in agricultural fields.

Almost no change has come into being in the technology structure of agriculture. The use of modern agricultural technology in the tribal community is far from encouraging. The irrigation facilities are scanty. The area under multiple cropping has not increased much. The use of fertilisers, pesticides and insecticides is almost nil.

It is learnt that the inequality regarding land distribution pattern is increasing. There are about 23 per cent families which do not have their own home-stead. The inequality is widening in case of income distribution also. This is because of increase in the number of white-collar and
other government jobs in the society. It has been shown that
top income classes forming 13 per cent of the tribal population
of Barak Valley enjoy per capita income above Rs. 3000.00 while
about three-fourth of the population has less than Rs. 2000.00
as per capita income. About 51 per cent of the population was
found to be living below poverty line. In spite of this, it is
important to note, not a single beggar is found in the villages.

There were no Barmans engaged in commerce or any indus-
try other than handloom in the pre-independence days. The number
of persons engaged in this sector is very small till to-day and
is increasing very slowly.

The unemployment problem in the society is mainly of
seasonal character. There are also some disguised unemployed.
Such type of unemployment problem is growing day by day owing
to increase in the number of uneconomic holdings in the society.
The educated unemployment problem was absent among them even a
few decades ago. Now the phenomenon of educated unemployment
appears to have started in the society. However, the degree of this
problem is comparatively lower in the Barman society than in the
caste Hindu community.

It is important to note that the Barman wage labour is
traditionally averse to work engagement in a non-Barman house.
In the course of investigation, not a single Barman worker is
found to be employed as a hired labourer in a non-Barman house.
Thus, economic compulsions also failed to bring about any change
in this age old tradition.

There have emerged some changes in the consumption beha-
viour of the Barmans. Half-a-century ago, about 85 per cent of fami-
lies used to sleep on the floors. But at present, about 50 per cent
of the households use cots. The use of chair, table and other articles of furniture was very negligible in the past. But, at present, the use of these wooden furniture has increased. *Inspite of this, still, 40 per cent households do not have any durable consumer goods. *Wrist watch, radio, bicycle, etc. have gained popularity by now. However, the percentage of households having these durable goods has not increased beyond 25 per cent till today. The consumption of tea has increased, but that of meat and fish has declined. From time immemorial, Barmans have been consuming rice-beer (Zp) which is a part and parcel of their socio-religious life. But at present, the consumption of rice-beer (Zp) has decreased owing to economic reasons. In the recent years, however, consumption of another liquor prepared from molasses or from the mixture of rice and molasses known as *Zoyaro* has increased. The consumption of salt has increased owing to decline of the use of its substitute, khar, an item which was commonly used in the preparation of every meal.

Some changes have taken place in the credit structure of the community. In the past, village money lenders and professional money lenders were the two principal sources of credit supply. But, at present, in almost each block, there are 2/3 commercial banks. In each Gaon Panchayat (G.P.), there is a G.P. level Co-operative society also. Our survey has established that village money lenders, commercial Banks, Co-operatives and relatives of farmers are the principal sources of credit. Out of these, Co-operatives provide only 11.06 per-cent of credit supply and commercial banks 8.3 per-cent. Thus, the institutional
sources provide only 13 per cent of the total credit requirement of the farmers. Though the role of non-institutional sources has declined to some extent, the degree of progress and performance of the institutional sources is far from satisfactory. The average rate of interest of the credit money provided by village money lenders is 250 per cent till now.

The legislative measures relating to regulation of functioning of money lenders in the state does not seem to have made any impact on the tribal society. Moreover, there is a system of undocumented land transfer where by the needy villagers use to procure funds from the money lenders or traders. Thus exploitation of the weak by the economically well-to-do classes is no less than in the non-tribal society.

In the educational sphere, some changes have taken place in the society. First, the percentage of literacy among the Barman community has been found to be increasing and it is presently higher than not only all Assam average but even the all India average too. This percentage is at par with the Valley's overall percentage as found out from the Census report of 1971. The percentages of literacy for the male and female sections of the Barman community as per 1971 Census were 37.97 and 22.56 respectively. The overall literacy percentage for Barmans and general population of the Valley were 30.44 and 30.6 respectively. Our survey also reveals that in 1984-85, the percentage of literacy of the Barmans was 43.7, the breaks up being 51.8 for
males and 34.57 for females. In the pre-independence days, there were very schools in the Barman areas. But it is also evident that the people were becoming increasingly interested in establishing more schools within their own or nearby villages. The change in attitude of the parents toward education of their children is not much different from that in the national level.

It is clear that female education was very limited in the pre-independence days. Most of the parents did not send their female wards to schools. But now the trend has been reversed and the children from almost every household are found to be educated in the schools. Female literacy among the Barman community is presently found to be higher than that of all Assam, all India and Barak Valley average.

In the post-independence period a change has ushered in the Barman society. The people in course of time have taken a liberal attitude in accepting those people who henceforth remained outcaste due to some prejudicially supposed offences committed by them. The degree of punishment awarded to these "offenders" has also been softened in the meantime. It may be mentioned here that "Nikhil Cachar Hedembha Barman Samiti", about twenty-five years ago, formally accepted a few families of their outcaste kinsmen in the society. The marriage of one Barman girl with a Bengalee Brahmin boy is also approved by the society. Therefore, some liberal attitude towards the henceforth stringent value system seems to have crept in to the society.

Of late, many Barmans are showing interest in political affairs relating to the district, state and even the nation.
There are some tribal cultural organisations in the state. It is also noteworthy that some sort of communication has come to exist among the various organisations. Thus, while on the one hand, "Nikhil Cachar Haidimbo Barman Samiti" works for the development of Barman Community of Cachar at the district level, the other organisation, called "All Assam Tribal Sangha" also pursues the same purpose at the state level though the organisation has a much larger area of activity concerning all the tribal communities of the state. Very recently, the samiti has accepted a resolution in its 42nd conference for establishment of a separate Autonomous District in the Barman inhabited areas or, alternatively, amalgamation of these areas with North Cachar Hills. However, it may be said that though the issue is now at the embryonic stage, it may grow into an active movement in future. "Dimasa Sanskriti Parisad," another organisation which was set up for the cultural development of the Dimasa speaking population, is now taking part in various political discussions. Thus, we find that the initiative and involvement in the political affairs among the tribals of Barak Valley is on the increase and a strong political and cultural consciousness is fast emerging in the society.

The availability of medical facilities for the maintenance of health and hygiene of the community does not seem to be encouraging at all. As against a fair general conditions of health in the earlier periods, the tribal community in recent decades has suffered and is suffering from ill health and contagious diseases like T.B. and other water-borne diseases. This is
perhaps due to unhygienic conditions of living, insufficient food either in quality and quantity and lack of medical facilities.

Various organisations have been working for the welfare of the tribals since independence. Among non-governmental organisations, 'Ramkrishna Mission', 'Kalyan Ashram' and 'Nikhil Cachar Haidimbo Barman Samiti' have been doing some work for the educational development of tribals in Barak Valley. No such facilities could be enjoyed by their children some decades ago. The government is not lagging behind. In accordance with the provisions made in various articles of constitution for tribal welfare, the Barmans have been getting a number of facilities relating to education, job, promotion, subsidy, grants etc. One Integrated Tribal Development Project (I.T.D.P.) has been functioning since 1980-81 in Cachar district. They have been benefitted through various poverty alleviation programme of the government.

In the background of above discussion, we have seen that the process of assimilation of the Barmans with other communities, and more particularly with the Bengali community, began during the Kachari reign. Some opinions favour the contention that there has been complete assimilation of the Barmans with the plains people and more particularly with the Bengalees in the Barak Valley. Our findings, however, suggest that the Barman community has reached more than half way to assimilation and realisation of a complete assimilation with the non-tribal population
would, perhaps, be a tall expectation due to growing consciousness about self assertion and identity.

Now, in course of our study relating to the present work, a number of problems of diverse nature had to be faced. These experiences are uncomfortable to a researcher and are stated below. A body of suggestions to overcome them is also advanced along with them.

(i) Many officials of the government are not clear about the distinction between tribals and Scheduled tribes. The fact is that all the scheduled tribes are tribals but all the tribals are not scheduled tribes in a particular region. This is clear from the constitution and also from the directives of the government of Assam. The present research work has, however, revealed that many non-scheduled tribe beneficiaries have been included in the list of scheduled tribe beneficiaries. As a result of this, the number of the scheduled tribe beneficiaries has been over-estimated in most of these cases. It is, therefore, suggested that the government officials be clear about the identity of beneficiaries and should make available the correct data relating to the task. Except I.T.D.P.-19, in most of the departments, the author has found such misconception with the officials and, hence, data furnished by them in most cases are not accurate and reliable.

(ii) It is also experienced that there is a big gulf between what the government record speaks about the distribution of tribal population and what the facts really are. Some areas,
recorded as inhabited by only general population are actually not so, while in some other cases the reality is of the reverse order. This is particularly noticed in the census reports. Such type of mistakes may lead to a wrong conclusion by the researchers. Though in a vast country like India, in the census operation, errors and omissions of this type is not impossible, yet, for future census operation, these types of errors should be avoided. Prior to sending the enumerators in the field, proper training and guidance should be given to them. This type of training should be conducted by the economists, demographers, statisticians etc. and not by the armed chair academicians alone.

(iii) For conducting socio-economic survey in agriculture-based rural areas, the existence of up-to-date accurate land records is necessary. But the villagers sometimes do not want to disclose their land records to the researchers, as has been found in the tribal areas of Barak valley. If they do so, sometimes after repeated queries, the information may be found to be unreliable. It is, therefore, suggested that the village panchayat should keep up-to-date land records of each of the households under its jurisdiction and furnish the same to the researcher and government for framing plans and programmes for the development of the village. But the panchayat may not collect the accurate records because the villagers do not supply the concerned officials with the necessary informations which they fear may be used against them by the government or the people they have land dispute with. So, in order to
encourage them to disclose the information about their land to the village panchayat authorities, some legislative enactment providing for non-usuability of these land ownership data for administrative and other legal purposes is felt necessary. It is only then that the village Panchayat authority will be able to gather and keep facts about the lands which are recorded in their jurisdiction.

(iv) In course of our study, some wrong data in the printed reports of the government have been detected by the author. Some of these were corrected and or pointed out in different chapters. Some of the data were beyond the scope of correction and hence are not used in the present research work. It is, therefore, necessary that there should be a proper co-ordination maintaining comparable and correlating records among different Government Organisations. Care should be taken in all respects to print the correct data. Inspite of this, if there occurs any type of mistake, this should be corrected at the earliest possible time.

(v) The cultivators have not accepted the scientific method of cultivation on a wide scale. After knowing the problems of the farmers in a particular area efforts should be made so that the cultivators accept the modern method of cultivation. It is, however, important to note that the prerequisite for application of modern technology in agriculture is irrigational facilities. It is also revealed that visit of the Gram Sevaks and Agricultural Extension Officers in the
villages are very rare. Their sincerity, devotion to duty and organising ability are essential for bringing about improvement in agriculture, on the one hand, and rural development, on the other.

(vi) It is also found that in most of the cases, the government servants entrusted with their duties in the rural areas do not like to stay in the villages and sometimes it is also observed that some important posts of physicians, Nurses etc. lie vacant months after months. This undesirable feature heavily tells upon the realisation of socio-economic objectives of the multi-faceted programmes. The government should take measures so that no such posts remain vacant in the rural areas.

(vii) There is lack of co-ordination in the different agencies for implementing the various development programmes. Sometimes funds provided for the implementation of development schemes in a particular area has been used in another area. There is also red-tapism causing undue delay in implementing the development programmes. Most of the schemes were to be translated into action within a particular plan-period, but they are often found to remain not only incomplete but also even not started before the end of the stipulated period. It is also suggested that there should be administrative gear-up and removal of all the obstacles causing delays.
(viii) It has been found that there is a system of undocumented land transfer at the time of borrowing credit money in the village. The most important disadvantage of this system is that the cultivator loses his means of repayment of credit money and, thus, cannot regain his land. It is, therefore, suggested that if, within a reasonable distance of the village, no land development Bank exists, the nearest commercial Bank should render sufficient monetary help to the needy farmers.

(ix) It has been observed that consumption of a harmful liquor made from molasses affect the health of the tribal community. It is, therefore, necessary that the mass media and other welfare organisations should play a more active role for the prohibition in rural areas. Some prohibition committees from among the local people will perhaps be better organisations to persuade the people to leave the harmful drink habit.

(x) There are some discrimination in regard to provision of benefits as between one tribe and another and between tribal population and non-tribals. In many cases, political considerations rather than economic judgement become the basis of benefits to the people. As a result, there may arise some distrust and disrespect between the beneficiaries and nonbeneficiaries. So, for providing economic benefits, an all India policy should be framed and that should be based on the yardstick of poverty position of the beneficiaries. If there is any local social factor relating to the economy which hinders development, remedial measures should be taken at the local level.

(xi) One important defect in the planning structure for development of the areas is that the plans come from above
due to which the tribal communities often consider them as an imposition. Hence, involvement of the people at the stages of plan-framing as well as implementation is necessary. This is possible only through a grass-root planning.

(xii) Many anomalies in the implementation process of poverty alleviation programmes like I.R.D.P., N.R.E.P., R.L.E.G.P., etc. have caught the attention of the study. Target groups are sometimes not properly identified and the official claims often do not corroborate with the actual benefit received by the beneficiaries. Hence, the whole programme of poverty alleviation should be critically assessed and suitable corrections made.

(xiii) The beneficiaries are sometimes not enlightened about the purpose for which they receive government grants under different schemes. That the beneficiaries treat these grants as gifts due to which the assistance is mostly spent on consumption and that no follow up measures are taken by the governmental machinery speak of a serious lapse on the part of governmental administration.

(xiv) There are some children in the villages who never attend any school. The Government should immediately enact laws for the enrolment of all the children in the age group 6-14 years in schools. In order that the scheme succeed, plans are to be framed for creation of employment opportunity to at least one person in every family in the secondary or tertiary sectors. This will fit in well with the initial process of progress. It is education which can dispel the darkness of ignorance and which can enable the people to get rid of their age-old superstitions. The degree of exploitations also will begin rapidly to lessen and, as a result, the people will begin to advance in every sphere of life.
Coming to the conclusion as to what degree of transition the tribal communities of Barak Valley have undergone in the period of our study, we have to say that a number of features like the system of excommunication of prejudicially supposed offenders, the system of payment of bride-price, dress styles, functional basis of marriage, the system of worship, attitude towards treatment of diseases, occupational structure, literacy, political consciousness, etc. have undergone changes, but to a small degree. Most of these changes occurred due to the active role of some voluntary organisations, while in other cases, the role of government is present. But the degree of change is not at all commensurate either to as long a time-span as four decades in the post-independence era or to the size of governmental efforts directed to developmental programmes.

On the other hand, there are some important aspects of life where either a minimal change or complete absence of change in the tribal community of Barak Valley have been uncomfortably observed. These aspects fall mainly in the areas of age-old aversion to work as hired labour in a non-tribal household, supernatural belief in curing capacity of traditional sacred specialists, the traditional village administration, inheritance, liquor consumption, agricultural technology, trade and commerce, industrial base, etc. This apart, the planned programmes of development has not been able to arrest the growing gap between the poverty and prosperity, not unlike in the non-tribal societies.
Thus, if we take an aggregate picture of the socio-economic life and living among the tribal communities of Barak-Valley, we find that the extent of transition during these long forty years is largely unequal to aspirations of the planners. The structure of programmes of development, unsuitable to the way of life of the tribals, on the one hand, and their poor implementation, on the other, have been at root of failure to secure intended results.