PREFACE.

Lakhimpur is an integral part of the Brahmaputra Valley. Geographically, culturally and historically it is not easy to distinguish Lakhimpur from the rest of the Valley. But, with the advent of the British rule, the district emerged as an economically rich geographical unit of the State of Assam. Consequently it has developed a distinct geographical personality. In fact, the rich natural resources have contributed a great deal towards this development. The richest tea belt of the State is located in the district. The tea, mineral and forest industries added lustre to the economy of the district. Naturally enough Lakhimpur District could easily be distinguished as an important Agro-Industrial region of the State of Assam.

Assam as a whole is marching fast in the field of industrial development. The discovery of oil and gas in Lakhimpur has further widened the horizon of economic progress. There are enough of unexploited resources which must be brought into use for optimum benefit. While exploiting the natural resources, enough care should be taken for their conservation. Conservation is as important as that of exploitation for sustained economic progress. For proper assessment of conservation and exploitation, a systematic geographical study is indispensable, which is badly wanting in this part of the country. The results of such a study are naturally expected to meet the increasing demand of geographical statistics in the field of economic planning. With this end in view, an attempt has been made through this work to evaluate the potentiality of Lakhimpur in relation to the regional needs.

A work of this type is not possible without intensive field survey. To collect first hand information, I had occasion to tour the
district extensively and at times I visited the same place twice or thrice to satisfy myself on point of investigation. Due to such reasons, it took about three years to complete my field work. Here I take the opportunity of expressing my thanks to the Sub-Deputy Collectors, the Divisional Forest Officers, the District Statistical Officers, who not only supplied me with various information but also helped me immeasurably with essential facilities in connection with my tour. I had to spend sufficient time at Shillong to collect certain relevant data which were not possible to collect in the field. In this connection, I received generous help and co-operation from the Deputy Director, Department of Economics and Statistics, Shillong, the Deputy Director, Department of Agriculture and the Deputy Chief Engineer, Flood Control and Irrigation wing, P.W.D., Shillong. I am grateful to Mr. P. Evans, M.A., F.G.S.F.N.I., M.Inst. Pet., Geological Adviser to the B.O.C., for his kind permission to reproduce some of the diagrams from his published papers.

The base map of the district is drawn from the million sheet map of Survey of India. It is conveniently reduced to the size of the manuscript by ordinary photographic method. The Departmental Cartographer Sri U.K. Roychoudhury has all along been helping me in copying and tracing all the maps. I express my sincere thanks and appreciation to him. I am indebted to the Librarian, State Central Library, Shillong, Librarian, Gauhati University Library and to my Departmental colleagues for their kind help and co-operation. Last but not least, I shall be failing in my duty if I do not express my special thanks and gratitude to my guide Dr. H.P. Das, M.A. (Cal), Ph.D (London) for his unfailing guidance and encouragement, practically at every stage of my work.

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