PREFACE

The present study entitled **TRIBALS IN URBAN CENTRE : THE BARMAN IN SILCHAR TOWN** is based on the total cultural setup of a tribal society, i.e., the Barman, a major plain tribe of Cachar, who have migrated to Silchar town and have well adjusted amidst the non-tribal people, mainly the Bengali.

The Barmans of Cachar district have been migrating in Silchar town from the middle of the 20th century in search of employment and many of them constructed their permanent settlement in the town. Because of the continuous contact with the Bengali population the and corresponding impact of urbanization and modernization, a scenario of socio-economic and cultural changes is emerging among the urban Barmans. Though some of the traditional institutions of the Barmans are existing in the urban centre till date, yet, these are also undergoing many changes in respect of their jurisdiction, influence and functions under the impact of urbanization. But, at the same time, adaptation of their traditional society to the new environment is also seen in the urban setting and the society is persisting without any break down.

In the study it has been attempted to understand the nature, causes and consequences of urbanization in terms of continuity and change of technology, values and institutions among the Barmans in the Silchar town. The study comprises ten chapters. The chapter one **Introduction** deals with the theoretical framework consisting of the problem, strategy, design and methodology as applied to conduct the study. The chapter two **The Silchar Town** depicts the organization of Silchar town in terms of various groups, their ecology, spatial expansion, interdependence and interactions with special focus on the Barmans. The chapter three **The Barman Tradition** delineates the structure and change of the Barman's historical tradition viewed

in terms of the dynamics of their passage through the phases like the pre-Barman, the plains Barman and the urban Barmans. The chapter four **Social Structure** analyses the Barman's structural aspects like family, kinship, marriage, social stratification, inter-ethnic and intra-group relationships, adjustment of immigrants and the community as a whole, community feeling and the interactions, tribe, caste and religion. The chapter five **Economic Structure** analyses the Barman's occupational distribution, functional specialization and factors affecting their intra and inter community location. The chapter six **Power Structure** analyses the Barman's internal formal and informal power patterns and those in relation to other groups in the urban system. The chapter seven **Cultural System** consists of the structure and change of the Barman culture such as housing, dress, ornaments, food habits, beverages, language and festivals under the urban influence. The chapter eight **Religious Beliefs and Practices** depicts the structure and change of the Barman religion in the urban system. The chapter nine **Education, Health and Communication** analyses the practices of education, health and communication among the urban Barmans. Finally, the chapter ten consists of the major findings of the research study in the first half and in the second half it examines the question of tribal identity and modernity in the light of the facts of continuity and change among the Barmans in Silchar town.

On the whole the study consists of comparative analysis of the rural and urban Barmans and the Barman and the non-tribal groups in order to understand the nature of urbanization, modernization and de-tribalization among the tribals in India.

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13 March 2008

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