In recent years several monographs have appeared on the North-East Frontier on the political transactions and relations with the frontier hill tribes. However, the number of works on the defence of the frontier and the history of the Local Corps and irregulars is extremely meagre. In fact, Military history in India has failed to receive adequate justice at the hands of historians, Indian or non-Indian. With the exception of Dr. A. Barat's *The Bengal Native Infantry* no scholarly work has been done on the Indian Army. Dr. H.K. Barpujari in his *Problem of the Hill Tribes : North-East Frontier*, Vol. I, has briefly traced the origin and development of the Local Corps, into which some of the hill tribes were enrolled till the year 1842. The development and organisation of the Local Corps, which later developed into Gurkha Regiments, is also described in the *Historical Records of the 6th Gurkhas Rifles*, Vol. I by Major L.G.J. Ryan and in the *History of the 8th Gurkha Rifles* by Lieutenant Colonel H.J. Huxford. These works are primarily intended for regimental purposes, and the treatment is rather sketchy. Colonel L.W. Shakespear's *History of the Assam Rifles*, in which an attempt has been made to trace the growth of the Frontier Police, is not only sketchy but contains numerous factual errors. It is doubtful if the learned writer had ever consulted official records.

The object of the present work is to examine the problem of frontier defence from the Burmese occupation of Assam in 1822, till the determination of the Bengal Government to establish its sovereignty over the hill tribes in the North-East Frontier in 1866. The successive stages in the organisation and development of the Local Corps and irregulars to meet the complex situations arising from time to time and from place to place have been analysed and examined. New light has been thrown on the question of
tribal recruitment. Chapter I describes the problem in its beginning and traces the early development of the Local Corps. The organisation of the irregulars which is interwoven with the problem of the hill tribes is examined in Chapters II & III. The circumstances leading to the defence of the frontiers by Local Corps is dealt with in Chapter IV. The impracticability of this system and the development of the Militia is described in the next chapter. In Chapter VI the direct and indirect changes brought about by the Mutiny in frontier defence is examined. The subsequent emergence of a Frontier Police backed by regimental units is described in Chapter VII. The Introduction provides the geographical background, customs, usages and mode of tribal warfare and a survey of the British policy towards the hill tribes in the North-East Frontier; while an attempt is made in the conclusion to assess the impact of military measures on the hill tribes.

The thesis is based mainly on official records, both published and unpublished, preserved at the National Archives, New Delhi; West Bengal State Archives, Calcutta and in the Assam Government Records Office, Shillong. Contemporary and semi-contemporary Reports, Journals and Memoirs have also been utilised. A Select Bibliography is appended at the end of the Volume.

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