The investigation is a study of the economic development of Cachar, a backward district in Assam, during the period 1951-74. There being no work on the subject, the sources and materials were widely scattered, and as such, I had to work in a number of libraries of the North-Eastern Region, besides the National Library, Calcutta. But the published sources on Cachar were few and far between; and I had to draw mostly upon the official records and departmental publications. Here I had to face a lot of trouble in collecting materials since 1951, for, there was hardly any office which maintained the records at the district level systematically since 1951. Rather, I was given to understand that methodical record-keeping began only since 1970-71 when the Government started compiling the progress-reports and statistical data in connection with the appraisal of plan performances. This being the state of affairs in the record-keeping of the district, I had to sort out papers from a great mass of disorganised files and records for tracing out the right thing. I also verified and supplemented the materials, wherever necessary, by gathering first-hand knowledge and information through extensive tours throughout the length and breadth of the district.

The economic development of Cachar began with the dawn of the era of Planning in the country; and under the impact of developmental planning, there has been growth-oriented changes in all directions of the economy of the district besides the
development of the various technical and institutional arrangements. The investigation deals mainly with the economic development of the district in relation to changes in the structure of output and allocation of inputs in the various sectors of the economy as well as with the growth problems.

In the context of the developmental planning the importance of such a study hardly needs be overemphasised to provide effective tools in the hands of planners at the district and the State level. The aim of the investigation is to make an assessment of the economic growth of the district, while the spotlight has been focussed on the existing potentialities of the district for enhancing the productive capacity with a view to removing the economic backwardness of this border district. As the study seeks to highlight the economic conditions of the district designed to be transformed and uplifted during the plan periods, it has been entitled "THE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT OF CACHAR DISTRICT DURING 1951-1974". Though the district has, by now, crossed the five plan-periods, yet the core of the study covers the first four plan-periods, for, the study began after the expiry of the fourth plan and much before the completion of the Fifth Plan.

The study has been opened, considering the strategic location of the district in the sensitive North-East Region of India, with a brief sketch of the political, social, cultural, and economic history of the district along with the geographical features; and in presenting the historical aspects I have
excluded the North Cachar (the then Haflong Sub-division) which was separated from Cachar in 1951, and included Karimganj (formerly a Sub-division of the Sylhet district) which was attached to it following the Partition of India.

A thorough discussion of the demographic profile of the district showing clearly the impact of immigration on the economy has been dealt in Chapter II. The Chapter III is devoted to a general discussion of the economic structure of the district; and the study has been related to price level and cost of living with a view to highlighting the poor standard of living, maintained by the people of the district. The income analysis has, however, been restricted to a decade only, from 1960-61 to 1970-71, and could not be made comprehensive in absence of district-level data covering the whole period of study.

The growth-oriented changes in the predominant sectors of the economy during the period under study have been thoroughly analysed in the context of developmental planning in the subsequent chapters from IV to IX with special reference to the conditions that prevailed before the commencement of the period of planning.

All throughout the study the discussion has been made against the background of Assam with due stress on the far-reaching effects of the Partition of India, wherever necessary. And, in making assessment of the economy as a whole, the achievements of the Community Development Programme have been
incorporated in proper places, although no special treatment of it has been made.

It has been my endeavour to deal with the practical aspects of the process of developmental planning by pinpointing the weaknesses, as well as the multifarious problems faced by the economy of the district. The searching analysis shows that the private sector holds the key to economic growth while the public sector is yet to make its due impact on the economy of the district.

In the Epilogue, after making a summary of conclusions, I have given suggestions to counteract the problems with a view to accelerating the tempo of economic development of the district, against the background of Assam.

I shall deem this research work of mine amply rewarding if the suggestions offered herein are found pragmatic and implementable.

Dated,
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