

**SOCIAL TRANSFORMATION IN THE BHOI REGION
OF MEGHALAYA**

By

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Dissertation

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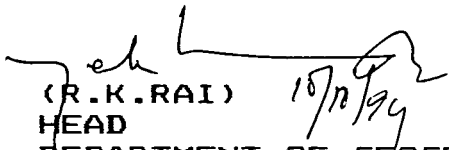


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This is to certify that the dissertation submitted by Sherly Alexander for the Degree of Master of Philosophy (M.Phil.) to the Department of Geography, School of Environmental Sciences, North Eastern Hill University, Shillong, Meghalaya, entitled "Social Transformation In The Bhoi Region of Meghalaya" is a bonafide study of the author to the best of my knowledge and belief. This study may now be placed before the examine for examination.


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CHAPTER - I

GENERAL INTRODUCTION

The Meghalaya Plateau consists of Garo, Khasi and Jaintia Hills. The central part of the Plateau is known as the Khasi Hills and it is divided into two the East Khasi Hills and the West Khasi Hills. Our study area the Bhoi region consisting of two Community Blocks - the Bhoi Area C.D. Block and the Nongpoh C. D. Block is in the northern part of the East Khasi Hills. On the northern and eastern part it is bounded by the Brahmaputra plains. On the western part by the West Khasi Hills and in the South by the Community Development Blocks of East Khasi Hills district.

Physiographically the Khasi Hills may be divided into three regions. The first division is the Ri-Bhoi on the North, which forms itself a compact plateau and gradually slopes towards the Brahmaputra valley. The second division is the Ri Lum, an irregular plateau on higher elevation with the highest peak (Shillong Peak 1969 m) situated in this part. In this region is located Cherrapunjee which recorded the highest rainfall in the world till the recent past. Now Mawsynram also situated in this region records the highest rainfall. The last division is Ri War forming a narrow belt full of oblong and sturdy ridges. The Khasi Hills are drained by many perennial and seasonal

rivers which are tributaries of the Brahmaputra river system (in the north) and Barak river system (in the south). The climate is relatively cool and humid. The impact of high humidity, extensive forest cover and the proximity of the Bay of Bengal has resulted in very heavy rainfall. The Khasi Hills covers an area of about 10,443 Sq. Km. The total population of the Khasi Hills is 874622 and that of East Khasi Hills is 657160 according to the 1991 census.

Social transformation has a wide connotation involving the indicators ranging from measuring the degree of social facilities such as medical, education, transport, communication and other infrastructural facilities, the occupational or class mobility under impact of the introduction of such facilities to the changes in certain demographic characteristics such as sex composition, population growth under the impact of urbanization and modernization which are reflective indicators of social transformation/development etc. While cities or urban areas have attracted greater attention from the social scientists in India, very little has been told about the villages in the periphery of these towns.

Most of the studies are based on extensive field work, and in majority of the cases the field work has been conducted in rural areas and among the rural

communities in different parts of the country, from the Kolar gold mines to the Nagas, in which the traditional value system have undergone some change, howsoever imperceptible it may be, either because of the migration of the rural folks to urban - industrial areas where they come in contact with a different environment, in which they try to assimilate themselves, or because of the diffusion of innovation of new and improved ways of agriculture and introduction of social facilities and urban amenities in the rural areas which guarantee forces of transformation in these areas.

This present study intends to study the social transformation taking place in the hilly and tribal area of the Bhoi region of Khasi Hills. No previous attempt has been made to study the social transformation in the Bhoi region, the processes involved and also select indicators have been taken to have a deeper understanding of the level of transformation taking place.

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

It is common knowledge that change and social transformation is a spatially variant phenomenon. The process of social change and transformation, historically has not operated at the same pace uniformly over space and their manifestations have

been determined to a great extent by the exigencies of geographical considerations. The geographical space as it is organised and translated by human practice provides a friction to the uniform spread of social change there by making Social Transformation a spatially variant phenomena.

It is in this context that problems of Social Transformation among the tribal population assumes considerable significance. Historically, speaking the tribal population has suffered diverse degrees of isolation concentrated as they are in hilly and geographically negative areas and away from the main foci of human civilizations and progress which experienced unprecedented changes and transformations in their society and economy. The hill environments, however, for a relatively longer period, experienced these developments on a much smaller scale due largely to their weak agrarian base. Difficult environment permitted marginal agricultural development only in a few favoured parts of the valley bottom. The hilly areas also witnessed a unique survival of the older modes of economies from gathering to transhumance, shifting cultivation to caravan trading. Under such conditions, the process of development operates at a low key and hill areas are only marginally integrated with developed economies of the plains. Larger

agrarian surplus production in the plain areas produces unprecedented .pa changes in their social and economic sphere leading to social transformation of a very high order in these areas, lack of such a surplus generation in the hilly and tribal areas experienced such changes only at a low key.

But the situation changed drastically with contacts of these hilly and tribal areas with colonial economy which took a keen interest in the resource base of these areas and exposed the tribes to modern developments and process of change forcing the tribes to break their age old isolation. The integration of the tribal economy with other economies and some times to the global economies produced far reaching changes in the tribal social economic order. These changes have been both positive and negative to the tribal societies spread in the vastness of the Indian sub-continent.

The North Eastern part of India presents a unique case for it contains a legion of tribes who have been exposed to modern forces only recently. The tribes are at disparate stages of their social evolution and practice diverse modes of economies taking advantage of the natural resource base of their location. Given the historical and social complexities of development and transformation in the tribal areas of the country, the

present study aims to evaluate the degree and nature of such transformation among the Khasis of Meghalaya plateau. The choice of the social group for the present study is dictated by the following consideration:

- 1) That the Khasis are concentrated in a contiguous belt in Khasi Hills of the Meghalaya plateau.
- 2) That the social structure of this tribal community is characterized by the unique survival of the matrilineal system.
- 3) That the community has been exposed to exogenous influences of the British colonial rule in the past and after Independence they were influenced by the non-tribal segments of the population.

SURVEY OF LITERATURE:

Most of the studies on social transformation have been taken up by non-geographers and have reference in non-geographical journals. There is a need for creating interest among geographers to appreciate this branch of geography so that a more appropriate commentary on social transformation with a proper spatial analysis, spatial relations, and co-variations with proper maps to analyse the spatial trends may be obtained. The literature that has appeared on social transformation can be broadly grouped under the following sub heads:-

- a) Caste and class.
- b) Culture including religion, language, tribal culture, economic traits, and the place names which are reflections of culture.
- c) Human settlements.
- d) Modernization including mechanization, urbanisation and industrialisation.

Some of the important works are referred to below:-

Ramu G. N's (1971) "Migration, Acculturation and Social Mobility among Untouchable Gold Miners in South India: A Case Study", refers to the limited changes of progress which are reflected in the migration pattern of people from rural areas to urban-industrial areas. While among the high caste people, education may be the dominant factor in migration, among the low caste groups, social factors such as low caste status, family funds etc., seem to be quite dominant.

Heinz Nissel's study (1970) "India's Economic and Social Problems" further reveals that India's economic problems are largely due to its social problems of which caste constraints are the toughest to be overcome.

Berry and Rees (1969) "The Factorial Ecology of Calcutta," found that Calcutta retained still many of the traditional elements "because many of the ethnic linkages between occupation, region of origin and caste

remain" though, "alongside these bases of differentiation are a strong land-use and familism gradient, comparable in many ways to modern American formulations of urbanisation".

T. J. Byers (1972) "The Dialectic of India's Green Revolution" has explored the dialectic of India's green revolution, which has most clearly been evidenced in Punjab, followed by Gujarat, Bihar, Western U.P. and other areas.

Sudhir Wanmali's (1970) "Regional Planning for Social Facilities:- a case study of Eastern Maharashtra" deals with the level of development of social facilities, this has been worked out by preparing an index of social facilities in settlements in a given region, which is an indirect measure of the social transformation.

S. Nangia in her book "Gradient analysis in Delhi Metropolitan Region", has worked with the gradient analysis of certain demographic indicators such as population growth, sex composition, etc., which she considers to be the reflective indicators of social transformation, cultural diffusions, economic development and, rural-urban interaction.

Harvey M. E. and Bhardwaj S. M. : "Spatial Development of Modernization in a Rural Development, Rajasthan,

India" deals with spatial development of modernization in Rajasthan. They say that the development of a region would depend on the introduction of structural variables at the grass-root level. This will allow local forces to determine settlement structure and circulation pattern.

Shiv Narain Mishra's "Human Dwelling in Sonpar Region: A geographical Analysis" deals with the various natural and cultural factors affecting the pattern of dwellings in the Sonpar region. It is observed that the human dwellings bear the stamp of local building material.

Among the cultural aspects forces of acculturation as identified by Manzoor Alam in "Two Cultures Unite in Hyderabad"; cultural characteristics as identified by Hiroshi Ishida in "A Cultural Geography of the Great Plains of India"; cultural traits reflecting themselves in place-names as identified by N. D. Bhattacharya in "Analysis of Place-names in the District of Murshidabad, West Bengal" religion and race as discussed by Gopal Krishna in "Distribution of Sikhs Outside the Punjab"; Klaus Dettmann in "Type Variability of the Towns in the Islamic Orient of World."; C.R.L. Gooch in "Ten Years in Exile ; An Appraisal of the Resettlement of Tibetan Refugees in India"; G.S. Gosal in "The Religious Composition of India's population : A Spatial Analysis", .pa and Romi

Khosla' in "End of an Era for Ladakh monasteries" have worked on the typical characteristics of adjustments of Sikhs, Islamic culture, and Tibetans to the new environments and have given a general background of the spatial analysis of religious composition of India's population.

There has been practically no study of social transformation in the hilly and tribal areas of the country especially of the north-eastern states. It is on this account that a step in this direction has been attempted by this present study of Social Transformation in the Bhoi region of Meghalaya. This study is different from all the works mentioned above. It has taken into consideration the transformation in a historical perspective taking indicators such as social amenities, attainment of literary and also the economic responses.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY:

The study places before itself the following broad objectives:-

1. to examine the role of ecological factors in the study area influencing the patterns of life, economy and society among the Khasis.
2. to get an insight into the historical processes of change affecting the communities.
3. to evaluate the role of provision of social

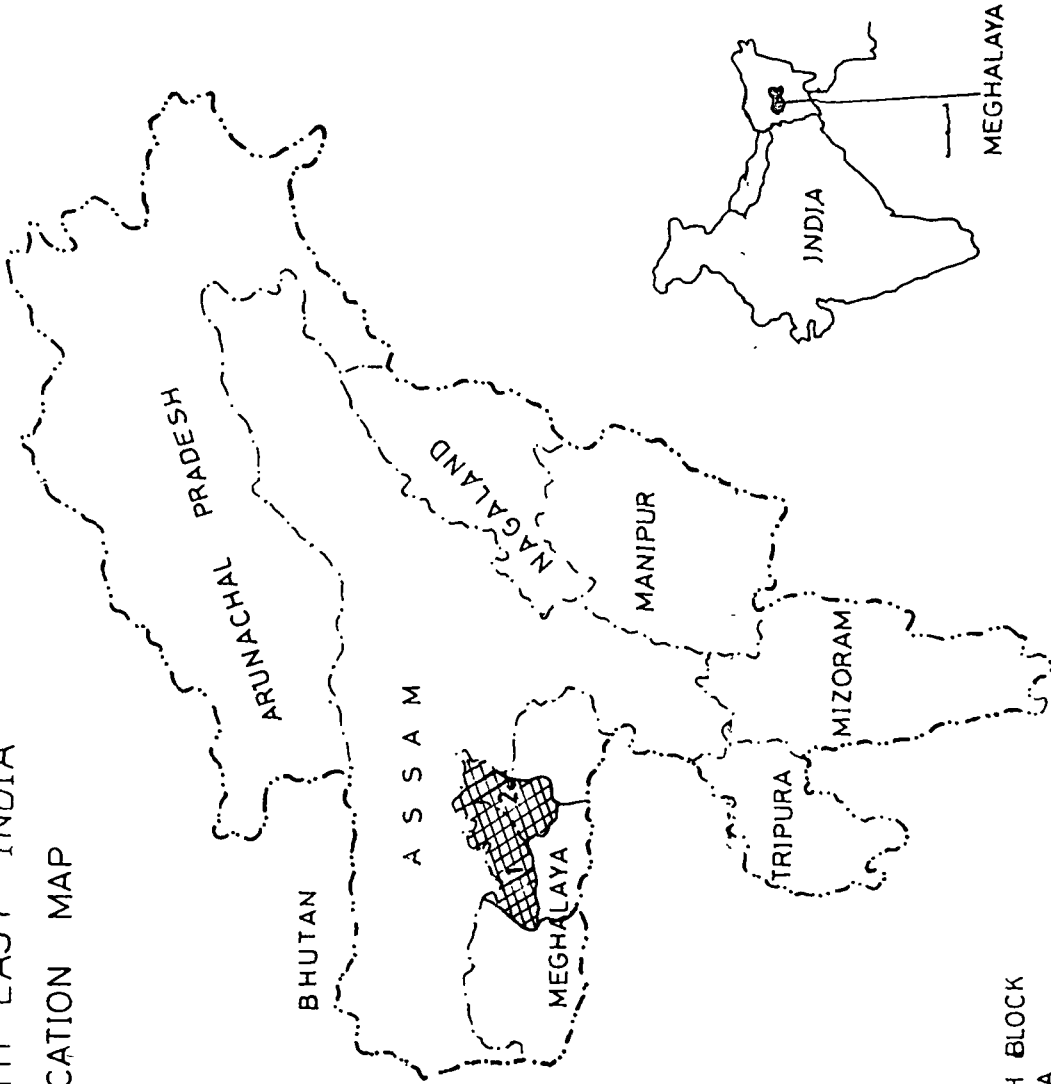
amenities in processes of transformation as an evidence of contemporary processes.

4. to assess the spatial patterns of social transformation among the Khasis with special reference to select indicators of social change and

5. to understand the implications of the nature of social transformation- formation on the economy and society of the Khasis.

The study is confined to the Bhoi region of the East Khasi Hills district. It consists of two Community Development Blocks the Nongpoh C.D. Block and the Bhoi area C.D. Block. It has recently been declared as Ri-Bhoi district. The area is predominantly inhabited by the Khasis who practise agriculture as their main source of livelihood. This region lies to the northern part of the Khasi Hills. It lies between $25^{\circ} 60' N$ - $26^{\circ} 05' N$ latitudes and $91^{\circ} 50' E$ - $92^{\circ} 30' E$ longitude. Physiographically, the region falls as a part of the Meghalaya plateau but it is a region of alternating ridges and troughs. It was once malarious and till recently considered unworthy of habitation by both the mountain people and the plainsmen. But recently there has been large scale migration to this area from Jaintia Hills and also from Assam. The Karbi population is quite high in this district. There is a considerable number of Nepali population also. The

NORTH EAST INDIA
LOCATION MAP



THE STUDY REGION

- 1 NONGPOH BLOCK
- 2 BHOI AREA

Fig. 1.

major part of Guwahati Shillong Highway runs through this area. The major town which has come is Nongpoh which has recently been declared as an urban area. The other areas with high population and are fast developing are Naya Bungalow Umsning, Kyrdemkulai, Byrnihat and Barapani.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS:

The following research questions are investigated in the course of this study:-

1. What processes – historical, social and economic affect social transformation in the hilly and tribal areas of the Khasi Hills?
2. What is the role played by social amenities in the processes of social transformation?
3. What are the implications of social transformation to the traditional social order of the tribes?
4. Whether literacy attainment is an indicator of social and cultural transformation in the society?

SOURCES OF DATA AND METHODOLOGY

For the study of Social Transformation, books written on Social Change in India, Tribal social changes in India, Tribal Institutions and also papers written on the subject have been taken into consideration. With the help of these books the conceptual idea of Social

transformation has been analysed. The data for the study of social amenities, occupational structure and literacy percentages have been based on secondary sources i.e., from the census of India, District Statistical Handbook of Meghalaya.

A conceptual study of Social Transformation was undertaken by first trying to understand the meaning and processes of social transformation. It has taken into consideration factors like religion, education and urbanization. The historical processes have been analysed by dividing the time period into three stages pre-colonial period, colonial period and Independence period to understand the changes taking place in each phase. Physical aspects have been considered by understanding the physiography, climate and resource base of the area as a determinant to social change. Social Amenities have been divided into categories such as that of availability of school, drinking water, health centres, post and telegraph offices, roads etc. The processes of transformation in the Bhoi region has been analysed by taking three main indicators, that of availability of amenities, attainment of literacy levels and economic responses (percentage of agricultural labourers and cultivators.)

The percentage of literates, agricultural labourers and cultivators have been calculated from the data at the

village level. The literacy percentage has been calculated from the literates of a village to the total population of the village. The same has been done in the case of agricultural labourers and cultivators. Maps have been constructed using different cartographic technique to show distribution of social amenities and also the literacy percentages, percentage of agricultural labourers and cultivators.

ORGANIZATION OF THE STUDY:

In the first chapter, an attempt has been made to assess the need and relevance of the present study. The objectives, research questions, methods and data base has been discussed. A brief survey of existing literature has also been made.

Chapter - II, is a conceptual overview of Social Transformation. The basic purpose of this chapter is to understand the concept of Social Transformation in its varied contexts and meanings. It considers the process, the elements, the parameters and also the constraints of Social Transformation. An attempt is also made to conceptually understand the relevance of social transformation in geographical studies. To make the concept clearer and for a proper understanding social transformation is studied in the light of the social structure, the processes involved, its relation



to geography, the processes of social transformation in India, the tribal and hilly areas with special reference to the North-East India.

Chapter -III analyses the changes which have taken place in the Khasi Hills with special reference to the Bhoi area in a historical perspective. The chapter has been divided into three phases i.e., pre-colonial, colonial and post-Independence era to understand the changes taking place in each phase. In the pre-colonial period the society was physically and socially isolated to a great extent with contact only with regards to trade. There was the continuation of the old traditions and modes of living because of the lack of contact from the outside. In the colonial period there was contact from outside because of the development of communication lines. The missionaries established schools, hospitals and churches. These not only encouraged the growth of settlements but also gave permanent characteristics to them besides bringing and propagating Christianity in the region. In the post-Independence era the government took up developmental programmes and thereby opening the area to the rest of the country. This helped in the further interaction of the non-tribal segments of the country thereby changing their social interaction, mode of living, their aspirations and urges.

In Chapter -IV the physical setting of the Bhoi area has been discussed in detail to understand the physical landscape of the region which includes physiography, climate, drainage, soil and natural vegetation. In the first section the location of the region has been discussed to give a clear picture as to its physical setting and its neighbouring areas. In the second section the physiography of the region is discussed. The Bhoi region comes under the sub-section of the Northern Undulating Hills. The significant physiographic features of these regions have been discussed. In the third section, a study has been done on the drainage system. The drainage pattern in the region represents a most spectacular feature revealing extraordinary straight courses of the river, evidently along joints and faults. The fourth section of the chapter deals with some aspects of the climate of the Bhoi region. A relatively low elevation of this area is responsible for a fairly high temperature and it is also the driest area in the entire plateau. In the fifth section the various soil types of the region are discussed. The soils vary from thick clays and alluvium in the river basin and valleys to red loams and laterites in the hills and mountains. In the sixth section of the chapter, the natural vegetation of the region have been discussion. Natural vegetation growth is rich in the Khasi Hills. The area with low sloping

grounds and flatlands have natural vegetation ranging from tropical to temperate forest types.

In Chapter V the distribution and availability of the Social Amenities have been dealt with so as to examine the regional pattern of availability of various social amenities and also to study the basis and implications of Social Transformation in the study area consequent upon availability and utilisation of social amenities. The social amenities has been studied under the following heads (a) Education (b) Medical facilities (c) Drinking Water (d) Communication - transport, bus stops and postal services (e) Power Supply (f) Market.

Chapter VI analyses the process of Social Transformation in the Bhoi region of Meghalaya considering the physical and social constraints and also the changes in the Colonial and Post Independence period. The process is analysed by taking into consideration the availability of social amenities because the availability of social amenities is considered as a basis for transformation where the existence of one amenity often leads to the coming up of other amenities thereby bringing change. Two main indicators of the process of social transformation i.e. attainment of literacy and economic responses have been taken to understand the process of change taking place. Attainment of literacy has been considered because the

spread of literacy is undoubtedly one of the most important parameters of social and cultural development among the tribal societies and also the other societies. In the study of economic responses emphasis has been laid on the level of dependence on agriculture, because economic transformation is indicated in most cases when a shift takes place from agriculture to non-agricultural modes of production.

Chapter VII includes the various conclusions derived from this study, the implications and suggestions for future work.

CHAPTER - II

SOCIAL TRANSFORMATION - A CONCEPTUAL OVERVIEW

INTRODUCTORY STATEMENT

The concept of Social Transformation is vast and complex, and an adequate understanding of it will require the combination of the works of the scholars in such various and diverse fields as economic, social and cultural history, law, politics, education, religion, demography and sociology. It will have to take account of regional, linguistic and other differences. Since Social Transformation means differently to different people, it has nuances of meaning, and therefore it becomes difficult to give a precise definition of Social Transformation. The basic purpose of this chapter is to understand the concept of social transformation in its varied contexts and meanings. It considers the process, the elements, the parameters and also the constraints of social transformation. An attempt is also made to conceptually understand the relevance of social transformation in geographical studies.

Whatever may be the conceptual difficulties in understanding social transformation, it is generally agreed that it is a necessary concomitant of social change in the desired direction and it is a process

which unfolds itself differently over space. A geographical understanding of the problems of social transformation acquires nuances of meanings in hilly and tribal areas which presents a complex environmental, social and economic ethos needing urgent attention. Cummulative human experiences suggest that the social transformation is not uniform over space and various forces are at work in differentiating the spatial manifestation of forces of change leading towards transformation. This chapter intends to clarify some of these issues at a conceptual level so as to permit a meaningful empirical analysis in the selected region.

SOCIAL CHANGE AND SOCIAL TRANSFORMATION:

It is often tremendously difficult to conceptually differentiate different dimensions of change including transformation. Change, growth, progress, transformations development are all related terms and may sound similar but are conceptually different and are a sub-set of change encompassing all directions of the society change is the process where there is the substitution of one thing for another, the succession of one thing in place of another. Growth is to become enlarged by a natural or artificial process. Progress is going on to a further or higher stage, or to further higher stages sucessively; it is to advance to better

and better conditions, continuous improvement. Transformation is a process by which there is a complete change in condition, a kind of Metamorphosis takes place. Development is the advancement through progressive stages, where growth takes place.

Evolution too is a term related to change but it is the process of evolving, developing in detail. The development or growth is according to its inherent tendencies, it is growing as opposed to being made.

While attempting a differentiation of these terms, one is tempted to quote Ahmad (1) whose style is inimitable;

"In a society, change comes in the natural course of social evolution. It may be rapid if the social group has generated an internal dynamism of its own which encompasses all spheres of material culture and affects all segments of population. Such an endogenetic change may be lasting until it gets re-inforced by exogenous contact and continental renewal. On the other hand, it may be slow, even imperceptible, if it gets stagnated by historically determined or socially caused inertia which thwarts internal dynamism and arrests progress. In any case change has to be seen in a time-space frame. Denuded of its time context and space-milieu, it would be as incongruous as un-intelligible."

The nature of change or transformation cannot avoid the basic issues raised by Ahmad. It has to be emphasised that change is not uni-directional, it may be progressive or regressive. This element of change

undoubtedly raised the inevitable question of value-system which involves the necessary logic for discriminating between positive and negative dimensions of change. "The former, as the cumulative human experience shows, can be attained through +institutionally directed intelligent intervention in the situation. Then it is called development as it brings about a qualitative new and irreversible sequence of changes eventually leading to transformation.(2)

When development is all pervasive and affects all spheres of material culture then true transformation takes place. Ultimately what is^o most desirable is Social Transformation and not merely social change.

PROCESS OF SOCIAL TRANSFORMATION

Any attempt to understand Social Change and Social Transformation has to deal with the processes which cause it. One of the earliest attempts to understand these processes comes from the Sociologists. Eminent Sociologist M.N. Srinivas identifies mainly two processes viz., Sanskritization and Westernization.

"Of the two processes to which the concepts refer Sanskritization seems to have occurred throughout Indian history and still continues to occur. Westernization, on the other hand, refers to changes introduced into Indian society during British rule and which continue, in some cases with added momentum in independent India." (3)

Westernization does not only affect certain sections of the people, it is not confined to see any particular section of the Indian population. The impact of westernization with regards to the number of people it affects and the ways in which it affects them, is steadily increasing. The process of Westernization has become faster since independence, and it is not unlikely that independence was a necessary precondition of such acceleration.

Sanskritization is the process by which a "low" Hindu caste, or tribal or other group, changes its customs, ritual, ideology and way of life in the direction of a high, and frequently, "twice-born" caste. Generally such changes are followed by a claim to a higher position in the caste hierarchy than that traditionally conceded to the claimant caste by the local community. Sanskritization is generally accompanied by, and often results in upward mobility for the caste in question, but mobility may also occur without Sanskritization and vice versa.

Westernization is the process by which radical and lasting changes were brought about in the Indian society, because of the new technology, institutions, knowledge, beliefs and values brought by the British. Westernization results not only in the introduction of new institutions for eg. newspapers, elections,

christian missions etc., but also in fundamental changes in the old institutions.

However, Srinivas has been scathingly criticised on his concept of social change by Ahmad who laments:

"There is no evidence to show that Srinivas considered either technology or economy as crucial phenomena related to any such change or explaining it in any way. However, both the concepts were inadequate measures of social and cultural change that overtook the Indian society in different historical situations - the first smacked of high caste chauvinism and the second of western imperialism."(4)

Social change according to Srinivas has been used in narrow, parochial sense and does not have any logical or rational context of meaning.

In A. Ahmad's words, he criticizes the use of the word Sanskritization in the following manner;

"It is interesting to note that if Sanskritization is the word for organised change that is a concomitant of social evolution, then the social and cultural change that has over-taken Europe during the last two and a half millennia of years should be described as Greekization, Romanization and Arabicization respectively" (5)

Another important process of Social Transformation is cultural diffusion, it is the spatial spread of ideas, innovation and attitude. Each element of culture originates in one or more places and then spreads over to the other areas bringing along with it change, development and ultimately transformation in the

society. An innovation will be accepted most in the areas closest to where it originates. The spread and acceptance depends upon distance, time and intervening obstacles of traditions and values in the society. In some of the areas a change or an innovation may be more widely accepted than in others and therefore the transformation in the society.

The process of socio-economic transformations is further accelerated by urbanisation. The process of urbanisation, it is agreed, brings in substantial changes in the demographic, social and economic composition of the people not only within an urban centre, but also to the adjoining villages which become genetically linked to the urban centre in a variety of ways. However, the degree and extent of the urban impact on the peripheral villages depends to a great extent on the spatial linkages it develops. So a major question arises on social transformation of the peripheral villages on the very nature of urbanisation itself. Urban areas are comparatively more developed than the rural areas, it is more densely populated, more of social amenities and the people are engaged in non-agrarian economic pursuits. Therefore urbanisation itself brings about transformation in the society.

Education plays a crucial role in the process of social transformation as it paves the way for the attainment

of the objectives of social development. Before Independence, there were historically determined constraints on the universal spread of literacy and imparting of education in the Indian society. The stunted and fragmented growth of literacy was because of the socio-economic inequalities and the stratified structure of society.

"The institutionalised framework of social inequality coupled with variations in income distribution engendered vast disparities not only in access to the institutions of formal learning but also in the levels of educational attainments of the different segments of Indian people" (6) As noted by Cippola, "while the art in writing spread around the world, across geographical and cultural borders, and adopted itself to a variety of languages, it hardly filtered down through social stratification." (7) Education in India has been considered as a special privilege of the upper-most stratum in the caste-ridden traditional society. The people who had an access to education exploited it as a means of making the individual accept and conform to the hierarchic structure of society and completely subordinate his individuality to it. (8) The social system which existed prevented the general masses to get education and they remained by and large outside the framework of institutionalised learning.

Government has been making efforts at reducing the inequalities in all facets of social development. The educability of the tribal communities is not the same with that of the general population or even to the sections where the society is caste-ridden. The spread of education among the tribal communities, by and large depends on their stage of social evolution, ecological setting, mode of economy, their exposure to a language other than their own dialect, the pattern of economic interaction with the non-tribal groups in their neighbourhood the role of tribal elites and of the exogenous forces that operated in the tribal regions before and after Independence. The spread of literacy in tribal societies has been constrained by a complex set of factors operating in close conjunction with each other.(9)

Any meaningful understanding of Social Transformation is not possible without an insight into the very nature of changing human environment relationships in its correct perspective. Any change in the society and its eventual transformation has to take place at least initially in close correspondence and co-operation with the nature. The pace and direction of social change would be determined to a great extent by the limits imposed by the nature on the human freedom and the

capacity of the social man to overcome such constraints through his own creativity and dynamism. Once the human society manages to somewhat free itself from the clutches of natural constraints then the processes of changes in the human society would depend to a very great extent on the constraints imposed by the society and its structure itself.

The relationship between man and the environment is not static. "Change in the social system and social structure inevitably brings about transformations in the very nature of the man-environment relationship. The environment may contribute to the first order of social differentiation; but with the progress of the mankind, with its improved knowledge of technological knowhow, the grip of natural constraints gradually loosens, while the grip of social constraints gradually hardens"(10)

Historically, a meaningful interaction between mankind and nature begins when man realised the limitations exerted by nature on his freedom. The more he understood nature the more adequately he dealt with it. All societies, in the beginning, were engaged in gathering and collection activities, depending on food freely available in the nature. The gathering economies were eventually replaced by primitive agriculture. Better supplies of food led to a massive

population growth and complex forms of development of natural resources resulted with the help of quick and improved technology. Greater availability of surplus which also encouraged private ownership and accumulation, produced social disparities of an unprecedented nature, the characteristics of many contemporary societies. The hill environments, however, for a relatively longer period, experienced these developments on a much smaller scale due largely to their weak agrarian base. Difficult environment permitted marginal agricultural development only in a few favoured parts of the valley bottoms. It also meant a restricted diversification of the economy. "Side by side, the hilly areas also witnessed a unique survival of the older modes of economies from gathering to transhumance, shifting cultivation to caravan trading. Under such conditions, the process of development operates at a low key and hill areas are only marginally integrated with developed economies of the plains"(11).

SOCIAL STRUCTURE AND SOCIAL TRANSFORMATION

While conceptualising the parameters of Social Transformation many authors consider the powerful influence of social structure. It has been often pointed out that the nature of the social structure are by and large responsible in retarding the uniform

spread of social, cultural and economic development. Social change cannot be viewed independent of technological and economic change but it is universally agreed that the institutional framework provides a major constraint in the diffusion of such changes. In trying to answer these questions one is inevitably drawn into the basic issue raised so admirably by the Indian Sociologist A.R. Desai (1969, Pg. 38)

" increasing spread of modern means of communication, the introduction of the British system of administration and laws, and the growth of modern, capitalist, competitive economy which shattered the substance economy of..... the village, undermined more and more the functional basis of caste. However, the transformation of self-contained rigid castes into modern mobile classes has taken place in a peculiar manner. Certain castes have been monopolising the position of the privileged upper classes of modern society."(12)

Here we see a totally different social structure which development has created in modern India, class struggles have often been assuming form of caste-struggles.

What role has the doctrine of immutable casteism played in the continuation of stagnant rural social order in a society which essentially remained unaltered due to unchanging technology and consequent rigid and institutionalised division of labour (Desai,

1969, Pg.43).

Man's constant interaction with nature and his understanding of the laws of nature brings out new innovation and new technology which in turn increases his interaction and also extends the area of his freedom. Economic changes are caused by technological innovations which helps man to increase his productivity and produce more skill. This brings about a surplus in the society, and it determines the pace and direction of social change.

Every society has been changing from the time of its emergence. The new technological innovations which has emerged has brought about changes in all aspects of the society i.e., in the social institutions, ideology, art, religion and also social outlook. But the benefits of these technological innovations has not been availed equally by all sections of the people, this is again due to the constraints imposed by the social structure. Here one is again tempted to quote Ahmad;

..... due to the constraints imposed by the social structure, all these processes have neither been uniform in social coverage nor in spatial extent -the latter being determined by the former. As soon as an innovation, a technique, a social amenity reaches the door-step of rural countryside, the paramount question that emerges is which caste and which social strata will gain initial advantages and will eventually monopolise the gains and

thus alienate the disadvantaged sections. Each innovation, therefore, leaves the disadvantaged even more disadvantaged and the deprived more impoverished."(13)

GEOGRAPHY AND SOCIAL TRANSFORMATION

Geographers have long been accustomed to studying the transformation of landscape, normally as passive recorders of changes wrought by nature, business, individuals and nations. Space may be primordially given, but the organisation, use and meanings of space is a product of social translation, transformation and experience (14) Organisation of space is thus a social product - that it arises from purposeful social practice.

Any understanding of Social Transformation remains incomplete without a proper conceptualisation of its spatial parameters. It is a common place of understanding that the nature, direction and pace of social transformation is never uniform in its spatial coverage nor in its social coverage. The former being determined by the latter. The organised and socially concretised space provides friction to a uniform spread of social change. Thereby making social transformation a spatially fragmented response. The geographical distribution of different social categories differentiate the impact of social change as diverse social categories have different capacities to respond

to the changes affecting them. Thus, the rate of social transformation may be phenomenal in areas which have experienced large scale agrarian development historically, whereas, the dominantly tribal areas have been only marginally exposed to such changes.

In the modern context, however, geographical variations in the rate of social transformation depends to a great extent on the policy measures in developmental interventions. But due to the constraints imposed by the social structure, the transformation have neither been uniform in social coverage nor in spatial extent. The spatial extent is determined by the social coverage. When a social amenity, an innovation or a technique reaches the rural areas the main question which arises is as to who will take advantage of the intervention and this attitude tends to leave the disadvantaged sections out of the process of change that is taking place. This tends to leave the disadvantaged even more disadvantaged and the poor more poor.

THE INDIAN SCENE

The Indian society is a mixture of the old and new and presents a case of utter confusion. Everything exists side by side, the conservative and the modern, the stagnant and the dynamic and so on. A horse cart side by side with the modern speed cars. A large

section of the Indian population has been exposed to modern education, to rational thinking, secular beliefs, to the modern innovations and ideas. The experience has been very well expressed by Ahmad.

-- Its exposure to media has contributed towards its consciousness of human values which transcend the limits imposed by the prejudices of caste, creed, languages, religion or ideology. Its democratic experience spread over three -- and a half decades has partly weakened the dogma of social hierarchy and inequality bred by centuries of casteists and philosophies and Brahmanical doctrine." (15)

India has marched ahead with regard to science and technology which is quite remarkable for a country like India. India is the only developing country to have produced its own nuclear reactor, has conducted tours to Antartica with the developed nation, and has competed with the developed nations in space science, medicine, agriculture and engineering. India's cities have all the modern amenities present in most developed nations -- night clubs, disco, VCR, high-speed cars, coloured televisions, five-star luxury hotels, stadia, revolving restaurants, race course, health clubs and the like. But still there are the old alongwith the new, the traditional with the modern. For eg., New Delhi has within its limits many medieval villages where practically nothing has changed, they follow what was done decades ago.

There are contradictions in all aspects in the nation. India has achieved self-sufficiency in food grains production and yet some 300 million people live below poverty line. The same can be said of literacy levels, primary schools have been set up in all villages and towns but millions of children are not sent to schools because they are earning hands. Even though more than half of the Indian population are not literate, they watch English films, listen to pop music. Therefore, we find that India is a strange country.

PROBLEMS OF SOCIAL TRANSFORMATION IN TRIBAL AREAS:

A substantial proportion of the Indian population has been scheduled as tribes. These tribes belong to different ethno-lingual groups, profess diverse faiths and are at disparate levels of socio-economic development. Spread along the entire spectrum of ranging from the stone-age hunters and gatherers of forest produce to the urbanised industrial wage earners. The tribal communities constitute an important segment of the Indian population.

Their spatial distribution is however characterized by a striking tendency to cluster in a few pockets of diverse degrees of isolation within an environmental setting which is by and large averse to settled agriculture. The lack of contact and adequate

interaction between the tribal and non-tribal components is largely due to this pattern of clustering and concentration among the tribal segment. Ecologically, all these areas of tribal concentration are hilly, forested or semi-arid and are largely negative from the point of view of supporting settlements of agricultural communities on a large scale.

The process of change within the tribal societies have consequently operated at a low key perpetuating the older mode far too long and thus leading to a socio-economic stagnation of a high order. The rigorous environment has acted as a constraint on the people and has fostered physical and social isolation for ages. The tribal communities have been by and large brought under the influence of exogenetic forces only marginally. Thus over time the tribal communities seem to have developed a mode of living generically linked to the ecological conditions in the enclaves which have provided them with a resource base and have favoured the survival of their way of life with marginal modifications. It is in these enclaves that the tribes have shown its strong tendency of clustering and concentration. It is interesting to note that the non-tribal segments neighbouring the tribal pockets have gone far ahead with regard to development i.e., they

have proceeded from the early stages of food gathering and subsistence farming to the modern production systems based on new technology, but the tribal people with their traditional modes of living have continued to stagnate at a low-level of technology with increasing dependence on nature.

The ecological condition in which they lived were far from homogenous and displayed a diversity of high order both in trades and culture. With the advent of Independence and introduction of political and economic process and qualitative new level, the original contrast in tribal areas have been sharpened, but interaction between tribal and non-tribal groups has increased considerably. The growing contact with the non-tribal society and the resultant impact of these exogenetic forces have brought two consequences on its wake. Firstly, these inroads into tribal societies are bringing about a transformation of the tribal social order on a scale unprecedented in their history. Secondly, their exposure to the non-tribal socio-cultural milieu and their recognition of the new social opportunities available in free India has generated new urges and aspirations in a large section of the tribal population.

The growing interaction between tribal and non-tribal societies, has changed the traditional ethos of work

among the tribes. They are changing from their traditional mode of economy, they are in a state of transition. The tribes were mainly dependent on forests which traditionally belonged to them. But now they are moving away from dependence on forests to increased dependency on agriculture. In the tribal areas land was collectively owned, but with the changes in the mode of production, land has now passed into the hands of individuals who own it privately. These changes have brought in a new concept of work and dependency among the tribal communities but the tribal tradition of work has not died out completely.

SOCIAL TRANSFORMATION AND THE TRIBALS OF NORTH EAST INDIA:

The major concentration of tribes is seen in the north east. The areas where the tribes are concentrated are hilly and forested and are largely negative from the point of view of supporting settlements of agricultural communities on a large scale. Therefore, the tribes of this region have led an isolated life and have their own culture patterns and primitive economies.

The negative physical environment/habitat has forced the people to make adjustments with it. Thus they have in time developed economies to suit their prevailing environment. The North East has remained

cut-off from the mainland for many centuries and their only contact came with the coming of the British and their exposure to the British economy and also the coming of the missionaries who brought alongwith them Christianity and also education. The society in this region underwent considerable changes with regards to education and also because of large-scale conversion of the tribals into Christians.

But inspite of all these interventions the change seen in the society was very minimal. The Ethnicity of the people were maintained, they resisted these forces which brought about only a little change. The traditional beliefs of the people were replaced by the greater traditions, alien to the land. The change in the economic sphere has taken the simple villager by surprise. The tribal society which is strong, close knit and integrated was bound to be affected by the presence of an alien ruler, the subtle influence of his culture and the need to adjust to his ways and methods. The prime factor which induced and fostered silent and mammoth changes in the North East was the work of the missionaries for nearly a century or more.

On the basis of the conceptual study of Social Transformation the following observations may be made:-

- 1) The concept of Social Transformation is vast and

complex and the proper understanding of it requires the combination of the works of the scholars in diverse fields economic, social and cultural, history, law, politics, education, religion, demography and sociology.

2) A geographical understanding of the problems of social transformation acquires nuances of meanings in hilly and tribal areas which presents a complex environmental, social and economic ethos. Cummulative human experience suggests that the social transformation is not uniform over space and various forces are at work in differentiating the spatial manifestation of forces of changes leading towards transformation.

3) When development is all pervasive and affects all spheres of material culture then true transformation takes place. Ultimately what is most desirable is social transformation and not merely social change.

4) The processes which cause social transformation to take place according to the sociologist M.N. Srinivas is Westernization and Sanskritization.

5) The other processes involved in social Transformation are (a) cultural diffusion i.e. the spatial spread of ideas, innovation and attitude. Each element of culture originates in one or more places and

then spreads over to the other areas. (b) Urbanisation :- it brings in substantial changes in the demographic, social and economic composition of the people not only within an urban centre but also to the adjoining villages. (c) Education:-plays a crucial role in the process of social transformation as it paves the way for the attainment of the objectives of social development. (d) Environment :- plays a very important .pa role in the social transformation. The pace and direction of social change would be determined to a great extent by the limits imposed by the nature on the human freedom and the capacity of the social man to overcome such constraints through his own creativity and dynamism.

6) Social structure imposes constraints on transformation when a social amenity, an innovation or a technique reaches the rural areas the main question which arises is as to who will take advantage of the intervention and this attitude tends to leave the disadvantaged sections out of the process of change that is taking place.

7) The Indian society is a mixture of the old and the new and presents a case of utter confusion. Everything exists side by side, the conservative and the modern, the stagnant and the dynamic and so on.

8) The process of change within the tribal societies have consequently operated at a low key perpetuating the older modes far too long and thus leading to a socio-economic stagnation of a high order. The rigorous environment has acted as a constraint on the people and has fostered physical and social isolation for ages.

9) In spite of the interaction of the exogenous forces in the form of British colonial rule, missionary work and also contact from the non-tribal segments of the population the change in the tribal societies of north-east was very minimal. The ethnicity of the people were maintained.

10) The process of social transformation is affected by physical, social, cultural, economic and political factors. All these determine the direction, pace, acceptance and continuation of social process.

This chapter intended to have an overview of the complexities of understanding Social Transformation what emerges out of the discussion is the fact that only the complexities are becoming clearer. Whatever, may be the difficulties in conceptualising the problem of Social Transformation, the following chapters shall make an endeavour to examine the empirical realities in a tribal setting.

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CHAPTER III

CHANGES IN THE KHASI SOCIETY – A HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE

The 'Scheduled Tribes' account for a sizable proportion of the population of India. They constitute an important segment of the Indian social fabric. These communities belong to different ethno lingual groups and profess diverse faiths. Living at disparate levels of socio-economic development, they are spread along the entire spectrum of social evolution in India – ranging from the paleolithic hunters and gatherers of forest produce to the industrial workers. Their spatial distribution is characterised by a striking tendency of clustering and concentration in pockets which have suffered from isolation historically and are situated in areas where the environmental setting is by and large unsuited to sedentary agriculture. Perhaps this pattern of clustering and concentration has contributed significantly to the lack of adequate interaction between the tribal and the non-tribal communities within the population of India.

The tribal territories of India are inextricably woven into the regional fabric of the country. The tribal people share a basic characteristic of the social ethos of India and its wide spectrum of regional diversities. Therefore, it is necessary to have a closer look at the

main elements of the regional structure of the Indian polity as it has evolved through the ages. The physical layout of India is such that all regions are not equally suited to settled agriculture at a low level of technology. As noted by Subba Rao, differences in relief and in the distribution of rainfall and the forest cover have resulted in some areas containing to be centres of perennial attraction while others remaining more or less negative. The physical diversity has thus provided the natural basis for the diversity of regional cultures. The river basins constituted the most attractive areas of the early peasant communities. These basins offered a strong base for agriculture - rich soil, adequate water supply and easy accessibility through riverain routes. The basins of the principal rivers Indus, Ganga, Narmada, Tapti, Godavari, Krishna and Kaveri - provided suitable habitats for these communities for thousands of years; and these regions have consequently shown a cultural continuity which has a parallel only in the valley of the Hwang Ho and Yangste Kiang in China. They have continued to be the perennial nuclear regions of India. On the periphery of these basins lay the relatively less attractive, or relatively isolated, areas as they were hilly, forested or dry and were away from the natural routes of communication within the country. Sind, Mewar, Kathiawar, Brahmaputra Valley in Assam,

coastal Orissa and Bundelkhand may be included in this category of relatively isolated areas. There were other areas in the interior of the sub-continent or within the bordering mountain rim, which were least attractive to man. These isolated or negative regions have remained as blind alleys in the history of India. They have been characterised by a high degree of stagnation caused by the continuation of earlier modes of culture by and large unaffected by the winds of change sweeping over the areas of attraction. The Western ghats, Aravallis, Vindhyan complex of the mid-Indian region, Chotanagpur Plateau and the Assam hills belong to this category of regions. These areas happen to coincide with the enclaves of tribal concentration. The Meghalaya plateau is one such area where there has been a stagnation because of the continuation of earlier modes of culture bringing about very little change. For thousands of years the tribals of this area have been living in the forests and hills without having more than casual contacts with the populations of open plains and the centres of civilization. The Meghalaya plateau is consisted of Garo, Khasi and Jaintia Hills. The central part of the plateau is known as the Khasi Hills. To study the change that has taken place in the Khasi Hills it has to be viewed in a historical perspective. An attempt has been made to study it in the following three stages:-

1. Pre-colonial Period
2. Colonial Period
3. Post-Colonial Period

THE PRE COLONIAL PERIOD :- Before the colonial rule in the area, the inhabitants had maintained loose relationship with the Ahom rulers of the Brahmaputra valley. The physiography and inaccessibility enforced isolation, this enabled them to retain and develop their traditional values and activities in relative isolation. The early conditions of the Khasis in their present habitat are not quite clear in the absence of any written records. However, there are historical evidence to show that the Khasis had not been an isolated group of people as is the common impression. They maintained close political, commercial and cultural links with their neighbours in the Sylhet and Assam plains, and with the Garos with whom they had more intimate and friendly intercourse. The records of their neighbours, eg. the account of the Koch, the Ahoms, Tripuris and the earliest archives of the East-India Company all throw some light on the early history and culture of the Khasis. Besides certain oral traditions prevailing among them, though not authentic, help one to understand their early conditions. The ancestors of the Khasis settled in the Eastern part of

the Jaintia Hills, Assam plains etc, but their settlement in the present habitat occurred during successive periods. This up-hill movement of the Khasis is seen by some historians as the result of the arrival at their borders of the Indo-Aryans and the Bodo migrants. There are certain legends, which suggest that the Khasis had established a few ruling dynasties in the northern part of their present habitat at the early stages of their settlement in the hills.

Barring these isolated historical glimpses, nothing much is known about the early history of settlement of the Khasis. However, some of the socio-political organisations still existing among them, help one to analyse and reconstruct their past socio-political history. Two such organisations are "Basanship" and "Lyngdohship", these evolved during the early centuries of their settlement in the hills. The system of Basanship evolved from historical priority of land occupation - each clan led by its respective chiefs, occupied a tract of land in the hills and established its ownership on the soil.

"Lyngdohship" evolved in a slightly different manner. In this case, the original colonisers of a particular tract did not belong to a single clan, but to a number of clans. They, having established a village together,

entrusted a priest's family from within or outside to conduct the affairs, both administrative and sacerdotal. The principal member of the family thus became the ruler of the village as well as its sacerdotal head. These Lyngdohs were then elected as rulers by the entire adult male population of the respective village of which they became the heads.

The evolution of such primary socio-political organisations was an important development in the history of the Khasis, which saw the transition of a nomadic folk into sedentary one. With the increase of population in the subsequent periods, further expansion of the villages into newer territories and multiplication in their number took place. Therefore, other lower order organisations such as Matebors, Pators etc, were appointed by Basans and Lyngdohs to assist them in their administration. Many Basanships and Lyngdohships became amalgamated to form the Khasi states of later years, some of them exist even to the present day. The highest order of socio-political system among the Khasis today is known as 'Syiemships' or Khasi states. It is not known for certain as to when these institutions came into being. The oldest Syiemship of the medieval period in Meghalaya viz. Sutnga or Jaintia (now extinct) is said to have originated in the 13th Century AD.

The Khasis follow the matrilineal system and it is here that one sees the original form of the matrilineal society. Management of the Khasi house and inheritance is matrilineal. The system of today should be connected with its long course of migration, the stages of settlement and the socio-economic traits. The Khasis follow the matrilineal system till today.

Traditions, beliefs and know-how were handed down from one generation to another by word, of mouth. The social system had vested authority in a chosen few such as the basans, lyngdohs and syiems, who were obviously interested in perpetuating their authority and augmenting it further. There were distortions in the original beliefs over a period of years. The validity of beliefs and practices was questioned by intelligent minds and new answers were sought.

The static nature of early Khasi society had a binary dimension, socio-religious and economic. The sparse needs were satisfied by a comparatively low level of prevailing skills and practices. Technological advance was almost absent and innovation was not significant. Centuries of stagnation led to some amount of dissatisfaction and a consequent quest for change.

COLONIAL-PERIOD ** :-

The main attraction for the European traders to this region was the limestone quarries of the Khasi hills. Infact, Sylhet, at the southern foot hills of the Khasi and Jaintia Hills, being easily accessible from the other parts of Bengal had been the main entry point for the hillmen. The Khasis used to frequent the foot-hill markets of Sylhet for the sale of their produces such as orange, betel-nut, honey, iron-implements, Bay-leaves, etc; in return for rice, dry-fish, cotton, silk clothes and salt. But the Khasis were also known as 'troublesome marauders', whose raids in the Sylhet plains were said to be a cause of constant terror to its inhabitants. These attacks continued even after the British took over the sylhet plains. Therefore, in order to restrict the Khasis a line of forts was established along the southern foothills and restriction was imposed by the British authorities. It did not restrict the trade between the Khasis and the inhabitants of Sylhet, but they prohibited the supply of arms and ammunition to the people of Sylhet and did not allow any one with arms to cross the frontier.

There was a need to find a route from the Sylhet plains to the Brahmaputra valley through the Khasi hills after

** It is difficult to accept colonial period for the study area as the region by and large remained away from the direct control of the British Colonial rule. However the term has been used under the assumption that the impact and the influence of the colonial rule was felt in a number of ways by the people of this region.

the capture of Assam in 1826, and David Scott, therefore entered into negotiations with the syiems of Cherra, Myllem and Khyrim. With increasing contact with the Khasi chiefs, the British were given permission to move through the territory and gave them facilities to construct a thorough road in 1829. At the beginning, the Syiem furnished men and material and cordial relation existed between all concerned. But in April 1829, the Khasis headed by their Syiem broke out in rebellion against the British lieutenants. Troops were immediately rushed from Sylhet and the Assam valley to quell the rebellion and the Khasis were forced to surrender to the British. Peace was, however, restored after four years, when U Tirot Singh, was captured by the British. Agreements were concluded with 25 Khasi States. The British Government transferred their head quarters from Nongkhlaw to Cherapunji where they remained till 1866 when the capital was shifted to Shillong.

The British rule made a perceptible impact on the Khasi society in the middle of the last century. Most Khasi chiefs submitted to the British power and the Khasi society helplessly depended upon the British Deputy Commissioner and the missionary. Before the arrival of the British they had successfully resisted stronger culture contacts. But the western impact was too

strong to allow any resistance. The British rulers imposed power on the Khasis by force of arms and then the process was set at work by which gradually the mind of the Khasi became receptive to the power of the British sword which was based on the great technological progress that the people of the west had achieved. The results were both decisive and extensive.

The Government did not have any positive policy and the Government's share in changing the Khasi customs and practices had been mainly to maintain law and order, to curb the militancy of the Khasi and to make them more law-abiding.

The British Government had effected drastic changes in the powers and functions of the syiems- The status of the ruling chieftain was affected adversely by the action of the Government. The syiems lost their age-old freedom of dispensation among the Khasi population. In this connection we cannot also deny the fact that the alien government was not only the agent of change but also the active aider of the missionaries, settlers and traders who had gravitated to this area and whose combined onslaught on the Khasi culture was decisive.

The political structure of the Khasi, however does not seem to have undergone radical changes on account of

the agreements entered into by the British Government with the Khasi chiefs. The freedom struggle of the Khasi chiefs suffered a setback when U Tirot Singh of Nongkhlaw was forced to surrender. The annexation of the hills put an end to the age old isolation of the Khasis but at the same time brought about some far-reaching political changes. The British Government granted recognition to the traditional rulers, Syiems, Lyngdohs, Wahadars, Sirdars etc., Immediately after the British occupation, the pattern of the election of the Syiems and other officials of the state remained unchanged but the concurrence and approval of the Government to the election of the Syiems was made obligatory. The majority of the states were accorded the status of Native States which were given autonomy in the internal administration. The chiefs and their officials in the twenty five states in the Khasi Hills were allowed to enjoy their traditional powers to try and decide all the civil and criminal cases except where serious crimes like murder, homicide and accidental death had taken place. These cases were to be referred to the Deputy Commissioner for his verdict. It is thus clear that the British administration curtailed the powers of the Syiems to a certain extent.

THE ADVENT OF MISSIONARY WORK.

According to the available records the spread of

Christianity in Khasi-Hills, began in 1813 from the southern plains of Sylhet, which by that time became an important centre of the Baptist Mission. The Welsh Calvinistic Mission after establishing itself at Sylhet, strongly extended their appreciation to the Khasi Hills and opened a centre at Cherrapunji in 1841. The missionaries with a view of educating the Khasis in their own tongue, studied the local language and printed several religious books adopting Roman script. However, the progress was not so impressive, for, according to records only 500 Khasis became Christians by 1871. But till that time the activities of Missionaries were confined merely to preaching the gospels, which for the bulk of the people, were in no way superior to their own traditional beliefs. Sensing this apathy among the people towards Christianity it was decided by the Mission authority to start medical mission along with that of proselytizing. The missionaries began to give medical aid to the sick and material aid to the forlorn. Then onwards a change of attitude of the common Khasis towards Christianity ensued. The activities of the Missionaries, since that time expanded to other spheres, especially education. In the subsequent period the converts grew steadily. By the dawn of the present century, there has been a spurt of activities of these Missions, which established many educational centres, hospitals and

orphanages.

The Khasis not only took the religion with dedication, but also adopted presbyterianism as their own with the least repercussion to the edifice of their socio-cultural tradition. The introduction of christianity brought about a conflict between the age old socio-cultural tradition and an alien religion. The church was more democratic and it appealed to the Khasis as one in conformity with their own social traditions.

Although Christianity has brought in many changes among the Khasis, its most important influence was to change the outlook of the people towards education, for at one time Khasis considered literature as the meanest profession, and it is said that they even resorted to sorcery to determine the admissibility of female education. But today literature and education occupy, important places in the Khasis society. Despite the change of religion by the vast majority of the people, which caused them to abandon some of their old customs, the socio-cultural edifice as a whole still remains intact, whether christians or non-christians, a Khasi is deeply concerned with upholding his tradition and old social values. Although the christians have abandoned many of their traditional rites associated with birth, marriage, death etc, the undertones of the

Khasi traditions are still there in their day -to - day life in matters of food -habits, dress etc., In respect to practices which are ingrained deeply in their socio-cultural system, the new faith has not, in the least measure, produced any significant change. Both christians and non-christians have perpetuated the traditional matrilineal system, clan organisation and exogamy, laws of succession and inheritance, traditional land-tenure system over and above the state organisations.

The contribution of the christian missionary lay mainly in spheres of religion, social practices, education, medicine, health, crafts such as carpentry, skills such as printing, general economic betterment, improvement of appearance, cleanliness, hygiene etc.,.

The Khasi society, strong, close-knit and integrated was bound to be affected by the presence of an alien ruler, the subtle influence of his culture and the need to adjust to his ways and methods. Besides, there were exotic influences such as the work of the christian missionaries, A society manifests changes not only because of the direct factors but also because of the reaction, resistance and sometimes opposition engendered in it by exotic forces. Thus, an alien religion involved the Khasi individual and society deeply, it also affected the Khasi cultural dynamics

and structural integration. The earlier cultural setting of the Khasi Hills changed and after the initial cultural shock, by slow degrees the pace of change was accelerated.

THE POST-INDEPENDENCE PERIOD:-

In developing countries and more so in India the pace of social transformation has rapidly accelerated in the recent past. The change has become our constant companion. The tradition bound tribal society, which prior to the independence of India was almost a closed system suddenly became exposed to the forces released by the Community Development Movement, Urbanisation, education and technology - in short, to the process of modernisation. This brought the tribal society in contact with wider society. These contacts of the tribals with the "other society", however, were not of an organised nature. These are really selective and sectorial. It would be erroneous to assume that the tribal society is homogeneous. In fact it is stratified. Today there are elites among the tribals and the middle class along with the poor.

After Independence there has been growing contact with the non-tribal societies and this has gradually moved the tribes away from their traditional ethos of work. They have been in a state of transition from their

traditional mode of economy. Their dependence on agriculture has gradually increased as they have been progressively alienated from the forest which traditionally belonged to them. With these changes in the mode of production, relations of production have undergone a transformation. The once collectively owned land is now passing into the hands of individuals who own it privately. Although, these changes have obviously led to a new concept of work and dependency among the tribal communities, the tribal tradition, of work has not died out completely.

Prior to Independence the tribals of the Khasi hills were a non political entity. They lived in the hills and forests of the region and hardly had any contacts with the rest of the country. The economic needs of the tribals were fulfilled by their visits to weekly markets. No where they were associated with Governmental or political affairs of the state. But since independence and promulgation of the constitution the Khasis have assumed a new status. They are supposed to participate in the national political system not only as ordinary citizens but bestowed with some special privileges and discrimination . The constitution provides them such privileges with the idea that their involvement and participation in the political system would bring them closer to the core of national life. The tribals are obliged to fall within

the national mainstream. The constitution envisages that the political and economic forces released by the national structures would in the end bring the tribals in the mainstream of national life.

In the post-Independence period, the Khasi states were merged with the Indian Union and the Federation of Khasi States was revived. This Federation was given certain judicial and administrative powers. The Khasi States Peoples Union, the then major political party, rendered all help to the Federation in its fight for the preservation of the ancient political institution and Khasi customs. The Sixth Schedule was introduced in the constitution which provided provisions for the Administration of Tribal Areas. The District Council of the United Khasi, Jaintia Hill was formed in 1952 in accordance with the provisions of the Sixth Schedule of the constitution. The formation of the District Council was the signal for arousing great political consciousness among the Khasi and for the beginning of a new kind of political struggle. They now alleged that the Sixth Schedule of the constitution did not provide adequate safeguards for the preservation of those rights and privileges and democratic institutions which the Khasis had been enjoying from times immemorial.

In the period after Independence the contact of the

Khasi with the outside world became such greater. The Khasis, now with the experience of the previous struggles were more conscious of their tribal identity, naturally frowned at and resented the various impositions and encroachments. In a particular manner they took offence at the systematic grabbing of tribal land and property by the people from the plains. The District Council reacted promptly and sharply. For instance, it enacted a series of laws to safeguard the interests of the Khasi, to strengthen their tribal consciousness, on the one hand, and tribalism, and nationalism on the other. The laws passed by the District Council did also curtail certain powers of the traditional chieftains and headmen. The consequence was that the laws created tensions and conflicts between the leaders of the political parties on the one hand, and the traditional chieftains, represented by Syiems, Sirdars, Lyngdohs, Wahadar etc., and their headmen on the other.

The evangelical work of the Christian Missionaries brought change in the religion of the people, which in turn for various reasons carried with it significant transformations in other aspects of life of the people, like education, style of personal life etc. The Christian Missionaries no doubt introduced a radical form of change in the life of the hill people, but

after Independence a planned effort for change was introduced for the north-eastern India along with the rest of the country. The objective was to bring about positive change in different aspects of life of the people, and thereby help them participate in the national efforts of economic development and social welfare. After 1947, the planned development programmes were introduced, and as a result there is hardly any aspect of life of the people which has not been influenced.

After Independence, with the introduction of transport and communication the tribals have closer contacts with the non-tribal segments of the population. The constitutional provisions made for the tribals have released a flood of new forces of political, economic and social nature. In short, the political and economic modernization has introduced a net work of institutions which work in the tribal areas. Policies and schemes emerging from the Governmental tribal ideology are being implemented even in the interior parts of the tribal areas.

The results of the colonial rule and during the post Independence era can be seen in the following observations. Historically, the hill areas have subsumed in themselves a substantial proportion of tribal component of India's population. The nature of

development experienced both during the colonial period and after has been responsible in qualitative changes in the composition of the Khasi Hills. Through accentuated influx of non tribal component with profit motive has not brought social transformation to these areas in a desired direction, in most cases it has further accentuated the processes of under development. At least before this interaction began during the British period, the process of development operated at a low key permitting the continuation of older tribal order in varying degrees. The pattern of interaction between the tribes and non tribes during this period had little effect on the economic development in the tribal enclave of the Khasi Hills.

Consequent upon the achievement of Independence and the advent of developmental planning in the early 50's the economy recovered gradually but its fruits were unevenly distributed between regions and social classes. The impact of over all growth in this region was felt more acutely as these regions lagging behind in economic development could no longer remain outside the ambit of the development processes as new planning strategies and democratic processes slowly infiltrated and exposed them to varied influences both negative and positive.

The exploitative character of the relationship between

the non tribal element and the tribal communities has seriously inhibited the emergence of new modes. On the other hand, it has far reaching effects on the hill area development which in many ways means also tribal development. One of the major effects of increased tribe and the non tribe interaction in the recent decades has been great changes in the ethnic composition. Further more, the tribes are gradually getting alienated from the land in the hands of more articulate immigrants. The tribal work force is increasingly getting marginalised and pauperised . This process has resulted in the tribes forming the bulk of the unskilled workforce.

The efforts of planning measures in developing these regions need not however go unnoticed. A large number of schemes have been adopted by the government to improve the lot of the tribal population. Such efforts have undoubtedly produced results. But unfortunately, " the growth impulses tend to get impounded within enclaves, leaving the tribal homelands, by and large unaffected."

On the basis of the above analysis the following conclusions emerge:-

(1) The early conditions of their present habitat are not quite clear because of the absence of any written

reports. There are some historical evidences to show that the Khasis were not an isolated group as is the general impression. They had close political, commercial and cultural links with their neighbours in Sylhet, Assam plains and also the Garos with whom they had intimate and friendly interaction.

(2) One can take the help of some socio-political organisations to reconstruct the past history of the Khasis. Two such organisations are 'Basanship' and 'Lyngdohship'. Basanship evolved from historical priority of land occupation - each clan led by its chief occupied a tract of land and established its ownership. Lyngdohship evolved when the original colonisers of a particular tract did not belong to single clan but to a number of clans.

(3) The coming up of 'Lyngdohship' and 'Basanship' was a very important development in the history of the Khasis, which saw the transition of a nomadic folk into sedentary one. This led to an increase in population and further expansion of the villages and the appointment of lower order organisations such as Matebors, Pators etc, to assist the Basans and Lyngdohs.

(4) The Khasis used to raid the Sylhet plains and they were known as troublesome marauders but the

British, in order to restrict the Khasis, established a line of forts. It did not restrict the trade between the Khasis and the inhabitants of Sylhet but they restricted the supply of arms and ammunition.

(5) The British needed to find a route from Sylhet to Brahmaputra valley and therefore they entered into negotiations with the Khasi chiefs and the British were given permission to construct a thorough road in 1829.

(6) The British rule made a perceptible impact on the Khasi society in the middle of the last century. Most of the Khasi chiefs submitted to the British power. They effected drastic changes in the powers of the Syiems. They granted recognition to the traditional rulers, Syiems, Lyngdohs, Sirdars etc and majority of the states were accorded the status of Native States which were given autonomy in the internal administration.

(7) The missionaries lay emphasis in spheres of religion, social practices, education, medicine, health, crafts such as carpentry, skills such as printing, general economic betterment, improvement of appearance, cleanliness, hygiene etc. Despite the change in all these spheres which caused them to abandon some of their old customs, the socio-cultural edifice as a whole still remains intact.

(8) Although christianity has brought in many changes among the Khasis, its most important influence was to change the outlook of the people towards education. Literature and education now occupy important places in the Khasi society.

(9) In the post Independence period, the Khasi states were merged with the Indian Union and were given judicial and administrative power. This tradition bound tribal society became exposed to the forces released by the Community Development, Urbanization, education and technology. This brought the tribal society in contact with wider society.

(10) After Independence there has been growing contact with the non-tribal societies and this has gradually moved the tribes away from their traditional ethos of work. Their dependence on agriculture has gradually increased as they have been progressively alienated from the forest which traditionally belonged to them.

CHAPTER IV

PHYSICAL SETTING OF THE BHOI REGION

For a clear understanding of the distribution of social amenities and the changes caused in the society there is a need to study the ecological characteristics governing the area. The Physical setting goes a long way in determining the setting up of an amenity for eg., in areas of steep slopes it is difficult to construct roads, whereas, in plain areas construction of roads can be done more easily. This is the same with all the other types of social amenities. The setting up of social amenities in a region brings about development and this development in turn brings about transformation in the society. The area under study has been isolated and have remained without adequate interaction from the exogenous forces because of the rigorous environment. They have been characterized by a high degree of stagnation caused by the continuation of earlier modes of culture, by and large unaffected by the winds of change sweeping over the areas of attraction. Therefore, to understand the social transformation of the region there is a strong need to understand the physical setting of the region.

LOCATION:- The Ri-Bhoi District has been formed recently. Earlier this area was under the East Khasi

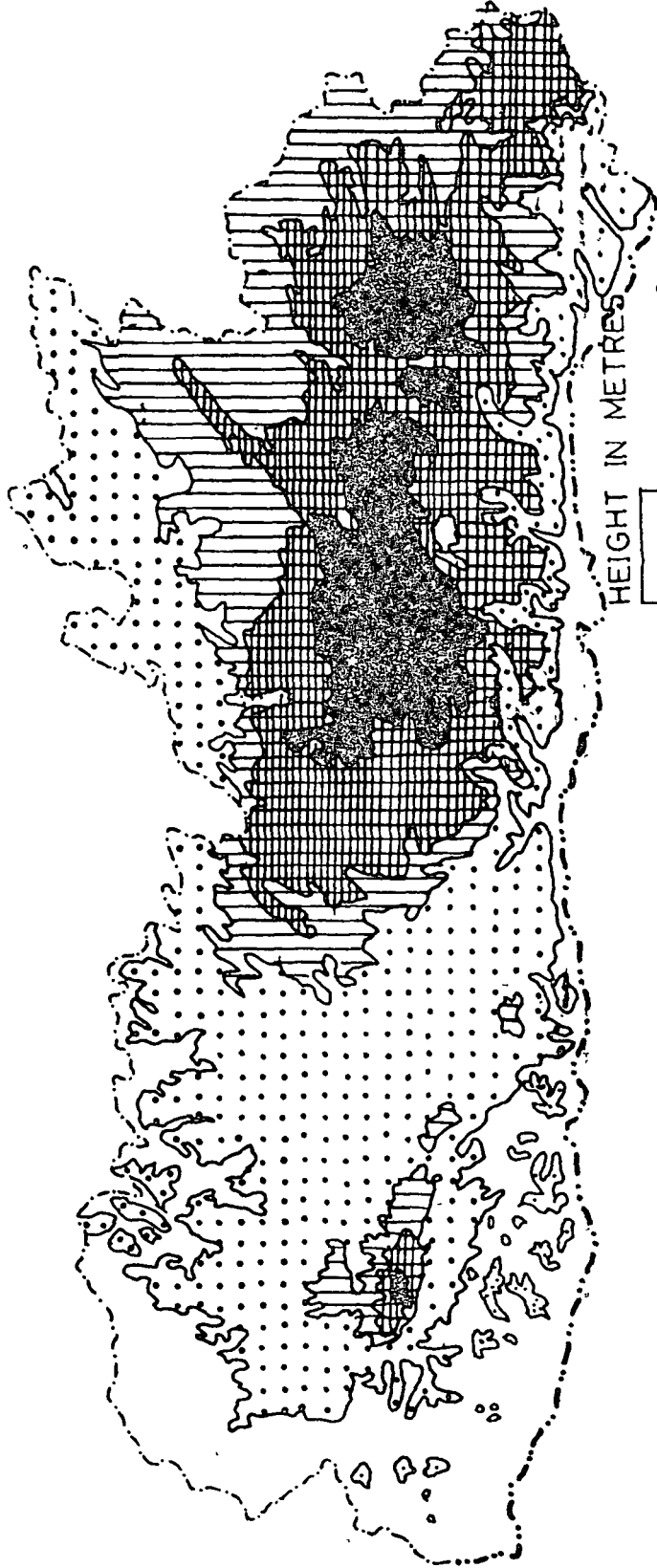
Hills District. This newly formed District consists of the Nongpoh Community Development Block and Bhoi Area Community Development Block. This district lies to the northern and north-eastern part of the Khasi hills. It lies between $25^{\circ}60'N-26^{\circ}05'N$ latitudes and $91^{\circ}50'E-92^{\circ}30'E$ longitudes. It is bounded on the Northern, North-Western and Eastern part by Assam. On the West by the West Khasi Hills District. On the southern part it is bounded by the East Khasi Hills District. On the South Eastern part there is the Jaintia Hills District. The Ri-Bhoi District lies to the north of Shillong the capital of Meghalaya and the head-quarters of the East Khasi Hills District.

The Ri-Bhoi District although a part of the Meghalaya table-land, is a region of alternating ridges and troughs with structural and stream terraces. It was once malarious and till recently considered unworthy of habitation by both the mountain people and the Plainsmen. But there has been large-scale migration to this area from Jaintia hills and also from Assam. The Karbi population is quite high in this District. There is a considerable number of Nepali population in this area.

PHYSIOGRAPHY AND GEOLOGICAL FEATURES:-

The Ri-Bhoi District physiographically falls as a part of the Meghalaya plateau. The region consists mainly

RELIEF



HEIGHT IN METRES

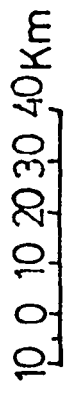
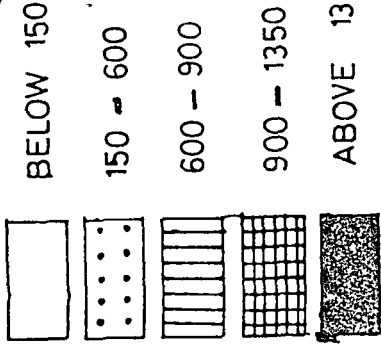


FIG. 2.

of rolling grassy land, intersected by river valleys and dotted all over with soft rounded hills. The hills here are covered with dense jungles and the elevation is between 400-1200-meters , and gradually slopes down to an elevation of 150 meters till they reach the plains of Assam. In the north the plateau gradually slopes towards the Brahmaputra Valley.

The Khasi Hills has been divided into 3 physiographic divisions:-

- (a) The Northern Undulating Hills
- (b) The Central Upland Zone
- (c) The Southern Face of the Plateau

The Bhoi Area comes under the Northern undulating hills. This region forms the sub-montane region of the central Meghalaya. This region is locally known as the 'Ri-Bhoi' region in the Khasi Hills. There are two terraces indicating two peneplain surfaces, one from Khanapara to Jorhat and the other from Burnihat to Nongpoh. The northern hills are separated from the more higher central upland by an important fault line.

The higher rate of run-off and the exposure of these rocks to denudation for a longer period, the softer sedimentary rocks of the Shillong series have been partly removed from this area and the hard gneiss, granite and quartzite of the Archean which formed the under structure has been exposed in many places. Level

lands or separate hills are absent in this area. The hills and troughs tend to be oblong trending south - west, north-west. Here the slopes alternate with terraces or platforms, which can be seen on way to Guwahati from Shillong. Such features are common in the areas between Umsaw and Nayabangalow between Umran and Umdihar around Nongpoh.

The weak and hard rocks of the 'Shillong Series' has a very interesting characteristic. During the rainy season the sandstones of the series become soaked with water and slide down the slope and obstruct road communication.² In spite of the existence of good flat land and good soil, the people had avoided the area in the early days because of the hot climate. But at present, it is the main area for internal migration of the War Khasis. The Nepali immigrants have been attracted to this area because of the existence of good patches of grassy grounds occurring in the area.

The area is made up largely of pre-cambrian rocks acutely folded and steeply dipping with an overturned fringe of Mesozoic and tertiary sediments.

Towards the Assam valley, the ridges become more and more distantly spaced and the valleys between them become wider. The ground now slopes gently towards the plains in the north.

DRAINAGE

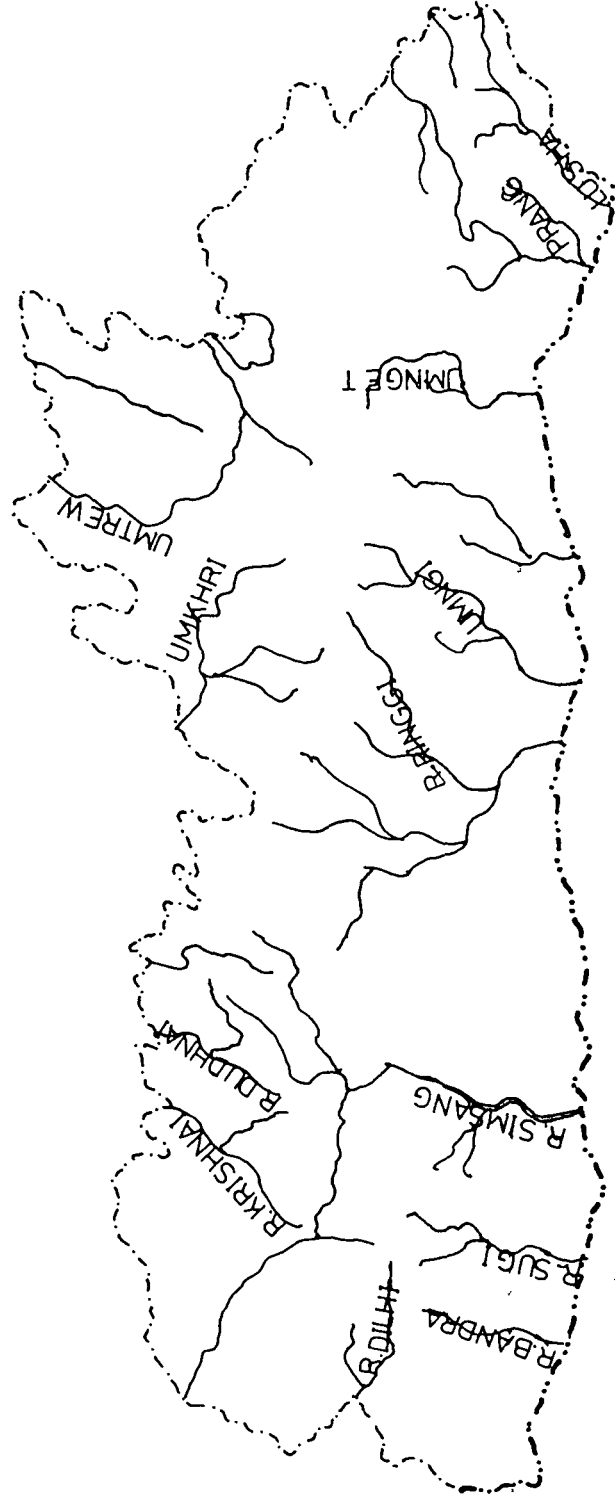


FIG. 3.

DRAINAGE:- The region is remarkable for the absence of navigable rivers (due to constant upliftment of the region which resulted in the formation of many waterfalls) except for short stretches at the base of the hills. In the region there are distinct river system flowing to the North and the other to the South. The important rivers of this region are Umkhri, Umiam, Umran, Umngi and Umtru.

The drainage pattern in the region represents a most spectacular feature revealing extraordinary straight courses of the river, evidently along joints and faults. The drainage system of the area consists of large number of streamlets, many of which are seasonal. During the winter months the streams dry up and leave stagnant pools of water which become a breeding ground for mosquitoes. The area has a well adjusted stream system draining over both the weaker and harder rocks. The weaker rocks such as sandstones, conglomerate etc., have been hollowed out as a result of prolonged erosion. The more resistant rocks, such as granites, diorite-gneisses and quartzites are found to have been left behind in the stream beds. ³ The valleys of these streams have step like forms. There are extensive flood plains near Burnihat which are formed by the river Umtru. The ridges which are low and oblong flank the flood plains and are used for laying out transport

and communication lines. While the summit of ridges and slopes serve as sites for both permanent and Jhum cultivation and dwelling, the valleys and stream terraces are generally used for wet paddy cultivation. These valleys sometimes are terraced to grow crops such as vegetables, ginger, pineapple and rice, where run off water from springs is channeled to them.

CLIMATE:- The topography has a marked influence on its climate. The climate of the region differs from that of the Brahmaputra valley mainly due to its higher relief which, in general, is warm. A relatively low elevation of some areas is responsible for a fairly high Temperature for most part of the year i.e., from February to October with April as the warmest month. The elevation ranges from 400m to 1200m. Here, the monthly mean temperature ranges between 25^o C and 30^o C in summer and 10^o and 12^o C in winter. January is the coldest month and daily range of temperature during winter is high. The night temperature ranges between 6^o C and 14^o C in winter. But it is warmer than the central upland region of the Khasi Hills.

This is the driest area in the entire plateau. The rainfall here ranges between 1270 mm to 1800mm. Except in winter warm clothes are not required here because the summer months become quite sultry and hot.

MEAN ANNUAL RAINFALL

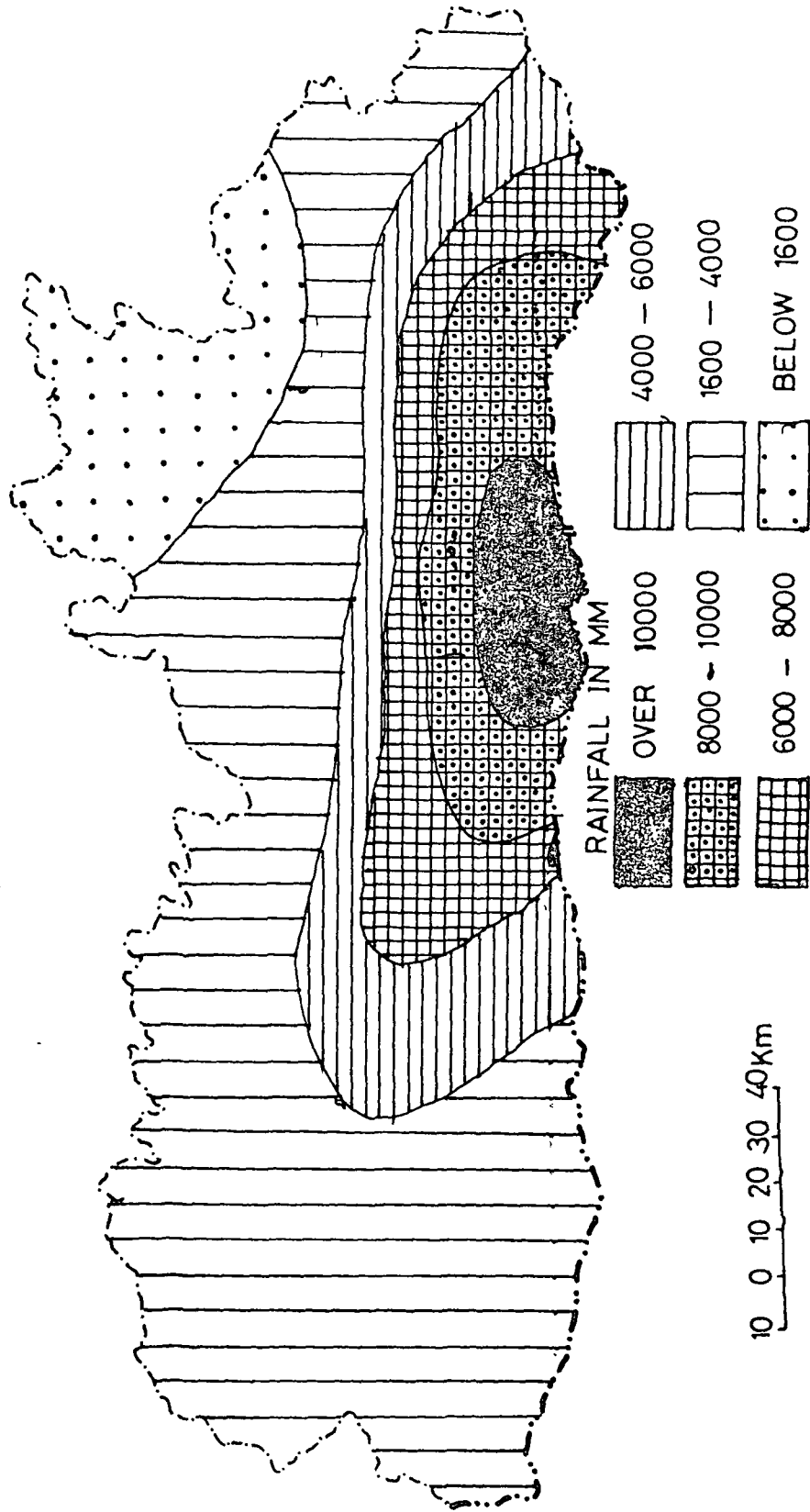


FIG. 4

On the basis of the weather conditions the whole region has 4 distinct seasons:-

- (a) The rainy season from May to early October
- (b) The cool season from early October to November
- (c) The cold season from December to February.
- (d) The warm season or Hot season from March to April.

During the warm season the entire plateau witness strong winds. This is perhaps due to northward migration of jet streams from the Gangetic plain to Tibetan plateau and development of low pressure in the Tibetan plateau at this time of the year.

SOIL:- Because of the regional variation in the underlying rock materials, relief, climate, etc, the soil varies from one area to another. The rainfall being high in some parts, even excessive in some other parts of the region, the soil in general is acidic. Except on hill plateau where we find mature soils with characteristic profiles, the slopes of the hills may present thin skeletal profiles or no clear profiles at all. The mineral deposits are also less in these soils.

As a result of its gentle slope and warm climate, the Bhoi area has lateritic soil. These soils have formed through the weathering of quartzites, schist, conglomerate etc. Normally, reddish or yellowish in colour, they have a vesicular structure.

SOILS

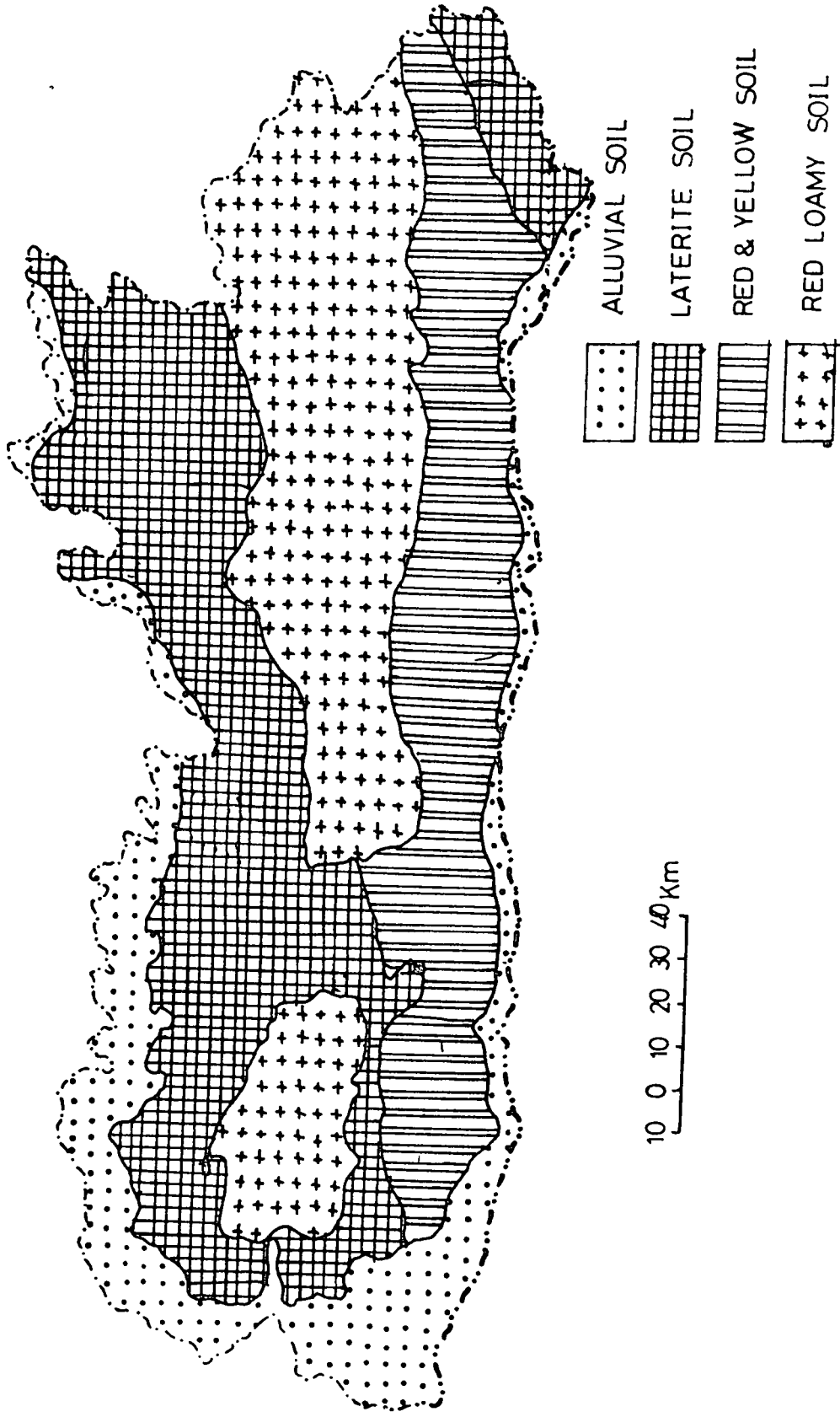


FIG. 5

They are often found to massive and firm which can be cut into blocks when moist. These have formed under the conditions of heavy rainfall and the soil is deficient in base ions and organic matter and rich in oxides of iron and aluminium.⁵ In this soil, long leafed plants can flourish well. However, as a result of Jhum cultivation practised by the inhabitants, the area does not contain any thick and tall forest.

Along the northern fringe of the area alluvial soils are found. They vary from sandy to clayey loam with varying amount of nitrogen content. They are highly acidic. They are rich in potash but poor in phosphate. In general, the soils are thin, immature and light in colour. They are clayey and fertile on the hill tops and are thick in nature, deep in colour, mere clayey and fertile in the valleys.

NATURAL VEGETATION:- The original cover of natural vegetation has been stripped of from the plateau as a result of years of cutting and burning of the forests for Jhum cultivation and because of unregulated grazing. The present vegetation, therefore, comprises of secondary growth.

The area with low sloping grounds and flat lands have natural vegetation ranging from tropical to temperate. Tropical mixed forests are mainly found

VEGETATION

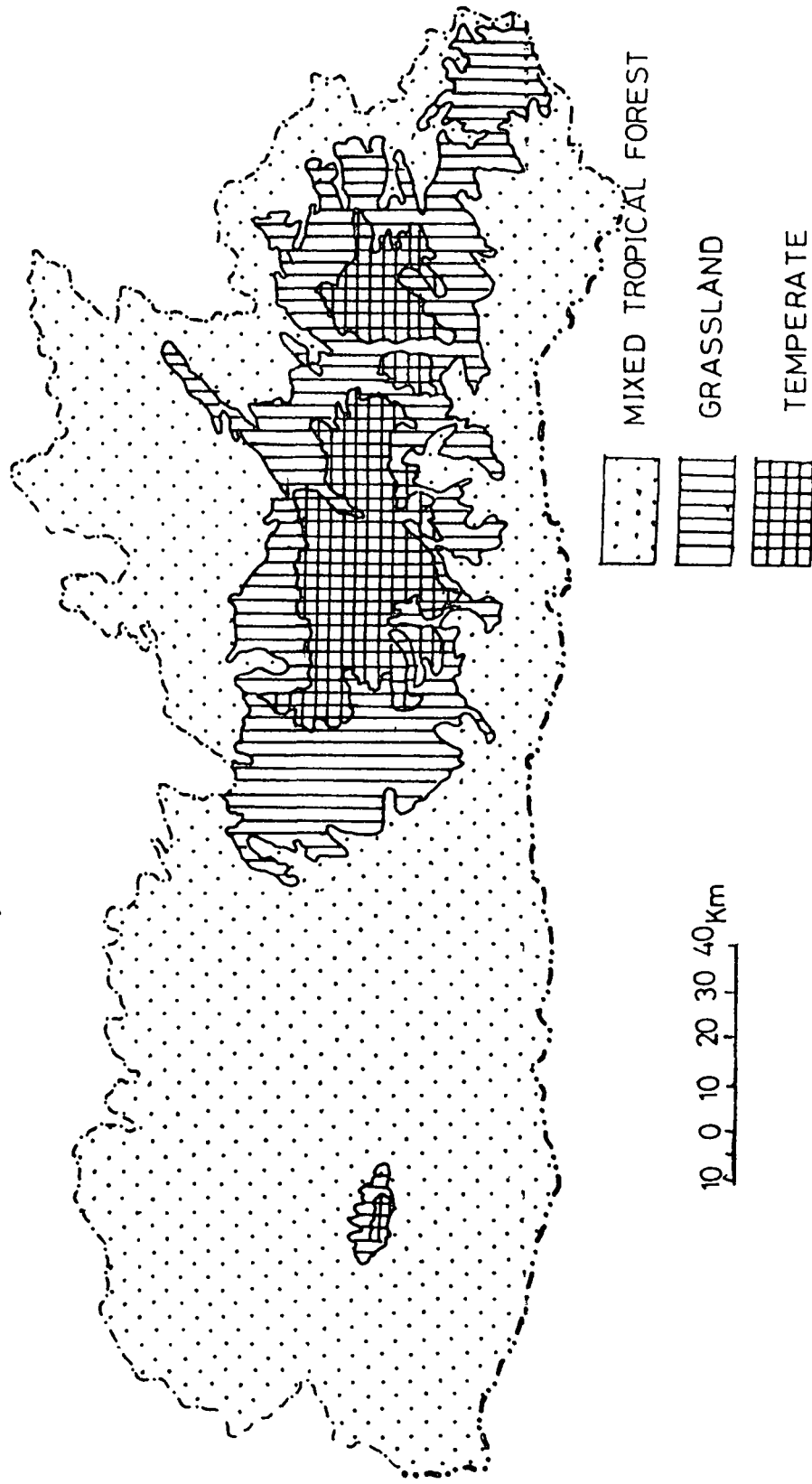


Fig. 6.

in this region. Dense jungles still clothe the higher summits of the whole area. Besides the valuable timber, medicinal plants, hard and soft wood are found abundantly. Due to the variation in rainfall there is considerable difference in the distribution of vegetational cover.

The Khasi pine (*pinus khasiya*) is well known and dominates the upper region. The quick growing bamboo and cane with occasional trees, form the thickets here. A large quantity of orchids, medicinal plants and herbs too are found in the different parts of the region. The main species of trees which are found in these tropical mixed forests are Sal, Nahar, Champa, Gomari etc., Large thickets of Bamboo are scattered all over along with wild bananas. Rolling grasslands are formed between 900 - 1350 m. Pine forests are found above 1350m .

Main species of pine are found mixed with willow, magnolia, oak etc. Due to the constant felling of the trees many of the forested areas are cleared. This has led to the change of climate to become hotter, and besides the huge destruction of forests has posed problem such as shortage of arable land and causes frequent movement of farming communities.

Besides the growth of vegetation the region is also

gifted with beautiful fauna. There are varieties of species of birds, snakes, tigers etc., The tropical and sub-tropical moist evergreen forest ensured the survival of rich mammalian fauna as also other groups of animals, birds, reptiles etc.,.

On the basis of the above study of physical setting of the Bhoi region the following conclusion may be made:-

(1) Physiographically the Bhoi region falls as a part of the Meghalaya plateau. This region forms the sub-montane region of the central Meghalaya. This region is locally known as the 'Ri-Bhoi' region in the Khasi Hills. In the north the plateau gradually slopes towards the Brahmaputra valley. The region consists mainly of rolling grassy land intersected by river valleys and dotted all over with soft rounded hills. The hills are covered with dense jungles and the elevation is between 400-1200 metres, and gradually slopes down to an elevation of 150 metres till they reach the plains of Assam.

(2) There is an absence of navigable rivers in the region, this is because there is constant upliftment of the region which resulted in the formation of many waterfalls. The drainage pattern in the region represents a most spectacular feature revealing extraordinary straight courses of the rivers, evidently

(5) Natural vegetation growth is rich in the Bhoi .pa region. Numerous trees are found in the hills and the plains. Forest covers are of tropical and temperate forest types. Various trees such as Sal, Nahar, Champa, Gomari are found in the northern parts of the region. Large thickets of Bamboo are scattered all over along with wild bananas. Rolling grasslands are found between 900-1350m. Pine forests dominate the forest cover of the region.

CHAPTER - V

SOCIAL AMENITIES - DEFINITION AND DISTRIBUTION IN THE BHOI REGION OF MEGHALAYA.

The availability of social amenities is one of the major criterion to measure the degree of economic uplift or development of an area, which forms the basis of change or transformation. The process of social transformation has already started in the area and social amenities help in the process. Social amenities are defined as essential and basic for a minimum quality of life and which constitute a necessary force for any social change.

Social amenities refers to the facilities used by people for the common welfare of the society in particular and the region in general. Those facilities which are socially available, i.e., provided by the Government and also privately owned are referred to as social amenity.

The eg., of social amenities are schools, water supply, power supply, roads etc., All the people are not able to avail of the quality of life which modern science, technology and industry have made possible, and there are certain amenities which are beyond the means of individuals or even families.

David Smith poses the question of availability of

THE BHOI REGION
LOCATION OF THE VILLAGES

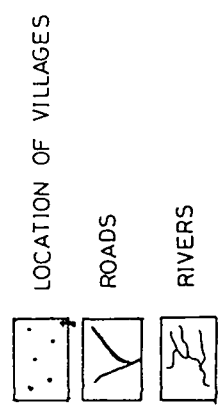
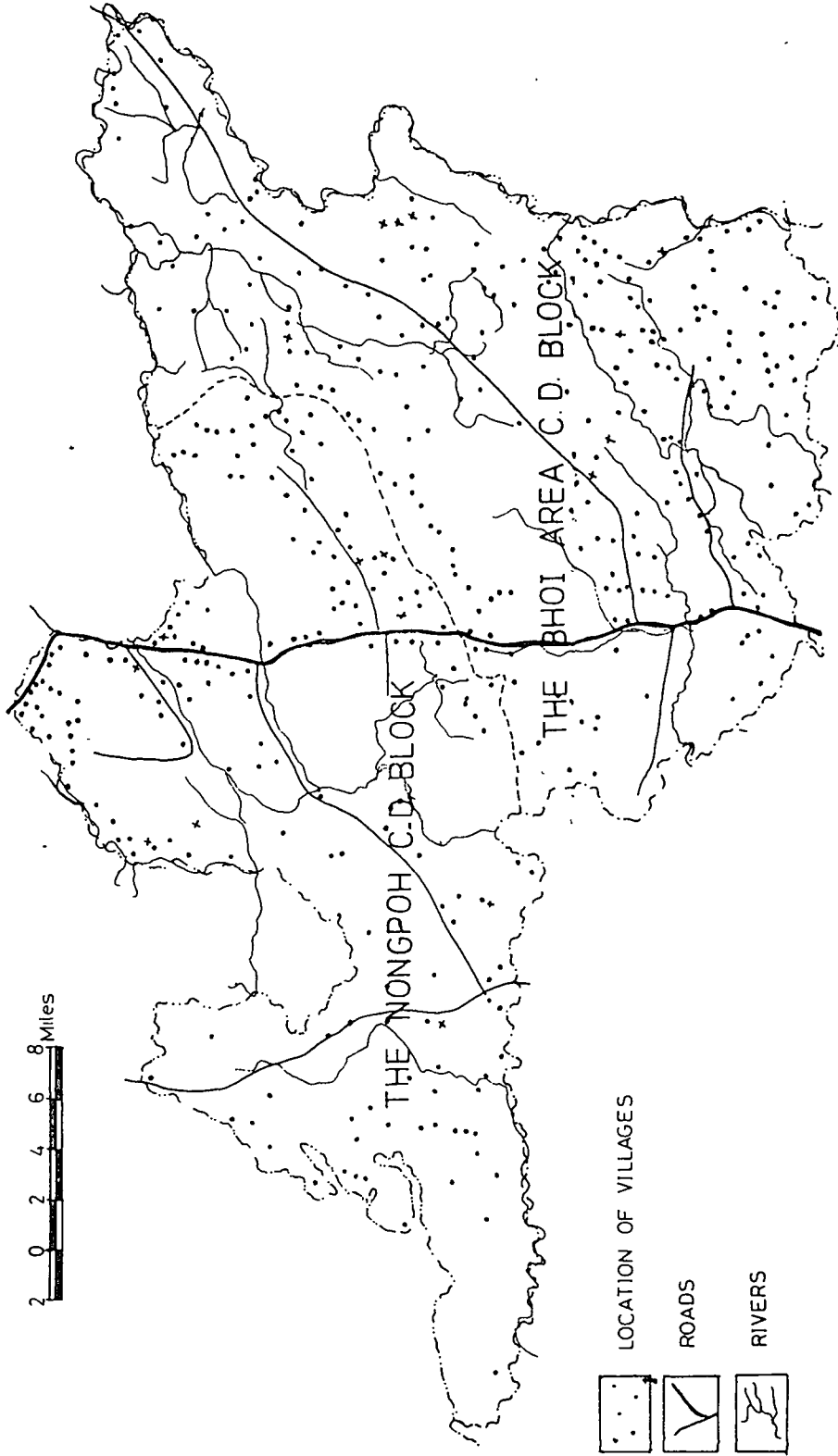


FIG. 7.

facilities in the most fashionable manner and in a style that is inimitable. He defines human geography as:-

"The study of who gets what, where and how, focussing immediate attention on fundamental questions of subject matter. Each of the words "who", "what", "where" and "how" poses its own set of problems. Asking "who"? requires us to consider relevant ways in which the population of whatever territory is under investigation may be aggregated, on the basis of such common characteristics as social class, economic status, race and so on (assuming that studying the life experience of every individual is impracticable) Asking "what " raises the question of what it is that gives human beings satisfaction, happiness, or a high (or low) life quality—including the "bads" as well as the "goods". Asking "where?" raises the basic geographical of the most sensible subdivision of territory for the purpose of investigation— a particularly important problem in welfare research for distribution (Eg. of income) which as highly unequal at one level of areal aggregation may appear equal at another Asking "How?" requires the identification and understanding of the structure, process or casual mechanisms at work within society, leading to a particular pattern of who gets what where"

It may not be out of place to indicate the theoretical frame in which provision of social amenity can be meaningfully understood. Availability and utilisation of these facilities have nuances of meanings in tribal and non-tribal settings. The non-tribal social order is by and large in - egalitarian in nature. Providing social amenities in areas inhabited by non-tribal population necessitates a social planning for without such a planning, the better-off among them usually appropriate the facility for their own benefits. The utility hardly filters down to the down trodden . This

is not so in tribal areas where importance needs to be given to area planning so as to identify areas which are less served by minimum facilities. Needless to emphasize that the tribal segment of population of India lives in isolated pockets generally hilly and rugged in their topographical characteristics and are often densely forested. Provision of social amenities in the tribal areas is contingent on their stage of social evolution, ecological setting, mode of economy, their exposure to a language other than their own dialect, the pattern of economic interaction with the non-tribal groups in their neighbourhood. The spread of social amenities in tribal societies has been constrained by a complex set of factors operating in close conjunction with each other. The stage of evolution, the traditions, taboos and also the lack of developmental efforts by the Government have all affected the spread and utilization of the social amenities.

This chapter makes an attempt to study the distribution of the social amenities in the study area so as to examine the regional patterns of availability of various social amenities and also to study the basis and implications of social transformation in the study area consequent upon availability and utilisation of social amenities.

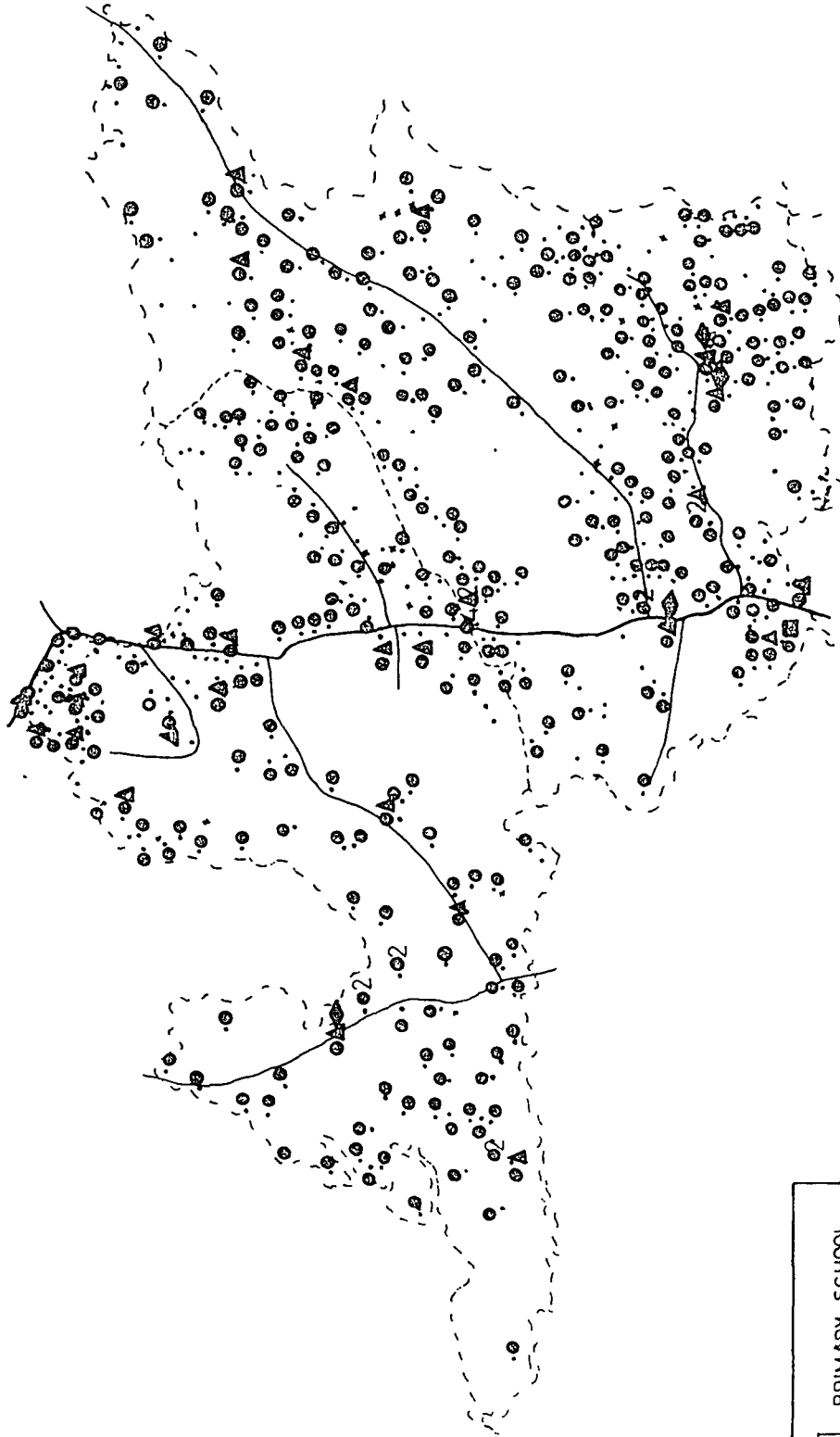
social organisation in this block, it is imperative to understand the existing patterns of distribution of the social amenities in the region so as to give us an insight into the process and pattern of social transformation.

The social amenities can be studied under the following heads:-

- (1) EDUCATIONAL AMENITY
- (2) HEALTH FACILITIES
- (3) WATER SUPPLY
- (4) COMMUNICATION
- (5) POWER SUPPLY
- (6) MARKET

EDUCATION:- Education is the most important social requirement upon which the general prosperity of the region and the state as a whole depends. Social and political values become more meaningful on realisation of academic education. That is why, if for any reason, people remain uneducated or if only the pace of educational progress lags behind we cannot expect qualitative or quantitative improvement in any sphere of development and social transformation. Educational level largely determines human occupation, which in turn, determines incomes. The level of education reflects the general economic and social standing of a community. No country in the world has prospered without this basic requirement. In this area there has been tremendous effort on the part of missionaries in setting up schools and spreading of education.

THE BHOI REGION
DISTRIBUTION OF EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTIONS



- | | |
|---|----------------|
| ○ | PRIMARY SCHOOL |
| △ | MIDDLE SCHOOL |
| ◇ | HIGH SCHOOL |
| □ | COLLEGE |

Fig. 8

The Bhoi Region constituting of the Bhoi C.D.Block and the Nongpoh C.D.Block has a total of 326 primary schools in 320 villages. There are 2 primary schools each in some of the villages. There are 33 middle schools, 5 High Schools and 1 College. 3 High Schools are in the Bhoi C.D.Block and 2 are in the Nongpoh C.D.Block.

In the Bhoi area C.D.Block the village with middle school are Umshaker, Umlaper, Umsohlait, Bhoilymbong, Lumdaitkhla, Kyrdem, Umroi, Hydel Umiam Project Barapani, Umniuh, Umsning, Mawrong, Umsaw Nongbri and Mawlong. The villages with High Schools are Umsning, Bhoilymbong and Lumdaitkhla. The only college in the Bhoi C.D.Block in the Union Christian College.

In the Nongpoh C.D.Block the situation is worse with 2 High Schools at Jirang Nongbah and Diwan. There are 20 middle schools at Jirang Nongbah, Umsong, Saiden, Nongpoh, Nongspung etc. There are no colleges in the C.D.Block. (Fig. 8)

The distribution of the educational amenities is very uneven. The geographical and socio-economic conditions of the tribal population play a great role in the educational development and expansion. The villages in this region are small and scattered with population average only upto 300 or even below.

When we analyse the pattern of distribution of the schools one finds that it is very uneven, it doesn't at all follow any pattern.(Fig-8) In some villages with very small population there is a school whereas in others with a high population there is not even a primary school. for eg., Sohneiwblei with 8 persons and Mawshrieh with 10 persons have a primary school each in the village. Whereas in the northern part of the area about 8 villages do not have any primary school at all. Therefore, the distribution of educational facilities does not only depend upon the population criteria. There are other factors for eg., topography, climate, location, communication links and also the attitude of the government or voluntary workers. In both the C.D.Blocks it is found that primary schools are found to be distributed all over and is not very much dependent or related to the existence of other amenities or to the population size.

The middle schools are scattered all over the District and does not follow any pattern. The High Schools are less in number, there are only 5 High Schools, 3 in the Bhoi C.D.Block and 2 in the Nongpoh C.D.Block.

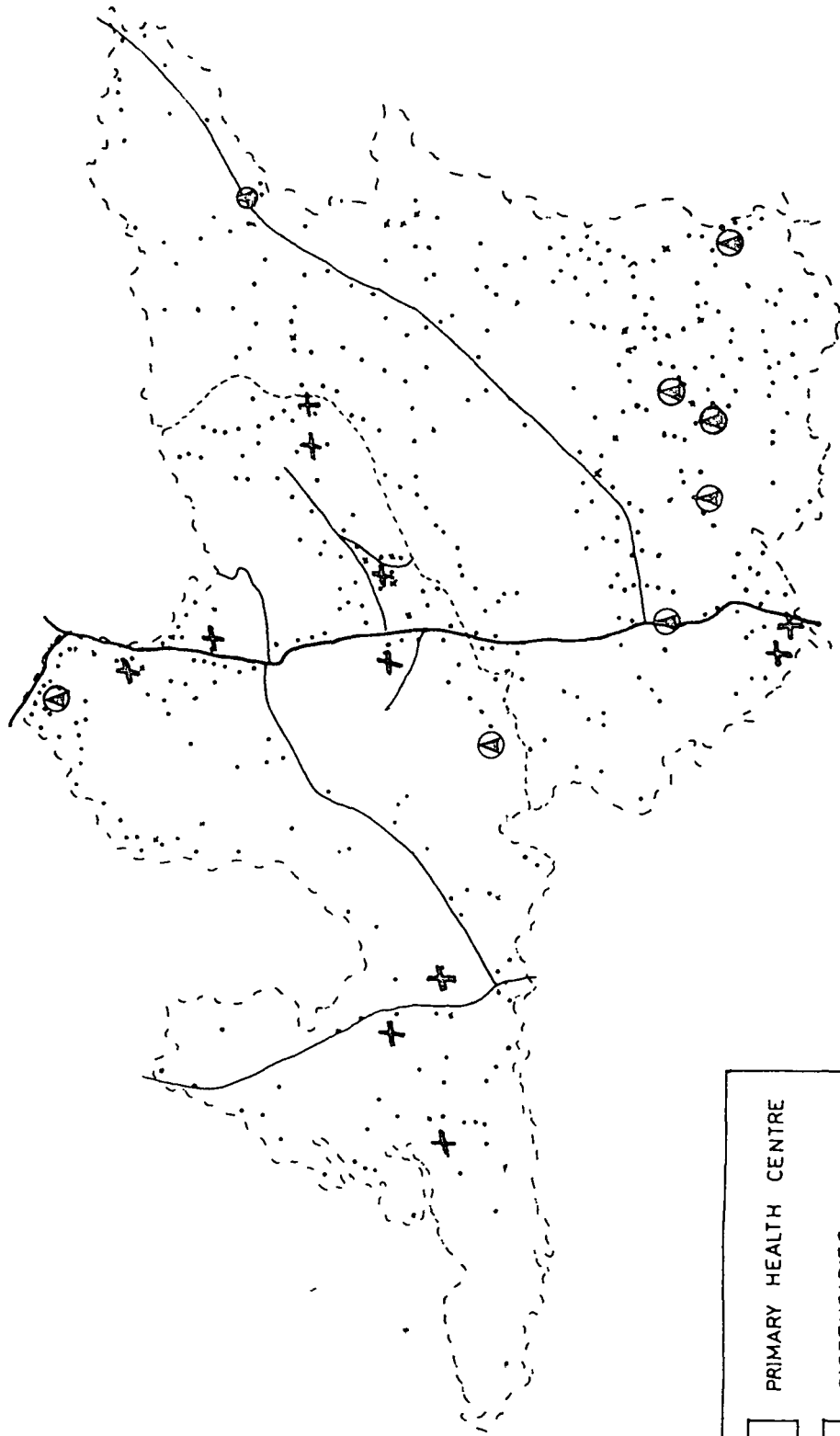
The literacy percentages also show a wide variation. They do not show much of link with the existence of schools, for eg.,there are only 26 villages with zero percent literacy whereas there are 6.7 villages with no

school at all and again the villages with primary, middle and high school have a lower literacy percentage than villages with only a primary school. For eg., Umrablei has 90.10 literacy percentage whereas they have only a primary school. In Umsning with Primary, Middle and High School the percentage of literary is only 41.28% . Therefore one finds that there is no definite pattern in the distribution of schools and the literacy percentage.

MEDICAL FACILITIES:- Health care is one of the most important indicators to measure the state of social well-being of a region. Medical care is no less important in the development because firstly it meets basic welfare needs and secondly, it greatly contributes to the efficiency of the region's labour forces. Health is the primary concern of all individuals and people.

On the whole the medical facilities found in the Bhoi Area is highly inadequate and scattered, that the people find it difficult to go to the areas with some sort of health centre. The villages are not connected by good roads and there are no regular bus services for them to reach the town or the health centres. All these difficulties make the people go to witch doctors or quack doctors. The people in these villages prefer the traditional methods of treatment through the

THE BHOI REGION
DISTRIBUTION OF HEALTH CENTRES AND DISPENSARIES





	PRIMARY HEALTH CENTRE
	DISPENSARIES

FIG. 9.

village quacks . The traditional (Khasi) medicine has played a vital role in the health care of the people since time immemorial. Now gradually, the popularity of Khasi medicine is going down due to the availability of new medical facilities with scientific and technological advancement. Allopathy and Homeopathy are innovating new drugs for better care of health and with the increasing literacy among people, they have become more aware of the drawbacks of traditional medicines and also superstitious beliefs.

The standard of living and the health status of the community depends on how the facilities provided by the public health centres are utilized. Health of the people depends on the standard of living and sanitation, the standard of education and organization of health services. Health services require physical facilities like clinic, hospitals, dispensaries, doctors etc., with trained medical personnel with sufficient supply of medicines and equipments. The present study analysis the distribution of dispensaries, health centres and primary Health Centres in the rural settlements of the area-

In the Bhoi C.D.Block there are:-

(1) 2 dispensaries at Union Christian College and Umiam Hydel Project, Barapani.

(2) 3 Primary Health Centres at Health Centres at Lumdaitkhla, Itpatung and Umsning.

(3) 2 Primary Health Sub-Centres at Umroi and Umlaper.

In the Nongpoh C.D.Block there are:-

(1) 8 Dispensaries at Patharkmah, Akhokijira, Nongpoh,Byrni, Narang, Diwan, Umden Khasi and Marnagar.

(2) 1 Primary Health Centre at Umtasor Nongpdeng

(3) 1 Health Centre in Pilangkata.

From the above categorisation one can see how ill-served the villages of this area are. Out of a total of 427 only 17 villages are served by some sort of Health Centre (Fig-9) All the others have to travel at least 10 Kms to avail of any medical facility. The lack of motorable roads in the villages also hamper the visiting doctors to reach the villages. People have to go on foot to the nearest health centre or clinic. Here one sees that traditional medicines play a vital role.

The availability of the medical facilities can be correlated with the size of the settlement, only the villages with a high population have been served by a health centre or dispensary. The health centres have a scattered location and are concentrated where the population is very high.

DRINKING WATER/WATER SUPPLY

Basic to human well-being is availability and /or provision of safe drinking water.This is particularly

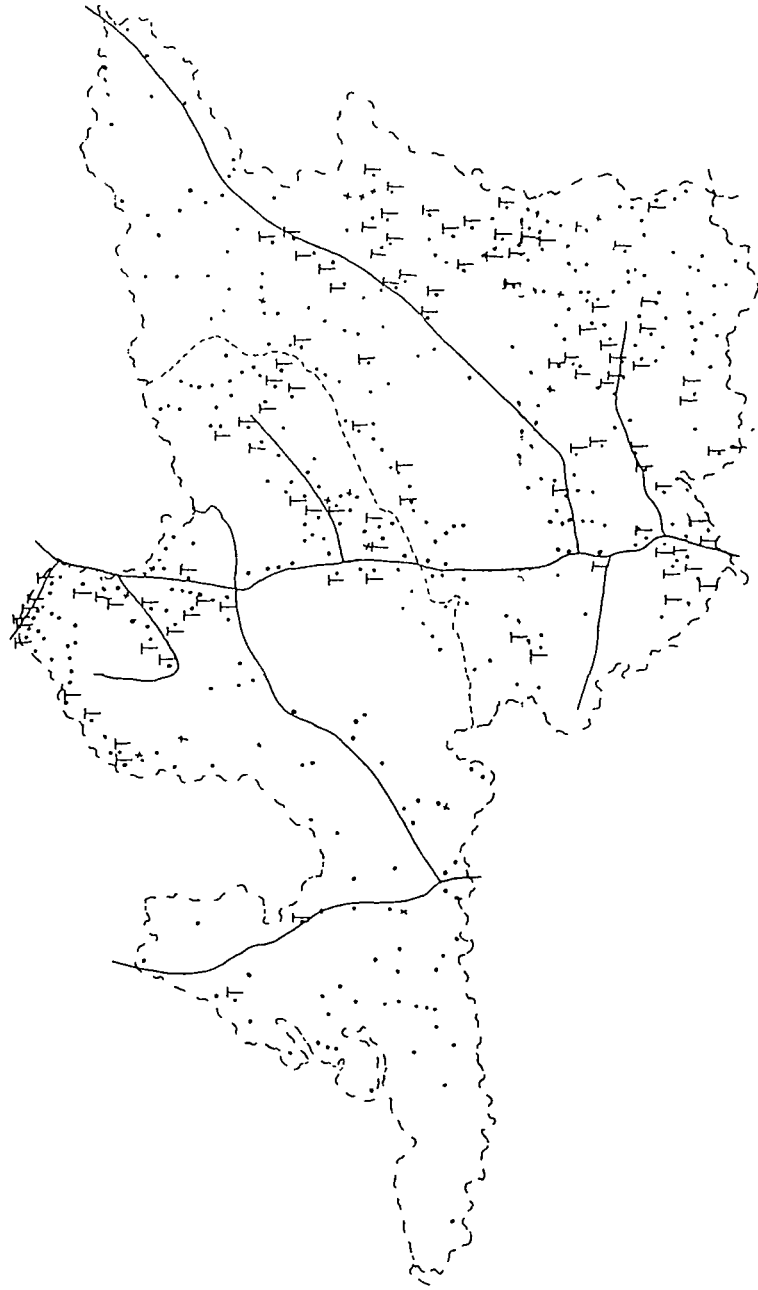
significant in hilly areas which hardly offers a scope for retaining rain water or tap underground water. The availability of drinking water often poses a problem, the adequate, safe water supply, free from water borne germs is the concern not only of the government but of all citizens. Highest priority has been given to rural water supply scheme. But unfortunately the villages of this area have to depend mostly on wells, streams or rain water for their water requirements. Tap water is only available in the village where population size is high and also where the villages have a good location i.e., beside a motorable road.

The supply of water depends on seasons and varies from one season to another season. So, the variation may show that during summer and rainy seasons the supply of water is adequate but during winter there is acute shortage in the supply of water. The monsoons play a very dominant role in the rainy and summer seasons. In winter all the sources dry up and also the water table goes down causing acute water shortage in the villages except at the places where there are perennial rivers or the supply of tap water.

In the Bhoi C.D.Block there are a large number of rivers viz, Umiam, Umraleng, Umlet, Umshprah, Umran, Umnet, Umsaw, Umphi, Umtrew, Umta, Umpri etc. The

THE BHOI REGION
DISTRIBUTION OF DRINKING WATER

3 2 1 0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Miles



T	TAP WATER
1	OTHER SOURCE

FIG. 10.

existence of so many rivers in the area solves the drinking water problem to a very large extent. Most of the villages, i.e., 176 of the villages use the streams as a source of water. 45 villages use wells as their water source and tap water is used only by 67 villages. Some of the villages use both tap water and well or tap water and streams simultaneously.

In the Nongpoh C.D. Block also there are a number of rivers and streams. Some of them are Umran, Umsnaid, Umdama, Umling, Umthna, Umtrew, Umsen etc. Here too 79 villages use streams as their source of water. Majority of the villages i.e. 87 villages use well water, only 34 villages use tap water.

Tap water is available only in few villages where population size is high and / or which are located beside a motorable road. (Fig-10) It is evident that the bulk of the villages depend on highly traditional sources such as streams for drinking water. With increasing population and pollution in the upper reaches of the streams, the source needs to be fast replaced by more hygienic sources such as taps and wells.

COMMUNICATION

The economic progress of any State or country is interlinked with development of good roads and

communications. The development of an efficient transport system and provision of such facilities is one of crucial importance for overall development of an area. The development of a good transport network is very difficult in areas which are isolated and marked by difficult and hilly terrain. While it may be difficult to provide all basic amenities in all the villages the problems of centralised services may be partly overcome through improved transport and communication system.

TRANSPORT

Transport network is vitally important for the development of an efficient economic system. Roads represent important linkages in the process of regional development. These contribute significantly towards mobilization of resources and reduce the gap between the rural and the urban settlements. In hilly areas the main means of transport is by roads as there is an absence of railroads.

In the Bhoi Area C.D.Block most of the villages are connected by Kaccha roads or foot paths. Only 25 villages (10%) out of a total of 246 inhabited villages in this area are connected by pucca roads. 106 villages (43%) are connected by Kaccha roads and 117 villages (47%) are connected by foot paths. The villages which are connected by pucca roads lie on the

THE BHOI REGION

DISTRIBUTION OF ROADS, POST OFFICE AND TELEGRAPH OFFICE

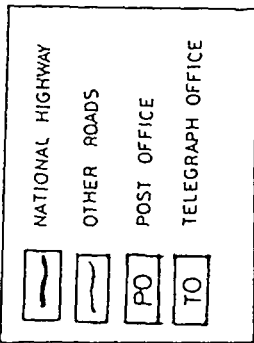
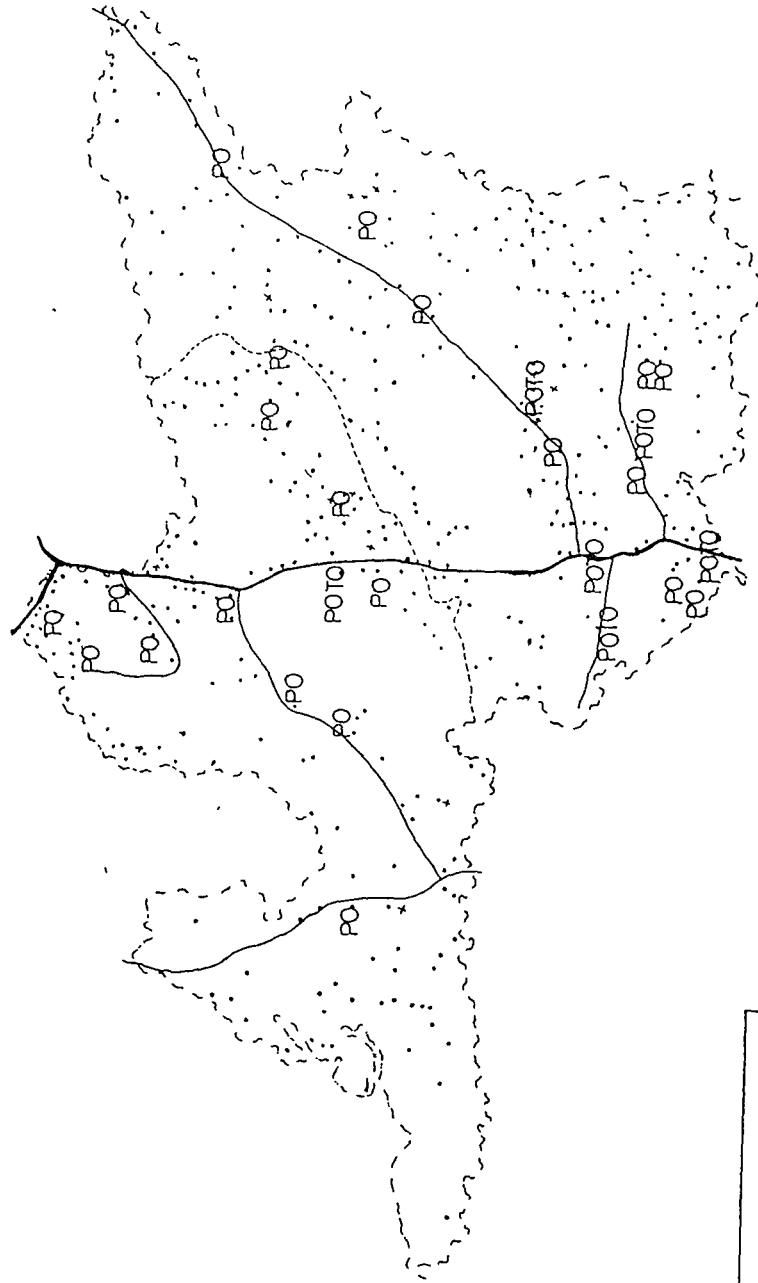


Fig. 11.

south and south western parts and also on the north western part. The reason behind this is the existence of NH 40-Guwahati- Shillong (G.S.Road) The villages lying near the main road have pucca roads connecting them. Bhoilymbong, Nongsder, Barapani, Umsaw Madam, Pylhum, Sumer, Umbir, Umran, Jyntiu, Umsaw, Nongkharai etc. are some of the villages connected by the pucca roads. Villages lying away from the National Highway have only foot paths and Kaccha roads connecting them. The size of the population of the villages connected by pucca roads are quite high.

In the Nongpoh C.D. Block only 22 villages are connected by pucca roads out of a total 179 inhabited villages. Only 12% of the villages are connected by pucca roads. 58 Villages (32%) are connected by foot paths and 102 villages (56%) of the villages are connected by Kaccha roads. In this C.D. Block too the villages which are connected by pucca roads lie along the main road or close to NH-40 (Fig-11)

BUS STOPS:- There are twenty bus stops in the Bhoi C.D. Block and they are concentrated mainly along the National Highway and the roads connecting it. 13 bus stops fall along the Highway. The bus stops are found in Lumdatkhala, Nongkdait, Umroi, Umsning, Umeit, Barapani, Pyllun, Umran etc.



THE BHOI REGION

DISTRIBUTION OF BUS STOPS WEEKLY & DAILY MARKETS

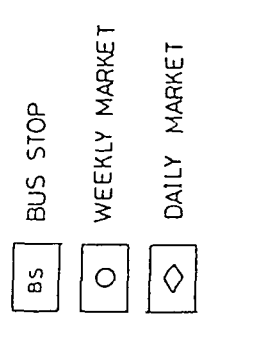
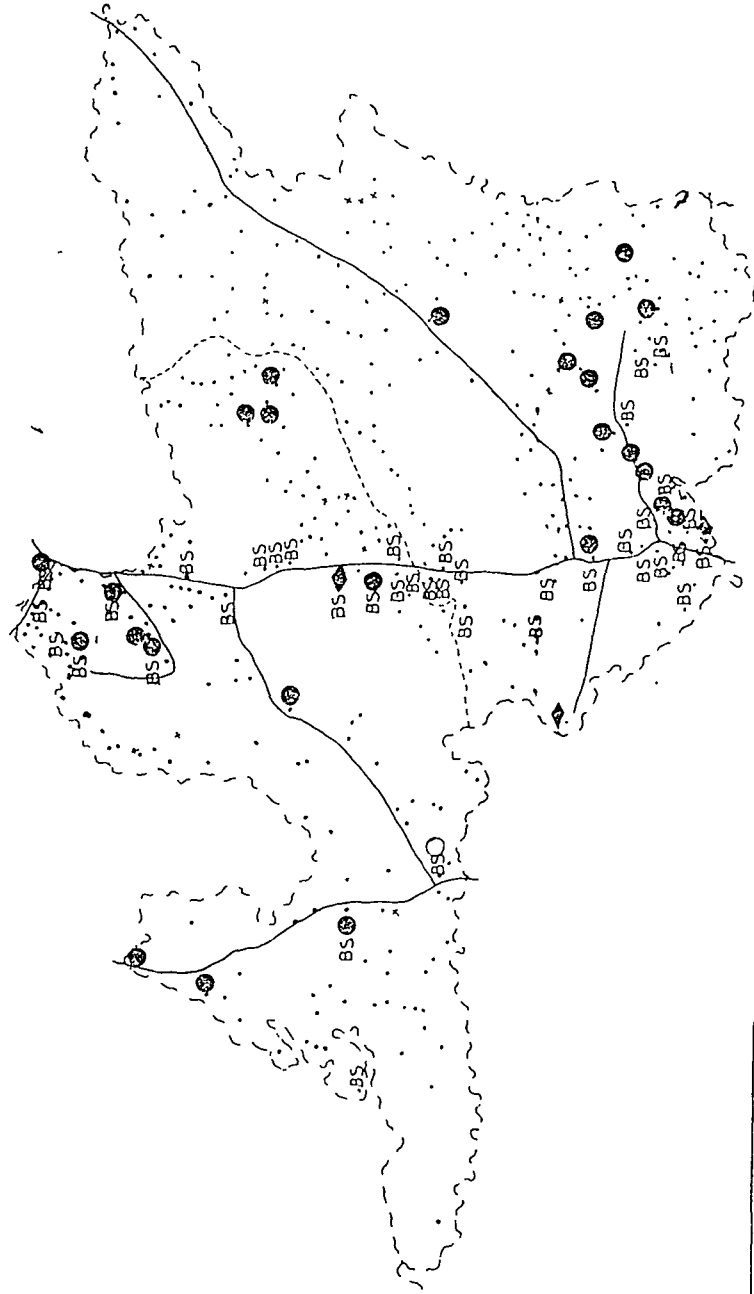
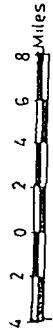


FIG. 12.

In the Nongpoh C.D.Block there are 17 bus stops and all are along the National Highway and the other main roads connecting it. The bus stops are at Nongpoh, Umling, Patharkmah, Pahamrimai, Diphu, Saiden, etc. (Fig-12)

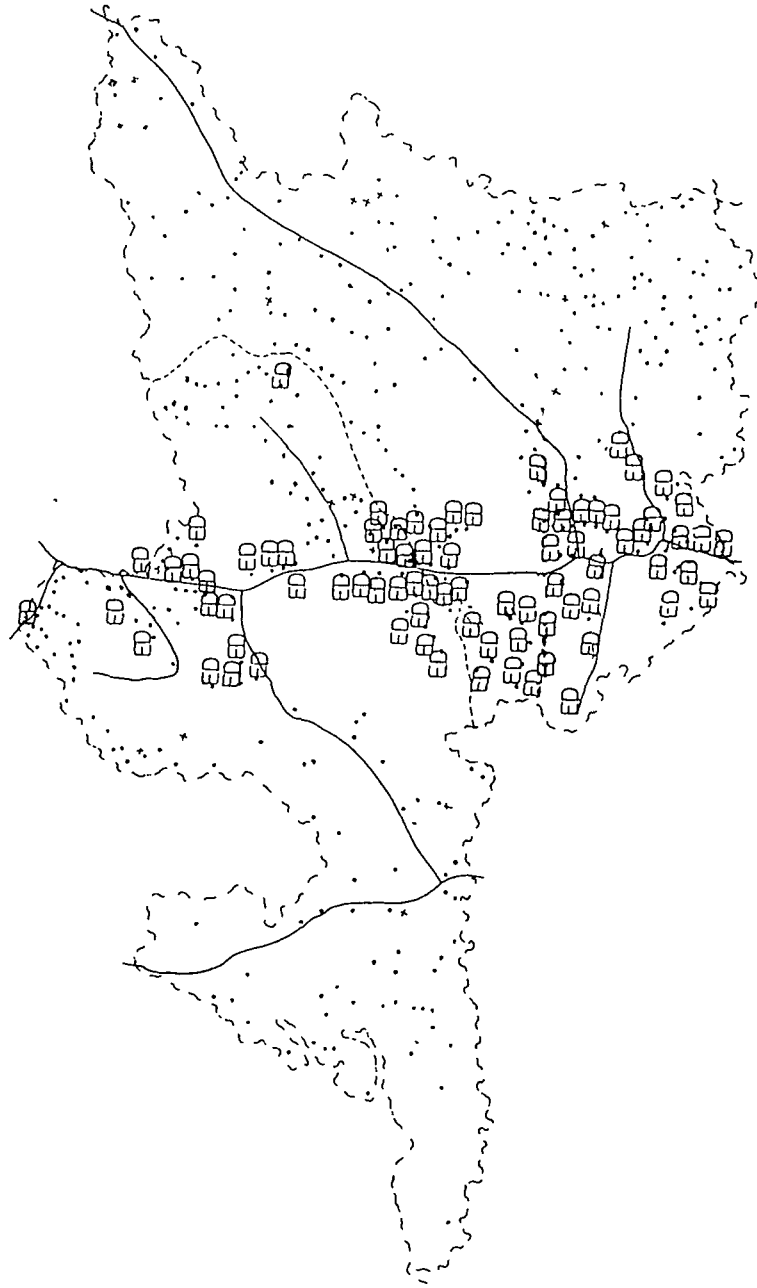
POSTAL SERVICES:- Postal Services can be classified into two (i) Post Office and (ii) Telegraph Office. In the Bhoi C.D. Block there are only 14 villages with Post and Telegraph Offices. They are Umroi with a population of 1190, Barapani with a population of 1977. Umsning with a population of 3718 and Umshorshor with a population of 957. On the average 1 post office is serving 18 Villages.

In the Nongpoh C.D.Block there 12 Post Offices and at Nongpoh there is a Telegraph Office. It can be seen that the villages with a higher population and those which are along the main roads have post offices (Fig-11)

POWER SUPPLY:- Electricity is an important element of modern infrastructure and the consumption of power is often taken as an indicator of general economic development. The electrification programmes in the rural areas has a dual impact since it affects both agricultural technology and the domestic life of the village communities.

In the Bhoi C.D.Block only 49 villages out of the 248

THE BHOI REGION
DISTRIBUTION OF POWER SUPPLY



ED	POWER SUPPLY
----	--------------

FIG. 13.

inhabited villages have been electrified. The villages which have power supply are those along the main road. Only 20% of the villages have electricity.

In the Nongpoh C.D.Block only 33 villages (18%) have electricity. Here too the villages with power supply lie along the National Highway.

There is also a positive link between the existence of the other social amenities with that of power supply i.e., areas which are well served by roads, educational institutions and health centres also have power supply. (Fig-13)

MARKET:- The market centre plays a vital role in the exchange of commodities and also spread of ideas which brings about change in the society. It is an outlet for the village to sell their goods and get other essential items. In the Bhoi C.D.Block there are 12 weekly markets, these markets roughly correspond to the existence of pucca roads and also to the Bus stops. The weekly markets are in the villages Mawhatipdeng, Mynriumsning, Madanrtiang, Lumdaitkhla, Mawlasnai, Umroi, Umden etc.

There are only 2 daily markets at Barapani and Kyrdemkulai. The reason for setting up daily markets at these two areas can be traced to high population because of the existence of the Hydel Projects. These

areas have enough population to serve, the local people themselves are the main buyers and sellers. In the Nongpoh C.D.Block there are 13 weekly markets in villages with a high population and those that lie along the main roads. There is only one daily market i.e. at Nongpoh (Fig-12)

OTHER FACILITIES:- There are other facilities in which are found in the villages which provide recreation and entertainment to the people. In most of the villages in both the C.D.Blocks there are football grounds which is a source of recreation for the villages in the evening. Video parlours and community T.V. sets also provide entertainment. There are small shops in most of the villages to provide the essential commodities. The credit facilities are provided by a number of co-operative banks and also the private shop owners / retail shop keepers in the villages. In some of the villages Rural Banks have been set up and also there are branches of the State Bank of India in some major villages. A number of adult education centres are present in many of the villages.

After the study of the distribution of social facilities we can give an over all picture of the existing social amenities in the Ri-Bhoi Region.

EDUCATIONAL AMENITIES:- Ri-Bhoi Region has 326 primary schools, 33 middle schools, 5 high schools and 1 college.

MEDICAL / HEALTH FACILITIES:- There are 10 dispensaries, 4 primary Health Centre and 3 primary Health Sub-Centres. There are only 17 health centres servicing 427 villages.

WATER SUPPLY/DRINKING WATER:- The number of villages served by streams in the Ri-Bhoi Region are 255, by wells 132 and by tap 101. Some of the villages are served by both tap and streams or by other sources such as rain water or tank water.

POST AND TELEGRAPH:- There are post offices in 26 villages, and telegraph offices in 6 villages in the Region.

ROADS:- 175 villages are connected by foot paths, 208 villages are connected by Kaccha roads and only 47 villages are connected by pucca roads.

BUS STOPS:- There are only 37 bus stops in the whole Ri-Bhoi Region.

POWER SUPPLY:- 82 villages have electricity whereas 345 villages do not have power supply.

MARKET:- There are 25 weekly markets and daily markets in the Ri-Bhoi Region.

CONCLUSION:- The following points can be derived from this chapter. (1) The detailed discussion of the distribution of the social infrastructure in the Ri-Bhoi District goes to prove that the villages are ill-served. There is a need to provide more facilities to the villages. Some of the villages do not have any amenity at all. They are still in the primitive age following shifting cultivation with no development whatsoever.

(2) Another aspect which comes to our notice is that the roads play a vital role in the development of an area and it can be seen that the amenities are mainly concentrated in the villages which are well connected and have pucca roads.

(3) Another factor which can be taken into consideration is the population size. The villages with considerably larger population size has more amenities than the others.

(4) It can be seen that the amenities are mainly concentrated in certain pockets. The superimposition of all the maps showing the amenities one tends to find a clustering pattern in the area. The other areas have an uneven distribution of social infrastructure.

(5) Another feature which emerges is that the villages all along the national highways are comparatively well

served than the others. There are some other villages along the roads connecting the national highways which are also well served by most of the amenities.

(6) Most of the villages which have power supply show a linear pattern lying along the National Highway 40.

(7) There is an inter-relationship and inter-dependence of one social facility to the other. The existence of one social amenity some times naturally brings up a series of other connecting amenities.

CHAPTER - VI

PROCESS OF SOCIAL TRANSFORMATION

IN THE BHOI AREA OF MEGHALAYA

INTRODUCTORY STATEMENT:- The process of social transformation is determined by a number of factors. Social transformation as a process has started in almost all areas but the process is not the same everywhere. Physical, economic, political and also social conditions affect the process of social transformation taking place. It is common knowledge that within the last hundred years there has been phenomenal change. Within this rather short period of time there has been transformation in the society regarding their progress in education and achievements through it have changed, their style of life and expectations from life have changed, there has been rapid and substantial changes in the society. But these changes have not been smooth. Social transformation is a necessary concomitant of social change in the desired direction and it is a process which unfolds itself differently over space.

The Bhoi Region presents a unique case for the region has been exposed to modern forces only recently. The people of this area are at disparate stages of their social evolution and practise diverse modes of economies taking advantage of the natural resource base

of their location. Difficult environment permitted marginal agricultural development and a lack of surplus generation therefore leading to very little changes in their social and economic sphere.

PHYSICAL AND SOCIAL CONSTRAINTS OF SOCIAL TRANSFORMATION IN THE BHOI AREA

The area under study has been characterised by rugged terrain and thick vegetation cover. Due to the difficult terrain and remoteness to the main communication lines of the country it remained isolated from any meaningful intercourse with the nuclear areas or areas of attraction. Its unproductive terrain had been a great deterrent to the economic development of its inhabitants and also the area. Maggers (1954) observes, "the level to which a culture can develop is dependent upon the agricultural potentialities of the environment it occupies". The physical condition of the area acted as a major constraint on the social transformation taking place. The hill people with a low level of technological development had to adjust to existing physical environment. This region is characterised by subsistence level of economy. The forests and hilly terrain of the area led to social isolation and also economic backwardness. There was no contact of these hill people with the other people of the plains and this led to social isolation.

With the conditions of social isolation and the areas which were not suitable for settled agriculture a sort of primitive agriculture called Jhumming or Shifting cultivation was practised. It requires greater inputs in terms of man-hours to clear vegetation on the flat hill-tops and slopes with a soil cover. The traction plough used in the plains cannot be used here. A digging hoe with a metal blade is used to turn the soil by hand. On relative gentle slopes agriculture is being done by preparing terraces where rice the staple food is cultivated. The level of technology is very low and also the hilly and rugged terrain leads to low productivity. It was a closed economy where production was predominantly for self-consumption only and the system of exchange was almost non-existent. There was no production and accumulation of effective surplus and therefore hampered development and growth leading to little or no transformation in the society. Because of the physical and social isolation the Khasi society was closed and there has been a stagnation bringing about very little change.

The existence of the traditional socio-political institutions such as Syiemship, Lyngdohship, Sirdarship hampered the changes taking place in the society. It was these institutions which resisted any sort of change coming into the area. Since interaction with

the outside world was limited, whatever little influence came from the neighbouring plain areas were strongly resisted by the Syiem, Sirdar and the village headmen. They tried to preserve their culture.

CHANGES IN THE SOCIETY IN THE COLONIAL AND POST INDEPENDENCE ERA

Prior to coming of the British the Khasi society was more or less closed without any contact with the outsiders. The only contact was with the people of the Brahmaputra valley, the only people who had some sort of interaction were the people living in the border areas. This contact was on account of the trade, the Khasis of the Bhoi area used to frequent the markets of the Brahmaputra valley for the sake of their produce and also to buy some essential items. This interaction was restricted only to trade of essential items. But with the entry of the British in the early part of the 19th century a series of changes started taking place. With the shift of their capital from Cherrapunji to Shillong, construction of the road connecting Sylhet and the Brahmaputra valley, the road between Shillong to Guwahati through the Bhoi area helped to overcome the isolation of this area. Small settlements started coming up along the major road network. This road passed through Barapani, Umsning, Nongpoh and Burnihat. Inaccessibility was reduced and the region was opened up. Several rural settlements mostly linear

settlements emerged along the major road network. Till the present times one can see that the larger settlements are along the roads. During the British period the Bhoi area underwent changes due to opening up of the region through the construction of transportation and communication networks.

The Christian Missionaries came more or less at the same time as the British Colonizers. The evangelical work of the Christian Missionaries brought change in the religion of the people, which in turn for various reasons carried with it significant changes in other aspects of life of the people, like education, style of personal life.

Christianity brought many changes among the people of this area but, the most important influence was to change the outlook of the people towards education, for at one time Khasis considered literature as the meanest profession. Schools were opened in the remote areas and more children were exposed to education. The Missionaries established schools, hospitals and churches. These not only encouraged the growth of settlements but also gave permanent characteristics to them besides bringing and propagating christianity in the region.

After Independence, however, change was brought about by planned development programmes. New political

institutions were created to look into the administration of the state. For eg., the District Council was set up to safeguard the rights and privileges of the people. But in fact these institutions were eroding the powers and functions of the traditional councils instead of improving upon them. There is a conflict between the traditional institutions and the modern institutions, the powers and functions of the headman, Sirdar, Syiems have been restricted to a large extent with the coming the modern political system.

After Independence planned development programmes were introduced to bring about positive change in different aspects of life of the people and thereby help them participate in the national efforts of economic development and social welfare. There was rapid growth of educational institutions, medical services, Government agencies, and institutions, water supply, transport and communication lines, power supply etc which helped tremendously in the transformation of the area.

SOCIAL AMENITIES AND SOCIAL TRANSFORMATION IN THE BHOI AREA OF MEGHALAYA

The social amenities in the Bhoi Area is very uneven. There is a clustering pattern in some of the areas. Most of the amenities are found in the villages which

lie close to the roads and also the villages which have a higher population growth. There is a clear cut relationship of one amenity with the other. The availability of one amenity often leads to the development of some other amenities. for eg., the availability of pucca roads often leads to the coming of bus stops, the bus stops further bringing about a market centre and so on. This helps in the development of the area and also brings along with it tremendous change which in the course of time develops into a town and thus transformation takes place in the area. Another example can be taken to make the process of transformation clearer the coming up of a school, bringing the facility of a health centre leading to the supply of safe drinking water and further by the availability of power supply, all goes to bring about change in the village.

The presence of a television set goes a long way in helping the people of the village to adapt to changes or to have contact with the outside world.

Therefore, social amenities are a necessity for social transformation. Unless the society has these basic amenities as power supply, water supply, communication lines, schools, medical facilities, markets etc., there cannot be any form of transformation. The basis to any change is the existence of these social amenities.

In the Bhoi Region of Meghalaya one can see that the villages which have changed to a large extent are those which have the largest number of amenities. The villages lying along the main Highway i.e., Barapani, Sumer, Nayabangalow, Umsning, Nongpoh, Jorabat, Burnihat are well developed and they have almost all the existing amenities. They are well connected by Pucca roads, they have primary and middle schools, power supply and health centres are also present, markets and bus stops also goes to make these areas more well served and a large-scale development has taken place. Since the last four decades or so there has been tremendous change in these villages. But in the villages which lie away from the main highway and the roads connecting it have not changed at all, here they are ill-served, some of the villages are not served by as much as water supply or even a pucca road. They lie isolated and they have continued to stagnate at a low-level of technology in a precarious equilibrium with nature. Out of the 427 villages in both the Community Development Blocks about 200 villages have atleast two amenities. All the other villages are ill-served and are at a low-level of change. They continue with subsistence farming and have a closed society with no interaction or contact with the people of the other villages or the neighbouring areas.

In the villages which have a considerable number of amenities there has been large scale change. There has been a shift from the subsistence type of farming and commercial agriculture has taken its place. In many of the villages large scale cultivation of ginger, potatoes, pineapples etc. have taken place. So also there has been a shift from the dependence on agriculture to other tertiary sectors like transport and other business establishments.

The existence of the social amenities in these villages has started the process of urbanisation. The presence of social amenities forms a base for further development and depending upon these amenities social interaction increases therefore giving in room for transformation. The existence of these amenities has led to a growth in the size of the population, and shift from the primary sector to other sectors. The process has started and along with it the process of social transformation has taken root in these villages.

SOCIO-ECONOMIC TRANSFORMATION IN THE BHOI REGION

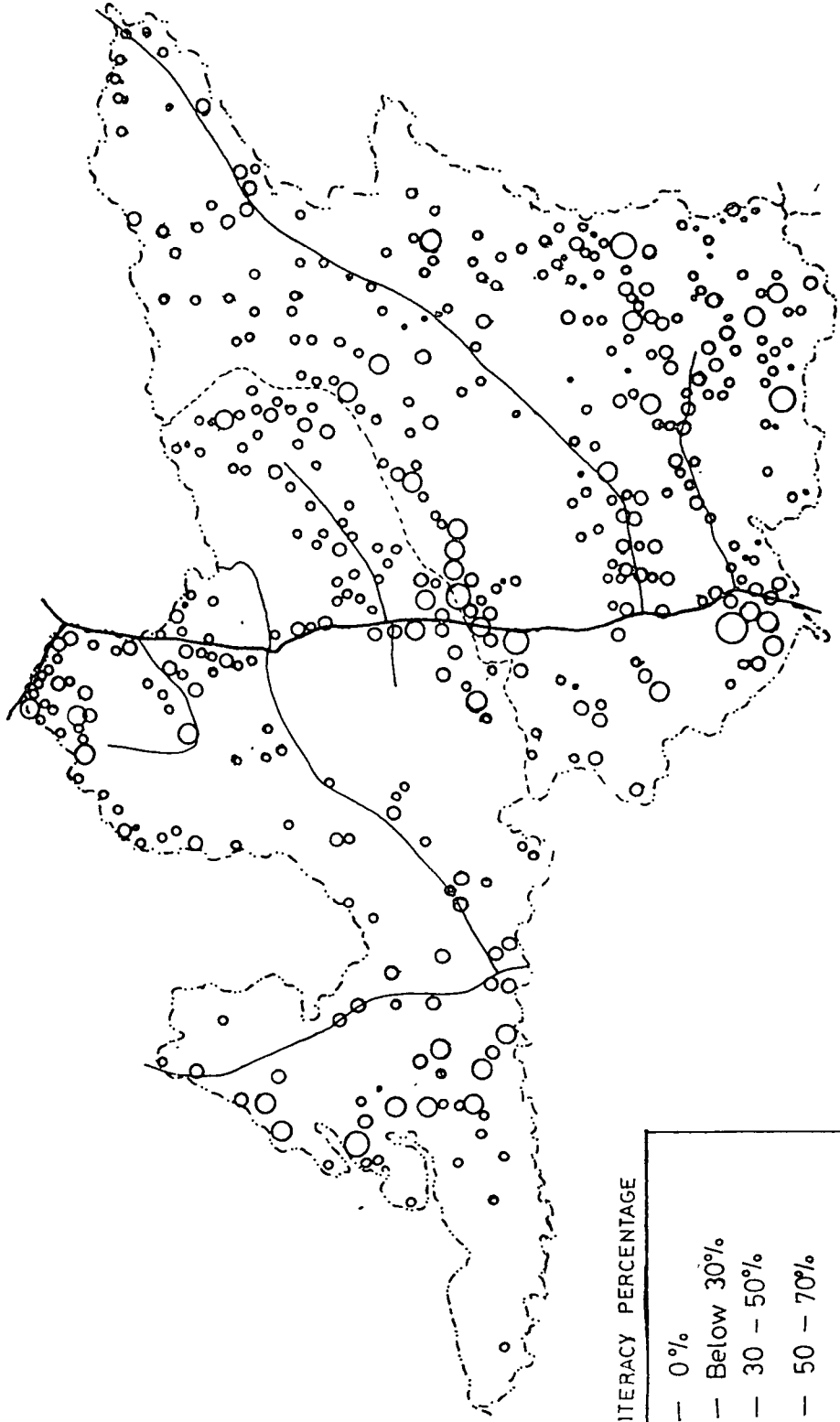
The transformation in a society is due to a large number of factors which include social, economic and political factors and forces. Social and economic forces play a very important role in the changes that are taking place in any given society. Two very significant indicators which have been considered to

understand the process and level of transformation in the Bhoi region are the attainment of literacy and economic responses. The literacy percentages for all the villages of both the Community Development Blocks are calculated and the percentage of cultivators and agriculturists are also calculated so as to give an insight into the percentage of population still involved in agriculture.

One of the ways of looking at the transformation of the tribal way of life is to examine the attainment of literacy. The Bhoi Region has remained more or less isolated barring the limited contact with the people of the Brahmaputra valley. These people lived in a state of social and geographical isolation and survived the upheavals that unfolded the successive acts of the drama of social change among the communities of the plain areas. The locational constraints have exercised far-reaching impact on their world-view, social responses to the agrarian formations and the pattern of interaction with the neighbouring communities. There was large-scale inequity in the spread of education, but the inequity within the tribal society is not inherent but introduced from outside. Historically, tribal societies have not nurtured inequity in the name of sex, age, status, social background or material well-being. The tribes have lived away from Hinduism

for so long that they could not contact social stratification based on caste hierarchy. The tribal societies in the North-East were exposed to the exogenetic influences of the European colonial origin. The process of colonial expansion initiated them into the process of modernisation without disturbing the tribal social order. There were historically determined and geographically defined limits in which christian influences managed to percolate into the fastness of the North-Eastern tribal world. It resulted in a differential pattern in the magnitude of the christian impact as a motive force to modernisation. The tribal tradition of work has rarely distinguished between male and female components of population. The women were as vitally linked with the social organisation of the tribes as the men. The male-female inequity in the tribal literacy in the north-east, insignificant as it is, may be cited as an evidence of the christian impact. Their path to education was not constrained by the social order. The tribes, have been exposed to literacy only recently. In general, their response to formal education and literacy programmes has varied significantly between tribes and from region to region, depending on their socio-cultural, economic and demographic characteristics and their response to

THE BHOI REGION
LITERACY PERCENTAGES



LITERACY PERCENTAGE

- — 0%
- — Below 30%
- ◌ — 30 — 50%
- ◌ — 50 — 70%
- ◌ — 70 — 90%
- ◌ — Above 90%

Fig. 14.

forces of modernisation, such as urbanisation and industrialisation, besides the influence of christianity in some tribal areas.

However, the initiatives taken by the government and other Quasi-Government or voluntary organisations with the objective of educating tribes through special educational programmes and literacy drives have played a significant role. The operation of these forces, in the tribal areas of the country has given rise to significant variations in the regional pattern of literacy in the last few decades.

The spread of literacy is undoubtedly one of the most important parameters of social and cultural development among the tribal societies. The various dimensions of socio-cultural change in a tribal society can be understood in the light of the levels of literacy and education. The lower the level of literacy the lesser is the contact and interaction with the non-tribal groups and the lower is the social and cultural development. It is with this premise that it is proposed to explore and depict the literacy of the tribal population at the aggregative level in the Bhoi Region.

The percentage of literates in a village to the total population of the village were computed and grouped

into six categories.

The literacy rates show a very high degree of unevenness. There are only 2 villages (1%) in the Nongpoh C.D.Block which has a literacy percentage above 70%, and 15 villages (9%) which has a literacy percentage above 50%, all the other villages lie below this level. There are 6 villages (3%) villages which has a zero percent literacy. About 107 (61%) of the villages in this block lie below 30% literacy level. Only about 46 villages i.e., 26% of the villages has a literacy percentage in between 30 and 50. About 10 villages, out of the 186 villages in the block, has been merged with neighbouring villages. The table below gives us a clearer picture.

NO: OF VILLAGES	Percentages of villages	Literacy percentage
6	3%	0%
107	61%	below 30%
46	26%	30% -50%
15	9%	50% -70%
2	1%	above 70%
176 Villages		

TABLE NO:1

NUMBER OF VILLAGES AND THEIR LITERACY PERCENTAGES IN THE NONGPOH C.D.BLOCK.

In the Bhoi Area C.D. Block there is only 1 village which has literacy percentage above 90% . Umsning has a literacy percentage of 90.10% . 1% of the villages has a literacy percentage above 70%. 17 villages out of 246 villages has literacy percentage above 50%. The major part of villages lie below the 50% literacy level. About 26 villages i.e.10.5% of the villages has 0% literacy; 141 villages (57%) have literacy percentage which lie below the 30% level; 58 villages (24%) has literacy percentage which lie between 30 and 50 (Table No:II)

NUMBER OF VILLAGES	% OF VILLAGES	LITERACY PERCENTAGE
26	10.5 %	0 %
141	57.0 %	below 30 %
58	24.0 %	30 %- 50 %
17	7.0 %	50 %- 70 %
3	1.0 %	70 %- 90 %
1	0.5 %	above 90 %
246 villages ;		

TABLE NO:II- NUMBER OF VILLAGES AND THEIR LITERACY PERCENTAGE IN THE BHOI AREA C.D.BLOCK.

Therefore, from the study of the literacy percentage in both the C.D.Blocks it can be seen that the major part of the villages lie below 30% literacy level. But as is seen in the map showing the literacy percentages there is no definite pattern. The villages with a higher literacy percentage are spread throughout

Blocks and are not clustered. In the villages which lie along the roads the literacy percentage is higher this can be linked to easier accessibility to schools because of the existence of roads (Fig No:14). There is wide variation in the literacy percentage and it does not show any link with the existence of schools i.e., there is not definite pattern in the distribution of schools and the literacy percentages.

The level of transformation as is evident from the educational level shows high level of disparities. Which means that the transformation which was expected in a tribal society is not taking place as evident from its socially and spatially fragmented nature. The map itself reveals that his nature of fragmentation in the educational processes do not have any clear cut spatial patterns as villages with high level of literacy or very low level of literacy co-exist in proximity to each other. The values of modern formal education is perceived differently. The perception of the values of education drastically differs among different sections of tribal societies as arranged hierarchically or spatially in areas exposed to modernisation . The level of literacy and its spread has been affected by the geographical setting in areas which are easily accessible the literacy percentage is higher.

Apart from education the other most important indicator

of socio-economic transformation among the tribes refers to their economy. To look at the transformation of the tribal way of life is to examine the spatial patterns in their dependence on agriculture as a mode of living. Tribal economy by and large reflects a symbiotic relationship with the environment and expressed in terms of simple adjustments with nature. The technological breakthrough is of a rudimentary nature, dependence on forest, primitive agriculture, absence of wage labour etc characterise tribal economies in most cases. However, with their increasing contacts with the modern world as also the exposure of the tribal areas to market forces in recent years have been continuous forces engendering transformations into the tribal social and economic order. It is not uncommon therefore to find the tribal economies ranged across the entire spectrum of social evolution ranging from paleolithic hunting and gathering to modern industrial production. The pristine nature of tribal economies have been violated far too often exposing the tribes to a variety of processes both positive and negative resulting in far reaching changes introduced to their economies. Thus it is not unusual to see a tribe moving away from their traditional occupations of forest based economies to an increasing dependence on land resources such as

agriculture in an eco-system by and large averse to settled agriculture and a movement from forest based economies to agricultural wage earning or industrial wage earning as is the case in Chota-Nagpur Plateau.

Economic transformation is indicated in most cases when a shift takes place from agriculture to non-agricultural modes of production. In other words development is accompanied by a structural shift of the working force from primary production to secondary production and even tertiary sectors of economy. The tribal communities of the area were dependent on forests but due to the growing contact with non-tribal societies, there has been a shift from hunting and gathering to shifting cultivation and in some areas to sedentary or settled cultivation. The areas which are well communicated have the penetration of the exogenous forces and transformation has taken place. In the hilly and forested areas hunting, gathering and shifting cultivation still prevail. Therefore the level of transformation depend to a large extent on the ecological base and the potentials of the area. It is in this context that the economic pursuits of the tribal population of the Bhoi Region is to be examined.

Fig No:15 and 16 show the percentage of agricultural labourers and cultivators respectively. The agricultural labourers are absent in most of the

villages. They are dominant in the certain pockets i.e., in the southern part of the Bhoi C.D. Block and also in the northern part of the Nongpoh C.D. Block. The percentage of agricultural labourers is considerably high along the National Highway. The western part of Nongpoh C.D. Block one finds that there is a small concentration of agricultural labourers. The increase of agricultural labourers in the region goes to prove that transformation has taken place but in the negative direction where wage earning has become dominant.

The percentage of cultivators show very little variation through out the entire study area. The dependence on agriculture is quite high. Only in areas along National Highway and the southern part of the Bhoi C.D. Block one finds a low percentage of cultivators. The existence of agricultural labourers and cultivators can be see as an indicator that the people of this area have shifted from the primitive hunting, gathering and shifting cultivation to a more modern mode of living i.e., settled agriculture. In some areas the percentage of population practising agriculture is also less they have shifted to other sectors such as transport and other business. Among the people in settled agriculture too is it has been seen that more and more people are opting commercial

farming of pineapples, ginger, potato, maize, oranges and other fruits. This again shows transformation in the economy of the people and also the region.

From a detailed study of the region it can be seen that in a few villages which are fast developing there has been a shift from the excessive dependence on agriculture to other tertiary sectors like transport etc. In Nongpoh, Burnihat, Naya Bungalow, Barapani, Kyrdemkulai etc we find that the dependence on agriculture has gone down. In Barapani only 9.29% , of the population are agriculturists; Kyrdemkulai has only 33.05%; Nongpoh has only 51.96%; Khanapara has only 28.51%; Burnihat has only 37.5% as agriculturists. The table No:3 gives a clear picture of the shift which has taken place.

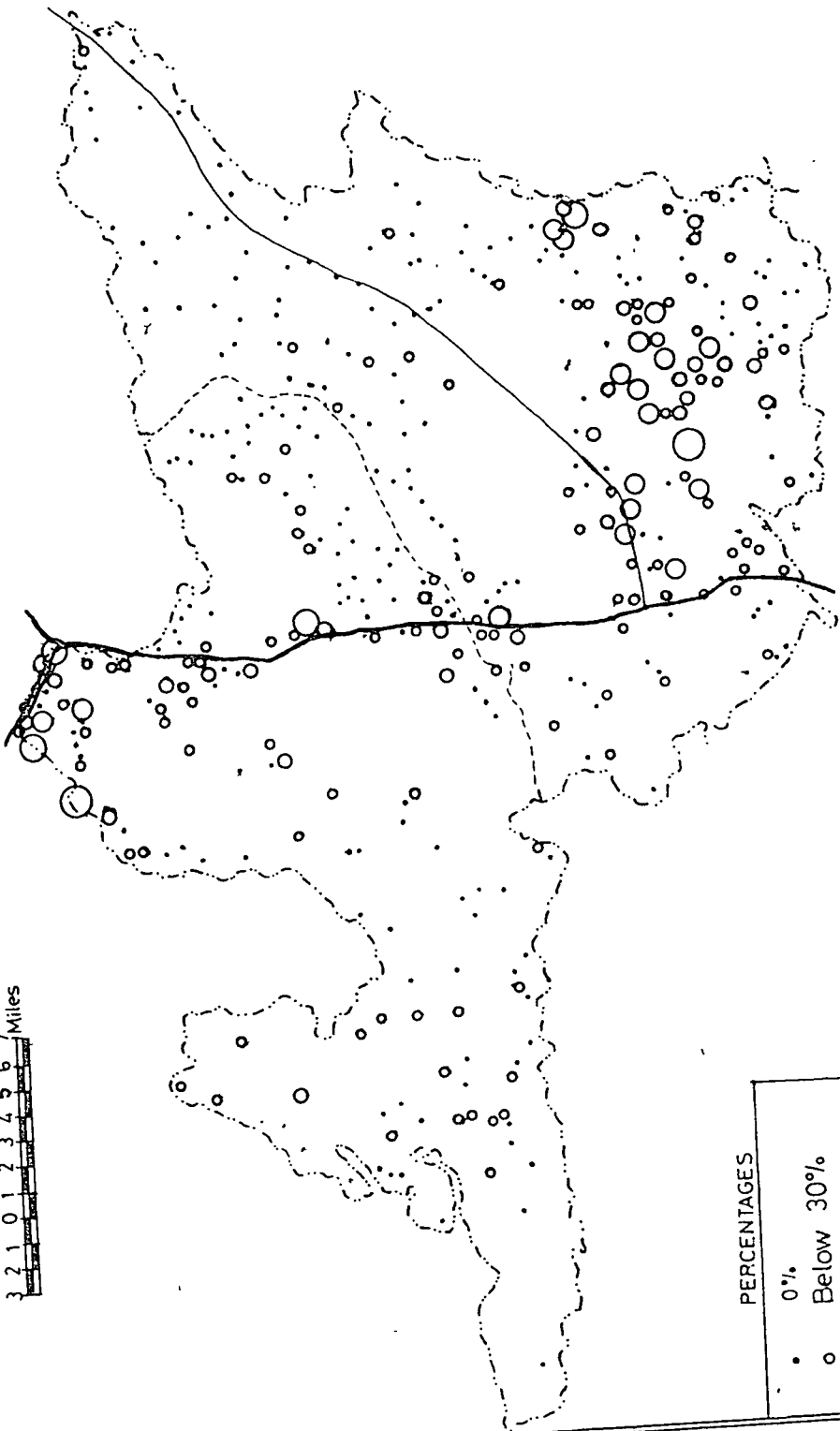
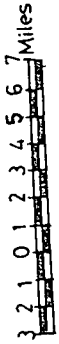
VILLAGE	PERCENTAGE OF POPULATION IN AGRICULTURE
BARAPANI	9.29 %
KHANAPARA	28.51 %
KYRDEMKULAI	33.05 %
BURNIHAT	37.50 %
NONGPOH	51.96 %

TABLE NO:III--SHOWING PERCENTAGE OF POPULATION IN AGRICULTURE.

The dependence on agriculture in the region is very high in both the C.D.Blocks as can be seen from the

YAMHATA-S

THE BHOI REGION
PERCENTAGE OF AGRICULTURAL LABOURERS



PERCENTAGES	
•	0%
◦	Below 30%
○	30 - 50%
○	50 - 70%
○	70 - 90%
○	Above 90%

FIG. 15

Non-agricultural labourers

following tables. Only in 3 or 4% of the villages the dependence on agriculture is less than 50%, in all the other villages dependence is very high.

NUMBER OF VILLAGES	PERCENTAGE OF VILLAGES	PERCENTAGE OF AGRICULTURISTS
3	1 %	BELOW 30 %
7	3 %	30% - 50%
9	4 %	50% - 70%
19	8 %	70% - 90%
208	84 %	ABOVE 90 %

TABLE NO:IV - NUMBER OF VILLAGES AND THE PERCENTAGE OF POPULATION DEPENDENT ON AGRICULTURE IN THE BHOI AREA C.D.BLOCK.

It can be seen that 84% of the villages still depend completely on agriculture. There has been very little shift . The process has started and it will take sometime before the results are seen.

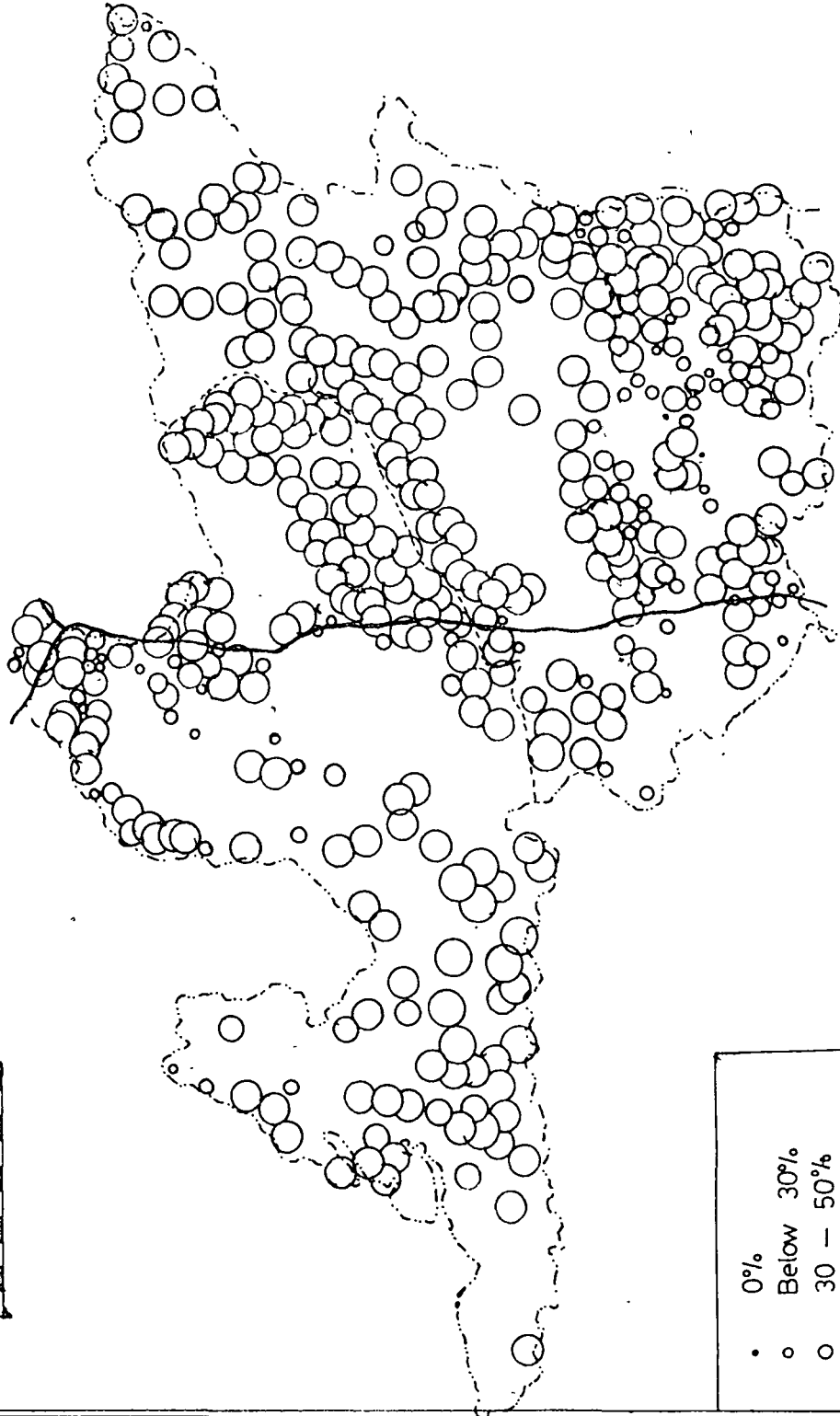
NUMBER OF VILLAGES	PERCENTAGE OF VILLAGES	PERCENTAGE OF AGRICULTURISTS
6	3 %	BELOW 30 %
3	2 %	30% - 50 %
4	2 %	50% - 70 %
12	7 %	70% - 90 %
151	86 %	ABOVE 90 %

TABLE NO:V-- NUMBER OF VILLAGES AND THE PERCENTAGE OF POPULATION DEPENDENT ON AGRICULTURE IN THE NONGPOH C.D.BLOCK.

villages dependent on agriculture is very high. 151 villages (86%) has agricultural population which is above 90%. The rest of the villages lie below this level.

The area under study is vast and ecological diversities are of greater magnitude in the hilly state and even greater in the study area. Ideally speaking the varying potentials of agriculture should result in diverse degrees of dependence on agriculture of the people. The study reveals that the level of dependence on agriculture across the rural space varies very little. This is indicative of very little or insignificant structural transformation in the economy of the people as an overwhelming majority of the working force continues to flock around a single occupation i.e, agriculture. This is irrespective of the fact that there exists enormous variation in the agricultural potential from area to area. The dominance of this single mode of economy suggests that the opportunities outside agriculture seems to be closed as an option. However, along the roads some amount of transformation has taken place but in the negative direction where wage earning has become dominant. In some of the villages of dependence on agriculture has reduced considerably and has shifted to other sectors of the economy.

THE BHOI REGION
PERCENTAGE OF CULTIVATORS



- 0%
- Below 30%
- 30 — 50%
- 50 — 70%
- 70 — 90%
- Above 90%

FIG. 16.

On the basis of the above analysis the following conclusions emerge:-

(1) The physical condition of the Bhoi Region acts as a major constraint on the Social Transformation taking place. The hill people with a low level of technological development had to adjust to existing physical environment. The forests and hilly terrain of the area led to social isolation and also economic backwardness. There was no contact of these hill people with the other people of the plains and this led to social isolation.

(2) Jhumming or shifting cultivation is being practised in most areas. This requires greater inputs in terms of man-hours to clear vegetation on the flat hill-tops and slopes with soil cover. The level of technology is very low and also the hilly and rugged terrain leads to low productivity and therefore production for self-consumption only.

(3) The traditional institutions also had a very important role in the pace of the changes taking place. They resisted a number of changes coming into the region with a view to preserve the traditional customs and practices.

(4) During the British period some changes were seen in the Bhoi Region due to the opening up of the region

through the construction of transport and communication networks, this led to the emergence of a number of settlements along the roads.

(5) The missionaries brought a change in the religion of the people, established schools, hospitals and churches. These not only encouraged the growth of settlements but also gave permanent characteristics to them besides bringing and propagating christianity in the region.

(6) The availability of social amenities forms a basis of the transformation where the existence of one amenity often leads to the coming up of other amenities for eg, the availability of a pucca road often leads to the coming of a bus stop, the bus stop further bringing about a market centre and then a school and so on. This therefore leads the area to become a centre for interaction of the people leading to transformation.

(7) The existence of the social amenities in these villages has started the process of urbanization. The existence of these amenities has led to a growth in the size of the population, and a shift from the primary sector to other sectors.

(8) The level of transformation as is evident from the educational level shows high level of disparities which

means that the transformation which was expected in a tribal society is not taking place as evident from its socially and spatially fragmented nature. There is no clear cut spatial patterns as villages with high level of literacy or very low level of literacy co-exist in proximity to each other.

(9) The level of dependence on agriculture across the rural space varies very little. This is indicative of very little or insignificant structural transformation in the economy of the people as an overwhelming majority of the working force continues to flock around a single occupation i.e., agriculture. The dominance of this single mode of economy suggests that the opportunities outside agriculture seems to be closed as an option to the vast majority.

CHAPTER - VII

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

In this study, an attempt has been made to understand and analyse the process of Social Transformation in the Bhoi region of Meghalaya. The meaning and nature of Social Transformation, the physical setting, the historical background and also the distribution of social amenities as a base for the process of social transformation has been discussed in detail. The changes which has taken place in the Khasi Hills during the historical part has also been discussed and analysed. The process of Social Transformation, the physical and social constraints affecting the process and the changes in the Bhoi region during the colonial rule and also during the post-Independence era has been discussed. Three main indicators have been taken to analyse the level of transformation which has taken place they are the availability of social amenities, the attainment of literacy and economic responses (percentage of agricultural labourers and percentage of cultivators). A study on the economic responses has been taken to analyse the dependence on agriculture as a mode of living.

The major conclusions derived from this present study are as follows:-

- 1) The concept of Social Transformation is vast and

complex and the proper understanding of it requires the combination of the works of the scholars in diverse fields as economic, social and cultural, history, law, politics, education, religion, demography and sociology.

2) The process of Social Transformation is affected by cultural diffusion, education, religion, urbanisation and also physical and social factors. The spread of an idea or technology is determined by a number of physical, social and cultural factors. The uniform spread of an innovation or culture is not possible.

3) Social structure plays an important role, all the processes of social transformation have neither been uniform in social coverage nor in spatial extent. As soon as any innovation, a technique or a social amenity reaches the door-step of rural countryside the paramount question that emerges is who will gain initial advantages and will eventually monopolise the gains and thus alienate the disadvantaged section. Each innovation, therefore, leaves the disadvantaged even more disadvantaged and the deprived more impoverished. Development brings about a qualitatively new and irreversible sequence of changes eventually leading to transformation. When development is all pervasive and affects all spheres of material culture then true transformation takes place.

Ultimately what is most desirable is Social Transformation and not merely social change.

4. Development brings about a qualitatively new and irreversible sequence of changes eventually leading to transformation. When development is all pervasive and affects all spheres of material culture then true transformation takes place. Ultimately, what is most desirable is Social Transformation and not merely Social change.

5. The presence of the Lyngdohship and Basanship was a very important development in the Khasi Society, which saw the transition of a nomadic folk into a sedentary one. With the increase of population in the subsequent periods, further expansion of the villages into newer territories and multiplication in their number took place. Therefore other lower order organisations such as Matebors, Pators etc., were appointed by Basan and Lyngdohs to assist them in their administration.

6. The British rule made a perceptible impact on the Khasi society in the middle of the last century. Most of the Khasi chiefs submitted to the British power. There were changes in the powers of the Syiems, Lyngdohs, Sirdars etc. and majority of the Khasi states were accorded the status of Native States which were given autonomy in the internal administration.

7. The missionaries lay emphasis in sphere of religion, social practices, education, medicine, health, crafts such as carpentry, skills such as printing, general economic betterment, improvement of appearance, cleanliness hygiene etc. The most important influence was to change the outlook of the people towards education.

8. After Independence with development planning and opening up of transport and communication the tribals have closer contacts with the non-tribal segments of the population. The constitutional provisions made for the tribals have released a flood of new forces of political, economic and social nature.

9. The area falls under the Meghalaya plateau and consists of grassyland which are intersected by valleys with soft rounded hills. The hills are covered with dense jungles and the elevation is between 400 - 1200 meters. The region is locally known as the "Ri-Bhoi" region. The hills of this area are separated from the Central Upland region by an important fault line. In the north there is a gradual slope to an elevation of 150 meters till they reach the plains of Assam.

10. Due to the constant upliftment of the region and formation of waterfalls there is an absence of navigable rivers. There are two distinct river system one flowing to the north and the other to the south.

The important rivers of this region are Umkhri, Umiam, Umran, Umngi and Umtru. The drainage pattern in the region represent a most spectacular feature revealing extraordinary straight courses of the river, evidently along joints and faults.

11. Because of the gentle slope and warm climate, the Bhoi region has lateritic soil. These soils have formed through the weathering of quartzites, schists, conglomerate etc. In this soil, long leafed plants can flourish well. However, as a result of Jhum cultivation practised by the inhabitants the areas does not have any thick and tall forests. In the northern fringe areas alluvial soils are found. Here rice can be grown.

12. The temperature of this area is fairly high as compared to the other parts of the Khasi hills. This can be attributed to the low elevation of this area. The elevation ranges from 400m to 1200m. This is also the driest area in the entire plateau. The rainfall here ranges between 1270mm to 1800mm. Except in winter warm clothes are not required here because the summer months become quite sultry and hot.

13. The distribution of social amenities is very uneven in both the C.D. blocks. A few of the amenities are concentrated in some villages whereas some of the

villages have no amenity at all. They are still following the old modes of culture practising shifting cultivation. Very little development whatsoever has taken place.

14. Roads play a vital role in the development of an area and it can be seen that the amenities are mainly concentrated in the villages which are well connected and have pucca roads. All the villages all along the National Highway are comparatively well served than the others.

15. The villages with considerably larger population size has more amenities than the others.

16. There is an inter-relationship and inter dependence of one social facility to the other. The existence of one social amenity some times naturally brings in a series of other connecting amenities.

17. Physical and social constraints affect the process of transformation taking place. The hilly terrains of the Bhoi region has affected the spread of ideas and technology which has impeded the process of transformation. The existence of a number of social institutions also affect the process of change taking place.

18. The availability of social amenities forms a basis of the transformation where the existence of one

amenity often leads to the coming up of other amenities, for eg., the availability of a pucca road often leads to the coming of a bus stop, the bus stop further bringing about a market centre and then a school and so on. This therefore leads the area to become a centre for interaction of the people leading to transformation.

19. The level of transformation as is evident from the educational level shows high level of disparities which means that the transformation which was expected in a tribal society is not taking place as evident from its socially and spatially fragmented nature. There is no clear cut spatial patterns as villages with high level of literacy or very low level of literacy co-exist in proximity to each other.

20. The level of dependence on agriculture across the rural space varies very little. This is indicative of very little or insignificant structural transformation in the economy of the people as an overwhelming majority of the making force continues to flock around a single occupation, i.e., agriculture. The dominance of this single mode of economy suggests that the opportunities outside agriculture seems to be closed as an option to the vast majority.

In conclusion one can say that the physical environment

of the Bhoi region affected the process of social transformation taking place. Because of the social and physical isolation caused by the difficult hilly and forested areas the people were isolated and they continued with the traditional modes of living and these people have continued to stagnate at a low level of technology in a precarious equilibrium with nature. Some of the areas of the Bhoi region were negative from the point of settled agriculture and therefore the practise of jhum cultivation continues in some areas till the present times.

The Bhoi region was till recent years considered to be malarious and people were averse to the idea of settling in the region. It is only during the recent years that people from Jaintia Hills and the Karbi population have started settling in the Bhoi region.

Whatever little change that has taken place in the area depended on the exogenous forces. With the coming of the British the area was opened to outside influence through the construction of the Guwahati - Shillong Highway. With the coming up of this road a large number of settlements started coming up along the roads. Because of the existence of the road non-tribals from the neighbouring areas started coming to the area bringing along with them new ideas leading to change in the isolated areas of the Bhoi region. The

settlements which came up along the roads in this area are Jorabat, Byrnihat, Nongpoh, Umsning, Naya Bangalow, Barapani etc. One finds that there is a concentration of non-tribal population in these settlements. Here the level or rate of transformation is faster than the areas which lie further away from the main communication line. In these areas the dependence on agriculture is much less than the other areas. The people now depend on other tertiary activities for a living. The availability of social amenities too is higher in these villages.

The missionaries brought a change in the religion of the people, established schools, hospitals and churches. These not only encouraged the growth of settlements but also gave permanent characteristics to the people besides bringing and propagating christianity in the region. The missionaries brought about changes in spheres of religion, social practices, education, medicine, health, crafts such as carpentry, skills such as printing, general economic betterment, improvement of appearances, cleanliness, hygiene etc.

In the post-Independence era with developmental planning and introduction of special programmes of development for the area there were some changes. The setting up of the basic facilities and making an

awareness among the people about better opportunities etc. There has been an increased contact with the non-tribal social institutions and has generated among them new urges and aspirations. They now perceive new opportunities which are available to them in the democratic polity of India.

The existence and availability of social amenities forms a basis of the transformation where the existence of one amenity often leads to the coming up of other amenities. The presence of these social amenities in the village has started the process of urbanisation, there has been an increase in the size of population and also a shift from the primary sector to other sectors has started. From the two indicators i.e., the attainment of literacy and percentage of population in agriculture which have been taken to measure the level of transformation. We can see that there is a very high level of disparity. The level of transformation as evident from the educational level shows a high level of disparity and is not what is expected in a tribal society. The tribal society has not nurtured inequity in the name of sex, age, status, social background or material well being, but in the Bhoi region the literacy percentage is quite low inspite of the existence of schools all over. There is no clear cut spatial patterns as villages with high level of

literacy or very low level of literacy co-exist in proximity to each other.

The dependence of agriculture too is very high in most areas. Only a few areas has a low percentage of agriculturists. This is indicative of very little or insignificant structural transformation in the economy. This again shows that opportunities outside agriculture is very little, and therefore excessive dependence on agriculture.

IMPLICATIONS

In the tribal areas the question of Social Transformation is far more complicated due to the continuation of many traditional institutions inhibiting change. However, tribal social structure is inherently egalitarian and any change, however small is likely to produce far reaching impact compared to non-tribal segment of the society. But the processes of change is not spatially uniform as it tends to localise itself and has to interact with the existing tribal institutions and modes of living. But there is enough indication from the present study that processes of social change is introducing elements of inequity and hierarchy into the traditional social order of the tribes. It is difficult to conceptualise the true significance of the nature of social transformation without going for a detailed field based investigation

so as to fully comprehend the precise role of social processes injecting the processes of inequities into the tribal social order.

Lastly, it must be mentioned that this study has its obvious shortcomings and it has been necessary to resort to generalizations because of the absence of the specific data. A detailed study on the other aspects such as social structure, population size etc., have not been taken up because of a shortage of time. This can be dealt in a future study.

The study of social transformation should be taken up on a wide scale for the tribal areas of North-east and especially Meghalaya. This is necessary to suggest new innovations to be pumped in for the transformation of the regions to bring them into the web of modernization and economic development. Education, which is one of the principal indicators of social transformation should be taken on a wide scale. The changes in educational system may be suggested following the trends of social change and diagnosing whether or not the trend is healthy.

Most of the studies on social transformation have been taken up by non-geographers and have reference in non-geographical journals. There is a need for creating interest among geographers to appreciate commentary on

social transformation with a proper spatial analysis, spatial relations and co-variations with proper maps to analyse the spatial trends may be obtained.

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