The present study is a modest attempt to trace the changes in the life-pattern of tribals at different levels in and around Durgapur under the twin impact of industrialization and urbanisation. From a cluster of tribal pockets amidst the jungle hideouts of dacoits, Durgapur has emerged today as one of the most important industrial cities in India. Unlike other analogous industrial towns like Ranchi, Jamshedpur, Rourkela and Bhilai, Durgapur presents some unique features in respect of geographical settings and ethnic characteristics of tribal populations.

The work relates mainly to the responses of the sons of the soil, in the area under survey, accustomed as they were, from time immemorial, to pre-feudal ways of life, to the tumultuous challenges of a rapidly expanding modern industrial society.
These responses are as numerous as they are varied; and like shafts of driving rains they reach to the very roots of tribal life. Of them, the physical responses are relatively easier to identify. But the subtle or subdued psychological responses seem to elude definition and to delineate them within the framework of a single canvas appears to be a near baffling task.

In any micro-study such as this, field work necessarily takes precedence over library work. Outdoor search for information in the neighbouring areas in all kinds of seasons, whether in the blistering heat of May or in the shivering cold of December, kept the author busy for prolonged periods over the last several years. The search, admittedly, was difficult as it involved extensive and in-depth interviews with cross-sections of the tribal population in remote regions on the basis of elaborate questionnaires. The author had to live with them quite often, sharing their abject privations and occasionally
their humble joys in order to know at first hand their spontaneous reactions to what was happening around. It required no small amount of gentle persuitation to prompt them to open their heart to an absolute stranger on issues that convulsed their life so violently. A huge amount of data has been collected in the course of these prolonged inquiries. The data, after being duly processed, have been presented in the text, sometimes also in tables, not only to ease the pressure on space but as an aid to the analytical study as well. To add to the dramatic vividness of the account, photographic representations of issues and events have been attached wherever thought necessary.

A people traditionally anchored to an isolated stagnant subsistence economy, based on primitive modes of agriculture, were suddenly cut adrift and launched into a whirlpool of changes which they had hardly anticipated. They had even less understanding of the happenings either. The vast historical
gap between a tribal economy and an industrial economy came to close in less than one generation. The changes, therefore, were so basic and sudden that they can, arguably, be likened to an upheaval. The life-style of the tribal people changed beyond recognition. The realisation soon burst into their consciousness with a lightning suddenness that things would not be the same again and a return to the past, however desirable, was no longer possible. While the older generations of tribals bemoaned the disappearance of their familiar world, the younger elements, however, welcomed the changes with some hope. To them, the future with all its uncertainties and forebodings held out the prospect of a new beginning. This dichotomy in tribal consciousness runs like a red thread through all the tangled skeins of the present narrative.

The work comprises five Chapters - each having dealt with its dimensional points at issue.

The first chapter deals with the
geophysical settings of Durgapur and its socio-economic history during the period prior to the erection of the Steel Plant.

As Durgapur remained in obscurity right up to the time of independence, it has not always been possible to trace a well-connected history, ancient and pre-modern. Also, acute was the paucity of authentic materials or documentary evidences, usually available on record on the life of the tribals as well as on that of the non-tribals who were mostly of scheduled caste of lower strata living somehow on tilling. The tribals had only then been in their wild habitations in the jungles now turned into a busy metropolis of glowing lustre.

In the Chapter II a short history of the erection of the Durgapur Steel Plant and the subsequent modernization of Durgapur has been discussed with references to the structure and composition of the present population including the migrated population, occupational provisions as well as the civic amenities of
Life.

Chapter III devotes to the discussion on the quantum of tribals in the Durgapur Steel Plant as well as in the Steel City on the basis of data as far as available.

In Chapter IV an attempt has been made to show the impact of urbanisation on the life pattern of the tribals - their leisure-time activities, recreations, religion, pastimes and festivals.

Chapter V discusses the process of assimilation and accommodation of the tribals in the non-tribal milieu and shows how this change has its repercussions on the tribals living in and around the villages of Durgapur.
WEST BENGAL
INDUSTRY AND
INDUSTRIAL REGION
Kilometre

SUGAR
TIMBER
TEA
SILK
LAC

BAY OF BENGAL

BIHAR
KHALDA
BISHNUPUR
BANDEL
KHAPOPLR
HALDIA
ORISSA
BHUTAN
NEPAL
BHUTAN
NEPAL
Sikkim
Uttam
Durapur
Industrial Belt
North Bengal
Industrial Region
Haldia
(Under Construction)

Hooghly
Industrial Belt
Asansol-Raniganj
Belt
Durgapur
Industrial Belt

Chittaranjan
Asansol
Durgapur
Haldia
Calcutta
Kharagpur
Batanagar

Bay of Bengal