Chapter IV

METHODOLOGY OF THE STUDY

The earlier Economists paid little attention, while discussing the change taking place in a society to the non-economic factors. But any Economy studied independently, neglecting the necessity of the Socio-Cultural factors, may lead to a vague conclusion.

Most of the general theories developed by earlier Economists like Adam Smith, Marshall, Hicks etc. neglect non-economic aspects of economic development. It is only in the recent time, some Economists seek to examine economic factors along with Social factors. Prof. Myrdal says, "Economic theory has disregarded so called non-economic factors and kept them outside the analysis. As they are among the main vehicles for the circular causation in the cumulative process of economic change, this represents one of the principal shortcomings of economic theory."

The other eminent Economists for example, Arthur Lewis (1955), Bauer and Yamey (1957), G.M. Meir (1970).

also stressed the point. According to Bauer and Yamey, "Economic development is the result of a combination of Social, Cultural, Political and Economic changes which in turn brings about further change." G.M. Meir says, "If development is growth plus change, and change is Social and cultural as well as Economic, then the qualitative dimensions of development becomes extremely significant in terms of human resource development. Without such change the process of development will not become self-sustaining."

In an underdeveloped country, certain social factors act as a Catalyst of economic development. For example, Poultry will not be developed in a region where an orthodox Vaishnav Community lives. Similarly, a piggery will not be developed in a region where an orthodox Muslim Community are the inhabitants. Before development of these two types of farming in these two localities, the first and foremost task is to change their value system. Saikia and Bora has rightly said, "In rural societies, certain social system and economic activities are so inseparably linked that any attempt to study one aspect of a particular community without the knowledge of the other is bound to represent only a partial picture. Moreover, certain social factor inhibit while others accelerate economic development to a great extent. Development plan would be successful only when such plans are based on the knowledge of such socioeconomic Principle."

7. Saikia, P.D. and Bora, A.K.; Social factors influencing Economic development (in)
   Goswami, P.C. (Ed.): 1972; Socio-Economic Research in Tribal areas; Agro-Economic Research Centre for North East India,
The eminent Sociologists namely C.E. Black (1966), B.F. Hoselitz (1961), S. Tax (1951), J.J. Spengler and R. Braibanti (Ed.) (1961), Lucy Mair (1963), Irving L. Horowitz (1956), and Firth (1951) also stressed the importance of non-economic forces in the process of economic development.

In case of Tribal Communities, this type of study is of special importance. In the tribal community, the basic assumption of pure economic theory like Price Mechanism, competition, exchange economy, mobility of the factors of production is generally absent. More normally, one will notice among them a mutual co-operation rather than competition in the area of economic activities. This co-operation is amply demonstrated in their activities relating to agriculture, hunting and other allied aspects.

In these Societies, as in others, socio-cultural systems and beliefs relating to kinship, religion, taboos, political Organization etc. have profound

14. Firth, R ; 1951; The Element of Social Organization, London.
influence on economy. For an assessment of the Tribal Economy, therefore, the most helpful method would be a Socio-economic approach which considers explicitly the relationship between economy and society. This is mainly because of a very close co-existence of social and economic customary forces in the society of our study. This will help to frame a reliable micro planning at the level of small community like the Barman society of Barak Valley. Unless we start the planning at grass root level of this kind, it will not be possible to arrive at an adequate macro level plan frame. 

But little work was done on the Socio-Economic approach of the tribal people in the nineteenth century. The anthropological studies give us very meagre data about economic activities of the tribal communities. In countries like Africa or Pacific islands, foreign scholars have studied the economic life of some tribes residing in those countries. But in our country we can know the life and living of many tribes by reading some hand books, anthropological documents, District Gazetteers, Census reports and other administrative reports. But these reports fail to reveal the in-depth facts to a researcher studying socio-economic aspect of these communities. In India, the Scientific analysis on the Socio-Economic life of a particular community has been started since the fifties of this

Century. An eminent economist D.S. Nag, studied Baiga economy in the year 1953. R.P. Saxena studied the Tribal Economy of the Western Hills of Madhyapradesh in 1964. Since then this type of research works have been gaining popularity. Besides, the census authorities of India have been publishing some monographs on this aspect since 1961. Moreover, interdisciplinary works are also gaining popularity now. Many scholars think that the problem of a particular community or the particular aspect of a community should be studied from different angles. According to Meir, "interdisciplinary study is needed to determine how economic and non-economic forces interact." Inter-disciplinary study is not a prelude to merger of all social sciences into general science. It is a frontier activity that cross and recross the boundary of scientists in allied interests without jumping a fence or climbing a stile." Parson Talcott and Smelser Neil J. wrote, "neither the economist nor the behavioral scientist can afford to ignore what lies over the boundaries of his discipline." In the

present day says John Craven, "it is impossible to draw a hard and fast boundary between that which is economics and which is something else." Thus, the economists can not totally avoid other social sciences like Political Science, Mathematics, Statistics, History etc. in their study.

But much work has not been undertaken either purely on the economic aspect or on the economic and allied aspects of the tribal life in the Barak Valley. Not a single village monograph has been published by the Census authorities on the socio-economic condition of the people till now.

**SCOPE AND OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY**

**Scope :**

1. The present study aims at discussing and analysing the extent of transition that has taken place in the life of the Barman community of the Barak Valley in respect of Social and economic aspects during the post-independence period. This has been done in accordance with the enlistment of Schedules tribes, as included in the President of India's notification in 1976, as well as the directives of the Government of Assam. The other tribal communities such as the Hmar, the Khasi, the Mikir, the Halam, the Riang and the Tripuri etc. have not been brought under the scope of the study as they are not regarded as Scheduled Plains Tribes in Barak Valley by the Government.

of Assam.

2. The Social aspects of the Barmans include role in the society of clan, religion, marriage, marital status, funeral system, family system, festivals, inheritance, super-natural beliefs, dress, village administration, traditional songs and dances, language and literatures etc.

3. The Economic aspects include the demographic characteristics of the Barmans, their occupational pattern, the problem and prospects of their agriculture and industry, unemployment and under employment, inequalities in income, poverty level, consumption pattern, indebtedness, and the standard of living.

4. The level of literacy of the Barmans, both for male and the female segments of population and spread of higher education will be examined in the study. This will involve examining the existing facilities that have been provided in the Tribal Villages for primary and secondary levels of Education. The medical and drinking water facilities in different sample villages will also be investigated.

5. Different Governmental and non Governmental agencies are engaged for the improvement of the standard of living of the tribals. Also different programmes and projects such as Intensive District Agricultural Programme, Integrated Tribal Development Project (I.T.D.P.), Integrated Rural Development Programme (I.R.D.P.), National Rural Employment Programme (N.R.E.P.), Child Nutrition Programme, Old age pension, etc., have been initiated by the Government with a view to ameliorating the hardship faced by the people specially the Tribal...
study tries to investigate the extent of changes brought in tribal life by this agencies and programmes. A critical appraisal of the performance of these agencies has been appended on the basis of the study. The policies adopted by the Govt. at different times towards the tribals have also been considered from a critical point of view.

6. The Socio-economic position of the tribals in 1947, as reflected by published data and collected from various sources and by interviewing the aged persons has been compared with the position prevailing in 1984-85, as shown by the relevant primary data collected in 1985-86, to give an idea of transition that has taken place in tribal life during the period under study.

OBJECTIVES:

The Socio-economic analysis of the plains tribal community of the Barak Valley seeks to study the extent of transition in respect of the following:

(i) Socio-religious and cultural assimilation with the non-tribals.
(ii) Social value system.
(iii) Education and attitude of the parents towards children's education.
(iv) Village administration.
(v) Demographic structure.
(vi) Occupational pattern.
(vii) Societal pattern.
(viii) Technology of production.
(ix) Employment situation.
(x) Consumption pattern and poverty.
(xi) Credit and investment pattern.
(xii) Economic infrastructure.
(xii) Voluntary organisational patronage.
(xiv) Impact of planning.

**METHOD OF DATA COLLECTION**:

The primary data required were collected from the Heads of the Barman families by direct personal interview with the help of interview schedules previously framed with an eye to the objectives of the study. Secondary data were collected from various Government departments, Official Agencies and Organisations. Observation method and group discussion were also adopted.

**FIELD INVESTIGATION**:

The preliminary field investigation was done during the period from October 1985 to October 1986. Field study was also made thereafter a number of times as and when it was felt necessary.

**REFERENCE PERIOD**:

The study was undertaken relating to the year 1984-85, though the information was collected for the period since independence as far as possible.

**LIMITATION OF THE DATA**:

The Barman households seldom maintain any written records. The respondents replied the queries from the memory. It is
LOCATION OF VILLAGES STUDIED IN THE MAP OF CACHAR

Name of the Village
1. Dhanipur Forest Village  2. Joypur Pt. III
obvious that information furnished in that manner suffers from certain limitations. In regard to secondary data the most important limitation has been imposed by the absence of 1981 Census in Assam due to unusual political conditions then prevailing. As a result of this, figures collected from official records and other statistical information are mostly related to 1971 census. Even in the published data of the secondary sources, a number of discrepancies has been detected which prove that there is lack of co-ordination among the different governmental organisations maintaining comparable and correlating records.

**DESIGN:**

For the present study multi-stage sampling method is adopted. At the first stage sampling unit, one district, i.e. Cachar out of two districts, namely Cachar and Karimganj in the Barak Valley is purposely selected because there is a very negligible number of Scheduled Tribe Population in Karimganj District. Then the enlisted areas comprising Scheduled Tribe Population, as recorded in the District Census Handbook, 1971 of Cachar District, were noted for the purpose of investigation work. But the investigation, it must be noted, establishes that some villages shown to have Scheduled Tribe do not, in fact, contain any such population.22 Over and above, the investigation

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22. There is a village Salimabad under Katigorah Police Station of Cachar District. According to 1971 Census, the total population of this village was 797. Out of these 797 people, 57 were belonging to the Scheduled Tribe. But the present author after consulting a dozen of persons has come to the conclusion that there also have never been any such Scheduled Tribe people in this village. However, there were and still are a few Barman families in this village who are not of Tribal origin. The mother tongue of the Scheduled Tribe Barmans of Cachar is Dimasa but that of the Barmans of Salimabad village is Bengali.
has also revealed that there are still other villages which are not shown to have any Scheduled Tribe community do have Tribal Population. Accordingly, while we have included the latter type of villages within the scope of this study, the former type has, obviously, been excluded. Excepting barely few, all the Scheduled Tribe population living in the Cachar District happen to belong to the Barman Community. Conveniently, these villages have been grouped into four categories on the basis of their ethnic composition as shown below:

i) Tribal Villages: A village in which Tribal Population is more than 75 percent of the total population.

ii) Predominantly Tribal village: A village in which Tribals constitute 50 percent to 75 percent of the total population.

iii) Mixed village: A village in which Tribals constitute 25 percent to 50 percent of the total population.

iv) Predominantly non-Tribal village: A village in which Tribal population is 25 percent or less of the total population.

23. The village Thaligram for example, where one can see till now the ruins of Kachari Capital Khashpur, was and is mostly inhabited by the 'Scheduled Tribe Barman Community'. But in the District Census Hand Book, Cachar District 1971, this village was recorded a 'non-scheduled Tribe village'. But the same for Cachar-District, 1961 recorded some Scheduled Tribe population in this village. The only logical conclusion which can be drawn from the see-saw features of the Census Report is that the population in the village is migratory in character. But the author is fully convinced after investigation that there was no largescale out-migration during these years of discrepancy. The Barmans are the permanent inhabitants of this village.
It has been found that those predominantly non-tribal villages which have tribal populations less than 10 percent of the total are the ones where respondents are rarely available. Due to this, these villages have been excluded from investigation.

In the second stage, at least 25 percent sample villages are taken from each group. The following considerations have been made for the selection of the sample villages:

(i) The villages are selected in such a way that all the police stations (as per 1971 census) where the Barmans have been residing are well represented.

(ii) The sample villages include interior as well as roadside villages.

(iii) The sample villages include tribal, predominantly tribal, mixed and predominantly non-tribal villages.

In the third stage, the number of tribal families residing in each sample village was then ascertained after discussion with the village Headman or other prominent person of the village. The tribal population under study are in general, occupationally agriculturist. Their living is to be wedded to other types of occupations like industry, white-collar jobs etc. However, there are a few isolated cases of households among which some members have been found to be engaged in occupation other than agriculture. Accordingly, households have been stratified on the basis of land holdings namely (i) Landless (no land), (ii) The marginal (.01 - 2.5 Acres), (iii) Small (2.51 Acres -
5 Acres), (iv) Medium (5.01 Acres - 10 Acres), and (v) The big farms (10.01 Acres and above). A proportional number of households from each group are selected in such a way that 25\% of the total Barman households come within the purview of our sample. The name of the selected villages and total number of sample households are given in Table No. 4.1 which will show that the personal investigation took into account 19 sample villages with 195 households and a population of 1139.

### Table No-4.1

**Name of the Selected Villages Under Survey.**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sl. No</th>
<th>Name of Village</th>
<th>Type of</th>
<th>Name of Gaon Village</th>
<th>Panchayat</th>
<th>Police Station</th>
<th>Total No. of Barman Households</th>
<th>Total No. of Sample Households</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Phanipur Forest Village</td>
<td>T.V.</td>
<td>Bhaga Bazar</td>
<td>Phalai</td>
<td>64</td>
<td>16</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Joypur Pt-III- (Langracherra)</td>
<td>T.V.</td>
<td>Joypur</td>
<td>Lakhipur</td>
<td>67</td>
<td>17</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Chailthacherra</td>
<td>T.V.</td>
<td>Khashpur</td>
<td>Uarbone</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>13</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Bara Thacherra</td>
<td>T.V.</td>
<td>Hafinagar</td>
<td>Lakhipur</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>10</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Lakhinagar Forest Village-1</td>
<td>T.V.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>77</td>
<td>19</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Gorervitor</td>
<td>P.T.V.</td>
<td>Bikrampur</td>
<td>Katigarah</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>11</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Kacharigaon (Chinarapur)</td>
<td>P.T.V.</td>
<td>Jhatinga</td>
<td>Borkhola</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>5</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Kumacherra</td>
<td>P.T.V.</td>
<td>Harinagar</td>
<td>Lakhipur</td>
<td>101</td>
<td>25</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Koorkari Pt-II.</td>
<td>M.V.</td>
<td>Kalain</td>
<td>Katigarah</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>10</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Bijoypur</td>
<td>M.V.</td>
<td>Jhatinga</td>
<td>Borkhola</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>8</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>Gonganagar-VI</td>
<td>M.V.</td>
<td>Bhuban Hill</td>
<td>Sonai</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>11</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>Thaligram</td>
<td>M.V.</td>
<td>Khaspur</td>
<td>Uarbone</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>13</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>Gonganagar-I</td>
<td>M.V.</td>
<td>Bhuban Hill</td>
<td>Sonai</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>8</td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Cont......
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No.</th>
<th>Village</th>
<th>Type</th>
<th>Preeminent Village</th>
<th>Location</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>Bilalipur</td>
<td>M.V.</td>
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<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>Tjalugram</td>
<td>P.T.V.</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>16</td>
<td>Alberbona</td>
<td>P.N.T.V.</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>17</td>
<td>Harinagar</td>
<td>P.N.T.V.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18</td>
<td>Laburbona</td>
<td>P.N.T.V.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19</td>
<td>Packim Mutrach-</td>
<td>P.N.T.V.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**T.V. = Tribal Village, P.T.V. = Preominently Tribal Village,**

**M.V. = Mixed Village, P.N.T.V. = Preominently Non Tribal Village.**