

PREFACE

The present work, **The Maras of Mizoram: A study of their History and Culture** aims at a comprehensive study of the Mara history and socio-culture before the advent of the British. The study has three points of special interest. First, the Maras commonly known to the outside world as "Lakher", "Shendu", etc. are a distinct tribal group living in India and Myanmar. They are clearly distinguishable by their culture, traditions, language, etc. which again must be understood as independent socio-cultural entity. Second, it brings out a clear picture of the Mara indigenous polity, socio-cultural life, traditions, etc. of the past. Finally, the study dispels the fallacious notion prevailing under the colonial and ^bwestern impact that the Maras do not have independent and form a "sub-culture" of the greater Lusei culture.

Material for this study has been drawn from various sources like contemporary documents, field investigations, personal interviews with knowledgeable persons having good information about the Mara polity and society, traditions, etc. But by far the largest amount of material is drawn from historical documents and contemporary sources left by the British administrators in their reports, accounts, correspondences, etc. Available Missionary works have also been consulted. These are supplemented by the published books and unpublished works. There are also some books

written by the Maras and are utilised in this work. Some unpublished works and manuscripts are also utilised in this work.

The study is divided into seven Chapters. Chapter I (Introduction) opens with location, geographical feature of the land; the people, their origin, habitat, migration, their ethnological and historical background. Chapter II deals with the traditional polity and political institution, chieftainship, the political organisation and system. Chapter III describes socio-cultural life of the people, and discussion have been made on social structure and system, social organisation and institutions. Chapter IV deals with religious life of the people, their religious beliefs, sacrifices, ceremonies and other ritual practices of the past. In Chapter V, a discussion is made on economic activities and every aspect of the economic life of the people. Chapter VI, deals with the folklife of the people, and detail discussion have been made on folk-culture like language, song, dance, festivals, folk-tales, etc. Chapter VII contains conclusion which deals with recent changes in socio-culture and religious life after the advent of the British.

In connection with this work, my foremost and [←]heaviest debt is to my supervisor, Prof. J.N. Phukan, formerly Professor and Head Department of History, now Dr. H.K.

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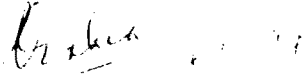
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