PREFACE

The study entitled "Social Change among the Lois in Manipur" is an attempt to analyse the socio-economic and political changes among the Lois of Manipur. The inclusive debate of the researches pertaining to the Scheduled Castes and their status in the society led to the use of a comparative research design for understanding the patterns of changes on the basis of the data collected by administering a structured interview schedule and indepth informal interviews conducted to the households in the two Loi villages of Manipur; namely, Koutruk and Leimaram. The study is divided into ten chapters, in all, entailing a bibliography and preceded by a preface.

The first chapter introducing the study describes the formulation of the research problem, extensive review of the existing studies on Scheduled Castes, the methodological strategy consisted of theoretical framework, types and sources of the data, the universe and the units of the study, selection of the units, techniques and tools for data collection, methods of data analysis and sociological significance of the study. The second chapter entitled "Manipur: Social Structure and Change" depicts Manipur in terms of land, people, social structure, economy, religion, culture, festivals, its interaction with other regions and development and change of the society. The third chapter on "The Loi Tradition" discusses origin and growth of the Lois, their traditional social structure, occupations, traditional power structure, religion, festivals, culture, their interactions with the Meitei and the resultant changes among them. The fourth chapter contextualizes the study in the two Loi villages and highlights the settlement pattern of populations, institutional networks and the surroundings of the villages. The fifth chapter entitled "Kinship Structure and Change" analyses the clans and lineages found in the two villages, and changes in the institution of family and marriage of the Loi. The sixth chapter on "Economic Organization and Change" reveals occupational structure of the Loi, their income, size of landholding, types of land ownership, types of crops grown, production and its value, types of inputs they use and types of farm and industrial implements they have. The seventh chapter entitled "Power Structure and Change" identifies the changes in the traditional power structure of the Loi, emergence of new political institutions like clubs and Gaon panchayats and their functioning, political
participation and voting behaviour among the Lois. The eighth chapter entitled “Cultural Change” presents changes in religion and its functionaries, festivals, food patterns, dress and housing patterns of the Loi. The ninth chapter entitled “Changes in Education, Health and Communication” analyses structure and change of education, health status and communication system. Lastly, the chapter ten discusses the findings and conclusion of the study.

The findings of the study show that the Lois, who were considered as inferior caste and were, prohibited commersal and commubial relationships with the Meitei are fast changing. A healthy trend of free social interaction between the Loi and the Hindu Meitei is very much evident at present. The new generation of the Loi has accepted much of the customs and traditions of the Hindu Meiteis. The spread of education and abolition of the traditional monarchical power have resulted into the free interaction between the Loi and the Meitei. Besides, their voluntary acceptance of Hinduism as well as their basic socio-cultural similarity with the Hindu Meitei has contributed to their on-going change. Agriculture is the main occupation of the villagers and they have modernized agricultural techniques and are using modern inputs and implements for increased production. Besides, they prefer working in government organizations as the government jobs carry high social prestige. As a result of urban contacts through education, employment or otherwise, the living standards of these people have been changing towards the higher caste people. In the post-Independence period, especially after introduction of the Panchayati Raj in Manipur, the Lois are trying to gain political power at the grassroots level by participating elections and contesting Panchayat elections. Thus, the process of transformation is going on in their life. the development of means of transport and communication, spread of literacy have significantly aided the process of social change among the Lois.