CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF RELEVANT WORKS

Review of the development of social geography and the works done within its framework is essential for doing any social geographic research as it gives the background against which the nature and scope of the research has to be defined. It is in this backdrop that the present chapter is devoted to the treatment of review of certain works in this line. The works included for discussion are not all inclusive for they are not easily available in a region where the study is being carried out, but the cross-section of studies that is taken is expected to demonstrate the common forms encompassing the field.

Social geography as an aspect of geography can be said to be as old as the geography itself. For references to human groups in their physical settings have been made by different writers since the early days. Notable among those writers were Herodutus and Strabo who viewed the social differences prevailing in different climatic environments. Thus, from the very early times people in various regions have been a keen observer of social milieu in
different environmental conditions. With the turn of the 19th century, the study focusing on the social groups in spatial context got more widened as more geographers took interest in the interplay between human beings and their surroundings. In this regard, Frederic Le Play's work may be mentioned as an outstanding one. Besides, many geographers such as Carl Ritter, Alexander von Humboldt and H.J. Mackinder deserve recognition as pioneers of social geographic studies. Vidal de la Blache was another great geographer who contributed in no small measure to the enrichment of the scope of social geography. In his studies of the Mediterranean world and of Monsoon Asia, he demonstrated the complex yet harmoniously balanced interplay between human institutions and particular natural settings. Moreover, it was he and his followers who demonstrated how the personality of the region emerges as a result of the way in which society exploits resources and reacts to its habitat. However, it can be mentioned that the real systematization of the elements of social geography began to take place only after the World War II. In this regard, Pierre George and Maximilien Sorre may be regarded as the first systematizers. They were later followed by Wagner, Ackerman and others who attempted to provide systematic framework. Another significant

2 Ibid., p. 135.
characteristic of postwar work is the development of individual systematic lines of enquiry. Geography of rural and urban life, population studies and geography of religious and political behaviour can be cited as the main lines developed after the World War II. The social dimension, however, can be said as the least studied aspect of human geography. Moreover, social geography the sub-discipline within the framework of human geography seems to be lacking definite boundaries. Such nebulous and ambiguous nature of the sub-discipline seems to have arisen more as a result of the use of the terms social, cultural and human geography interchangeably. In recent years, however, geographers have attempted to differentiate these three types of geographic study and attach specific meanings to them. Kariel and Kariel have tried to distinguish them from one another along this line: 'A logical distinction can be made among these three types of geographic study, although such a distinction is rarely made in practice. Human geography can be defined as the study of the spatial aspects of the set of phenomena involving man in which the dependent variables include population and human activities: economic, political and social. Strictly speaking, social geography would include only that sub-set of variables dealing with the spatial aspects of organizations, social institutions, individuals and groups; whereas cultural geography would deal with another sub-set of variables
related to the spatial aspects of both material and non-material element of culture.  

As regards defining the area of social geography it could be mentioned that it, as a specialism whose links with other disciplines are still in the making has been defined differently by different writers. No generally accepted definition of social geography appears to exist. Social geography equating it with human geography was first defined by Fitzgerald in 1946. Watson in 1957 defined it as 'the identification of different regions of the earth's surface according to associations of social phenomena related to the total environment'. Again, in the words of Pahl (1965) 'Social geography is the study of the patterns and processes in understanding socially defined populations in a spatial setting'. As is evident from the above definitions the former lays emphasis on the areal differentiations implying them simply as man-made. The latter on the other hand, stresses on the sociological orientation, and spatial setting takes only a secondary position as a framework for social analysis. Another

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definition of social geography is that of Eyles (1974), according to whom 'Social geography is the analysis of the social patterns and processes arising from the distribution of, and access to scarce resources'. In his view the subject of social geography is problem oriented which has to deal with the socio-spatial problems created by scarcity and uneven distribution of limited resources. Buttimer's definition of the specialism, however, places stress on the meaning of the environment to groups and their activities in it. She defines 'Social geography as the study of the areal (spatial) patterns and functional relations of social groups in the context of their social environments: the internal structure and external relations of the nodes of social activity, and the articulation of various channels of social communication'. Thus, from the foregoing it becomes obvious how different writers put different weight to different aspects while defining the area of social geography. However, without entering into dispute as to whose definition prevails it can be conveniently concluded that social geography is concerned with the patterns of the attributes and activities of people in the spatial context. The subject has four dominant themes: first, social geography as its parent discipline is primarily concerned with space; second, it

searches for order so as to establish patterns; third, it tries to explain the patterns so established, i.e. to examine those processes that help in producing a particular pattern; fourth, it tries to identify social problems and their areal concentration and attempts to ameliorate the problems.  

Having dealt with the definitions of social geography it will not be inappropriate to examine the approaches in social geography keeping the fact in mind that the subject deals with people. This fact leads to a social scale problem, for people range in number from one individual to the whole mankind. This necessitates us to fall back on social theories which can be roughly divided into two broad categories, namely holistic and action oriented. The holistic approach considers society as a whole, whereas the action approach primarily examines the role of individuals or actors that constitute a society. It was the former approach incorporating both the determinist and possibilist approaches which dominated social geography in the past. Holism particularly its possibilistic approach can be exemplified by reference to functionalism. Everything in society can be seen as having particular social function. In this perspective many a writer like Vidal de la Blache (1925), Hartshorne (1939), Gilbert and Steel (1945), Robinson (1953), Smith (1965), Wrigley (1965) etc. have

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written a vast literature pertaining to social geography.  

The second approach, i.e., the action approach is concerned with the action and interaction of the groups and individuals. With such an approach, however, one has to be wary of psychologism (or psychological reductionism). A crude example of psychologism is to consider that the desire to own a house is the fallout of mental insecurity. Thus, it calls for our awareness to the dangers of attributing action to psychological factors. This is potentially a problem of behavioural geography, the techniques of which for studying the structure of personality are drawn from psychology. The study of small groups or individuals' attributes and activities will be interesting. However, a chaotic assemblage of behavioural and social data needed for such an approach would be not only unmanageable but also extremely difficult to analyse.

The two approaches mentioned above have been found unsuitable for a rational study in social geography. Jones and Eyles have come forward with a new approach which they have named 'Group Approach'. It gives a social framework that is a meaningful categorization of the population and provides sufficient detail to form the basis of an useful


analysis. To deal with the attributes and activities, social
groups which differ in size have, for the purpose of social
geographical study been categorised into two broad groups.
The categorization is done on the basis of the general type
of social relationship and interaction within each group.
The first group is the primary group or group-in-the mind
and is characterised by informal, personal face-to-face
contact among the members. Family comes under this group. So
also neighbourhood group, or a clan or a tribe is included
in the primary group. The second group is the secondary
group or group by association and is characterised by formal
association of people because of certain common interests.
This has further been divided into ascribed, expressive and
materialist groups. The grouping of individuals similarly
placed on the economic, cultural and political ladders for
the advancement and furtherance of their interests falls
under the first sub-group. Under the expressive groups are
the voluntary associations, clubs and societies which
generally come into being for an intrinsic satisfaction in
the group activity itself. Materialist group includes those
individuals who group together for material ends. Trade
Unions, business associations, pressure groups, gangs,
political parties, etc. can be cited as the examples of
materialist group. Besides, group categorization, group
structure and groups in society are other aspects of group
-oriented approach in social geography. Factors such as
economic, cultural and the possession of similar ideas are considered the determinants of internal group cohesion in respect of group structure. The group approach also considers the wider issues of groups vis-a-vis society itself and particularly social, economic, political and cultural changes that affect society. Industrialization, urbanization and bureaucratization are taken as three major processes responsible for affecting a society. Industrialization not only leads to the development of new social relationships as a result of the reduction of society's dependence on land but also leads to increasing specialization of labour. This increasing division of labour results in growing interdependence among different sections of society. This industrialization dominated by specialization of labour, together with its concomitant, i.e., urbanization is greatly responsible for making the society grow more complex. This societal complexity, in turn, calls for organization not only in the economic plane but also in the political sphere for maintaining proper regulation of group relationships in the society. As it all happens, bureaucratic management and planning become indispensable for arranging affairs, deciding and streamlining priorities and for checking and controlling any irregularities and abuses.

The above are but a discussion on the approaches in social geography. It would now be appropriate to turn towards the conceptual basis of the subject. There are three
levels - group structure, group categorization and differences in groups in society that the conceptual basis is based on. From these three levels which are basically interrelated emanate other useful and important concepts such as social landscape, social space, territorial space, etc. of the subject. Besides these concepts developed on space, an important concept introduced by Vidal de la Blache is 'genre de vie' or mode of living. This concept is extremely rich as it embraces most of the activities of a group and even of individuals. It means a combination of techniques - material, functional, social and spiritual that a group of people inherits and adopts in a particular physical setting at a particular point of time or stage of civilization. Thus, the concept is an active expression of the adaptation of human group to their natural setting. Essentially, the concept belongs to cultural geography, yet it has come to play an important role in social geography also.

Having examined the concepts, now it will be worthwhile to look into the patterns and processes in social geography. With regard to patterns the social geographer's starting point is the spatial patterning of human activities. They begin on the premise that social activities are related in space in an easily identifiable way. Social geography being fundamentally concerned with the spatial manifestations of social change, cultural patterns are also considered while dealing with the patterns in space. However, a social
geographer is interested in the cultural patterns on a lesser scale as compared with a cultural geographer. Interest of a social geographer primarily lies in looking at social structure within any culture and at the groups that are created by similarities and dissimilarities such as castes and tribes, occupation and interest groups, etc. Patterns are but an outcome of processes and the examination of processes that appear to produce a particular pattern occupies an important place in social geography. Important processes that give rise to patterns in social geography are intra-urban mobility, rural-urban mobility, immigration, assimilation, social distance, segregation, social pathology, etc. The two important works dealing specifically with social topics like 'Social Justice and the City' and 'Mental Maps' are worth mentioning in this connection. Thus it may be observed that social geography by way of its specificity includes broadly the themes of social spatial, social structural, social interactional and social space cognition including experiential, traditional and perceived ones.

Having dealt with the approach and conceptual framework as outlined above, a review of a few works on the

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regional scene is done herewith. To begin with, Kay's (1967) work on social geography of Zambia is a commendable one. In this work an analysis of population structure, religious composition, ethnic groups, linguistic composition, occupational pattern, etc. of the country which is land-locked, has been done by using various cartographic techniques. The author also touches upon the distribution of Zambian males at work or seeking work in foreign countries and the number and origin of alien males at work or seeking jobs in Zambia. This, he does by depicting the main migration routes in the map. Another worth noting work in the same vein is that of Jones (1961) in which he, besides other aspects of social structure, studies in depth the different religious groups such as Roman Catholics, Jews, Protestants, etc. with their general pattern of distribution. By and large, this study is characteristically urban and it examines the detailed pattern of differentiation in the city. Though not in detail, Sillery (1972) considers the vast landmass of Africa from social geographic point of view and takes the large view of it. The book aims to give a simple but completely authoritative general picture of Africa stressing on various racial

and social groups in different physical environments. This, however, is not for those seeking very detailed information about various aspects in different regions of the continent. Stephen (1964)\textsuperscript{17} in his book "The Middle East : A Social Geography" deals with different racial, religious, linguistic groups, etc. of the region. However, as the study area encompasses a wide region, the analytical part of the work is not so detailed. Nevertheless, the book gives a very good account of the region, its social landscape made up of discrete racial groups, based on experience and reflection. It is also well furnished with maps, photographs, etc.

Social geography as an academic sub-field within the domain of geography has not yet fully developed in India. Though a number of works touching upon this theme or closely allied aspects has been done, the overall quantum of work is still small. Studies on tribes, castes, religions, etc. have appeared in recent years but not much headway has been made in the study of the spatial dimension of ethnicity, social infrastructure, and social pathology as integral elements of social geography. The work of David Sopher that bears outstanding merit compensates much of such poverty however.\textsuperscript{16}


In the study of Howrah from social geographic point of view Chatterjee (1967)\(^{19}\) analyses the social groups and their evolution in their physical set-up. The study though not an elaborate one, tries to project the population structure, its classification into age-sex group, religious groups, literacy rate and the livelihood structure of the people. The decadal growth of population has also been dealt with taking into consideration the increase as a result of migration mostly. The same author (1967)\(^{20}\) examines the morphological structure of Asansol apart from the social structure by depicting the spatial distribution and distinction of urban land use in the maps. The impact of industries and transport on the general morphology of the city and on the social milieu has also been discussed. On the rural scene the work of Singh (1975)\(^{21}\) although oriented towards settlement theme, bears thoughtful social geographic insight. Here the author makes use of the concept of social space, while interpreting the morphology of the rural settlement. He examines the role of different castes as well

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as religio-ritual and secular dominance in the study of community and social space structure. Villages like Bardha and Peysen have been considered in the study. Further, he touches upon the notions of economic space and economic distance, and refers to how ritual distance and economic distance act to bring groups closer functionally, operationally and spatially. Such a study provides insights into the intertwined settlement pattern in the village space. The work of Singh and Singh (1970)\(^{22}\) is also worth noting in this context. It is a micro regional study comprising 740 villages of eastern Uttar Pradesh. The cropping pattern of the area which is typical of an underdeveloped agricultural economy is examined. The study emphasizes the physical, social, and economic factors in the evolution of the existing land use pattern in the area. Furthermore, it is suggested that the government and the public should work together to gear up the agricultural machinery for a scientific resource allocation to various agricultural crops. In a different vein, although marginally oriented towards social geography, Singh's (1955)\(^{23}\) study of Banaras is a pioneering work insofar as the nature of the influence of urban area on the socio-economic landscape of its surrounding areas or urban land

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is concerned. In much the same way the work of Sharma (1980) which studies the spillover of urban characteristics from city to the countryside also deserves mentioning. In the study the author considers some major cities like Kanpur, Ahmedabad, Hyderabad and Poona and stresses on the range of urban effects and the regional variation in urban impact. A similar study by Borah (1985) throws light on the impact of Gauhati and how it correspondingly decreases with the increase of distance on the socio-economic set-up of the territory area of the study. Here various criteria have been used effectively to study the urban areas' influence on the surrounding areas. The work of Sinha (1976) is also a notable one in so far as the relationship between human habitation and its geographical milieu is concerned. Here, the author examines the rural settlements, the village patterns, house types and their functions in the case of different social groups inhabiting different pockets of the area. Closely allied to the above is that of Sharma (1972) which studies the relationship between the harsh

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environment and humankind, the environmental constraints under which people live, population structure, caste structure and the migration pattern of the region.

Coming to the works on specific social components, the studies conducted by Singh and Mikerji (1972)\(^\text{28}\), Chandna (1972)\(^\text{29}\) and Patil (1975)\(^\text{30}\) on the distributional aspects of caste groups in India are worth mentioning. Singh and Mikerji make an attempt to identify the characteristic attributes of the population geography of the scheduled castes of the country. For this, they analyse the castes distribution and their relative concentration at the district level. Chandna, in a parallel study on Haryana deals with the geographic patterning of scheduled castes and their social and demographic attributes. The structure of their work force has also been analysed as exemplified by the industrial categories of the census of India. The thrust of Patil's study falls on the spatial distribution of the scheduled castes in the Bhima-Siva interfluval region in Sholapur District. In another study


of castes by Bharadwaj and Harvey (1975) analytical tools have been used to compare the occupational structure of the scheduled castes in Punjab with that of the general population. Mokerji's (1980) work on Chamars is yet another important and thoughtful work in this line. It deals with the spatial processes and patterns of social parameters of Chamars of Uttar Pradesh who are mostly landless and agricultural labours. Various attributes that characterise Chamars as an autonomous social group have been discussed thoroughly. Elaborate use of maps depicting different aspects of the social group makes the work all the more interesting. Another important work on caste is that of Taher (1979) which tries to find out, with the help of Location Quotient, the concentration of scheduled castes population in Assam. The study is based on 1971 census and it analyses not only the concentration but also the occupation of each of the sixteen castes in Assam. The comparatively low concentration of scheduled castes population in the hill districts is attributed to physical and economic constraints held out by the hilly terrain and


an absence of market in an area sparsely populated by shifting cultivators.

Among the works done on tribals, the work of Raza (1971) on the structure and functions of rural markets in tribal Bihar, deserves mentioning. Functionally, these markets, the nerve centres of exchange system of the region are organised on the basis of the volume of trade. These are either weekly or bi-weekly markets. The author deals with the sites, commodities, prize fixation method and ecological contexts in which the markets operate. He is of the view that the rural weekly markets represent the market towns and also function as the social centres of the region. Mention may also be made about that of Patnaik (1970), Sharma (1971) and Mazumdar (1973). Patnaik discusses the different types of shifting cultivation practised by Lamba, Lanjia and Saoras and the crops grown. He argues that shifting stash-burn cultivation is not only a means of


livelihood but is also a way of living among those people. Sharma's study falls on the regional patterns of agriculture among the tribal groups in Madhya Pradesh. He uses criteria like agronomic practices, extent of shifting cultivation, size of holdings, farming implements and crops produced for the purpose of regionalization. Mazumdar discusses the distribution of tribal population in eastern Gujarat by making use of a dot map and a physiographic map. Occupational structure of the tribal population as a whole has also been considered in the study. Work done by Vidyarthi (1974)\(^{38}\) is also commendable in this context. He focuses on the multifarious problems faced by the tribals in different regions of the country. He ascribes these problems mainly to their exposure to the exogenous influences. Another worth noting work is that of Furer Haimendorf (1971)\(^{39}\). It is a comparative study of two tribes: The Angami-Nagas, the hill tribe of North-East India and the mountain people of northern Luzon in the Philippines, in which the author has observed a striking similarity in the ecology and the material culture of these two populations. Mazumdar's (1972)\(^{40}\) work on the

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acculturation process in the Hajong tribe of Meghalaya also merits mentioning. The paper evaluates the role of geographical factors in the process of acculturation and also distinguishes the Hajongs from other Hindu and Muslim groups with the help of house type, food, cultivation and implements they use. As to the distribution of literacy in the country, the work of Ahmad (1986)\(^41\) deserves a commendable note. Here, he discusses the heavy concentration of literacy in the metropolitan cities like Delhi, Bombay, Madras, etc. The study sheds immense light on the imbalanced growth of literacy which he assumes, has taken colonial pattern. Also the work of Bhatnagar (1972)\(^42\) on the social change that has taken place among the rural communities of North India, particularly Punjab is worth mentioning here. It makes it abundantly clear of the role played by education in the modifications of the social institutions as well as social behaviour. Prasad's (1971)\(^43\) study on the evolution of literacy patterns among the tribals in Bihar is another commendable work. He argues that the efforts of the Christian Missionaries in conjunction with the British Government policy

\(^{41}\) Ahmad, A. (1986): Special Lecture on 'Disparity in Literacy in India', Department of Geography, Gauhati University.


were greatly responsible for spreading the literacy spatially and raising its level among the tribals in the area under study.

Works on religion as compared to those of tribes and castes are limited, focusing mainly on the distribution pattern of major religions in the country. In this respect, the work by Raza, Ahmad and Siddiqui (1973) is a notable one which traces the historical factors that seem to have contributed significantly to the pattern of concentration of Muslims in India. It, with the help of maps depicting the share of Muslims in the rural and urban segments of population, attempts to explode the myth that the Muslims are an urban phenomenon. Mukerji (1973) also studies the spatial distribution of Muslims in Uttar Pradesh on the basis of geographic patterning of the historical phenomena. Another work that deserves mentioning is that of Siddiqui (1973). It studies the inter-censal change in the strength of different religious groups and highlights the marked concentration of differing

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religious groups in different regions of Kerala. The study is based on census schedules for 1951 and 1961. Amani's (1974) work is a notable one in language scene. It assesses Urdu's claim as a second regional language in certain parts of India where its speakers constitute a substantial numerical strength. Similar study of the same aspect by Singh (1975) is also worth mentioning. The study focuses on the spatial pattern of variation in the Punjabi speaking population during the decade 1951–61.

Besides, there is a good number of literature on Naga society and on different facets of Nagaland written by various writers. Important ones which have a bearing on social geography are those of Hutton, Mills, Amani, K.Z. (1974) 'The Status of Urdu Language in India: A Geopolitical View', The Geographer, XX(2) pp. 15-36.


Furer Haimendorf etc. The first writer, basically a social anthropologist has written elaborately about the social structure, organization and cultural traits of two major Naga tribes, namely Angami and Sema. In the same line Mills discusses social as well as the cultural characteristics of the Lotha, Ao and Rengma Nagas, whereas Haimendorf deals with the socio-cultural set-up and political organization of the Konyak-Nagas. The works of these writers on the tribes mentioned above are not only the first among the authoritative literatures on Nagas but also highly invaluable as they shed a great deal of light on the understanding of traditional Naga society. Works of Tajenyuba (1958) and Alemchiba (1970) are also worth noting. The former focuses on the subjugation of the Nagas by Britishers and the relationship that emerged later between these two peoples. How the socio-cultural life of the Nagas began to change following their contact and interaction with the aliens has been discussed in detail. The latter makes an attempt on the origin of the Nagas and


the process of occupation of their present territory. Further, it discusses the socio-political set-up of the Naga villages and the emergence of Nagaland as a political entity within the Indian Union. Another commendable work on the Naga society is that of Horam (1975)\(^54\). While focusing on the factors that lead to changes in Naga society it tries to point out the undesirable fallout of these changes.

Of the recent appearances on the literary scene of Nagaland and its people, books by Ghosh (1982)\(^55\) and Shimray (1985)\(^56\) are worth mentioning. In the 'History of Nagaland' though the main emphasis is on the history of the State from ancient to modern period it takes note of its geographical framework, flora and fauna, climate, population, religion, etc. Furthermore, while dealing with the history of the State by broadly dividing it into three periods, it discusses the relations of Nagas with the Ahoms and the Britishers as well; and the resultant effect of these relations on the life of the Nagas. In the latter, the author attempts to trace the origin of the Nagas of Nagaland and also of Manipur notably the Tangkhuls. His elaborate discussions on the socio-cultural traits of the Nagas are commendable.

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The above mentioned studies conducted by various writers on different aspects of social geography are undoubtedly illuminating and throw ample light on the trend of study in the field. However, it could be contented that such studies are selective in studying the social geographic aspects and are not concentrated on a particular area especially in the Indian scene. Coming to the scene of Nagaland it is observed that detailed geographic study on the State as a whole or any section of it is highly limited. Whatever has been done so far comprises mostly the works done from the perspective of disciplines such as sociology, anthropology, history and political science. As such, many a geographic questions on various aspects are there, open for research. Keeping this in mind, the present study will make an effort to study the major aspects that fall within the framework of social geography. The main aspects that the present study seeks to deal with are the process of peopling in the region, patterns of population characteristics and composition, patterns of social components and characteristics including settlement and house types, land use and cropping pattern, patterns of working force and literacy and educational development and patterns of social composition including religious and linguistic composition, tribal component and socio-cultural traits of the Nagas. Besides, it also attempts to give a perspective of the social character of the tribes at the micro level and the peripheral view of the changes that the present Naga society is undergoing.