CHAPTER SEVEN
CHAPTER VII

CONCLUSION

This is a pioneering study in the field of social geography in Darrang district. No comprehensive social geographical study has earlier been conducted on the tribes and non-tribes of this district. Writing on the treatment of a plural society from the social geographical perspective is a difficult job requiring broad-based study, deeper insight and intensive field work. To appreciate the ethnic problem, one must study the tribes thoroughly, both individually and in group. The complex social system and the ingenuity that the different social groups possess and the mental and moral attitudes and disciplines that they develop, should be viewed in the backdrop of their ecological settings. The social and psychological gaps among the groups need to be removed very cautiously and in doing so, one must proceed with delicacy so that their social ethos are not disturbed.

The social distance between the indigenous and the immigrants must be dispelled to formulate a harmonious assimilation leading to the formation of a greater Assamese society. Proper and unbiased implementation of the IMDT (Illegal Migrants Determination by Tribunal) Act may help in detecting and deporting the illegal immigrants and may grant constitutional safeguard to the genuine citizens.

Mere creation of Tribal Blocks and Belts cannot solve the tribal problems, if they are not properly implemented. Alienation of tribal lands and the consequent displacement of the tribal families have become a grave problem now-a-days. The establishment of the Dhansiri Irrigation Project, though essential for the regional development, has led to the displacement of many tribal people living in and around the project area, with no alternative provision of rehabilitation. Moreover, the practice of paying cash compensation, that too, in instalment, is
definitely a discouraging affair. It should, therefore, be made compulsory that the Project authority give employment to at least one able-bodied person of each of the affected families and the rehabilitation scheme of the displaced families be made a part of the Project.

The study also reveals the pattern of economy. The marginal farmers of the INT group earn their bread from their meagre land holdings with primitive agricultural methods. The tribals, on the other hand, have an explicit lack of seriousness to treat agriculture as a part of industry. Whenever they find their life difficult, they rather prefer to shift to other places. This has been exhibited by the villages with tribal nomenclature around the Wild Life Sanctuary of Orang (newly renamed as Rajib Gandhi Wild Life Sanctuary), but with no tribal population today. Moreover, they have an indifferent attitude towards resorting to activities relating to secondary and tertiary occupations. The only secondary occupation the tribal people seems to take up is the sericulture. In this respect, although they have the potential, the infrastructural facilities are lacking. Their traditional techniques are time consuming and labour-intensive and hence turn out to be non-economical. By the age old technique, they need fifteen days to spin a meagre half a kilogram of silk, which can make Eri-spinning fifteen times speedier with the help of modern machinery. Only science and technology can bring a novel change to the moribund industry, and for that the concerned people must be properly motivated. The tribal people use castor-leaves for feeding the Eri-worm. But the use of castor-seeds to extract valuable castor-oil is unknown to them. Similarly, both the INT and IT people grow sugarcane in the district and prepare ‘gur’, as there is no sugar mill. They burn out the bagasse as domestic fuel, although it is an important raw material of paper-pulp industry, thereby making a national loss. Thus, there are many areas where new technology can be applied for economic development.

Weekly and bi-weekly markets of the district are flooded with large supply of pineapple in the season of riping of the fruit. Besides, ginger and banana are abundantly grown in the Rajagarh area of Sekhar mauza. All these are largely grown by the tribal peasants. However, establishment of fruit preservation industry could have encouraged the cultivators to grow more of these crops. Similarly, there is an abundant production of winter vegetables in the Brahmaputra char areas. But a lack of marketing facility deter the producers from producing more of them as
cash return is not commensurate to the labour spent. A cold storage may easily promote the market gardening into a lucrative enterprise.

One of the greatest problems of the inhabitants of the district is the smallness of the land holdings, yielding a per capita income below the state average. Use of modern technology in agriculture and shifting of a reasonable percentage of workers from agriculture to household and other industries, may mitigate the increasing economic backwardness. Increased percentage of literacy may help in reducing the severity of wretched economic backwardness and motivate towards industrialisation. It is, therefore, the duty of the planners to evolve suitable plans and programmes for an all round development of the district’s population, especially the people of the economically weaker sections, who play a significant role in the broad spectrum of socio-cultural framework of the district.

Acculturation has changed the mode of traditional life of the inhabitants of the district. The degree of acculturation has been gaining momentum along with the development of education and economic condition. In the recent days, the group of people who are in the process of acculturation newly, is the immigrant Muslim group, who have started opening and going to Assamese medium schools. But the degree of acculturation to approximate the Assamese norms varies from group to group in case of other ethnic population. With due honour to the social ethos and traditional customs, one must plan the developmental schemes. The cultural mosaic of the greater Assamese society is nothing but the summation of these social ethos and traditional customs, which in other words, may be termed as the culture. But in articulating the social assimilation, the planners must be cautious, so that the ethnic identities of the tribes are not disturbed.

From the analysis made in chapters Fourth and Fifth, the following points may be brought to the conclusion in a broad generalised form:

(i) Although Darrang district had a glorious past during the Koch regime, the present socio-economic condition is not up to the mark, rather deplorable.
(ii) People of different ethnic origin select separate sites for their settlement in a broad perspective.

(iii) There is a tendency among the different social groups to cluster in some pockets.

(iv) The tribal people and the tea-tribes, who have settled among the indigenous non-tribals, try to maintain their traditional socio-economic, as well as socio-cultural characteristics.

(v) A feeling of unity and fraternity exists in the district among the indigenous Hindu and Muslim inhabitants.

(vi) Although the district has been settled by large scale immigrant Muslim population, there seems to exist a social distance among the indigenous and the immigrant settlers.

(vii) A fear-psychosis seems to have been developed among both the indigenous tribal and non-tribal people of the south and south-east of the district, as if they may lose their cultural identity for the large scale encroachment of the immigrant Muslim settlers. It may be one of the causes of the recent Bodo-movement in Darrang district as well as Assam as a whole.

(viii) The tribal people constitutes over seventeen per cent of the district's population. Their immediate concern is to meet the basic needs, rather than craving to cater for higher needs and aspirations.

(ix) Socio-economic backwardness, along with their increasing unemployment problem, make the indigenous people, especially the young generation, assert their rights to form an equitable society and to remove the social groupwise disparity.