CHAPTER X

CONCLUSION

The broad framework of the present analysis purports to show the inter-action of environment and economy on human culture. It is the physical environment which urges man to do his work. Thus it forms the foundation, though other co-variates also intervene in moulding the cultural traits of man. It appears from the study that cultural adaptibility becomes the primary determining factor in the selection of human occupancy rather than the physical environment which in this age of technology becomes secondary.

In the Doors, the interaction between the physical and cultural environment becomes much complicated because of the heterogeneous group of population working there. Therefore even within the same physical framework, various cultural patterns have been evolved. This has resulted in a considerable amount of acculturation or diffusion of culture. In the course of the last century, the cultural realms of the Doors have also undergone considerable changes. During the middle of the last century, the people of the Doors belonged to non-sedentary, semi-nomadic, agricultural-pastoral group. With the introduction of tea, permanent agriculture was
thrust on that environment. This was a big leap forward from a semi-nomadic culture to a sophisticated partially mechanised agricultural pattern.

The change in the economic environment was, however, brought in within a short span of time. The indigenous population of the Dooars, therefore, find it difficult to adjust themselves with the changing economy and began to migrate to other places, unless forced to stay under duress. The number of people thus affected were fortunately few because of the scattered distribution of the local population and also due to the fact that extension of plantation was effected on uninhabited, newly cleared forest lands. Thrusting of a new plantation economy on the semi-nomadic agricultural system thus necessitated the import of a large number of workers from the adjoining States. The immigration of a large number of labour force from different occupational and cultural realms created further complexities. Moreover, the new immigrants were forced to adapt themselves in the alien environment and thrive in a region of heterogeneous culture. This has resulted in a slow but gradual diffusion of the cultural traits of the indigenous as well as the immigrant population of the Dooars. But such diffusion has not been able to form a homogenized culture in the
Dooers. On the contrary, each section of the population, in their family life has been able to retain their original cultural core. It is only in their dealings with neighbours or in their outdoor activities that they have moulded the cultural intrusions from others according to their own image. It is due to this fact that there is no lack of cultural diversity in the Dooers though the region enjoys more or less homogenous physical environment and the inhabitants are living there for about a century.

The cultural transformation which has taken place in the course of the last century, is the result of the introduction of plantation agriculture and its gradual stabilisation. The introduction of this type of agriculture has resulted in the clearance of some of the virgin forest lands and facilitated the spread of settlements and growth of population. Industrial elements were also introduced along with agriculture. Elements of trade and commerce came into prominence and isolated pockets of urban areas became a reality. At least three sets of settlement pattern have evolved, viz., (1) those related to plantation agriculture, like the regions in the north, (2) those related to traditional crop farming like the regions in the south, and (3) a transitional type depending both on the traditional agriculture
The introduction of plantation agriculture is also largely responsible for the evolution of the existing complex socio-economic set up of the region. The new system has undoubtedly brought in economic affluence. The plantation workers are now better paid and enjoying better amenities than their neighbours. The spread of rail-road networks not only help in the healthy growth of economy, but also facilitate the exchange of local commodities and ideas. As a result, the local inhabitants of the area have been able to break their long-standing isolation and have become more and more mobile. In this way, they are enjoying considerable amenities of modern life, and in a way, are better placed than their neighbours depending on traditional agricultural occupations. Such economic affluence has not, however, brought in contentment amongst the labourers. On the contrary, the plantation workers, specially the younger members of their families, have become somewhat restive, frustrated and materialistic in their ways of life. The growth and spread of plantation have thus clearly played a dominant role in the shaping of the ecosystem of the Doosera.
The present analysis has thus become an important case study to show the relationship between the environment, economic development and the cultural traits of the Dooras, which happens to be an important geographical entity of West Bengal. The relationship which has come out from the study is not, however, static in nature but has got all the elements of dynamicity in it.