



GOVERNMENT OF TRIPURA

**SOCIO-ECONOMIC SURVEY  
OF THE  
NOATIA TRIBES**

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## FOREWORD

In every developing country where modernity is making inroads in the traditional life of the rural areas especially on the tribal ethos and culture, it is essential to take up socio-economic studies which provide dependable indicators of change. Preparation of monographs on different tribes in Tripura had been taken up with this purpose in view viz., to know fully the inherent ethno-social-economic characteristics of the particular tribal groups who are gradually being acculturised due to historical factors.

2. The author Dr. Sudhangshu Bikash Saha has done recently a doctorate on "The History and Culture of the Tribal Peoples of Tripura" and is also otherwise known for anthropological studies. His main emphasis has been on socio-economic status of Noatias, who are considered a species of the generic stock of Tripuris. He has dwelt on the ethnological characteristics of Noatia in Tripura, stressed on their migrant features, as distinct from resident Tripuris and their contacts at some historical past with the Burmese, Chakmas and Mogs of Arakan.

3. While providing the socio-cultural setting of Noatias he has given an insight on their clan and family composition, food, dress and abodes as also rituals, religious beliefs and their village organisation. This provides an essential background in which the present day condition of Noatias, distributed over different parts of Tripura, is set.

4. It has been shown that as per Census data the Noatias are mainly distributed in Khowai and Kamalpur Sub-Divisions of West and North Tripura Districts as well as Sonamura, Udaipur, Belonia and Amarpur belt of West and South Tripura Districts. An interesting feature is that over the last four decades i.e. from 1941 Census, from which data have been processed, the Noatias are a declining tribe so far as population growth is concerned, in Tripura. In between 1941 and 1951 their number decreased from 26.3 thousand to 24.9 thousand, from 1951 to 1961 by another 8.9 thousand and from 1961 to 1971 by another 5.7 thousand. It is not known whether this is due to wrong classification of Noatias during Census, as Noatias at one time were considered to be a part of the Tripuris and may still be enumerated in many places as such. Alternatively this may be due to migration or may be due to more death rate compared to less birth rate. In any case this might well be a matter of further research.

5. The author has taken pains to study the Noatia tribe in their specific geographical context viz., in different Sub-Divisions of Tripura, where they reside, separately. He has studied the demographic characteristics, agrarian techniques, its impact on their economy, especially on income, expenditure and indebtedness, and has offered his suggestions relevant for the area. Here too perhaps it would have been worth studying the distinctive features of Noatia families in different places of Tripura and comparing it with their land holdings, size and class of lands, quantum and variation of inputs, yearly income and expenditure, occupational status and

indebtedness and then try to establish a correlation between entire gamut of these factors with the technological progress achieved by the same tribe in different places of their settlement. Such a holistic study perhaps, would have taken much more time however, than the mere three months which Dr. Saha had got for completing the study.

6. In fine this is a commendable effort for a monograph and would surely be of considerable use to all those who want to know something about the Noatias, who are one of the 19 Scheduled Tribes of Tripura. We are all grateful to Dr. Saha for having taken up the study with only a token help from the Government and completing the same in due time.

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## PREFACE

This Survey embodies the characteristic feature of Socio-economic life of Noatia tribes of eight sub-divisions of Tripura. Though the hamlets have been selected purposively for socio-economic survey, I am sure, they are expected to display a fair picture of the Noatia tribes wherever they live.

2. In course of my investigation, I have had co-operation from the innumerable inhabitants of different hamlets, hamlet chiefs, Gao Pradhans, Panchayat secretaries and non-tribal gentlemen and gentle ladies. Different services were rendered by the Multipurpose Project Officers, Block Development Officers, District Tribal Welfare Officers, Tribal Extension Officers, Tribal Supervisors and many other departmental administrations of different categories. I acknowledge my indebtedness to all of them.

3. This monograph was taken up under the aegis of the Directorate of Research, Tribal Welfare Department, Government of Tripura and had to be completed within a time bound programme. This could not have been possible without the help of the Minister, Tripura Welfare, Director of Tribal Research and the Linguistic Officer, Tribal Research, Government of Tripura. I respectfully acknowledge my deep gratitude to them for their valuable information and time to time suggestions. Thanks are extended to Shri Ashit Ranjan Das, Steno to Director of Research, for typing this voluminous work and other staff for their co-operation.

4. In spite of all endeavours to make the monograph free from mistakes, there might have some typographical errors and other drawbacks for speedy preparations of the work which may kindly be viewed with consideration.

5. In fine, I do hope this monograph will be able to throw some light on the socio-economic life of the Tribals of Tripura in general and of the Noatia tribes in particular.

AGARTALA,

S. B. SAHA

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## CHAPTER—I

### GEOGRAPHICAL BACKGROUND

#### *Introduction*

Tripura is situated in the eastern region of India. The Surveyor General of India mentions that the area of the territory is 4036 sq. miles whereas the Survey Office of Tripura extends the figure to 4116 sq. miles. It is situated between 22°56' and 24°32' north latitudes and 91°10' and 92°22' east longitudes. Of the total area of Tripura, about 60% consists of hills, hillocks and hilly terrains and the rest consists of flat land stippled with turbulent serpentine rivulets and painted grey with barren tracts, lush green with luxuriant verdures and ritious hue with wild growth.

#### *Boundary*

Tripura, an ancient feudal hill state of India, is situated to the east of the country hemmed in between Bangladesh and Assam. It is bounded on the north by the Cachar district of Assam, on the west by Comilla and a part of Noakhali district of Bangladesh, on the south by the districts of Chittagong and a part of Noakhali of Bangladesh and on the east by the Mizo hills of Mizoram covering about 182.4 Kilometres in length from its north to the south and 112 Kilometres in breadth from its east to the west.

#### *Topography*

Topographically, the whole territory can be divided into seven distinguishable features which are as follows :

(i) Hill Range (ii) Hillock (iii) Valley (iv) Lunga (v) Flat land (vi) River and (vii) Lake.

#### HILL RANGE

Seven hill ranges, increasing in height towards the east, run north and south with an average intervals of 19 Kilometres. They rise higher successively from west to east and each range enhances in height from south to north and they are (i) Jampai (ii) Sakhan (iii) Longtharai (iv) Atharamura (v) Sardeng (vi) Baramura and Deotamura.

#### HILLOCK

The natural elevation of an area is locally known as tilla. Such tillas may be called hillocks. The lands upon such tillas are clad with timber forests, bamboo jungles and bushes which constitute rich sources of natural wealth of the territory. Some hillocks are utilised as sites for homesteads by the sylvan people.

#### VALLEY

The low lands in between hills and drained by rivers form the Valleys. The Valleys are extremely fertile and when during the winter, the tribals grow paddy, jute etc. the valleys become verdant with lush green crops.

## LUNGA

The low lying areas between the hillocks or tillas are called Lunga Land. The lunga lands are fertile. The lowlying lunga lands are mostly boggy and are found covered with reeds. The lunga lands are best suited for plough cultivation.

## FLAT LAND

The plain surface of the territory is found situated between-intermittent hills. Land-hungry cultivators have settled mostly in these flat lands.

## RIVERS

Tripura is a land many rivers that drain away its vast area and enrich it by soft alluvial deposits, water them and provide excellent water ways for the territory. There are 10 (ten) rivers in Tripura which go by (i) Gomati (ii) Howrah (iii) Fenny (iv) Muhari (v) Dhalai (vi) Juri (vii) Khowai (viii) Manu (ix) Longai and (x) Deo.

## LAKE

There is no other principal Lake worth mentioning in the territory than the Rudrasagar lake which is situated at a distance of 53 Kilometres south-east from Agartala. The Harijala and Dakruajala, two other small wheels of water situated at Udaipur also deserve mention.

### *Climate*

The climate of the territory is generally hot and humid. The cool dry season usually starts from November when temperature begins to fall and continues till February. From March to May, occasional thunderstorms and rains take place. The monsoon arrives in the month of May bringing storm and heavy rains in its trail. In the month of September, the weather is sultry owing to the high percentage of moisture and temperature comes down in the month of October and gradually a cold and dry wind from the north starts blowing.

### *Soil*

The soil of the territory offers many different varieties. The soil of the high land or tilla land is not so rich and is generally formed with loamy sand. Such land is poor in humus or decomposed organic matters. The soil of the land of lunga land is mostly alluvial and are especially fresh and very fertile, alluvium being brought down and deposited by the streams and charras year after year. The marshy swamps have bog-soils which are spongy in consistency and look like peat.

### *Flora*

Most forests of the territory are of mixed character. Vast areas have been occupied by a great variety of bamboos throughout the hills of the territory only interrupted by scattered trees and other plants like sungrass etc. some of the important timbers in the forest consist of sal, karai, gamai, garjan, chamal, jarul, rata, khemta, champa, sundi, sonal and nageswar etc.



### *Fauna*

Tripura has great animal wealth. The following animals are commonly found within the forests of the territory viz., tiger, leopard, bison, bear, elephant, buffalo, wild pig and deer etc. Besides these wild beasts, different kinds of birds, snakes and other reptiles are also found in great number. A large variety of fish, crab, tortoise are also found.

### *Population*

The people of Tripura are of three categories viz., the original residents, immigrants and recent migrants from defunct East Pakistan now called Bangladesh. The people belonging to the scheduled tribes claim to be the original residents of Tripura. Previously they were dependent on jhuming or shifting cultivation in the hills, but of late a large section of the tribal people are being accustomed gradually with plough cultivation in the plains. Therefore, they are discarding their nomadic character and are settling down permanently. The immigrants, settled in Tripura came most from undivided Bengal, Assam and some have settled after coming from Bihar and Orissa in the pursuit of their livelihood. The recent migrants are those who have taken refuge for an honourable existence in this territory after partition of India due to communal disturbances in the adjoining districts of the defunct East Pakistan. Gradually the refugees entered this territory through unauthorised routes as looth and arson, raping and killing became the order of the day in the then East Pakistan, men, women and children left their hearth and home and flocked to Tripura in tens, hundreds, and thousands.

Table—I below, shows the growth of population in the territory of Tripura.

TABLE—I

<i>Year</i>	<i>Total Population</i>	<i>Tribal Population</i>	<i>Percentage of tribal total population</i>
1901	1,73,325	91,679	52.89%
1911	2,29,613	1,10,129	47.96%
1921	3,04,437	1,66,500	54.69%
1931	3,82,450	2,03,327	53.16%
1941	5,13,010	2,56,991	50.09%
1951	6,39,029	2,37,958	37.23%
1961	11,42,005	3,60,070	31.53%
1971	15,56,342	4,50,544	28.95%

### *Cultivation*

The Tribals of Tripura are born cultivators. Since time immemorial the tribals have been practising cultivation for having their subsistence by a process known as jhuming or shifting cultivation. It was not till the earliest part of the fourteenth century, when the Bangalees entered Tripura, that the plough cultivation of the plain lands started. Now-a-days in Tripura, a good number of tribals have started plough cultivation. Some still follow the beaten track of jhuming or shifting cultivation.

**Land**

There are four types of lands to be found in Tripura. These are classified as follows: (a) Tilla land (b) Lunga land and (c) Plain land (d) Slope land. Amongst the four types of lands, tilla and slope lands are suitable for jhuming or shifting cultivation and lunga lands and plain lands are suitable for plough cultivation.

In table—2 below, the land utilisation pattern in Tripura is shown. The table will reveal the urgent need for weaning the jhumias from shifting cultivation and helping them to take to plough cultivation. Tripura's topography being mainly hilly, when hill slopes are used for shifting cultivation, it leads to soil erosion on a large scale causing floods in the plains. To save plain lands from floods and extension of cultivation, these hill slopes will have to be brought under forest plantations. Accordingly, more and more areas are being taken over by the Forest Department and being converted into Reserved or Protected forest areas. As a result, areas available for shifting cultivation are steadily falling down in acreage. Therefore, the jhumias are being forced to jhumming at the same plot of land repeatedly. The inevitable result of this is low outturn and deterioration in the conditions of the jhumias.

TABLE—2

i) Total area of the State	...	10,47,700 hectares
ii) Area under Cultivation	...	2,41,500 -do-
iii) Area of reserved forest	...	4,07,613 -do-
iv) Protected forest	...	2,20,491 -do-
v) Area of the hill	...	4,79,782 -do-
vi) Area under waste land cultivable waste	...	2,000 -do-
vii) Fallow land	...	4,500 -do-
viii) Area under miscellaneous uses, land put to non-agri- cultural uses.	...	46,876 -do-
ix) Barren and uncultivable land	...	6,000 -do-
x) Permanent pasture and other grass	...	33,000 -do-
xi) Land under miscellaneous	...	85,420 -do-

The way of tribal life, since time immemorial had to depend mostly upon jhum economy. In those days, they produced almost every article they consumed, such as paddy, vegetables, Cotton, Sesame, maize, fruits and different plant of spices etc. in the jhum process of cultivation. They also made baskets and pursued other crafts. They practised hunting and fishing. They used cotton textiles manufactured from cotten raised in the jhum lands. They only would go to market for purchasing salt, dry fish, cooking oil and other necessities of life etc.

But at present, due to paucity of jhum land, the tribals of Tripura are facing great difficulties. The tribals, who inhabit the tilla or high

lands have to depend on the market for almost all of their necessities of daily life. During hard days they have to ease of their hunger by taking fruits, bamboo shoots, yams and different kinds of roots, and herbs collected from nearby forests.

Tripura is divided into three districts and ten sub-divisions. Table—3 below, shows sub-divisionwise tribals as per Census Report of 1971.

TABLE—3

Name of the district	Name of the Sub-division	Tribal Population	Total Population	Percentage of Tribal Population to total population.
West Tripura	Sadar	1, 15 940	4, 72, 729	24. 53%
	„ Khowai	71, 701	1, 77, 999	40. 28%
	„ Sonamura	11, 237	1, 09, 877	11. 14%
South Tripura	Amarpur	50, 874	78, 453	64. 85%
	„ Belonia	36, 454	1, 38, 134	26. 32%
	„ Sabroom	24, 597	58, 934	41. 74%
	„ Udaidur	31, 195	1, 24, 207	25. 11%
North Tripura	Kamalpur	25, 801	88, 435	29. 18%
	„ Kailashahar	43, 090	1, 41, 181	30. 52%
	„ Dharmanagar	39, 656	1, 75, 393	22. 61%
		4, 50, 544	15, 56, 342	28. 95%

The proportion of tribal population to total population of Tripura has been decreasing as will be evident from the figures above. It will also be clear if we study the growth of population on Table—1. It is due to the continuous migration of people from now defunct East Pakistan. By virtue of their peculiar nature, the jhumias who were earlier forest dwellers have been entering deeper and deeper into forests because of their inability to adopt permanent cultivations on non-arable lands at the face of keen competition from the newly settled cultivators hailing from neighbouring districts who have reclaimed most of the permanent arable lands. As a result, most of tribals, finding no alternative but to depend on the jhuming or shifting cultivation, for which also there is no sufficient land here, have migrated further into the jungles. The biggest economic problem that the tribals have to face now happens to be the problem of cultivable land. Over and above, the output of jhum crops have gone down and hardly provide food for more than three to four months in a year to a tribal household.

The constitution (Scheduled Tribes) (Part C States) order, 1951 contained names of eighteen scheduled tribes in Tripura in Part—VII of the Scheduled to the order. Again, the constitution (Scheduled Tribes) (Part C States) order, 1951 have been amended by the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes Lists (Modification) Order, 1956, according to which the enumeration of Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes has been conducted in 1961 Census of Tripura. The modified lists of

Scheduled Tribes appearing in the Schedule to the amended order are reproduced below: (1) Lusai (2) Mag (3) Kuki including the following sub-tribes (i) Balte (ii) Belalhut (iii) Chhalaya (iv) Fun (v) Hajango (vi) Jangei (vii) Khereng (viii) Khephong (ix) Kuntei (x) Laifang (xi) Lentei (xii) Mizel (xiii) Namte (xiv) Paite or Paitn (xv) Rangchan (xvi) Rangkl'ole (xvii) Thangluya (4) Chakma (5) Garo (6) Chaimal (7) Halam (8) Khasi (9) Bhutia (10) Munda including Kaur (11) Oraon (12) Lepcha (13) Santal (14) Bhil (15) Tripuri (16) Jamatia (17) Noatia (18) Riang (19) Uchai. (16) Jamatia (17) Noatia (18) Riang (19) Uchai.

If we make a close study about the tribals of Tripura, we cannot but find that their principal means of livelihood is tilling the soil. The form of cultivation is known as jhum cultivation. Primitive system of agronomy is still in vogue. At present, a good number of sylvan people has practised settled cultivation. Proximity of habitation to water courses like river or charras etc. is essential for the tribals for selecting the sites of villages as most of their worships are performed on the banks of rivers or charras etc. They are very skilled in the art of weaving with indigenous handlooms. They are also well versed in bamboo, wood and cane handicrafts. Their staple food is rice and their food is perhaps one of the simplest in the world.

The people of this territory other than tribals as Table—I will clearly indicate are the Bengalees who have virtually caused a sort of population explosion in this state. They constitute the bulk of her population and follow different kinds of livelihood such as trade, commerce, weaving, crafts, agriculture and professions of divers nature. These people prefer the plain and valleys for habitation. Their social customs, language, education and culture are full of varieties.

In short, these are the people who now live in Tripura and have accepted the state as their home. They form a colourful variety and in peaceful and unhurried pursuit of their avocations they have patterned their lives in a significant way. In physical form and Stature, in body colour and facial form, in dress and costumes in ornament and jewellery, in mode of life and basic ideas, beliefs and habits they provide a wide diversity but they have offered to live together and have accepted a norm of living which has given rise to an extremely interesting tapestry of human existence.

## CHAPTER—II

### SOCIO-ECONOMIC BACKGROUND

#### *Early History*

According to Table No. XVII of 1931 Census published in Bengali by the Government of Tripura, the Communities of Puratan Tripuri, Deshi Tripuri, Jamatia, Riang and Noatia were known under the generic name of Tripur Kshatriya. The number of Tripur kshatriyas as in 1941 Census had been far less than the figures given in 1931 Census and this was probably because of under enumeration or due to the fact that many tribals did not enlist themselves as Tripur Kshatriyas.

Lewin States, "The great Nowultea clan with its many Sub-divisions living for the most part in the Mong Rajah's country, on the banks of Fenny, are in close contact with the Bengalees of the plains. They are consequently addicted to Hindu superstitions and observances, and I regret to say that latterly they have been some slight indications that the most important man among them are postering the hurtful and obnoxious doctrines of caste and niceties of feeding" (T. H. Lewin—The Hill Tracts of Cittagong and the dwellers therein. P. 79). Lewin further observes, "There are four clans of the Tipperah tribe resident in the Chittagong Hill Tracts, as follows: The Pooran, the Nowultea, the Osuic, and Reeang" (T. H. Lewin—wild races of South Eastern India, P. 197).

There can be no doubt that in ancient times of the Chittagong Hill Tracts fell within the region controlled by the rulers of Tripura. It is probable that during some remote age when Hill Tripura was under the rule of some Hindu rulers belonging to the Kshatriya clan, a group of the Tripuris left their original place of residence and took refuge in Chittagong Hill tracts and Aracan following some religious squable which had threatened to destroy their tribal identity. Whatever might have been the location of the Noatias original home, in facial features and physical structures they are very akin to the aforesaid Tripuri tribe and are to be classified under Mongoloid group. Though apparently Hindus, the Tripuris demonstrate some vital differences from the caste Hindus regarding their worships and other religious practices. These differences lay probably in thier original differences with the Hindu rulers of Tripura. This religious difference seems also to have contributed to their migration towards the Chittagong hill tracts and Aracan etc.

Some Scholars believe that the Noatias could have been the original inhabitants of Tripura State. The Social rites and ceremonies of the Noatias bear a close resemblance to those of the Tripuris. Anthropologists like T. H. Lewin, R. H. Sneyd Hutchinchon and others have classified the Noatias also under the Tripuris. This effort, however, has led me to try to trace the origin of the Noatias from another standpoint.

During some periods in the past, the limits of Tripura state had extended upto Burma from Brahmaputra and upto Aracan from the borders of Bengal. In C. 1512 A.D. Maharaja Dharma Manikya occupied Aracan. At that time many Tripuri soldiers were attracted by the natural abundance and easy livelihood available in the region and began to settle down in Aracan permanently. Chittagong also came under the rule of Tripura during the reign of Vijay Manikya (C. 1529-1565 A.D.). At that time many Tripuri tribal people residing at the putskirts of the capital fortified the southern boundary of the kingdom. In course of time, even after the consequent of the plain lands of Tripura by the Mogul rulers, those tribals of Aracan and Chittagong hill tracts did not return to Tripura. In Aracan, these Tripuri tribals began to settle at 'Naitong'. According to Burmese language 'Naitong' means a hillock of bad omens.'

Gradually marriages took place between the Burmese and the Tripuri tribals and the different Burmese titles such as Naitong, Mongbai, Tongbai and Khaklu were conferred on them.

Again Aracan and Chittagong hill tracts were then predominantly inhabited by the Chakmas and the Mags. As a result, the Mags and the Chakmas came closer to each other and marriages came to take place between the members of the two tribes quite frequently. These Tripuri tribals accepted some customs and culture of the Chakmas which have synthesis in respect of the disposal of the dead.

Such matrimonial contacts with the Burmese, the Chakmas, the Mags brought the Tripuri tribals into offing a new tribe who, however, came to consider themselves different from the Tripuris. After a long interval, these Tripuri tribes returned to their homeland with new trends and culture of society which they could not give up due to long practices. Those people had settled in the south Tripura and lost contacted with the culture and custom of the Tripuri tribals. Afterwards when they tried to mix with the Tripuris of Hill Tripura they found their culture and custom were different from those of the Tripuris of Hill Tripura

The new Tripuris of this territory then came to be known as the Noatia or Katal Community. The word 'Katal' in Kok Borok language means 'New'. The term 'Noatia' also means New. This tradition led many people to think that the Noatia community has been a mixed tribe. It may be presumed that various tribals such as the Tripuris, the Burmese, the Chakmas, the Mags have been incorporated in this community. They have been dwelling in Tripura since time immemorial and have been persuing their old habits and religious beliefs. But during the last thirty years of their contact with the refugee from erstwhile East Pakistan now called Bangladesh who are Banglees, a synthesis of attitudes and social demeanour has developed in the life pattern of these original inhabitants.

#### *Ethnic Character*

The Noatia is of Tibeto-Burman stock having marked Mongolian features. He has a broad head, small eyes, flat nose depressed at the

base and scanty hair. He has had flat face and thick lip. His complexion varies from yellow-brown to light brown.

The Noatia is of good physique with thick and strong heels. Male Noatia is endowed with beards and moustaches and is of medium height. The female Noatia is calmly and a little shorter in stature.

#### *Food and drink*

The principal crop and staple food of the Noatia tribe is rice. They are very fond of dry fish, pork and chicken. Their subsidiary food consists of fish, vegetables etc. During the monsoon bamboo-shoot is widely used as an article of alternative diet.

They are very fond of rice-beer. A good quantity of rice is kept for the preparation of the country liquor. They brew their drinks like "Churak" (distilled) and prepare "Butuk" (Langi). To prepare 'Butuk or Langi' approximately 2 or 3 kg. of atop rice is taken and the rice is boiled. After a few hours 'Chuan' (made of leaf and bark of some particular wild plants) is powdered and well mixed with this boiled-rice and put into a earthen pitcher (Langi) and the mouth of the pitcher is covered with banana leaf. After three or four nights this Langi becomes drinkable. This drink is used at the time of different festive celebrations in connexion with the religion and for merriment.

#### *Dress*

The Dress of the Noatia tribe is of the simplest nature. The male wear a thick turban and a narrow piece of loin cloth and a guernsey or shirt when they go out. When they are at home, they put on a small loin cloth around the waist and this is not more than three feet in length. When they are in the field, they wear a napkin.

The Dress of the female is equally inornate. She covers her breasts with a small piece of cloth embroidered with splendid artistic designs which is locally known as Risha or Riah. The lower part of the body is covered with a long piece of cloth which is known as Pachhra.

#### *Adornment*

The Noatia tribes take great care for their personal decoration and hair-dressing. They are fond of ornaments made of Silver. They also use various kinds of ornaments made of flowers which they wear on hair and ears. Ornaments are used in great quantity during the observance of festivals and marriage ceremonies. On the occasion of marriage festivals, large number, of ornaments are used by the women who attend the ceremony. The brides are also given quite a load of ornaments to decorate with.

Their adornments reflect a good quality of workmanship and individuality. Below is given a list of ornaments in vogue among the Noatia tribal women :

*Ear-Ornament* : Dhedi (Dheri), Taiya and Wakhum.

*Necklace* : Kathichha or Kanthi, Hashi, **Sat-lahari**, Panch-lahari, Rangbak and Mala.

*Wrist-Ornament* : Kasar and Cudi (Curi).

*Nose-Ornament* : Kali and Bali.

*Ankle-Ornament* : Kharu and Paizeb.

*Finger-Ornament* : Yasitam.

#### *House-type*

On the hills, wherever is to be heard the sound of pigs and flutter fowls, it can easily be assumed with certainty that there are abodes of the tribal people hidden behind the luxuriant vegetation. In Tripura, due to their natural bent, they take initiative to build houses with the help of easily available forest products such as bamboo, wood, sungrass and cane etc.

It is observed that generally the Noatia build their houses on the top of the tilla lands. Cottages, erected upon the square blocks of mud are used by some tribals as their dwelling in the plains. Usually the roof is covered with sungrass or thatch. These dwelling houses which have their walls made of bamboos or sungrass are all the while plastered with a thick coating of mud and cow dung on both sides. Some have separate sheds for cattle and poultry. The size and character of the houses vary in accordance with the pecuniary position of the tribals. The other thing which deserves to be stressed here is that the well-to-do tribals usually follow their Bengali neighbours in their conduct, demeanour, customs and also in building their dwelling houses.

It has been witnessed that typical cottages are built quite skill-fully by the shifting cultivators on a raised platform. Such houses built about seven to eight feet high are known as 'Tong-ghar'. It is observed that those dwelling houses are thatched by two roofs, one part of each houses leaning against the slope of a hill and the other part being supported by wood or bamboo posts which remains standing in a beautiful artistic manner. The lower part of a house upto the 'Tong' is two to three feet high and the upper part from the Tong is nine to ten feet high. One-fourth or one-third of a house is kept open and almost free. This part of the house is meant to be used as an open porch. The remaining part of the house is walled up, the walls being made woven bamboo splits. Such houses are found with only one door. No windows are to be found in these huts. Usually variety of domestic animals are reared by the tribals and they are kept under the 'Tong-ghar'.

Another type of temporary dwelling house is seen to be built by the Jhumias on the top of the hillocks synthesis to the above in the jhum fields to guard the jhum cultivation against the depredations of birds and animals living in the forests. These 'Tong-ghars' are exceedingly beautiful to look at.



### *Clan*

In reviewing the clans of the Noatia tribals, it is observed that the history of most of them is buried in legends and myths of various types. Generally the tribal clans are named after a particular leader or a place or village to which the group originally belonged. The names of their clans are sometimes also derived from heroic deeds of the tribal chiefs. Sometimes the clan are named after a profession, a residence on a hill or a river near which the original ancestors are said to have lived. A few others are associated with the names of supposed ancestors or totems based on animals or trees or fruits etc.

The most of the clans of Noatias, it is learnt, were named when they resided at Aracan. As for instance, one of the clans of Noatia is 'Naitong' which according to Burmese term is 'a hillock of bad omens'.

During my field trip, it is learnt that those tribals acquired the following titles in Aracan which was their original abode as per their heroic deeds, profession, residence on hills or bank of the rivers where the tribes lived. The titles were Naitong, Gabeng, Khaklu, Anak, Fatung, Mongbai, Tongbai, Keoa, Khalvi, Gaigra, Harbeng, Daindak, Kerang etc. The tribes of the above clans who have been residing in Tripura are known by these titles.

Other clans of Noatia, it is learnt that the titles were endowed by the different rulers of Tripura at different times for their presentations to the Kings. From those titles the different clans were known as Murasingh, Totaram, Achlong and Garjan etc. who have been residing in Tripura from the time immemorial.

With a view to having deep insight into the real historical phases and events of Noatia tribes, I think, it is indispensable to make researches on the Burmese words that had moulded the original social status and character of the said tribe from time which goes back to C.1512 A. D. and onwards.

### *Family*

The smallest unit of a family of the Noatia tribes consists of a man, his wife and their unmarried children. This type of family is known as Nuclear family. The joint family system is also prevalent among the Noatias. A special kind of joint family is one consisting of distant relations as members of the family. Those types of family are also observed among the tribes.

The family among the Noatias is patriarchal in nature. The sons inherit the father's property as a matter of right. Among the Noatias, daughter cannot inherit her father's property. Though the mother has no legal right to the property, the opinion of the mother is held in high esteem.

The Noatia tribes have adjusted themselves to the local Hindu environment and have adopted the methods, customs and practices of the region which in many respects differ from the traditional customs, rituals and rules of the original abodes.

### *Marriage*

Monogamy is the common practice of the Noatia tribals but polygamy is also permitted. Choice of the bride is the general profile of the society. 'Marriage by negotiation' is the commonly accepted form of marriage. Parents of the bridegroom and that of the bride meet at the house of the bride where they finalise the details of the marriage. The marriage rite is performed by the Ojhai or the village priest on a schedule date. However, other forms of marriage, such as 'marriage by service' which is locally known as 'jamai khata' is also prevalent among the Noatias.

In modern times, marriage as a result of love is also met with among the people of this tribe. Child marriage is a very rare exception in the society. Divorce can be effected on the adjudication of the village chief along with elderly persons of the village. Dowry system is existent. Widow marriage among them is also prevalent.

### *Funeral Rites*

The Noatias cremate the corpse. The corpse is at first bathed and dressed in new cloth. When a person dies on Sunday or Wednesday, the funeral rite is not performed on that day. On the following day, they observe certain practices surrounding the dead body like other aboriginals. When all the performances are over, the dead body is placed on a scaffold and the bearers slowly move towards the cremation ground. In case of victims of Cholera, small pox, leprosy and tuberculosis, the corpses are disposed of by burial. Again, in case of death within a month of the newly born baby, the corpse of that baby is placed in a cradle and hung in a big tree in the dense forest.

Some well-to-do Noatias make chariot and the corpse is placed on it. Drinking rice-beer, the funeral party sometimes pulls the chariot to the burning ground. A man gets five layers and a woman seven layers of wood upon the pyre. A son of the deceased sets fire to the mouth of the dead by lighting straw. In case, the deceased has no son, the right of setting fire would go to brother or nephew in order.

After the corpse is consumed by fire, they preserve the bones and ashes of the deceased for immersion in a river or a stream. On the fourth day after the cremation, the cremation ground is washed and the symbols of some birds made of cane are kept surrounding the cremation ground. If the deceased is a renowned person, a flag coloured with red or white is fastened on the top of and adjacent tall trees. Food consisting of rice, curry and rice-beer is offered as dedication to the departed soul.

After the expiry of twelve days, obsequial rites are observed in accordance with the status and ability of the relation of the deceased. Accordingly to one's capacity, the ritual ceremony may be performed within a year or so.

### *Religious Belief*

It has been noted that the religion followed by the Noatias is highly influenced by the Hinduism particularly of sakti cult. They are found to pay homage to the deities of the Hindus. (A good number of the

**Noatias** is found to lead the life of Vaisnava mendicants. Their faith and religion have many common features with those of the Hindus. Like the Hindus they believe that in the beginning there was water all around before the universe was created. This idea, it will appear, bears close synthesis to the Hindu belief about creation.

There are considerable similarities between the religious beliefs, rites, rituals and ceremonies of Murasingh and Totaram, two clans of the Noatias and the Jamatias. To set out on pilgrimage every year is a must among the worshippers of God Vishnu. Generally they go to holy places in India in batches.

They have two kinds of priests viz., the Brahmin Pandits and the Ojhai. The Brahmin priest worships the deities according to Brahminical system and the Ojhai priest performs the puja in the traditional process.

### *Rituals*

The Noatias have a good number of popular gods and goddesses and these they worship in the way prevalent among the tribal people. They worship the deities through their Ojhai priest. Following is a brief account of these Pujas.

**Lampra Puja** : This puja is held in order to propitiate the presiding deity of the sea and the sky before all the auspicious occasions such as marriage, formal entry into a newly built house, construction of a new house and purification of a natal. This worship is performed with offerings of egg, goat, cock, goose and pigeon etc.

**Tuima Puja** : Tuima stands for the worship of the goddess of water. The tradition of the Tuima is quite old and is supposed to have existed among the Noatias from even before the time of their embracing Hinduism. This worship is based upon the belief that all lives originate from pure water, a widely shared primitive belief which in all probability has led to the sacred usage of sprinkling of water on the occasion of religious and festive occasions. To celebrate the puja, they build a temple made of bamboos just at the middle of a nearby river. They sacrifice goats, buffalo etc. before the altar. During early days, the tribals would also sacrifice buffaloes but this is no longer in vogue. The devotees pray to the deity so that the deity would save them from all sorts of epidemic diseases.

**Ker Puja** : This puja is celebrated during the months of Phalgun and Chaitra. It is held within a boundary marked around the village. The significant aspect of this puja is that when it is in progress, no person or even a beast is allowed to enter or move out of the specified boundary. Should a violation take place, the puja will be void and it has to be arranged all over again. The trespassers are fined. The fine is generally imposed either in kinds or cash. Every family in village has to pay a subscription towards a common purse for the holding of the same. This puja is performed for the welfare of the village and its people.

**Garia Puja :** This puja is rendered in order to propitiate the deity for blessings. This worship is based on the beliefs that this ensures weifare, good fortune and hilarity throughout the year in the villages. They sacrifice cock before deity. Rice-beer is the most essential item for this puja. The Ojhai performs this puja and he has to remain on fast till the end throughout the worship. The 'Ghot' (earthen water-jar) of Garia puja is generally put on the first day of Baisakh and the puja is held gradually on the seventh day of the month of Baisakh. On the seventh day the puja is completed and devotees start singing and dancing. The villagers enjoy a very mirthful day and the echo of their merry making with music and songs is heard through the villages.

**Nakri Puja :** The deity of this name is worshipped for the welfare of the village and for protecting the Noatias for all sorts of harms. The deity delights in receiving fowl or goat as sacrifice along with rice-beer.

Like the caste Hindus, the Noatia also worshipped various Hindu gods and goddesses such as Siva, Kali, Durga, Lakshmi and Saraswati. The Chaturdas Devtas (fourteen gods) and goddess Tripura Sundari are also held in high esteem by these people.

### *Magic*

The Noatias are also found to cherish belief in magic, witch-craft, ghosts, goblins, wizards, sorcerers etc. They have recourse to these practices toward off evil spirits from the village. They perform various rites and rituals for the enactment of magic. Such rites and rituals are performed by an Ojhai.

### *Language*

The Noatias are one of the growing tribe inhabiting in Tripura. The dialect they use is called Tipra or Murang which belongs to the Bodo group of the Tibeto-Burman sub-family of the great Tibeto-chinese family of language. It is known as Kok-Borok, the main prevailing language of sylvan people of Tripura. Some Bengali and Assamese words had crept into the Kok-Borok language at a remote past.

Now-a-days two groups of people are trying to push the claim of two different scripts for writing the Kok-Borok language. One group is in favour of the use of Bengali script and the others are trying to push the Roman script. The government of Tripura has, however, accepted the Bengali script for use in writing the Kok-Borok language. It is introduced by the Government of Tripura in the primary stage of education for the tribal children.

Reproduced below are some words out of thier dialect.

What is your name ?	Nini Mung Tama ?
How do you do ?	Nung Bahai Tang ?
I am well.	Aang kaham Tanga.
Where is your home ?	Nini Nak Bura ?
Where are you going ?	Nung Boro Thang ?
I eat rice.	Aang Mai Cha-a.
Give me water.	Aana Tui Rudi.

### *Village Organisation*

The Noatias have a memory of a powerful village Organisation of Burmese style of their earlier abodes. The village organisation was associated with socio-religious and socio-political affairs of the tribes. Originally they had a chief named 'Naran' in the remote past who, was the supreme authority, used to run the administration with the different categories of the courtiers. Those personnels were as follows :

- |                  |  |
|------------------|--|
| i) Naran         | : The Chief of the village.  |
| ii) Pumang       | : Assistant to Naran and Commander in-chief.   |
| iii) Moulavi     | : Incharge of the Juba Samity.   |
| iv) Sobhamali    | : A male assistant to Pumang.  |
| v) Khemrang Mali | : A female assistant to Pumang. She had to see adultery cases.                                 |
| vi) Chowdhury    | : He had to see the activities of Roazas.  |
| vii) Roaza       | : Chief of the hamlet.   |
| viii) Dabeng     | : Deputy to Roaza.   |
| ix) Karbari      | : Advisor to Roaza.  |
| x) Singhabura    | : He had to discharge the different functions of the hamlet like marriages, rites and rituals. |
| xi) Murchui      | : Police and Messenger.  |

The above pattern of village organisation is no longer prevalent, at present, amongst the Noatias. The present village organisation of the Noatias consists of the headman of each hamlet. The headman is known as Roaza or Chowdhuri. He deals with different types of disputes in consultation with other elderly persons of the village.

The following types of disputes are now-a-days, generally delt with by the village council of the Noatias of this territory. (a) Case of divorce (b) Adultery (c) Theft (d) Minor cases arising out of love affairs (e) Breach of social rules or norms.

For development and to tackle the disputes in the villages, the Panchayat Organisation has been formed by the government with two to three mouzas as its jurisdiction. The Panchayat Organisation in consultation with the village organisation works for the development of the village and deals with multifarious disputes of its area.

### *Population*

According to 1971 Census, the Noatia is the seventh among the nineteen tribes of the state of Tripura and the Noatia population is 10,297 formed with 5269 males and 5028 females. The number shows a decrease of about 35.68% over the population of 1961. From the different Census reports, it is observed that the Noatias are being enumerated separately only from 1941 and onwards. Before 1941 they were enumerated along with the Tripuris.

In Table—4 is given the sub-division wise distribution of Noatia population in Tripura according to the Census of 1971.

TABLE—4

<i>Names of the Sub-Divisions</i>	<i>Population</i>		
	<i>Male</i>	<i>Female</i>	<i>Total</i>
1. Sadar	2	—	2
2. Khowai	1028	966	1994
3. Sonamura	898	886	1784
4. Amarpur	1244	1070	2314
5. Belonia	473	452	925
6. Sabroom	—	—	—
7. Udaipur	952	1037	1989
8. Kamalpur	671	617	1288
9. Kailashahar	—	—	—
10. Dharmannagar	1	—	1

In Table—5 is shown the growth of population of Noatia tribals from 1941 and onwards.

TABLE—5

<i>Year</i>	<i>Tribal Population</i>	<i>Noatia Population</i>	<i>Percentage to total population</i>
1941	2,56,991	26,351	09.12%
1951	2,27,958	24,992	10.54%
1961	3,60,370	16,010	40.44%
1971	4,50,544	10,297	02.28%

#### *Education & Literacy*

According to Census report of 1971, the educational break up of the Noatias is very deplorable. The Census shows the division of the Noatias into 607 literates and 9690 illiterates. The percentage of literacy among the females is contemptible. Among the surveyed villages there are only three Noatias who have attained educational level of Matriculation and above.

### ECONOMIC ACTIVITIES

#### *Cultivation*

The principal means of livelihood of the tribals is cultivation. They are also born cultivator. From the remote past the tribals have been practising cultivation for having food and other crops by a process known as jhuming or shifting cultivation. Generally the hill tribes do not like plough cultivation because of the fact that they do not bother for bullocks, buffaloes, plough and other implements. Their only implement is 'takhai' which helps the entire jhum from cutting till harvesting. At present, a good number of tribals of Tripura is being gradually adopting plough cultivation and the government is trying to induce them to take to the new method of agriculture.

### ***Animal Husbandry***

The Noatias have various domestic animals. The following are worth mentioning: Cow, bullock, goat, buffalo, pig and poultry birds like fowl and duck etc. Eggs of poultry birds are taken as food and caifs are sold for money. This help them with additional income. The government of Tripura has started a programme of animal husbandry to provide the tribals an avenue of income. Pigs and poultry birds are being distributed on subsidy basis to encourage them to have some profitable occupations.

### ***Handicrafts***

Since the remote period, the tribals of this territory have been producing handicrafts quite note worthy in structure, variety and beauty. They make these handicrafts which exhibit-interesting artistic designs and forms. These articles are made of bamboo, bamboo-roots, cane, palm leaves etc. with the help of tools of very simple nature. Among the local industries, hand-spun weaving deserve special mention and it has a singularity of its own. In the remote past, when yarn was amply available in this region, the Noatia tribals used to produce wrappers, dubris (a piece of skirt), bed-covers, screens and asanas in a large scale.

Besides weaving, cane and bamboo products also occupy a lofty place. Bamboo grows in adequate quantity in this territory. The Noatia tribals manufacture many artistic things from the bamboo and its roots. They also manufacture various types of household requirements from bamboo. Manufacture of pottery and clay vessels have also been undertaken by the tribals as their profession for subsistence.

The schemes of handicrafts promoted by the government will help the tribals in earning some additional income. Some training cum production centres are being run from tribal welfare funds. Grants are also being extended by the government to Mahila Samities under these programmes so that the tribal women can pursue the traditional crafts and utilise their spare time in the effective manner serving their best interest and the national interest as well. The government of Tripura is thinking seriously of making the small industries more broad based by seeking more self-help from the tribal citizens of the state.

### ***Wage earning***

Some tribals earn wages as daily labourers in the fields owned by others in their own villages. Sometimes they collect different forest produce. The government of Tripura has chalked out different programmes for the provision of tribals as daily labourers at the time of dire distress.

### ***Employment***

A very few of Noatia tribals work in the government offices and other commercial firms on a monthly salary basis. The scale of pay is fixed by

the employers. As the scope of employment is meagre in general, impetus must be given to the floating of orchard, piggery, poultry, dairy and fishery where possible. For this purpose they may be encouraged to form small co-operative societies so that they may not ruin in mismanagement and rivalriness and the government should extend her helping hand in all respect such as fund, land, equipment and guidance from time to time. It is to be seen that these societies are based on trade basis in lieu of multipurpose one.



## CHAPTER—III

### SOCIO-ECONOMIC SURVEY

With the objectives of assessing the socio-economic life of Noatia tribes, the Directorate of Tribal Research, Government of Tripura has entrusted me with the work of field investigation of the Noatia tribals of the whole ten sub-divisions of three districts of Tripura State. Accordingly a survey was undertaken with the extensive field trips to the best of my ability and knowledge.

The concentrations of the Noatia tribals as to be found in the sub-divisions of Sadar (2), Khowai (1994), Sonamura (1784), Kamalpur (1288), Dharmanagar (1), Udaipur (1889), Amarpur (2314) and Belonia (925) according to the Census of 1971.

From the above, it is found that the population of Noatia tribes in Dharmanagar and Sadar Sub-divisions is very negligible, so the survey work of the above two sub-divisions was excluded.

According to Census report of 1971 as shown above, it is observed that there was no Noatia tribes in Sabroom sub-division, notwithstanding the fact that Shri H. C. Chowdhury, the Honourable Minister for Tribal Welfare and Welfare of Scheduled Castes, Tripura hails from the Noatia tribe belonging to Sabroom sub-division. In this connection, I should say that most of the inhabitants of Noatia tribes of Sabroom sub-division use the surname 'Tripura'. Accordingly it tends, as it appears, the enumerators of Census Department to overlap them with the 'Tripuris' in lieu of 'Noatia'.

From the surveyed hamlets of Sabroom sub-division and learning from different sources, I think, the population of Noatia tribes of Sabroom sub-division would be approximately 2000 or above.

From the above Census Report of 1971, it is revealed that the number of Noatia tribes of Kailashahar sub-division is 'nil'. It seems that the enumerators of Census Department posted the Noatia tribes into 'Tripuri', because most of the Noatia tribes of this sub-divisions use the surname Tripura. As for instance, the honourable M.L.A. Shri Gopinath Tripura hails from the Noatia tribe belonging to Kailashahar sub-division. Hence I think, the enumerator of Census Department took him as one of the Tripuri tribe.

It is observed from the investigation of some hamlets of Kailashahar sub-division and having different informations, I think the population of Noatia tribes of Kailashahar sub-division will be approximately 1500 or above.

From Table—5, under the sub-heading "Growth of Population", it reveals that the population of Noatia tribes is a decreasing one which appears to be a puzzling question in view of the rate of the present

growth of population. Hence I should say that the Census Department failed to recognise and identify the different clans of Noatia tribes as a result of which a section of them had been included in some other categories. With the present rate of growth of population in view, no other inference is possible. It is more so when we know nothing of such a disastrous phenomenon as can permit such an abnormal decrease.

Accordingly, I have completed the task of survey of the eight sub-divisions which are ; (i) Sonamura (ii) Kamalpur (iii) Udaipur (iv) Amarapur (v) Sabroom (vi) Belonia (vii) Kailashahar (viii) Khowai.

The findings have emerged from the extensive survey undertaken a midst sample population of eight sub-divisions in respect of socio-economic condition. The findings of the sample survey thus undertaken are depicted in the subsequent pages.

## PART—I SONAMURA VILLAGE BACKGROUND

### *Location*

I have undertaken the survey work in the following hamlets of Sonamura sub-division under Melaghar Block Development Office in relation to Socio-economic spheres of confined the Noatia tribes and collected data of the same hamlets are appended below :

<i>Name of the hamlets</i>	<i>Number of households</i>
1. Nandakumar para	14
2. Gopalnanda para	13
3. Bhairab Ch. Chowdhury para	33
4. Jairam Chowdhury para	11
5. Taisama	32
6. Mahim Ch. Chowdhury para	31
7. Bisa Ch. Chowdhury para	24
8. Hala Kumar Chowdhury para	44

The two hamlets Nanda Kumar para and Gopalnanda para belonging to Mohanbhog Colony which are under Chandigar Gaon Sabha and are bounded by Kamratali Bazar on the south, Kokrania village on the north, Udaipur border on the east by and Melaghar on the west by. The field investigation covers 27 households with a population of 113 persons consisting of 57 males and 56 females of the two hamlets. The above hamlets situated under Melaghar Block Development Office and are at a distance of 6 kilometres.

The other two hamlets Bhairab Chandra Chowdhury para and jairam Chowdhury para belong to Taibandal Gaon Sabha are bounded on the east Mirza, on the west Taishakandal, on the north and on the south by Noabari and Dakhin Taibandal respectively. Again Taisama situated near Chundal is under Taibandal Gaonsabha and is bounded on the east by Kanipathar, on the west by Jarihari charra, on the north and the south by Gomti river and uttar Taibandal respectively.

The field investigation covers three hamlets containing 76 families consisting of 451 persons with the break—228 males and 223 females. The hamlets under Melaghar Block Development Office are at a distance of 16 to 18 kilometres.

The two hamlets Mahim Chandra Chowdhury para and Baisha Chandra Chowdhury para belonging to Birendranagar Gaon Sabha are bounded on the east by Wangcharra, on the west by Sonamura—Nidaya Road, on the south by Mainapathar and on the north by Kathalia Gaon Sabha. The another hamlet Halakumar Chowdhury para of Mainapathar Gaon Sabha bounded on the east by pipuriakhala, on the west by Tulatalibari, on the north by Birendranagar and on the south Karalya Charra.

The field investigation covers three hamlets containing 44 house-holds consisting of 423 persons having 218 males and 205 females. The hamlets under Melaghar Block Development Office are at a distance of 20 to 22 kilometres.

There are some Charras flowing around the hamlets and they form village boundary lines.

#### *Communication*

Nandakumar para and Gopalnanda para belonging to Chandigar Gaon Sabha which are under Mohanbhog colony have a jeepable road passing at a distance of one and a half kilometres west of the hamlets. Bhairab Chandra Chowdhury para, Jairam Chowdhury para and Taisama belonging to Taibandal Gaon Sabha have a road from Taibandal to Gumti river at a distance of one to four kilometres.

The communication facility during the monsoon is distressing. The road is jeepable only in fair weather. During the period of heavy rains, the road becomes muddy and it is due to the flowing of rain water from the high slope. There are a number of small hilly zig zag tracts linking the hamlets with one another.

Mahim Chandra Chowdhury para, Bisha Chandra Chowdhury para and Halakumar Chowdhury para of Birendranagar and Mainapathar Gaon Sabhas have a metalled road from Kathalia to Sonamura at a distance of 5 to 10 Kilometres. During the monsoon, some hamlets have to face great troubles for availing themselves of the metalled road.

Due to hilly nature of some of the areas as well as living for years together in the hilly tracts, the tribals at large have been accustomed to covering very long distance solely on foot. Sometime they have to cross some charras which are used as tracts always for miles together. During the monsoon, sometimes they have to cross these charras by swimming. Generally the tribals are not in the habit of carrying their agricultural produce with the aid of any conveyances. Both men and women folk carry their commodities either on their head or in the baskets on their back which are locally known as 'Langa'.

#### *Characteristics of the Hamlet*

During my survey, it is observed that the name of the hamlet is usually derived from the name of the headman of the hamlet. When the

headman dies, the name of the hamlet would automatically be changed. Like other sylvan people, the Noatia tribals select their houses on the hillocks.

Generally, once a week the tribals enjoy weekly market. On a market day, it is a stream of both male and female tribals with baskets on their backs coming to the market up and down the hills from miles together.

It is learnt that women are allowed to enjoy equal status of freedom with their male counterparts.

It is also learnt at the time of survey that the people of one sub-clan do not participate either in marriage or funeral rites of the other sub-clan though they are residing side by side.

The sub-clan of Murasing and Totaram of the Noatia tribes have embraced Vaisnavism. According to them rearing of fowls, goats, pigs is taboo. So the tribals of those communities of this area do not foster any beast or bird save and except cows and bullocks. The people of this category do not cremate the dead body. According to them, they are to bury the dead bodies building arbour in the graveyard. It has been reported that to set out on pilgrimage in every year is a must by the well-to-do member of this tribe.

No instance of social clash is heard at the time of survey. There are harmony and solidarity among the tribals and non-tribals in some of the surveyed hamlets.

#### *Different Facility*

In the surveyed hamlet people are not having medical facilities in the true sense of the term. In case of urgent necessity, the tribals have to depend on herbal medicines. They do not get medical facilities from the government dispensary which is situated at a distance of ten to thirty kilometres.

All the surveyed hamlets have no good sources of drinking water. There are very few government ring-wells and tube-wells which are inadequate in proportionate to the number of population in the hamlets. Generally they have to depend on nearby charras which are flowing around the hamlets. Some of them have facilities from Katcha wells excavated by the well-to-do Bengalee neighbours. To some extent, the general sanitation of the hamlets is tolerable though not satisfactory.

It has been reported that poultry birds often suffer from different diseases. Sometimes those diseases turn into epidemic form.

In some forest areas, the tribals are permitted to take fire-wood for domestic purposes but not allowed for sale.

#### *Hamlet Administration*

With regard to social leadership in the surveyed hamlets generally the Chowdhury or the hamlet chief plays an important role in the hamlet.

The Chowdhury sits with the elderly persons of the hamlet to settle disputes. He also looks after other affairs of the locality. When a case is complicated and not easy for solution, the Chowdhury acts in consultation with the elderly persons of the hamlet and reports the matter to the Panchayat Organisation.

## DEMOGRAPHY

### *Population*

All the surveyed hamlets of Sonamura Sub-division consists of a moderately small population. All the hamlets have other communities like tribals of other sects and Bengalees. There is no freemixing between the different communities which may be due to different religious practices by them. Mutual respect between the two folds is unknown.

The undermentioned Table—6, will show the general distribution of population of all the surveyed hamlets of Sonamura sub-division. There are 202 households in the surveyed hamlets. The total population comes to 977 consisting of 503 males and 474 females. The average size of the family is 4.8.

Femal birth rate in some of the hamlets is greater than that of male birth rate. It is observed at the time of my field trip that most of the adult females are equally active as the male members. The dependent members are significantly higher in the hamlets. It has been reported that one household of Mohanbhog colony has deserted after drawing the grant of jhumia settlement.

TABLE—6  
Distribution of Population

Name of the hamlets.	No. of families.	Total members.	No. of males.	%	No. of females.	%
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
1 Nandakumar para	14	54	23	42.6	31	57.4
2. Gopalnanda para	13	59	34	57.6	25	42.4
3. Bhairab Ch. Chowdhury para	33	207	102	49.2	105	50.8
4. Jairam Chowdhury para	11	50	27	54.0	23	46.0
5. Taisama	32	194	99	51.0	95	49.0
6. Mahim Ch. Chowdhury para	31	118	68	57.6	50	42.4
7. Bisha Ch. Chowdhury para	24	112	57	50.8	55	49.2
8. Halakumar Chowdhury para	44	183	93	50.8	90	49.2

### *Composition of Family*

A nuclear family is one having of parents and unmarried children. A special joint family is one consisting of even distant relation as members of family. The number of households captioned under special joint family is very negligible. That type of family is not preferred among the surveyed hamlets.

It is observed that there is a strong tendency towards the nuclear type of family. Concentration of nuclear families in between the size groups of five to seven indicates the average choice. The system of joint family in some of the hamlets is not preferred.

### *Marital Status*

In general, timely marriages are solemnised. It is the common practice among the people of this Sub-division. There is a tendency of some families to give their sons in marriages a bit-earlier. This follows from the fact that some parents desire to make their sons self-supporting with the solemnisation of marriage ceremony and get separated. Generally marriage are take place at the age of 20 for male and 15 for female.

Love marriage is observed. In recent times demand for dowry from the groom side is gradually gaining ground. Divorce can be effected on the adjudication of elderly persons of the hamlet.

During my field trip, it is learnt that the people prefer marriage by negotiation. Widow remarriage may be initiated. There are eighteen widows and twentysix widowers in the surveyed hamlets.

### *Educational Facility*

The member of School-going children is very deplorable. Educational status slightly differs between the two sexes. There is significant fall in the number of girls with any primary school. While considering the educational status of the surveyed hamlets, it is found that there is higher percentage of illiterate.

During the conversation with the tribals, it is observed that there is no tenacity of the guardians of some of the surveyed hamlets to send their wards to the primary schools. On the other hand it has been reported that one teacher of a junior basic school is very irregular. He turns up to the school from a distance of 15 kilometres daily. During the monsoon, roads of the interior tribal hamlets/villages become very miserable. Hence, attendance of the so-called teacher in the monson become contemptible.

## AGRARIAN STRUCTURE

### *Land & its utilisation*

Most of the villagers of this area have takenup settled cultivation and horticulture in recent years. With moderate rainfall the average output of paddy stands 20 maunds per acre. In absence of current land-revenue records, it is not feasible to have official data on holdings. As a result, I shall have to satisfy, to some extent, with rough estimation based

on information gathered from the hamlets during the survey. In Table—7 below, picture of land utilisation is shown and the distribution of households by land-owner and landless is furnished in Table—8.

There are some ponds in some of the hamlets and these have been utilised as small fisheries. Some households have vegetable gardens and small orchards around their homesteads.

Considering the large area under cultivable waste, a proper reclamation of waste land is most essential in order to bring more land under agriculture so as raise greater agricultural yield.

TABLE—7  
*Distribution of Operational Holdings In Acres*  
In Acres

Name of the hamlets.	Total lunga land	Total tilla land	Total homestead land	Total lunga undecultivation	Total tilla under cultivation
1	2	3	4	5	6
1. Nandakumar para	9.20	41.60	02.40	09.20	15.00
2. Gopalnanda para	8.40	65.20	02.00	08.40	31.00
3. Bhairab Ch. Chowdhury para	11.60	62.40	07.60	10.00	29.00
4. Jairam Chowdhury para	18.40	15.60	02.80	18.40	07.10
5. Taisama	39.60	14.80	04.40	37.00	07.40
6. Mahim Ch. Chowdhury para	47.60	22.80	06.80	47.60	11.00
7. Bisha Ch. Chowdhury para	38.00	11.20	05.80	38.00	05.40
8. Hala Kr. Chowdhury para	82.40	27.60	12.40	79.00	27.60

TABLE—8  
*Distribution of households by land owner and landless*

Name of the hamlets	No. of households	Land owner	% distribution	Land less	% distribution
1	2	3	4	5	6
1. Nanda Kr. para	14	12	85.7	02	14.3
2. Gopalnanda para	13	13	100.0	—	—
3. Bhairab Ch. Chowdhury para	33	22	66.6	11	33.3
4. Jairam Chowdhury para	11	11	100.0	—	—
5. Taisama	22	22	68.7	10	31.3
6. Mahim Ch. Chowdhury para	31	29	83.5	02	06.5
7. Bisha Ch. Chowdhury para	24	23	95.8	01	04.2
8. Hala Kumar Chowdhury para	44	44	100.0	—	—

Out of the total households as shown in Table—8 above, 166 households are big cultivators who possess 2 acres and above, 10 households possess 1 to 2 acres and thus occupy the middle position in status and 26 households are landless.

#### *Agricultural Method*

Settled farming and garden crops are the general methods of agriculture in the surveyed hamlets. The garden crops are cultivated on the lower hill slopes which are turmeric, ginger etc. The banana plantation is quite significant. Low lands between two hillocks are used sometimes for boro cultivation. Irrigation facility in some of the areas is poor. So water in the rains may be stored up by excavation of ponds, tanks and construction of bundh in the charras.

The government had introduced different crops and method of cultivation in the hamlets, sometimes it proves a failure due to poor enthusiasm from the village who are callous for any change.

#### *Livestock & Poultry*

Cattle populations of the surveyed hamlets is not satisfactory. It is already mentioned that the sub-clans Murasingh and Totaram having embraced Vaishnavism, rear only milch cows for milk and bullock for cultivation. Most the tribals of the surveyed hamlets are very poor. So they cannot purchase bullocks. Some of the tribals got subsidy grants from the government to purchase bullocks for cultivation. The number of pigs is undoubtedly low for tribal hamlets.

Based on information collected from the persons of the hamlets, Table—9, has been drawn up to show the ownership of livestock and poultry of the surveyed hamlets.

TABLE—9  
*Distribution of Livestock and Poultry.*

<i>Name of the hamlets</i>	<i>Bullock</i>	<i>Milch</i>	<i>Pig</i>	<i>Goat</i>	<i>Fowl</i>
1. Nanda Kr. para	09	04	07	03	11
2. Gopalnanda para	04	01	06	—	16
3. Bhairab Ch. Chowdhury para	22	11	—	—	—
4. Jairam Chowdhury para	12	04	—	—	—
5. Taisama	36	15	49	29	327
6. Mahim Ch. Chowdhury para	33	09	27	—	174
7. Bisha Ch. Chowdhury para	22	11	47	06	209
8. Hala Kr. Chowdhury para	27	12	63	07	231

#### *Tool and Implement*

The prestige of sylvan people depends not only on the possessions of lands and cattle but also on the number of tools and implements used by them for the agricultural activities. The picture of tools and implements used by the tribals reflects their position in agriculture. Table—10 below, shows the total number of such tools and implements as is observed at the time of survey.



TABLE—10

*Distribution of Tool and Implement*

<i>Name of the hamlets</i>	<i>Plough</i>	<i>Spade</i>	<i>Harrow</i>	<i>Sickle</i>	<i>Takhal</i>
1. Nanda Kr. para	05	12	05	16	18
2. Gopal Nanda para	02	09	02	15	21
3. Bhairab Ch. Chowdhury para	11	23	14	21	27
4. Jairam Chowdhury para	06	14	08	19	21
5. Taisama	18	27	18	42	67
6. Mahim Ch. Chowdhury para	16	33	19	47	54
7. Bisha Ch. Chowdhury para	11	24	12	37	43
8. Hala Kr. Chowdhury para	14	48	15	81	97

## ECONOMIC STATUS

*Income*

In determining the economy of a village, items of income, expenditure and indebtedness are the main sources to be dealt with. During the short term of the survey in the hamlets, it is not always feasible to have a correct information yet every nerve has been strained to bring out correct and precise data in respect of socio-economic life of the village.

Agriculture is the principal source of basic economy of people of Tripura. By and large, agriculture is also the prime source of livelihood of the Noatia tribes of this area. The system of agriculture as prevalent among them cannot keep the people engaged through out the whole year because of the fact that labour force in the domain of agriculture by far out number the provision of land and capital. Over and above, a good number of tribals is landless. So they have to depend on earning from other sources.

The secondary occupation of the tribals is day labouring. It is reported that with daily engagement, a worker can earn only two to three rupees only. A very few of them earn something by collecting and selling fire wood. The rate of those categories is four to five rupees per day. No body is found in the surveyed hamlets to earn livelihood from the salaried job.

It is observed that some tribal girls are engaged in the profession of tailoring is under Mahtanbhog Colony. It is learnt from the tribal supervisor that the tailoring not very lucrative profession in this village due to non-availability of market. The tribal inmates cannot compete with the same products of the market. Considering the subsistence level of living of the poor tribals and absence of alternative employment, tailoring may be encouraged. The government may provide better training facilities to the tribal inmates in tailoring.

Considering the economic position of the tribals of the surveyed hamlets that the average annual income per household of the cultivators is about Rs. 800/- and that the average rate of daily labourer is Rs. 4.50p.

### *Expenditure*

In most cases when the tribals were asked about their monthly expenditure, either they could not remember the exact amounts of expenditure incurred on different items of their day to day requirements or they told us such a figure which could not tally with the total members of the family. It is very difficult on the part of a simple and illiterate tribal to remember all the different heads of expenditure. They do not know the family budgeting and indifferent to the real expenditure. The tribals are fond of eating, drinking and merry-making at the cost of all they earn. They do not think of the to-morrow.

From the surveyed hamlets, the same picture reveals. It has been reported that the tribals are very prone to exaggerate their expenditure on unproductive purposes.

The people have to depend more or less on herbal medicines which are available from the quacks. So expenditure in this respect is thought to be very meagre.

The tribal characteristic of the people is their alluring fascination for regular consumption of intoxicants like rice beer or country liquor. Intoxicants like rice-beer are brewed at home and consumed by all. Hence percentage of expenditure in this regard is although a bit high.

From the above, it may be concluded that fifty percent people of the surveyed hamlets are economically backward class who are half-fed and ill-clad.

### *Loan and Indebtedness*

During my field trip, it is learnt that many among the tribals are compelled to take loan. The loan facilities as available to the tribals at present are mostly from government sources, private source and own savings sources.

#### GOVERNMENT SOURCE

- a) Development loans.
- b) Jhumia settlement loans.
- c) Agricultural loans through Co operative Bank.

#### PRIVATE SOURCE

- a) Loan from Village Mahajan.
- b) Loan from Pady Merchant.
- c) Loan from Villager.

#### OWN SAVINGS SOURCE

- a) Loan from Dharma Gola.
- b) Loan from Grain Gola.

The Mahajans or the money-lenders are the chief from whom loans are available at an exorbitant rate of interest being 50% to 100%. The loans are also obtainable from the paddy merchants on the terms of

repayment not by cash but by paddy, sometimes the paddy is costlier at the time of taking loan and much cheaper at the time of harvesting season i.e. when loans are to be repaid. The rate of interest is high varying 75 to 115 kilograms of paddy against one hundred rupees. Those money lenders or paddy merchants are available in the nearby markets. Usually the landless tribals do not have heavy amount of loans which are paid generally in exchange of labour during agricultural operation.

The tribals borrow money for both productive and unproductive purposes. Productive purposes cover the borrowings for the purchase of seeds, manures, tools and implements. Most of the loans of this category together with the interest accrued there to as mentioned above are being squard off within the same agricultural year. Unproductive purposes cover the borrowings for meeting up the expenditure for marriage ceremony, funeral rites, medical treatment and litigation etc. They are available by transfer of land though with the same rate of interests as enumerated above. During my survey of this area, it reveals that they, in general, cut a very sorry figure in making repayment of the loans of this kind. As a result, they lose the produce of the mortgage land besides being thrown open to the danger of losing it for good. In short, the mahajans or the money-lenders are sucking their blood resulting in the state that the tribals are becoming poorer and poorer.

### SUGGESTION

With the objectives of assessing the socio-economic spheres of Noatia tribes, a survey was undertaken in eight hamlets of Sonamura sub-division consisting of 202 households. In the foregoing pages, the socio-economic life of the Noatia tribes of the above sub-division has been depicted.

Despite of their far-reaching development in their cultural life due to their intimate contact with the Bangalees coming from neigh-bouring districts of defunct East Pakistan now called Bangladesh, the economic life of the Noatias of this area has not been improved.

A few suggestions for remedy are most needed for the welfare of the Noatia tribes in general and especially in the socio-economic spheres of the socially depressed sections.

1. Dadan system i.e. money-lending practices at exorbitant rate of interest should be forth with put an end to. In this connexion, establishing of Dharmagola and Graingola to provide better credit facilities to them may be encouraged among the tribals. In this respect. Mohonbhog Colony of Sonamura sub-division may be cited as an example of this kind where colony inmates deposit money and paddy in the Dharmagola or Graingola for their rainy day. It is learnt from the tribal supervisor of the same colony that money and paddy have been extending as loan with interest to the inmates when the necessity arises. The interest given by the tribals are kept in the credit of those inmates. So I would suggest that the government may kindly be urged to take initiative and to encourage the poor tribals to establish the golas on Co-operative basis in all tribal colonies/villages under the direct Supervision of the Tribal Extension Officers or the Tribal supervisors as deemed prudent and convenient.

2. In absence of government officials, management of the goals is to be entrusted to sincere and honest members of the society and a constant inspection is to be ensured from the side of the government so that the shady dealings of the members and leakage in the stock may not cheat the simple and innocent tribal members of the society. If such bold steps are taken by the government, it is sure, the tribals will be able to stand in good stead against the deceitful and crafty money-lenders who have been mercilessly exploiting the tribals from generation to generation.

3. Due to marsh in lungu land, the output in the same land is deplorable and not up to the mark. In order to accelerate the yield in the lungu land, it is most essential to reclaim the marshy land by way of excavating the side channels on both sides of the tilla land.

4. Some tribals of this area are in possession of the homestead on khas lands. Suitable measures should be taken for conferring ownership right on the tribals for their homestead land so that they may have encouragement in this regard.

5. Many tribal supervisor cannot speak with the tribal in their mother tongue to discharge their day to day works. Training in tribal language especially the Kok-Borok which is the major language of Tripura tribals should be introduced among the tribal Supervisors and the Tribal Extension Officers. During my field trip, it is observed that the Tribal Extension Officers and the Tribal Supervisors have enough time and opportunity to learn the tribal language by way of speaking with tribal inmates of their area. I would suggest that the tribal Extension Officers and the Tribal Supervisors should be informed well in advance say at least two years ahead that those successful candidates may be provided with two to three advance increments in their basic pay. In this way the non-tribal officers may be extended incentive to learn the tribal language.

**PART—II**  
**KAMALPUR**  
**VILLAGE BACKGROUND**

*Location*

I have undertaken the survey work in the following hamlets of Kamalpur sub-division in relation to Socio-Economic life, confined to the Noatia tribes and collected data of the same hamlets are appended below :

<i>Sl. No.</i>	<i>Name of the hamlets</i>	<i>Number of families</i>
1.	Maliroy Roaza para	41
2.	Chandmohan Roaza para	11
3.	Ashapura Roaza para	07.

Maliroy Roaza para belonging to Maharani Gaon Sabha is under the district of North Tripura and is bounded by Mendihower M. T. Colony on the east, Kalapahar (Atharamura) on the west, Barachowdhury para inhabited by Tripuri community on the north and by Birata Kumar Roaza para inhabited by Noatia Community on the south. The investigation covers 41 households consisting of 215 members. The hamlet located under Salema Block Development Office is at a distance of 15 Kilometres from Salema Bazar.

The hamlet Chandmohan Roaza para belonging to Paschim Dulucharra Gaon Sabha under the district of North Tripura and is bounded by on the east Paschim Dulucharra and on the west Kalapahar (Atharamura) and on the north Ashapura Roaza para and on the south by Nalicharra. The investigation concerns with 11 families with a population of 38 persons. The hamlet situated under Salema Block Development Office, is at a distance of 9 kilometres from Salema Bazar.

The another hamlet Ashapura Roaza para belonging to Paschim Dulucharra Gaon Sabha is under the district of North Tripura and is bounded by on the east Paschim Dulucharra and on the West Petramura Kalatilla and on the north Dupicharra and on the south Chandmohan Roaza para. The investigation concerns with 07 households having a population of 32 members. The hamlet situated under Salema Block Development Office, is at a distance of 11 kilometres from Salema Bazar.

*Communication*

Communication facilities of these hamlets are very miserable. It is learnt that from the time immemorial the people of the surveyed hamlets suffer from worst and arduous communications. Recently the government has completed the construction of about four kilometres road. The hamlet tracts maintained by the dwellers are not fit for easy passage for outsiders.

Due to hilly nature of some of the areas, people have to use charras as tracts for miles together. During monsoons, the charras are fully of water to the brim and water overflow sometimes for hours together.

People have to face great difficulty in crossing the tracts. During heavy monsoon, those so called tracts remain closed due to erosion of soil along with bamboo trees of both the banks. Due to heavy rains, sometimes roads become very muddy and it is due to the flowing water from the high slopes.

In seasons other than monsoons, the tribals are accustomed to crossing up and down along hilly tracts which run in a zig zag course.

#### *Characteristic of the Hamlet*

It is learnt that the people of one household generally participate in all festivals of the other family. Two different clans have been inhabiting in the surveyed hamlets and they have no difference in social status like that prevails in some areas of Tripura. It is observed that good relationship exists among the dwellers.

Density of population in this area is very poor. This cannot give rise to any market in these localities. So the people of Maliroy Roaza para have to depend on a market named Santirbazar, which is at a distance of 17 kilometres and on another market named Salema Bazar, which is at a distance of 15 kilometres.

Again the people of Chandmohan Roaza para and Ashapura Roaza para have to depend on a market named Kulai Bazar which stands at a distance of 10 kilometres and on another Salema Bazar, at a distance of 9 kilometres.

Chandmohan Roaza para and Ashapura Roaza para are forest hamlets so they have little attachment to the places which they occupy.

#### *Different facility*

There is no source of drinking water like ringwells or tube-wells. Generally the tribals have water from nearby charras for which, it has been reported that they suffer from various diseases like stomach troubles, diarrhoea and dysentery.

The general health of the surveyed hamlets is quite unsatisfactory and this may besides the scarcity of pure drinking water largely be due to the want of nutritious food. There is no medical facility in the truest sense of the term within the surveyed hamlets. In case of urgent necessity, the tribals have to go to the village quacks.

It is observed that one leper has been inhabiting in Chandmohan Roaza para who sits, acts and drinks freely with other people of the hamlet. They have very shallow idea about leprosy perhaps due to their ignorance of this contiguous disease.

#### *Hamlet Organisation*

Most of the functions of the hamlet were undertaken by the traditional village council, but it does not exist here. At present all the functions are carried out by the Roaza. All the Roazas of the different

hamlets meet together and distribute the jhum lands amongst the right persons. Generally the Roazas of each hamlet try petty cases like divorce, adultery and other miscellaneous disputes of the hamlets. Complicated cases are dragged to Panchayat Organisation for alleviation.

## DEMOGRAPHY

### *Population*

All the surveyed hamlets of Kamalpur sub-division consist of moderate rate of population. There are no other communities save and except the Noatias. Mutual understanding coupled with amity among them in their day to day activities is observed.

There are 59 families in all the surveyed hamlets and the total population comes to 285 with the break up—144 males and 141 females. The average size of the households is 4.8. Table—11 below, shows the general distribution of population of all the surveyed hamlets of Kamalpur sub-division.

It is learnt that twenty five Noatia households from the Periphery of the bottoms of Atharamura (Kamalpur Sub-division) have deserted to various places of Tripura due to poverty and paucity of jhum land with perfect condition. It has been reported that ten families from Ashapurna Roaza para, fourteen families from Chandmohan Roaza para and two families from Maliroy Roaza para have deserted to different places for the same causes.

TABLE—11

### *Distribution of Population*

<i>Name of the hamlets</i>	<i>No. of families</i>	<i>Total Nos.</i>	<i>Male Nos.</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>Female</i>	<i>%</i>
1. Maliroy Roza para	41	215	113	52.6%	102	47.4%
2. Chandmohan Roaza para	11	38	17	44.8%	21	55.2%
3. Ashapurna Roaza para	07	32	14	43.8%	18	55.2%

### *Composition of family*

The type of nuclear family is the general profile of the society. The type of joint-family is observed in some of the households. There are three special joint-families found in the surveyed hamlets. Most of the adult female folk are equally active like that of male folk.

Average family consist of four to six members. In some households, it is observed that female members have greater importance and play vital role in domestic life.

*Marital status*

Early marriage is not favoured. It is observed that both early marriage and late marriage are not found. Usually timely marriage is held among the members of the surveyed hamlets. It is learnt that there are five widows and three widowers in the surveyed hamlets.

Marriage by negotiation is the customary rule of the society. There love marriage cases are solemnised. Child marriage is not found.

Remarriage after widowhood is the general profile of the society. There is no social bar to divorce. It is effected by the adjudication of the Roaza and the elderly persons of the hamlet. Three divorce cases are found.

*Educational facilities*

In respect of education facilities in the surveyed hamlets, it may be said that most of the population still remain illiterate. A primary school is situated in midst of the Maliroy Roaza para named 'Maliroy Para Junior Basic School'. It is learnt that there are twenty five students in the numerical strength of the school having a tribal teacher. The teacher is not found in the hamlet at time of my survey. It is heard that the so called teacher was waiting for his pay at Kamalpur from the last three days. The parents are very indifferent to the education of their wards. They care little to send them to the school.

There is no school at Chandmohan Roaza para and Ashapura Roaza para. It is learnt from reliable source that a school was sanctioned by the Education Department for the above two hamlets. But the inhabitants remaining passive in the matter have failed to avail themselves of the opportunity. They show no zeal for schooling their wards.

## AGRARIAN STRUCTURE

*Land and its utilisation*

Jhuming or shifting cultivation is practised by the tribals of Maliroy Roaza para, Ashapura Roaza para and Chandmohan Roaza para of Kamalpur sub-division. The usual practice with these tribals is to use a fresh clearing for only one cropping after which the land is abandoned for a few years to allow fresh vegetation to grow. Jhuming or shifting cultivation as a system of farming is highly inefficient in the sense that both the output per acre and the yield per worker in jhuming or shifting cultivation are extremely low. Again, these seem, however, to be no serious difference of opinion in the fact that it involves a great waste in terms of soil erosion and damage of forests.

Out of forty one families in Maliroy Roaza para only five families have adopted both settled cultivation in the plain lands adjacent to their abodes and shifting cultivation on hillocks in Kalapahar. It is observed that harvest of the plain lands were in undated by the recent flood of Tripura.



Due to absence of current official records on land holdings, it is not feasible to assess actual lands of the hamlets. Based on information collected during the Survey, the data are shown in Table—12 below, in respect of lands possessed by the tribals in this year and the distribution of households by land owner and landless is furnished in Table—13.

TABLE—12  
*Distribution of operational holdings*

Name of the hamlets	Total lunga land	Total tilla land	Total Home-stead	Lunga land under cultivation	Tilla land under cultivation	
1	2	3	4	5	6	
1. Maliroy Roaza para.		56.80	223.60	04.80	35.00	223.60
2. Chandmohan Roaza para.		01.40	43.20	01.60	01.60	43.20
3. Ashapura Roaza para.		01.60	11.40	01.10	01.20	11.40

TABLE—13  
*Distribution of Households of land owner and landless*

Name of the hamlets	No. of house-holds	Land-owner	%	Landless	%
1. Maliroy Roaza para.	41	34	82.9%	07	17.1%
2. Chandmohan Roaza para.	11	10	90.9%	01	1.1%
3. Ashapura Roaza para.	07	06	85.7%	01	14.3%

Out of total households as shown in Table—13 above, 34 households are big cultivators who possess 2 acres and above, 11 household possess 1 to 2 acres and thus occupy the middle position in status and 09 households are landless.

The tribals of the different hamlets are practising jhum cultivation on the tilla lands shown in Table—12 above, situated at Kalapahar (Atharamura) which are not fixed of tenurial rights to the tribals of the surveyed hamlets. It is learnt that they are not yet forbidden to cultivate under jhuming on tilla lands of Atharamura. I have had an opportunity to observe their jhum products above the hillocks. I think, the people of

different areas of those localities are exploiting the unprotected forest resources. The tribals have their supplies from the unprotected forest areas like wooden posts, bamboos and sungrass free of cost. Fire wood is the easy available products which grow in abundance there.

#### *Agricultural method*

In connection with the methods of shifting cultivation, the tribals observe a series of rites from beginning to the time of harvesting. The full operation is of eight stages viz. (i) Selection of site (ii) Cutting the forest (iii) Burning of dry jungles (iv) jhum cleaning (v) Sowing of seeds (vi) Weeding the jhum (vii) Watching the crops and (viii) Harvesting.

In selecting the jhum site, they prefer hill slopes. During the period from sowing to full growth of the crops, they have to take great care for frequent weeding which is most essential for protecting the jhum products. Women and children also participate in this work. The work of weeding is practised thrice on average.

A jhumia helps his neighbour with manual labour, when he needs. His neighbour also in his turn comes to help him in the same way in his jhuming operation. Cultivation of jhum depends on the monsoon. Work of sowing seeds begins after a shower i.e. first rain of the season. The entire family take their bath before they start cultivation. Various kinds of vegetables and cereal seeds and one kind of paddy along with powdered earth in accordance with specified proportion are mixed in a big basket which are distributed amongst the tribals in their respective small baskets which are locally known as 'Chempai'. At the time of sowing, they stand in row and start to dig holes with the help of takhal (a kind of hoe) where the seeds of various kinds are sown. During the operation of jhuming, the woman-folk sing songs. The scene is joyous and has a beauty of its own. It is better if rain comes just after sowing, then the seeds are covered with earth. In such case, the seeds are saved from birds and ants.

The jhumias do not forget to take necessary measures to safeguard the jhum crops from wild animals such as hill rats, different kinds of birds, monkeys, deer, elephants and especially boars. So they build 'Machang Ghar' which is ten to twelve feet in height from the ground and live in such machang ghar in order to keep a keen watch over the wild animals with a view to scaring them away. They use a variety of implements made of bamboos which are known as 'Wathop' for this purpose and make a net made of ropes. Bows and arrows are also used. Adult members of jhumias households reside in the machang ghar till the harvest time.

Normally at least after ten years of fallowing, the plot becomes suitable for re-juming. Now-a-days because of reservation of forest land, the jhumias go to the same plot before the full period of fallowing.

*Livestock & Poultry*

For jhumias, live-stocks and poultry are not an important part of their economic activities. Because of the shifting of their abodesas they have to reside in the jhum field along with the members of the households for a period of five months, the jhumias attach little importance to the rearing of livestock and poultry. Table—14 below, as prepared with the data collected during the time of survey from the dwellers by questionnaire, shows the position of livestock and poultry birds.

TABLE—14

*Distribution of Livestock & Poultry*

<i>Name of the hamlets</i>	<i>Bullock</i>	<i>Milch</i>	<i>Pig</i>	<i>Goat</i>	<i>Poultry</i>
1. Maliroy Roaza para	10	03	45	—	131
2. Chandmohan Roaza para	01	—	—	—	37
2. Ashapura Roaza para	02	—	07	—	26

*Tools and Implements*

The tools and implements used by the tribals are observed at the time of survey. Those tools and implements used by them are traditional. It is learnt that all of them were purchased by the tribals. In this respect they did not have any subsidy grant from the government.

The number of different kinds of tools and implements used by the tribals of the surveyed hamlets is shown in Table—15 below. The number and nature of tools and implements used by the tribals bear a close relationship with the strength of labourers and their sort of occupations.

TABLE—15

*Distribution of Tools and Implements*

<i>Name of the hamlets</i>	<i>Plough</i>	<i>Spade</i>	<i>Harrow</i>	<i>Sickle</i>	<i>Takhal</i>
1. Maliroy Roaza para	05	37	05	43	187
2. Chandmohan Roaza para	01	14	01	17	42
3. Ashapura Roaza para	01	12	01	12	15

## ECONOMIC STATUS

*Income*

Out of 41 families of Maliroy Roaza para, only 34 households it is learnt, get income derived from cultivation. Those families have been practising jhuming of shifting cultivation on tilla lands. Among them, five families have been practising both shifting cultivation and settled cultivation. It is observed that those families have practised settled cultivation, on the plain lands adjacent to a charra. All the harvest of the plain lands was inundated by the recent flood.

It is always difficult to collect datum in respect of income of the tribals by interview method because the tribals have no system of account-keeping.

Out of forty-one households, three families are engaged in collection and sale of fuels from the nearby forest. It earns a sum of about three rupees per day per soul. In other four households both males and females are engaged daily labourers in the nearby forest. They earn wages from plantation works, reclamation works, construction of roads and other miscellaneous works. It is learnt that a labour can earn three to four rupees per day.

It is learnt that only those tribals who practise both shifting cultivation and settled cultivation are full fed and can spend something after luxury articles but they cannot lay by anything from their earnings.

The average annual income of the surveyed hamlets per household from the cultivation is about rupees five hundred.

#### *Expenditure*

The tribals of this area spend all the amount they earn from their output of the cultivation. They always run with a deficit budget and with a view to overcoming the deficit they, under the painful necessity have to take loans from the mahajans or the money-lenders or look for any government grants.

The daily labourers always seek for any job in the nearby forest. If they find work, they spend all they earn. It is characteristics of the tribals that they do not think of the following day or days. On the other hand if they do not find any job on particular day or days they pass that day or days without any meals or so.

#### *Loans & Indebtedness*

At the time of survey, it is learnt that the mahajans or the money-lenders of Salema Bazar and Kulai Bazar have introduced the system of 'dadan' for purchasing agricultural products from the innocent, poor and illiterate tribals at high rate of interest and low rate of price. It is also learnt that those mahajans deal in some other articles which are used in domestic requirements of the tribals. The price of such articles are realised at a very high rate in exchange of commodities produced by the tribal hamlets.

Most of the tribal of the surveyed hamlets have been taken 'dadan' every year without which they cannot start the cultivation. Usually, they have to refund the loan by agricultural products like cotton, sesamum and mesta etc. It has been reported that the rate of interest varies from 50% to 75%. The tribals are very simple, cannot understand the system of loan and thus fall an easy victim to the clutches of the clever money-lenders.

## SUGGESTIONS

In the foregoing pages, attempts have been made to give a picture of Socio-economic condition of Noatia tribes of Kamalpur sub-division who have been practising jhuming or shifting cultivation till today. The survey of those hamlets makes it clear that the out look of the tribals could not develop for lack of proper communication and education facilities. So I would suggest that immediate proper steps for the same are the crying need of the day so that they can broaden their out look by free-mixing with the outsider and thereby they will be able to keep pace with the time and mould their life befitting the modern age.

As transpired from the findings that have emerged from the survey undertaken, a few suggestions are appended below for the development and prosperity of the backward people.

1. It is true that the evaluation of jhuming or shifting cultivation is marked and important stage in the history of the development of agriculture. But the practice has long become outdated and in any case not compatible with the economic change, tide and development. So a shift from jhuming or shifting cultivation to some other method of cultivation or to some other occupation seems, therefore, inevitable. But the crux of the problem is to evolve a suitable alternative to jhuming or shifting cultivation. The scope of resettlement and colonisation schemes seems to be seriously limited due to paucity of suitable lands. Yet, full vigour and energy should be extended for searching out suitable lands for them to resettle the jhumias into permanent cultivation. Different loans may be sanctioned to them for abolition of jhuming or shifting cultivation. In this connection, we should bear in mind the opinions of Sociologists and anthropologists who stress the need for a cautious approach in this respect. They opine that jhuming or shifting cultivation, which is more a way of life with the aboriginals than a mere means of livelihood, is inseparably bound up with their customs, traditions, habits, values, attitudes, beliefs and that it would, therefore, not be wise to disturb the existing order all too hastily without regard to the social and psychological factors involved therewith.

2. In the hilly slopes where jhuming or shifting cultivation is practised, essential requisites may be arranged for terraced paddy cultivation, contour bunding and reclamation of land for settled cultivation.

3. It is learnt that 'dadan' practised at exorbitant rate of interest by the money-lenders are in vogue. There is no professional money-lenders in and around the hamlets. They have to go to the market at a distance of ten to fifteen kilometres for borrowing money. Usually the rate of interest varies fifty percent to seventy five percent. The land agreement is verbal. Written agreement is no more in vogue due to promulgation of different laws by the government. The tribals have to refund the 'dadan' in the same harvesting season by selling sesamum, cotton, mesta etc. to those money-lenders. Those mahajans or money-lenders are the monopoly purchasers in those markets. In this way, the

depressed tribals are losing much in both ways. They are having less price but paying exorbitant rate of interest. This menace can be put an end to by affording alternative arrangements for borrowing at a formidable and legitimate rate of interest from the nationalised banks or Co-operative banks.

4. Jhum land with perfect condition is not available in adequate quantity due to continuous jhuming which has accomplished complete change in texture of soil and nature of vegetation. The bamboos, woods, an essential factor for shifting cultivation are no longer available in abundance in the forest. So it is most necessary to give the tribals another system of cultivation because the tribals are forbidden to practise jhum. Now those, who have accepted settled farming by understanding boro paddy cultivation along with jhuming side by side, should be accorded economic grants to purchase bullocks, manures, implements and best seed etc. The feasibility of introducing second crop may also be examined so that the practising of settled farming can become more fruitful and begets more money than that of jhuming or shifting cultivation. If a group of tribals is benefitted by practising with new methods, the other will follow suit.

5. When loan or grant of any kind be sanctioned and paid by the government to the tribal inmate, he should be escorted by a committee formed by the panchayet members or any other committee which is suitable for the purpose, so as to save him from squandering away of money in purchasing other commodities at the deviation of the purpose for which the loan or grant is sanctioned. This will safeguard the proper utilisation of the loan or grant.

## PART—III

## UDAIPUR

## VILLAGE BACKGROUND

*Location*

I have undertaken the survey work in the following hamlets of Udaipur sub-division under Matabari Block Development Office in respect of different aspects of Socio-economic life of the Noatia tribes and collected data of the same hamlets are appended below :

<i>Name of the hamlets</i>	<i>Number of families</i>
1. Kalaban	57
2. Goaliapara	33
3. Uttar Buraghat	29
4. Kanipatharmalipada para	16

The hamlets Kalaban and Goaliapara are situated within Garji Gaon Sabha of the Udaipur Police Station in Udaipur sub-division of the district of South Tripura and are about 19 and 20 kilometres respectively away from Udaipur Head quarters.

The hamlet Kalaban is bounded on the east by Murshumpathar and on the west by Tulamura and on the north by Pukta and on the south by Patichari Colony.

The hamlet Goaliapara is bounded by Bajrabari on the east and on the west by Kalaban Bazar and on the north and the south by Suknacharra and Mushumpathar respectively.

The hamlets Uttar Buraghat and Kanipatharmalipada para are situated within Rani Gaon Sabha of the Udaipur Police Station in Udaipur sub-division of the district of south Tripura and are about 5 kilometres away from Kakraban Basic Training College.

Both the hamlets are bounded on the east by Mirja and on the west by Kamratali (border of Sonamura sub-division) and on the North and the South by Gomti river and Microchopathar respectively.

*Communication*

There is a metalled road from Garji to Tulamura crossing the two hamlets named Kalaban and Goaliapara. The people of those areas use it with perfect satisfaction in respect of communication facility as in not ordinarily available to system hamlets. The hamlets Uttarburaghat and Kanipatharmalipada para belonging to Rani Gaon Sabha has a road from Kakraban to Mirja at a distance of one to three Kilometres. During the monsoon, the communication facility is very miserable. The road becomes muddy due to heavy shower for days together. The river Gomti in the northern side of the above hamlets flow through the different parts of this sub-division in a Zig-zag course. It is navigable for country boats during the monsoon. In winter, the Gomti of this area becomes completely dry when people can cross the river on foot.

There are many up and down hilly tracts connecting all the surveyed hamlets. During the rainy season, the hamlet feeder tracts become slimy and it is an arduous task for the outsiders to cross those hilly tracts. But the aboriginals have been accustomed to passing those tracts with ease in the wake of their living in those places for ages together.

*Characteristics of the hamlet*

There is no class distinction in respect of social or economical status in the surveyed hamlets. There is, of course, difference of caste and creed among the inhabitants in the surveyed hamlets. They do not indicate any difference either social or economical status enjoyed by the different sections of the people. There exists cordial harmony and solidarity among the tribals and non-tribes. Table—17, below shows the different races inhabiting the surveyed hamlets.

**TABLE—17**

**UTTAR BURAGHAT**

Noatia—29, Jamatia—04, Tripuri—03, Hindu—59 and Muslim—04 families.

**KANIPATHARMALIPADA PARA**

Noatia—16, Tripuri—12 and Hindu—19 families.

**GOALIAPARA**

Noatia—34 and Hindu—20 families.

**KALABAN**

Noatia—57 and Garoo—40 (Protestant—10, Catholic—28, Pure Garoo—2) families.

The distinction of different lineages exhibits in religious beliefs and marriage ceremonies. Sometimes the aboriginals stage their own folk-dances in the artistic costumes duly accompanied with the melodious sound of their own-made different musical instruments, when all male and female folks from different villages irrespective of caste and creed assemble there and enjoy picturesque show with festive moods.

Most of the male folks of the surveyed hamlets are bilinguals. They can speak both hill language as well as Bengali. The female folks of this kind are very few.

*Different facilities*

All the surveyed hamlets have good sources of drinking water and the people of those hamlets usually have water from the government ringwells. Three ring-wells in Kalaban and one in Goaliapara are found. There are three ring-wells in Uttar Buraghat and Kanipatharmalipada para. Many of the families of the different surveyed hamlets seem to have owned wells in their respective abodes. There are four ponds in Kalaban and Goaliapara and twenty ponds in the whole of Rani Gaon Sabha where fishes are being reared.



Malaria and dysentery etc. are common diseases, usually the tribals consult with the quacks who inhabit in and around the hamlets and depend on herbal medicines. Sometimes Ojhai or the village priest is asked to apply magico-religious rites. The village priest prescribes different herbs and drugs for the ailing. Seldom, they consult with qualified medical practitioners available at sub-divisional town Udaipur which is at a distance of 19 to 25 kilometres.

The hamlets Kalaban and Goaliapara have a post office situated at equidistant from the two hamlets.

The hamlets Uttar Buraghat and Kanipatharmalipada para have a good market situated at Kakraban which is at a distance of 3 kilometres and another at Mirja at a distance of 5 kilometres.

It is learnt at the time of survey, occasionally vaccination is inoculated in all the surveyed hamlets. In short, it may be concluded that in general, the sanitation of the surveyed hamlets is moderately good.

#### *Hamlet Organisation*

Every hamlet has their own hamlet organisation though it has no synthesis with the traditional village organisation of the Noatia tribes. Various activities are now-a-days done by the hamlet organisation of the tribes. Generally the Roaza or the hamlet chief deals with the work in collaboration with the elderly persons of the hamlets. If any hamlet has no Roaza, the duty is vested with an elderly person selected or elected by the members of the hamlets. Complicated cases are dragged to Pradhan of the Gaon Sabha who tries those cases along with the members of the Panchayat.

## DEMOGRAPHY

### *Population*

There are 135 households in the surveyed hamlets, each occupying a separate house above the hillocks. The total population of the surveyed hamlets is 778 of which 378 males and 400 females. The average size of the families is 5.8.

The Noatias are the original inhabitants of these areas and the refugees from East Pakistan now called Bangladesh entered in this territory and took refuge in the surveyed hamlets. Now here, Ghose, Sutradhar, Das, Majumder, Kaystha and different tribal people inhabit in the surveyed hamlets. The different dwellers practise different religious doctrines and dogmas and social customs yet, it is learnt at the time of survey that they live in perfect peace and amity.

Table—18 shows the general distribution of population based on information collected in the surveyed hamlets.

TABLE—18  
*Distribution of Population*

Name of the hamlets.	No. of families	Total members	No. of male	% distribution	No. of female	% distribution
1. Kalaban	57	345	172	50.2%	172	49.8%
2. Goaliapara	33	187	85	45.5%	102	54.5%
3. Uttarburaghat	29	160	77	48.2%	83	51.8%
4. Kanipatharmali-pada para.	16	86	43	50.0%	43	50.0%

#### *Composition of family*

The majority of the households of the surveyed hamlets belong to nuclear type of family consisting father, mother and unmarried children. The next important family type is the joint family having father, mother, uncle, aunt and their children. There are only a few cases of special joint-families which are mainly a combination of father, mother, brother and his wife and their children including distant relations etc.

Generally, the tribals of the surveyed hamlets do not prefer joint type of families and at the present day, nuclear type of family is preferred. The parents usually prefer to get their sons living in separate mess after marriage.

#### *Marital Status*

Out of so many clans of the Noatia tribes only three are predominant in these hamlets viz., Murasingha, Achlong and Kerang. In Uttarburaghat, most of the households belong to Murasinh clan. It is learnt that usually they do not prefer their matrimonial relation with other clans of their society. It is learnt from some of the families of Kalaban and Goaliapara that love-marriage is solemnised. It takes place at the adjudication of the hamlet council.

Early marriage is disliked by the Noatias of the surveyed hamlets, yet twenty five percent of marriages come off between the age group of 15 to 18. There are more widowers than widows and most of them belong to age group between 35 and 60. Only six cases of remarriage after the death of the first wife among the Noatia tribes of the surveyed hamlets have been detected. Eleven case of love-marriages took place amongst all the surveyed hamlets. Dowry system is prevalent.

#### *Education facilities*

The villages Kalaban and Goaliapara has one Junior Basic School which is situated at the centre of two hamlets. The roll strength of the students is one hundred. The teaching staff in the school appears to be poor in comparison with the roll strength of the pupils as there is only one teacher now working here. According to the rules of Education Department of Tripura in respect of ratio of the students, when there are forty students in a primary school, it will have one teacher and when the roll strength enhances to eighty students, the school will get two teachers and so on and so forth.

As there is no higher educational centre in the hamlets or in the nearby hamlets, one has to go Garji High School situated at a distance of 6 kilometres.

Further, it has been reported that the teacher of Kalaban Junior Basic School comes to the institution daily from Chandipur which is at a distance of 14 kilometres. Evidently, his irregularity needs no mention.

There is also a Junior Basic School in between the Uttarburghat and Kanipatharmalipada para having numerical strength of fifty students.

Feeding centre are observed. Fixed number of pupils do not come to get free boiled rice and pulse daily in the feeding centres. After cooking, the incharge of the feeding custodian has to look for adult men and women to share the meal. The system is defective. Text books for class I and II are supplied by the Education Department on grants.

The teachers of Junior Basic Schools of the Tribal villages may be instructed to inhabit in the hamlets adjacent to the schools. Strictness in this respect may be urged by the competent authority. Schemes may be co-ordinated with the junior Basic schools. Free meal may be supplied after the lapse of at best two periods.

Usually, the guardians of Uttarburghat and Kanipatharmalipada para have no urge for education despite the fact that a Junior Basic School is situated within the hamlets. From the conversation with the tribal inmates at the time of survey, it reveals that the cause is not an economic factor but the reason is medium of teaching in the school for the students of class I and class II. So, it may be suggested that a tribal teacher along with Bengali knowing teacher or teachers may be appointed forthwith for removing the inconvenience of teaching for the tribal students of lower classes. Further, it may be added that if the qualified teacher from the tribal community is not available, the qualification of those tribal teachers may be relaxed to some extent.

## AGRARIAN STRUCTURE

### *Land & its utilisation*

Cultivation is the primary source of fundamental economy of the people. Most of the tribals of the surveyed hamlets have been practising plough cultivation though they practised jhuming or shifting cultivation from the time immemorial.

By and large, most of the families have vegetable gardens and orchards in and around their homesteads. It has been reported that some tribals of Kalaban and Goaliapara are in possession of the homesteads on the lands of Forest Department and some tribals of Uttarburghat and Kanipatharmalipada para are in a possession of home-steads on khas lands under the Collector. It may be suggested that measures may be taken for extending tenurial right to them for encouragement. As a result, they would take more care for the development of homestead land.

Sometimes the cultivators have to take part in daily labour as secondary occupation because they cannot maintain their household-consumption from the income accrued from the agricultural products. Landless working people take part in cultivation as secondary occupation.

The rate of daily labourers in Kalaban and Goaliapara varies from rupees four to five per soul and rupees three to four per worker in Uttarburaghat and Kanipatharmalipada para.

The daily labourers do not have work throughout the whole year. When they do not have work, they have to pass that day or days unfed and underfed.

#### *Expenditure*

The expenditure pattern of the surveyed hamlets reveals that the percentage of expenditure is higher for pulses, mustard oil, salt, molasses which are mostly purchased from the local markets. Dry fish is their main item for food. Milk, eggs and vegetables are normally available in some of the families where no expenditure in this regard is made. They brew their own requirements of drink which is made of rice. They offer country liquor at the time of worship. Wine is also used on festive occasions.

Generally the tribals spend all the amount they earn. The cultivators of the surveyed hamlets always run in deficit budget. Sometimes they take loans from the mahajans or the money-lenders or wait for any government help. They are ready to spend rupees fifty for having rupees one hundred from government grant.

#### *Loans & Indebtedness*

There is no professional money-lenders in and around the surveyed hamlets. The tribals have to take loans from the mahajans or the money-lenders who inhabit at Udaipur. Sometimes the money-lenders give the tribals money as 'dadan' for purchasing agricultural goods from the illiterate tribals.

The tribals are simple people and cannot understand the system of loan and fall an easy prey to the clever mahajans. The condition of such 'dadan' is to return the amount in kind and not in cash at a fixed rate. Sometimes the tribals borrow grains for seed as well as for consumption purposes. The tribals take loan in the summer or any time when they fall in dire need but have to repay the loan at the harvest time.

It has been reported that one Dharma Kumar Murasingha, son of Late Hridayadas Murasingha of Uttarburaghat mortgaged his 1.80 acres of land in 1971 to one Thakurchand Das against Rupees 1,400/-. He is trying for his land to get back but has failed. Again one Karna Kr. Murasingha son of late Gopi Mohan Murasingha of Uttarburaghat mortgaged 1.80 acres of land in 1971 to the above person against Rupees 1,400/-. He is also trying to have his land returned but has failed.

Some loan agreements are verbal and some are written. In time of dire need, the tribals take loans from the mahajans or the money-lenders mortgaging their lands.

All the tribals have not disclosed the loan agreement. Some tribals have disclosed the names which have been known at the time of survey. Those names are furnished in Table—23 below.

TABLE—23

*List of mortgagors*

<i>Name of the Tribals</i>	<i>Name of the hamlet</i>	<i>Total amount</i>
1. Purna Mohan Noatia	Kalaban	Rs. 1,000/-
2. Jaybidya Noatia	-do-	Rs. 900/-
3. Bidya Mohan Noatia	-do-	Rs. 700/-
4. Braja Kr. Noatia	-do-	Rs. 2,000/-
5. Krishna Mohan Tripura	Goaliapara	Rs. 500/-
6. Chand Mohan Tripura	-do-	Rs. 700/-
7. Shyanbasi Tripura	-do-	Rs. 500/-

## SUGGESTIONS

The foregoing pages present a report of the findings of the different aspects of the socio-economic life of the Noatias of Udaipur sub-division. Some suggestions for remedy as transpired most essential for the welfare and uplift of the Noatia tribes, are being made.

1. The tribals of Tripura are born cultivators. Cultivation is the pivot on which their livelihood revolves. Failure of monsoon causes starvation among the tribals. In that case, proper irrigation is the crying need of the moment. Irrigation facilities are too scanty in all the hamlets already surveyed. Again provision of overflow has created a great feasibility to bring the land under Bodo cultivation. It will help cultivators to enhance the yield by way of irrigating the land for Bodo paddy, wheat and vegetables etc. Admitting the difficulty of the government in providing a sufficient number of overflow tube-wells due to paucity of funds, it may be suggested that in lieu of fixing iron-pipe, country-made pipe made of especially matured Borak or Bari bamboos may be fitted to serve the purpose of the overflow. It is learnt from Shri Nanda Lal Noatia, Ex-Pradhan of Garji Gaon Sabha of Kalaban under Udaipur sub-division, the Bamboo made overflow is durable for five to six years. In view of its low costing, it is urged that the government may kindly experiment the matter so that the tribals may have an abundant number of overflows from the government end for irrigation purposes.

2. Village Level workers (V. L. W.) are absolutely needed to look after the agricultural work among the tribal cultivators. They should be the guide, friend and philosopher of the tribal inmates for introducing the improved methods of cultivation. These will help immensely the enhancing of the yield of crop among the growers. They may be instructed every now and then on their jobs and duties. Surprise visits may be made by superior officers from time to time for checking up the proper discharging of their duties.

3. Government should search out cottage industrial avenue or avenues for side profession suitable for a particular area and thereafter

the tribals may be encouraged in participating in those, thus found out in order that they may better their lot by earning additional income through the utilisation of their time to spare.

4. It is to be noted that the tribal characteristics of the people are their alluring fascination for regular consumption of intoxicants like rice-beer or country liquor. Intoxicants like rice-beer are brewed at home and consumed by all. Hence the percentage of expenditure on this account is a bit high. Suitable measures may be taken to reduce this bad practice.

5. The landless tribals do not remain busy through out the whole year. In the slag period, they may be provided with an alternative job. Village industry like weaving, tailoring, basket making, rope-making etc. or any other industry may be started. For efficient discharge of duties, they require a need-based type of training. Every effort should be made for finding good market of the manufactured articles and necessary facilities for the sale of the products should be accorded.

PART—IV  
AMARPUR  
VILLAGE BACKGROUND

*Location*

I have undertaken the survey work in the following hamlets of Amarpur sub-division under Amarpur Multipurpose Block in relation to socio-economic spheres, confined to the Noatia tribes and collected data of the same hamlets are appended below :

<i>Name of the hamlets</i>	<i>Number of families</i>
1. Mantridas Roaza para	24
2. Haradas Baishnab para	17
3. Jatan Roaza para	08

The hamlet Mantridas Roaza para under Karbook Gaon Sabha is bounded on the south by Matahari Chowdhury para, where most of the households belong to Rieng tribes, on the north by Haradas Baishnab para where all the families are of Noatia tribes, on the east by Amaresh Jamatia para, where most of the families hail from jamatia tribes and on the west by Nutanbazar—Jalaya Road.

The hamlet Haradas Baishnab para under Lebacharra Gaon Sabha is bounded on the north by Ram Chandra Rieng para, on the south by Mantridas Roaza para, on the east and the west by Nutanbazar—Jalaya Road and Mahala Mag para respectively.

Population of the Noatia tribes of Mantridas Roaza para and Haradas Baishnab para comes to 165 and 86 souls respectively. The hamlets situated under Amarpur M.P. Block, are at a distance of 28 kilometres.

The other surveyed hamlet Jatan Roaza para under Lebacharra Gaon Sabha is bounded on the north by Dumbur project colony and on the south by Depaicharri field and on the east by National Project Construction Corporation colony and on the west by Nutanbazar—Jalaya Road.

Population of Noatia tribes of Jatan Roaza para is 25 and the hamlet situated under Amarpur Multipurpose Block which is at a distance of 20 kilometres.

*Communication*

Mantridas Roaza para and Haradas Baishnabpara under Lebacharra Gaon Sabha have a jeepable road crossing the two hamlets. The name of the road is Nutanbazar—Jalaya Road. During the period of monsoon, the road changes to miry for days together due to flowing water from the nearby hillocks. There are a few up and down feeder tracts in and around the hamlets which run in a zig-zag course.

The hamlet Jatan Roaza para has a bus road from Jatanbari to Agartala passing by the hamlet which is hardly at a distance of half a kilometres. The hamlet has a jeepable road from Jatanbari to Dumbur

project passing by the side of the hamlet. The road runs very close to it.

*Characteristics of the hamlet*

The people of Haradas Baishnab para have their own religion. Most of this people of this hamlet embraced Vaishnavism. According to them, the soul is immortal and subject to rebirth in accordance with merits of deeds done in the preceding birth. The hamlet contains 86 people at the time of survey and this small size has afforded conditions of harmony and solidarity among the dwellers.

The people of Mantridas Roaza para having 165 souls within the hamlet, have been residing in a very cordial atmosphere and it is learnt that there exists no social exploitation due to efficient discharge of the duty of the hamlet chief.

The other surveyed hamlet Jatan Roaza para has 26 household. The Table—24 below, extends the total number of families and population figures of each hamlet.

TABLE—24

*List of Tribal & Non-tribal*

<i>Name of the Community</i>	<i>Number of families</i>	<i>Number of souls</i>
1. Noatia	08	25
2. Chakma	01	07
3. Tripuri	03	17
4. Hindu	14	78

There is perfect mutual understanding among the different communities although the minority group is always very cautious in their day to day activities. No instance of social clash is heard at the time of the survey.

Among seventeen Noatia families of Haradas Baishnabpara each occupies a separate house on the tilla lands. Among those, there are three mud-wall houses having roof of sungrass. The enclosures of the houses are made of bamboos and the stalk of jute plants. The eight dilapidated houses belonging to Noatia communities of the hamlet jatan Roaza para on the tilla land are standing in miserable condition which sets us to think seriously of the wretched condition of the people of those households.

The hamlet chief Shri Jatan Kumar Roaza of Jatan Roaza para, it is learnt, donated many acres of lands to the different institutions for name and fame and Jatanbari has been named after his name for his numerous beneficial deeds. He is, at present, in a wretched position and as a result, has deserted the hamlet due to poverty.

Accidental death of one male aged 35 years occurred due to attack of a wild elephant a year ago. It is learnt that some wild elephants are moving about even now at night at a distance of two kilometres of the Mantridas Roaza para to eat ripe crops. I have had an opportunity of



witnessing a small hut constructed at the top of a big tree where from sylvan people have to ward off the wild elephants by implements made of bamboos.

#### *Different Facilities*

The hamlet Mantridas Roaza para and Haradas Baishnab para have no good sources of drinking water. The tribals generally have to bring water from the nearby Ekcharri charra. The people of Jatan Roaza para have good sources of drinking water obtainable from Nutanbazar water supply.

The post office and telegraph office is within easy reach of the hamlet of Jatan Roaza para though, at present, the wretched Noatia people have no use of those offices.

Mantridas Roaza para and Haradas Baishnab para have a post office situated at Karbook, at a distance of 4 kilometres. The people of those hamlets have good market facility with a market at Karbook, which is at a distance of 4 kilometres and another situated at Jatanbari, is at a distance of 7 kilometres.

The climate of the hamlets Mantridas Roaza para and Haradas Baishnab para is satisfactory. It is learnt, at the time of the survey that people suffer less from any enervating diseases. They do not have any medical facilities from the government dispensary which is at a distance of 10 kilometres. It is situated at Nutanbazar known as Nutanbazar Primary Health Centre. The people have to depend more or less on herbal medicines to be obtained locally from quacks.

#### *Hamlet Organisation*

With regard to social leadership, generally the Roaza or the hamlet chief plays an important role of the hamlet. The Roaza sits with the elderly members of the hamlet to settle disputes and looks after other affairs of the locality. When a case is complicated one and not easy for solution, the Roaza acts in consultation with the elderly persons of the hamlet and reports the matter to the Panchayat Organisation.

It is learnt that Mantridas Roaza son of late Prahllad Chandra Roaza of Mantridas Roaza para is discharging the function of the hamlet chief of his hamlet. In Haradas Baishnabpara, Haradas Baishnab son of late Sashi Kumar Tripura is doing the function of the hamlet chief of their hamlet.

In absence of Roaza in any hamlet, the elderly persons of the hamlet sit together and try the petty cases of their hamlet. This practice is seen in the hamlet of Jatan Roaza para.

## DEMOGRAPHY

### *Population*

The distribution of the different surveyed population is presented in Table—25. This figures are determined at the time of the survey based on information. There are 49 households in the surveyed hamlets confined

to Noatia tribes and the total population of the Noatia tribals is 276 consisting of 147 males and 129 females. The average size of a family is 5.6.

In Mantridas Roaza para, there are only two families of Tripuri tribes and in Haradas Baishnabpara, three families of Jamatia tribes inhabit with them. But in Jatan Roaza, different communities like Noatia, Chakmas, Tripuris and Hindus have been residing in twenty six households with a population of 127 souls.

TABLE—25  
*Distribution of population*

Name of the hamlets	No. of families	Total members	No. of males	% distribution	No. of females	% distribution.
1. Mantridas Roaza para.	24	165	83	50.3%	82	47.7%
2. Haradas Baishnab para.	17	86	49	56.9%	37	43.1%
3. Jatan Roaza para.	08	25	15	60%	10	40%

#### *Composition of family*

It is learnt from the investigation that all the surveyed hamlets have nuclear and special joint type of families. They are found to prefer nuclear type of families. There is no joint family in the surveyed hamlets. This indicates that the joint type of families is not preferred by the dwellers. It is learnt, at the time of the survey that usually the head of the family desires his sons should be separated after their marriages.

#### *Marital Status*

Out of a good number of clans of Noatia tribes only khalisha, keoa and Naitong are predominant in these hamlets. Monogamy is the general profile of the Noatia society of the surveyed hamlets. Polygamy is prevalent among some of the households. It is very interesting to note that according to the traditional system of Noatia society, the bridegroom is chosen by the bride sitting at the site of oven. The same system is observed here also.

Child marriage is totally absent. Divorce is effected by the adjudication of the hamlet chief along with the elderly persons of the hamlet. Traditional dowry system where the father of the bride takes money, is not in vogue.

It is learnt at the time of survey that one love marriage was solemnised between a Noatia girl of Jatan Roaza para with a Hindu young boy, staff of Dumbur project in the year 1973. After the birth to a baby, the staff fled away last year leaving the wife along with newly born baby.

#### *Educational facilities*

Majority of the Noatia tribes of the surveyed hamlets are illiterate. A very few of them can write his or her name. The rate of school-going

children is negligible. Some of the guardians have no urge for education of their wards despite the existence of primary school adjacent to their hamlets.

The hamlet Mantridas Roaza para and Haradas Baishnab para have one primary school named Prahllad Chandra Junior Basic School which is situated at the centre of the hamlets. The numerical strength of the school is 82. It has had a teacher who has been residing in the adjacent hamlet. The condition of the school is very deplorable having no furniture and other educational appliances. It has been reported that water leaks through the roofs during the monsoon. The students have to sit on the coarse mat made of bamboo-cane.

The hamlet Jatan Roaza para has one school named Ekcharri Jatan Kumar Senior Basic School, at a distance of 1 kilometre. The School building is a tin-shed with bamboo plastered walls. The floor is katcha.

### AGRARIAN STRUCTURE

#### *Land and its utilisation*

Because of the absence of current land-revenue records, it is not feasible to have official data on holdings. Based on information gathered from the inhabitants of the hamlets at the time of survey, statistics of land utilisation is extended in Table—26 and the distribution of households by land owner and landless is furnished in Table—27.

It is learnt at the time of survey that some inhabitants of Mantridas Roaza para and Haradas Baishnab para had colony settlement in the year of 1971 having tilla lands, bullocks and cash grants. A good number of households disposed of their bullocks during the last few years due to financial crisis.

It is observed that those tilla lands are now fallow. Sun-grass grows on the fields. The agriculturists are very callous and inactive. It is also learnt that so long they worked in Dumbur project as daily labourers and had no desire to cultivate those lands. The condition of the lands is satisfactory but they cannot cultivate at the moment due to pecuniary condition.

TABLE—26

#### *Distribution of operational Holdings*

*In acres*

Name of the hamlets.	Total Lunga land	Total tilla land	Total Home-stead	Total Iunga lands under cultivation	Total tilla under cultivation
1. Mantridas Roaza para.	50.00	62.40	06.40	48.00	20.80
2. Haradas Baishnab para.	10.00	14.80	04.00	09.60	03.20
3. Jatan Roaza para.	—	—	0.60	—	—

TABLE—27

*Distribution of Households of landowner and landless*

<i>Name of the hamlets</i>	<i>No. of households</i>	<i>land-owner</i>	<i>% distribution</i>	<i>land-less</i>	<i>% distribution</i>
1. Mantridas Roaza para.	24	24	100%	—	—
2. Haradas Baishnab para.	17	11	64.7%	06	35.3%
3. Jatan Roaza para.	08	—	—	08	100%

Out of 49 households as shown in Table—27 above, 31 households are big cultivators who possess above 2 acres, 4 households possess 1 to 2 acres and thus occupy the middle position in status and 14 households are landless.

*Agricultural Method*

The tribals of the surveyed hamlets have been practising settled farming. It is learnt that, nobody is adopting jhuming or shifting cultivation. Paddy is the most important crop grown. Out of a total cropped area of 60 acres of lands, more than 55 acres of lands are reported to have been sown with paddy. Both the seasonal crops are practised by the tribals of this area.

Irrigational facilities in Mantridas Roaza para and Haradas Baishnabpara are very poor. So water in rains may be stored up by construction of bundh of Ekcharricharra. Over flow tube-wells may be sunk for Bodo paddy cultivation.

*Livestock & Poultry*

Cattle stock of Mantridas Roaza para is not satisfactory. The number of pigs is undoubtedly low for a tribal hamlet. The number of poultry birds is quite significant. Most of the families of Haradas Baishnab para embraced the faith of Vaishnavism. In accordance with the Vaishnava cult, rearing of fowl, goat and pig is taboo. Accordingly, the number of fowls, goats and pigs of Haradas Baishnabpara is nil.

The Table—28 shows below, the ownership of Livestock and poultry birds of the surveyed hamlets.

TABLE—28

*Distribution of Livestock and Poultry*

<i>Name of the hamlet</i>	<i>Bullock</i>	<i>Buffalo</i>	<i>Milch</i>	<i>Pig</i>	<i>Goat</i>	<i>Poultry</i>
1. Mantridas Roaza para.	33	04	18	08	03	140
2. Haradas Baishnab para.	12	—	11	—	—	—
3. Jatan Roaza para	—	—	—	—	—	17

*Tools and Implements*

In course of investigation, the number of agricultural tools and implements in use in the surveyed hamlets is taken. The total number of tools and implements used by the people of all the surveyed hamlets is shown in Table—29 below. The different tools and implements are purchased from the local markets.

TABLE—29  
*Distribution of Tools and Implements*

<i>Name of the hamlets</i>	<i>Plough</i>	<i>Spade</i>	<i>Harriw</i>	<i>Sickle</i>	<i>Takhal</i>
1. Mantridas Roaza para.	18	17	18	31	61
2. Haradas Baishnab para.	06	15	06	17	39
3. Jatan Roaza para.	—	04	—	05	12

## ECONOMICAL STATUS

*Income*

The cultivators do not have work throughout the year. Over and above, the labour force in agriculture is excessive in comparison with the land and capital. Daily labourers do not have job through out the whole year. From the talk with the tribals, it reveals that they prefer to have job in and around the hamlets. So long they worked in Dumbur Project, they were happy and they passed by days fullfed. Now they have been working in the brick field as daily labourers during the dry season. Sometimes they are engaged in construction of roads and other miscellaneous works in and around the hamlets. The rate of daily labourers varies from Rs. 4/- to Rs. 5/- per capita.

The average income per household of the agriculturists is about rupees four hundred to rupees five hundred per annum.

Now cultivators earn a high amount which have attracted the cultivators to change their occupation. Sometimes they take up daily labourers as their secondary occupation without the care for the cultivation.

*Expenditure*

The position of the surveyed hamlets save and except the hamlet Mantridas Roaza para seems to be that whatever is earned is spent on current consumption and nothing is saved. So income and house-hold expenditure in the surveyed hamlets may therefore be taken to be the same for all day to day purpose. In times of need, during the ceremonies like marriages, funeral rites and for medical treatment etc. they take loans from the mahajans or the money-lenders or any other sources.

As regards the hamlet Mantridas Roaza para, the people of the hamlet is on the whole economically solvent. Nobody in this hamlet admits that they have any surplus income to save. But it is observed at the time of survey that some of the households either run in deficit-budget or accumulate a surplus.

*Loan and Indebtedness*

There is no mahajans or money-lenders in and around the hamlet. It is learnt during my survey that in times of dire need, the dwellers take

loans from their known persons of Nutan Bazar which is situated at a distance of 10 (ten) kilometres from Mantridas Roaza para and Haradas Baishnab para and 2 kilometres from Jatan Roaza para. It has been reported that there is no uniformity in the rate of interest and it is subject to variation from person to person.

In times of investigation, it is learnt that the people of Jatan Roaza para have no debt at the moment. The people of the above hamlet are very poor. Moreover, they have no land to mortgage, so the mahajans or the money-lenders can not rely on them.

It is learnt that one Dharma Kumar Noatia son of late Ar Chandra Noatia of Jatan Roaza para mortgaged his 0.60 acre of land to Jamini Sil of Depacharra in 1970 against Rupees Five hundred and 1.00 acre of land to Rangu Das of Depacharra in the same year against Rupees five hundred. He attempted to get back the lands but it has been reported that he has failed.

It is further learnt that another Liladhan Noatia son of late Jatan Kumar Roaza of Jatan Roaza para mortgaged his 2.00 acres of land in 1968 to one of his Hindu neighbour against Rupees five hundred. He has been trying to have the lands returned but he also has failed.

As regards Haradas Baishnab para, the people of this hamlet confess that the mahajan or the money-lenders do not lend them due to bad repayment.

As regards Mantridas Roaza para, the people take loans from the known persons. But nobody discloses any name or any amount of loan taken. According to them, the loan agreement is verbal. No security is offered against the loans. Sometimes loans are paid in terms of labour during agricultural operation. The rate of interest is fifty percent.

## SUGGETIONS

In the foregoing pages, the findings have emerged in the different aspects of the socio-economic spheres of the Noatia tribes, a few suggestions are furnished below for the development and prosperity of the socially depressed aboriginals.

1. Plough and draught animals should be distributed among those who get jhumia settlement. Subsidy grants to purchase bullocks and milch cows are now being distributed by the Government. But it is scanty in comparison with the need. Hence, provision may kindly be made by the Government to meet out the need of the swelling number of the tribals. What is striking to note here is that, some of the tribals getting jhumia settlement are, it is learnt, in the habit of misutilising the subsidy. As for example, it may be cited that milch cows if bullocks are purchased from the market in presence of the authorised persons of the B.D.O. or the P.E.O. But it is gathered that there remains a previous contact or contract between the seller and the purchaser beyond the knowledge of the authorised persons. Such a deal has often bitter results and outturns. Hence, it is desired that to avoid this underhand dealings, the purchase should be made from one unknown to the tribals for whom the purchase is being made.

2. For eradicating illiteracy among the tribals, night schools both for the young and old may be set up. The tribal people's suspicions, superstitions and various attitudes have become stumbling blocks to the speedy and successful implementation of different welfare schemes of the government and to the promotion of agricultural development of tribal souls. It is most essential to understand and analyse the economic factors and the psycho-sociological and religious beliefs acting upon the sylvan people. The Tribal Extension Officers and the Tribal Supervisors may be instructed to discuss with the tribals about the above factors from time to time through the tribal languages. If those officers speak with the tribals through their languages, they are sure to look upon them as their own men and as a result the talk between them would be fruitful.

3. The tribals of Jatan Roaza para are in possession of home-stead on khas lands. Measures may kindly be taken for conferring ownership right on the tribals for their homestead lands so that they may have encouragement.

4. The tribals of Jatan Roaza para are landless. So they have to depend on other sources. Some tribals have deserted. In respect of the same, suitable measures may be taken to stop the desertion.

5. The tribals being sentimental regarding the failure of the government in fulfilling the grant in time as per agreement executed upon as a breach of contract. It also irritates them. This deserves to have a stop.

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## PART—V

SABROOM  
VILLAGE BACKGROUND*Location*

The survey work in respect of socio-economic spheres confined to the Noatia tribes have been undertaken in the following hamlets of Sabroom sub-division under Satchand Multipurpose Block office and the collected data of the same hamlets are furnished below :

<i>Name of the hamlets</i>	<i>Number of families</i>
1. Sonamohan Roaza para	16
2. Matahari Chowdhury para	07
3. Gokul Roaza para	10
4. Danu Chowdhury para	48
5. Prasanna Roaza para	11
6. Surendra Sardar para	50
7. Basi Roaza para	07

The hamlets Sonamohan Roaza para, Matahari Chowdhury para and Gokul Roaza para are situated within Uttar Buratali Gaon Sabha of the Manu Police Station in Sabroom sub-division of the district of South Tripura are at a distance of about 3 kilometres from Manu Bazar.

The above hamlets are bounded on the east by Dakhin Kalapania and on the west by Belonia border and on the north by Gardeng and on the south by Dakhin Buratali.

Further the hamlets Danu Chowdhury para, Prasanna Roaza para, Surendra Sardar para and Basi Roaza para are situated within Dakhin Buratali Gaon Sabha of the Manu Police Station in Sabroom sub-division of the district of South Tripura are about 4 kilometres away from Satchand M. P. Block Office.

The above hamlets are bounded on the east by Dakhin Kalapania and on the west by Belonia border and on the north by Gardeng and on the south by Fulchari.

*Communication*

Being situated near the Manu Bazar, all the surveyed hamlets enjoy such communication facilities as are not generally available to sylvan hamlets. The sub-division town at Sabroom is about 14 to 18 kilometres away from the different surveyed hamlets. The Agartala—Sabroom metalled road runs touching the edges of the surveyed hamlets. There is a brick-built road constructed recently. It starts from Satchand Bazar and connects different hamlets namely Danu Chandra Chowdhury para, Prasanna Roaza para, Surendra Sardar para and Basi Roaza para.

All the surveyed hamlets have many up and down, zig-zag feeder traders which criss-cross the different hamlets. It may be summarised that, on the whole, the communication facilities of the surveyed hamlets are, to some extent, satisfactory.

### *Characteristics of the hamlet*

Different tribals and non-tribals have been inhabiting in the surveyed hamlets. The non-tribals are Nath, Namasudra, Mahishya Das, Pal, Banik, Sil and Brahmins. During my field trip, it is learnt that there is free-mixing between the tribals and non-tribals communities. There exists harmony and solidarity amongst the inhabitants. Only difference is seen in times of religious practices and matrimonial ceremonies. Yet the non-tribals are cordially invited to attending the functions of the tribals.

It is learnt, some of the surveyed hamlets have got two types of priests namely, the brahmin and the Ojhai. The brahmin is a must on the occasion of obsequial rites of the Noatia tribals of this area. Some of them have adopted the religious beliefs and rites of the neighbouring Hindus.

It is observed that some female folks of tender ages of some of the surveyed hamlets are not using Risha (cover-breast of the tribals). It seems, it is the sign of the uncivilised culture.

As I have been informed, by some elderly people, of the uncontrolled drinking of the rice-beer by the tribals. After harvest, they think little of their rainy days, brew rice-beer as much as they please and consume it amply.

During my survey, I have come to learn that a young lady cannot marry a widower. To keep up the spirit of their social custom, a virgin is forbidden to do so.

### *Different facilities*

All the surveyed hamlets have good sources of drinking water. There are seven ring-wells, three tube-wells in and around the hamlets of Sonamohan Roaza para, Matahari Chowdhury para and Gokul Roaza para. Besides, there are four ponds where fishes are being reared and people of the above hamlets have water from those sources.

There are eight ring-wells and four tube-wells in and around the hamlets of Danu Chowdhury para, Prasanna Roaza para, Surendra Sardar para and Basi Roaza para. Further, the dwellers can boast of four ponds where fishes are being reared. These ponds build up great source of water facilities.

The hamlets have no medical facilities in the truest sense of the term. It is learnt that they can avail themselves of the hospital facilities from the government dispensary at Manu and for the livestock and poultry birds, they may utilise the A.I. Centre at Manu. Generally the inhabitants of the surveyed hamlets have to depend on village quacks.

### *Hamlet Organisation*

Many of the disputes of the Noatias of the surveyed hamlets are settled by their hamlet councils and Panchayats. There is a headman in every hamlet known as Roaza or the hamlet chief. He is an important person. This post may be hereditary.

When a resident of the hamlet has any complaint against another in respect of land, marriage, divorce or objectional case of love, he has to report the matter to the Roaza. The Roaza, in a meeting of a few elderly persons of the hamlet, tries his level best to compromise the dispute. If he fails, he reports the matter to the village Panchayat, which in a meeting of the members, decides the matter. Besides the above mentioned panchayat, the disputes, it is learnt at the time of investigation, are sometimes dragged to law courts for adjudication.

### *Population*

In accordance with Census, 1971, it reveals that there was no Noatia tribe in Sabroom sub-division, notwithstanding the fact that Shri Hari Charan Chowdhury, the Honourable Minister for tribal welfare and welfare of Scheduled Castes of this state hails from the Noatia tribes belonging to Buratali gaon sabha under Sabroom sub-division in the district of South Tripura. In course of my field trip in respect of socio-economic spheres of Noatia tribes of different sub-divisions, it is observed that a good number of Noatia souls has been inhabiting here from time immemorial. In this connexion, I should say that the data of Census come from enumerators who were unfamiliar with the standard of anthropological classifications.

There are 149 households in the surveyed hamlets. The total population stands 771 consisting of 340 males and 431 females. The average size of the family is 5.2. All the surveyed hamlets have cosmopolitan population. Female birth rate in some hamlets is greater than that of male birth rate.

The undermentioned Table—30 will show the general distribution of the population of all the surveyed hamlets of Sabroom sub-division.

TABLE—30  
*Distribution of Population*

Name of the Hamlets.	No. of families	Total members	No. of males	% distribution	No. of females	% distribution
1. Sonamohan Roaza para,	16	69	28	40.6%	41	59.4%
2. Mataharichowdhury para,	07	41	16	39.2%	25	60.8%
3. Gokul Roazapara,	10	57	17	29.9%	40	70.1%
4. Danu chandra Chowdhury para.	48	230	115	50%	115	50%
5. Prasanna Roaza para.	11	55	15	27.3%	40	72.7%
6. Surendra Sardar para.	50	267	125	46.9%	142	53.1%
7. Pasi Roaza para.	07	52	24	46.2%	28	52.8%

### *Composition of Family*

The smallest unit is the nuclear family which is constituted with a man, his wife and his unmarried children. The joint family system is also prevalent among the Noatia tribes of surveyed hamlets. During my field Trip, it is observed that, in general, the tribals prefer nuclear type of family. There are four special joint families.

The family among the Noatias is patriarchal in nature. The sons inherit the father's property as a matter of right. Among them, daughters cannot inherit their father's property. Though the mother has no legal right to property, the opinion of the mother is held in respect.

### *Marital Status*

The most widely practised marriage type among them is the marriage by negotiation. The guardians of both the groom and the bride meet and chalk out the details of marriage which is later on performed in the house of the bride. There are ten cases of love marriage in all the surveyed hamlets where marriages took place as a result of mutual love. In such cases the guardians do not put any obstacle. Child marriage is not noticed among the surveyed hamlets. There is no social bar to a Noatia widow to remarry.

Conventions of divorce also prevail in the surveyed hamlets. Divorce case may be executed when both husband and wife mutually agree to the proposition and in this case some elderly people are invited and honoured with only two bottles of rice-beer as per custom. But if the husband desires to divorce his wife having no consent to it, the matter is referred to hamlet council for approval. The council always keep a keen eye to the demands of the wife for fulfilment. In such case, as soon as the council approves the matter, the divorce comes into force. In short, in the disputed case, the final decision rests upon the decree of the council.

### *Educational facilities*

There are one senior Basic School functioning at the heart of Sonamohan Roaza para, Matahari Chowdhury para, Gokul Roaza para and the hamlets Danu Chowdhury para, Surendra Sardar para and Basi Roaza para have also one senior Basic School. There is no higher educational centre in the surveyed hamlets. Though the schools are situated in the hamlets, the tribals having less interest in the value of education and lack of enthusiasm in respect of education, the tribals of this area are educationally backward. In the field of education of the surveyed hamlets, it is observed that the female education lags far behind than that of male education.

It has been reported that on courting failures in the final school examination and after returning to their own hamlet, some of the tribal youths alienate from traditional occupations and become idle. They dislike to take up the traditional way of life.

The schooling in the primary institutions in some of the surveyed hamlets is in a very deplorable condition. The teachers of these schools are, it is learnt, in the habit of declaring indiscriminate promotion of the students to the next higher classes without detaining a single educant in any class. This leads to the mass detention in class six in higher educational centre for years together and this leads to paving the way of great wastage.

While considering the educational status of this area, it may be held that there is higher percentage of illiterate in the surveyed hamlets.

## AGRARIAN STRUCTURE

### *Land and its utilisation*

In early days, ample lands were available for jhuming or shifting cultivation. The lands were to lie fallow for many years. Now it is proved that jhum cultivation involves great waste in terms of erosion of soil and damage of forest resources. Now this system of cultivation is abandoned.

Purchased lands become the private property of the tribals. Some communal lands are also observed which are meant for common use by every hamlet. It is not claimed by any particular person as his own though the same may be quite adjacent to his house. Cattle may freely graze on these lands. Communal functions are held on such grounds.

The government has distributed various fruit plants in tribal areas. The garden crops are practised by the tribals. The cultivation of crops which include turmeric, ginger and brinjal are practised by some tribals.

It is observed that some tribals have been waiting for government grants. They are very callous for the improvement of the lands as well as crops for their future. During my field trip, it is observed that some tilla lands are fallow. They become idle. Sometimes they are ready to spend rupees fifty for having rupees one hundred from government grants.

Neither current land revenue records, nor reliable statistics about their land holdings are available at present. Finding no other alternative, I am to satisfy myself with the information of the headman of each household. Based on information gathered from local sources, the data are appended in Table—31 in respect of lands possessed by the tribals and the distribution of households owned by land owner and landless is furnished in Table—32.

TABLE—31

*Distribution of operational Holding**In Acres*

Name of the Hamlets	Total lungu lands	Total tilla lands	Total Home- stead lands	Total lungu land under cultivation	Total tilla lands unde cultivation
1. Sonamohan Roaza para.	19.40	41.20	03.00	19.40	30.00
2. Matahari Chowdhury para.	20.80	11.40	02.00	20.80	06.40
3. Gokul Roaza para.	05.00	38.60	02.40	05.00	21.20
4. Danu Chandra Chowdhury para.	64.00	10.20	03.40	56.40	07.00
5. Prasanna Roaza para.	08.00	37.00	06.20	08.00	20.00
6. Surendra Sardar para.	30.80	20.60	12.80	28.40	09.00
7. Basi Roaza para.	16.40	—	00.80	16.40	--

TABLE—32

*Distribution of households of landowner and landless*

Name of the hamlets	No. of families	land-owner	% distribution	land-less	% distribution
1. Sonamohan Roaza para.	16	15	93.8%	01	6.2%
2. Matahari Chowdhury para.	07	06	85.8%	01	14.2%
3. Gokul Roaza para.	10	09	90%	01	10%
4. Danu Ch. Chowdhury para.	48	24	50%	24	50%
5. Prasanna Roaza para.	11	10	90.1%	01	9.9%
6. Surendra Sardar para.	50	21	42%	29	58%
7. Basi Roaza para.	07	06	85.6%	01	14.4%

Out of the 149 households as shown in Table—32 above, 56 households are big cultivators who possess above 2 acres, 35 households possess 1 to 2 acres and thus occupy the middle position in status and 58 households are landless.

*Agricultural Method*

The people of all the surveyed hamlets have adopted the agricultural methods of the Bengalees i.e. plough cultivation. It is worth mentioning that in the hamlets, the traditional method of shifting cultivation is on the verge of extinction and it has been gradually replaced by that of settled cultivation. Settled farming reflects here Aush and Aman paddy cultivation and Bodo paddy cultivation is unknown in the surveyed hamlets due to paucity of irrigation facilities.

During my survey in this sub-division, it is observed that some educated persons who have taken to agriculture as their primary occupation have already proved to be the most successful agriculturists. They have accepted and adopted improved agricultural methods and introduced high yielding varieties.

#### *Livestock & Poultry*

Livestock is an important part of the economic activities of the cultivators. It is observed in all of the surveyed hamlets that they are more or less stable in respect of livestock and poultry birds. There are pigs in most of the households. Rearing of fowls appears to be very popular amongst the tribals. It is to be noted that rearing of ducks are unknown to the tribals.

Table--33 below, reveals the position of the livestock and poultry birds of the surveyed hamlets.

TABLE—33

#### *Distribution of Livestock & Poultry*

<i>Name of the hamlets</i>	<i>Bullock</i>	<i>Milch</i>	<i>Pig</i>	<i>Goat</i>	<i>Poultry</i>
1. Sonamohan Roaza para.	10	07	24	02	65
2. Matahari Chowdhury para.	12	08	21	04	25
3. Gokul Roaza para.	06	04	16	—	31
4. Danu Ch. Chowdhury para.	28	12	41	07	221
5. Prasanna Roaza para.	06	04	15	—	27
6. Surendra Sardar para.	13	10	33	11	160
7. Basi Roaza para.	12	08	27	05	41

#### *Tools & Implements*

The number and nature of the tools and the implements reflect, to some extent, the economic position of the households. During my investigation, the quantity of those implements are collected. Table--34 below, furnishes the data of the tools and implements in use in the surveyed hamlets.

TABLE—34

#### *Distribution of Tools and Implements*

<i>Name of the hamlets</i>	<i>Plough</i>	<i>Spade</i>	<i>Harrow</i>	<i>Sickle</i>	<i>Takhal</i>
1. Sonamohan Roaza para.	05	14	05	14	19
2. Matahari Chowdhury para.	06	20	06	06	11
3. Gokul Roaza para.	03	08	03	11	12
4. Danu Chandra Chowdhury para.	14	37	14	35	52
5. Prasanna Roaza para.	03	14	03	08	14
6. Surendra Sardar para.	09	41	09	30	51
7. Basi Roaza para.	06	10	06	11	17

## ECONOMICAL STATUS

### *Income*

Land, labour and capital are the three equally important factors for agriculture. The lands, purchased by the tribals become their private property. These can be sold, mortgaged, gifted or given for rent. Labour is an inevitable factor of production in economic organisation of a society. Though in modern industrial production, in the simple

agricultural society, labour is the main factor. The tribals work in the field because they have food out of it. All the working people males, females and the children of a household participate in agricultural work. The question of capital comes as the next most important factor in the process of production. The tribals have all sorts of tools and implements which are essential for production. In respect of these capital items, the following may be considered viz., plough, bullock, spade, harrow, axes, sickle, hoes and takhal etc. very useful.

There is 'Barga' system or share cropping among the tribals. This system works on mutual understanding between the cultivator and the land owner. Under this system, each party gets half of the total output of the land. The landowner has to provide the land, seed and manure to the cultivator and the cultivator has to provide plough, labour and bullocks.

Another system is prevalent amongst the tribal which is known as 'Bartar' system. According to this system, a land owner who has no plough and bullocks, takes loan of the same from his neighbour for cultivating the land. For the same service, the land owner has to extend a certain amount of crop to his neighbour as service charge.

Generally the tribals of all the surveyed hamlets can hardly produce enough to meet their own requirements. Surplus cash crops also are not adequate to pay for the purchase of food for family consumption and other essential commodities of the households. So it is observed that they are living in utter poverty and are depending more or more on various government reliefs and measures. Finding no alternative they have to go to the village Mahajans or the money-lenders for borrowing money for family consumption.

Then it is a known fact that primary occupation alone cannot keep the tribals engaged throughout the year. Finding no source of income to tide over their insignificant income, they are dragged to secondary occupation like daily labour to construction of road, government relief work, agricultural work like paddy husking and so on and so forth. But this does not mean that majority of the tribals get work throughout the rest time and they pass their days full fed. No, not that, some of them earn much but while others do not even find room to work. So they have to rush to the money-lenders or any other source for survival.

During my field trip, it is observed that the average annual income per household of the cultivator is about Rupees six hundred to Rupees Seven hundred and the rate of daily labourer per day per soul varies from Rs. 4/- to Rs. 5/- only.



### *Expenditure*

The expenditure pattern of the surveyed hamlets is higher than that of the income. Very few among them have any surplus income. During my investigation, it is observed that some tribals do not care for their future. They are unconcerned about the conditions and circumstances of life.

The tribal characteristics of the people of the surveyed hamlets are their alluring fascination for consumption of rice-beer or country liquor. It is brewed at home. Sometimes they spend much without thinking for the rainy days.

Except some of the well-to-do cultivators, all other occupational groups of the surveyed hamlets are found deficit. It is interesting to note that the expenditures on education and medical treatment are low but expenditure on consumption of rice-beer is very high.

In general, it may be summarised that the economically backward classes of all the surveyed hamlets are underfed or unfed and ill clad. But the economically forward sections of all the surveyed hamlets are full fed and spend something for luxuries.

### *Loan and Indebtedness*

The sources of loan are the village Mahajans or the money-lenders who inhabit in the adjacent markets. Sometimes the tribals have loan from government sources like seed loan at a low rate, manure loan having some portions on gratis, milch loan when one calf is to be returned and so on and so forth. Sometimes agricultural loans are given through Co-operative banks.

On enquiry, it is learnt that they borrow either in cash in times of dire need like marriages, funeral rites, domestic expenditure or in kind like paddy for sowing in the agricultural fields or immediate consumption for non-availability of work for day or days. On that occasion, it is learnt, the tribals have to repay the loan by 120 kilograms of paddy against Rs. 100/- at harvest season.

The picture derived from the surveyed hamlets, on enquiry, is something different from that of other places. They do not always move to general money-lenders of the adjacent market. Sometimes they borrow money from the neighbours and relations of same hamlets.

During investigation it is learnt that about 62% households are indebted with an extent of rupees from one hundred to rupees two thousand. Generally the rate of interest is very high varying from 60% to 75%.

It has been reported that some tribals have to repay the borrowed money in exchange of labour in times of agricultural operation. Loan is repaid partly after harvesting when another loan is borrowed in the slag season and usually he cannot repay full borrowed money during his life time.

## SUGGESTIONS

Based on findings of the investigation in the aspects of socio-economic life of the Noatias of Sabroom sub-division, a few suggestions are given in order to bring about something for development and uplift of the socially and economically oppressed sylvan people.

1. Illiteracy amongst the male tribals is mostly prevalent. Prevalence of illiteracy among women is common. Tribal Extension officers and Tribal Supervisors may be instructed to explain to the tribals that the education enlightens a life. The school boys and girls should be excluded from forming economic hand at each family. It is suggested that the government should afford education especially at primary schools through the mother tongue of the pupils. Teachers may be recruited locally and preferably from the community to which the tribal belongs. Qualifications of teachers may be relaxed, if the qualified tribal teachers are not available.

2. When loan or grant of any kind be sanctioned and paid by the government to the tribal inmate, he should be escorted by a committee formed by the Panchayat members or any other committee which is suitable for the purpose, so as to save him from squandering away of money in purchasing other commodities at the deviation of the purpose for which the loan or grant is sanctioned. This will safeguard the proper utilisation of the loan or grant.

3. The government is urged to make necessary arrangement for business loan from the Co-operative banks or the nationalised banks on easy terms to the tribals so that they may have incentive for business line.

4. It has been reported that sometimes the tilla lands were allotted to some tribals for jhumia settlement. But the fact remains that house jhumias could not know which land was allotted to them. When the tax-collectors happen to come for collecting tax, they come to learn that some lands were allotted to them previously. It causes a great deal of disturbances and confusion. The government is requested to adopt measures for doing away with it.

5. Tribals may be encouraged in starting piggery, poultry and diary on a small scale either on co-operative basis or in private limited nature under the direct supervision of the personnel of the Tribal Welfare Department, Government of Tripura. For this purpose government should extend financial aid, subsidy grant and technical aid.

PART—VI  
BELONIA  
VILLAGE BACKGROUND

*Location*

The following hamlets of Belonia sub-division under Bagafa Block development office have been surveyed in different aspects of socio-economic life of the Noatia tribes and findings that emerged are appended hereunder :

<i>Name of the hamlets</i>	<i>Number of families</i>
1. Ananta Sardar para	18
2. Arjun Kumar para	28
3. Kanu Tripura para	11
4. Gidda Kumar para	16
5. Brisha Kumar para	07
6. Sutna para	11
7. Kaifang	03

The hamlets Ananta Sardar para and Arjun Kumar para are situated within Purbapilak Gaon Sabha of the Baikhora Police Station in Belonia sub-division of the district of South Tripura and are about 15 kilometres from Jolaibari High School.

The hamlet are bounded on the east by Debtamura and on the west by Purbapilak and on the south by Bagmara (Sabroom border) and on the north by Birendranagar.

The hamlets Kanu Tripura para, Gidda Kumar para, Brisha Kumar para and Sutnapara are within Kalsi Gaon Sabha of the Baikhora Police Station of the district of South Tripura and are about 8 kilometres away from Jolaibari High School.

The hamlets are bounded on the east by Kanuprasad para and on the west by Dulucharra and on the north by Bancaphabari and on the south by Mohari river.

The hamlet kaifang is situated within Purbapilak Gaon Sabha of the Baikhora Police Station in Belonia Sub-division of the district of South Tripura and is about 12 kilometres from Jolaibari High School.

The hamlet Kaifang is bounded on the east by Silachari and on the west by Kalsi and on the north by Birmanta and on the south by Tripura.

*Communication*

There is a metalled road from Bogafa to Kalsi. The people of that area enjoy sueli communication facility as is not generally available in the hilly areas. The hamlets Ananta Sardar para, Arjun Kumar para and Kaifang have a jeepable road from Kalsi to Tairuma Bazar at a distance of one to three kilometres. The said jeepable road may be extended upto

some kilometres towards the hamlets so that the poor tribals may avail themselves of the easy communication facility at a considerable expense and the same will do much help in time of emergency and in urgent need.

The communication facility by jeep is contemptible during the rainy season because the road being kachha becomes muddy due to rain water and flowing water from the high slopes from both the sides. The river Muhari in the southern side of Kalsi Gaon Sabha flows towards the different directions.

The charras are situated in and around the different surveyed hamlets. During the rainy season, sometimes the charras are full of water which brim over for hours together. People have to face a great difficulty to cross those charras and one has to swim if he desires to cross. But it is interesting to note that those charras get back their original form after some hours when people can cross those charras on foot.

There are many up and down hilly feeder tracts which connect different surveyed hamlets. The aboriginals can easily cross those tracts.

#### *Characteristics of the hamlet*

The hamlets Ananta Sardar para, Arjun Kumar para have no good market facility. They have to go to Kalsibazar which is at a distance of 4 kilometres. The market day, it is learnt, a distinguished day for the tribal people. Both men and women move to the market in a batch wearing colourful dress and using ornaments. A stream of aboriginals move to the markets and it displays picturesque scene.

The tribes select tilla lands to build their houses for dwelling and never feel any linking for plain lands for the said purpose and they spare no pains to fetch water from the low land at a distance—say about half a kilometre or more—it is their peculiar characteristic.

In Ananta Sardar para and Arjun Kr. para there are no other castes and tribes save and except Noatia souls. They are compact group with a strong in group feeling and a high sense of self identity. It is interesting to note that, during my short survey, it reveals that they do not like other tribals of another sect or non-tribals who inhabit with them in the same hamlet. They like to live alone. It seems, this puts a great bar to the function of broad outlook. The Noatias of Kanu Tripura para, Gidda Kumar para, Brisha Kumar para and Sutnapara are living with other tribals and non-tribals and there prevails perfect solidarity and harmony among them. No clash, social or economic is reported by any of the soul. In some of the surveyed hamlets, the Noatias also believe in some animistic rites but those are now-a-days given up by most of them.

#### *Different facilities*

The hamlets of Ananta Sardar para, Arjun Kumar para and Kaifang suffer from want of good drinking water. The people of these hamlets are contended to obtain water from nearby charras. The people of Kanu Tripura para, Gidda Kumar para, Brisha Kumar para and Sutnapara have good sources of drinking water. There are some government ring

wells and tube wells. Some of the well-to-do households in and adjacent to the hamlets have some ponds. People may obtain water from those sources.

It may be summarised that the source of drinking water in the hamlets of Kanu Tripura para, Gidda Kumar para, Brisha Kumar para and Sutnapara is, to some extent, tollerable, but as to the hamlet of Ananta Sardar para and Arjun Kumar para is deplorable. Accordingly, the sinking of tube wells and construction of ring-wells are the crying need of the day.

For medical facilities, the tribals have to depend mostly on herbal medicines which are available from the quacks. Sometimes, they have to depend on the village Ojhai who practices different magical rites in order to please the deities. He prescribes different drugs and herbs. Sometimes the village Ojhai administers water sanctified by Mantras. Serious patients are taken to government hospitals at Bogafa and Belonia.

In short, it may be concluded that the general sanitation of the hamlets Ananta Sardar para, Arjun Kumar para and Kaifang is not so good but the sanitation of the other surveyed hamlets is moderate, to some extent, though not up to the mark.

#### *Hamlet Organisation*

Each hamlet has its own hamlet-council, but the traditional village organisation does not exist among the Noatia of today. The hamlet organisation of the Noatias, now-a-days consists of the Roaza of each hamlet. His post may be hereditary. He decides the matters in consultation with some elderly persons of the hamlet. The Roaza along with some elderly persons of the hamlet deals with cases of breach of social norms and rules, cases of love affairs and divorce etc. The council tries its best to compromise the matter.

What I have observed during my field trips in the Noatia society of the surveyed hamlets is that they are peace-loving and are contended with the adjudication of the Roaza of the different hamlets.

## DEMOGRAPHY

### *Population*

The Noatia tribes in this sub-division according to the Census report of 1971 are given as numbering 925. A survey of all the souls is not feasible. It is decided to conduct a household investigation by the sample survey method and the following hamlets are selected for investigation viz., Ananta Sardar para, Arjun Kumar para and Kaifang under Purbapalak Gaon Sabha, Kanu Tripura para, Gidda Kumar para, Brisha Kumar para and Sutnapara under Kalsi Gaon Sabha.

All the surveyed hamlets have 84 households consist of 468 souls with the break of 245 males and 223 females. From the survey, it reveals that the average size of the households is 5.6.

The hamlets Ananta Sardar para and Arjun Kumar para have homogeneous population but other hamlets have cosmopolitan population which are as follows :

<i>Name of the hamlets</i>	<i>Households</i>		
1. Kanu Tripura para			
2. Gidda Kumar para	Mag	...	195
3. Brisha Kumar para	Riang	...	81
4. Sutna para	Bengalee	...	173
5. Kaifang	Mag	...	03
	Riang	...	24
	Bengalee	...	01

Table—35 below, shows the general distribution of population of the surveyed hamlets.

TABLE—35  
*Distribution of Population*

Name of the hamlets.	No. of families	No. of members.	Males	% distribution.	Females	% distribution.
1. Ananta Sardar para.	18	98	51	52.1%	47	47.9%
2. Arjun Kr. Para	28	138	72	52.2%	66	47.8%
3. Kanu Tripura para	11	51	24	47.1%	27	53.9%
4. Gidda Kr. Para	16	76	41	53.9%	35	46.1%
5. Brisha Kr. Para	07	39	19	48.7%	20	51.3%
6. Sutna Para	11	50	28	56%	22	44%
7. Kaifang	03	16	10	62.5%	06	47.5%

*Composition of family :*

A nuclear type of family with patrarchal authority forms the unit of the Noatia Society but joint families are also not altogether unknown in surveyed hamlets. The family among the Noatias is the basic social unit. But now-a-days joint families are not so common owing to the increase in the size of the joint families and due to economic reasons.

The Noatia Society is patriarchal and the lineage is always traced through the father. If the eldest son separates himself from the family and starts to live outside his father's household, he forfeits all claims to inherit any of the property which descends to the younger sons.

It is worth mentioning that the Noatias of the surveyed hamlets have adjusted themselves to the local environment and have adopted the methods, customs and practices of the territory which they hailed from. From the investigation, it reveals that there are eight joint families two special joint families of the surveyed hamlets.

### *Marital Status*

Monogamy is the common practice but polygamy is also permitted by the society. Marriage by negotiation is the common feature. From the survey it reveals that usually they practise tribal endogamy, never marry non-tribal people. Their marriages follow strict rules of Kin-group organisation. During my field trip, it appears that they keep following their customs of their forefathers.

The marriage rite is performed by the Ojhai or the village priest on a scheduled date. Marriage as a result of love is also traced in the surveyed hamlets. Child marriage is a rare exception in the survey hamlets. During field trips, it is learnt that eight love marriage came off in the different hamlets. Dowry system exists, but the traditional dowry in respect of bride-price is not in vogue. Divorce is initiated by the mutual consent of the husband and the wife.

### *Educational facilities*

The hamlets Ananta Sardar para and Arjun Kumar para have one Junior Basic School which is situated at the heart of the hamlets. As there is no higher educational centre in these hamlets or nearby hamlets, one has to move to Kalsi Senior Basic School which is at a distance of 12 kilometres and to Jolaibari High School at a distance of 16 kilometres. There are only two boys who are reported to be reading in class IX in Belonia Vidyapit High School. Feeding centre is situated at Ananta Sardar para and the same is, it is learnt, discontinued for paucity of funds.

Other surveyed hamlets have Junior Basic School and Senior Basic School in or adjacent hamlets. The children have to go to Jolaibari High School for higher education at a distance of two and a half kilometres.

Majority of the people of the surveyed hamlets are illiterate and a few among them are able to read only and some of them have attended different stages of education. A negligible number of females had got education up to different stages, otherwise majority of them are illiterate. The older generation is indifferent to education but the younger generation is more inclined to education.

It has been reported by the people of Ananta Sardar para and Arjun Kumar para that the teacher of the school is always irregular. He always comes to school from a distance of twelve kilometres daily. Roads of the interior tribal villages become rather impassable during the monsoon. Hence the attendance of that so called teacher in the rainy season becomes contemptible. It is suggested that, the teachers of the interior villages may be instructed for residing near the schools. In spite of different schools situated in and around the hamlets, it may be opined that the people of all the surveyed hamlets have remained backward from the range of literacy.

## AGRARIAN STRUCTURES

### *Land & its utilisation*

Land is the basic factor of the production, others being capital and labour. The territory having from time immemorial jhuming or shifting

cultivation in character, people by convention attach to the lands. Naturally the question how much land is under their occupation may crop up for proper calculation. Besides agricultural lands, one is in need of a small plot of land to construct at least a simple cottage with a view to inhabiting safely.

It is observed that the yield of the land is very lamentable in some of the areas of the surveyed hamlets due to march in the same land. It is most necessary to reclaim the marshy land by way of excavating channels on both sides of the tilla land with a view to enhancing the output.

Because of absence of current land revenue records, it is not possible to have official data on holdings. Finding no alternative, I am to satisfy with the informations of the hamlets in respect of the lands possessed by each household. Based on information collected from the tribals, the quantity of land utilisation are appended in Table—36 below and the distribution of households owned by landowner and landless is furnished in Table—37.

TABLE—36  
*Distribution of operational Holdings*

Name of the Hamlets	Total Lunga land.	Total tilla land.	Total Home-stead land	Total Lunga land under cultivation.	Total tilla land under Cultivation.
1. Ananta Sardar para.	31.20	—	04.40	31.20	—
2. Arjun Kumar para	30.60	01.80	06.80	30.60	01.00
3. Kanu Tripura para	01.60	05.40	02.20	01.60	04.20
4. Gidda Kr. para	—	04.20	02.40	—	02.00
5. Brisha Kr. para	—	02.20	01.80	—	02.20
6. Sutna para	—	02.60	02.20	—	02.00
7. Kaifang	—	01.60	00.80	—	01.00

TABLE—37  
*Distribution of Households by landowner and landless*

Name of the Hamlets	No. of families	land owner	% distribution	land-less	% distribution
1. Ananta Sardar para	18	13	72.3%	05	27.7%
2. Arjun Kr. para	28	10	35.7%	18	64.3%
3. Kanu Tripura para	11	05	45.4%	06	54.6%
4. Gidda Kr. para	16	14	87.5%	02	12.5%
5. Brisha Kr. para	07	06	85.7%	01	14.3%
6. Sutnapara	11	09	81.8%	02	08.2%
7. Kaifang	03	01	33.4%	02	66.6%



### *Marital Status*

Monogamy is the common practice but polygamy is also permitted by the society. Marriage by negotiation is the common feature. From the survey it reveals that usually they practise tribal endogamy, never marry non-tribal people. Their marriages follow strict rules of Kin-group organisation. During my field trip, it appears that they keep following their customs of their forefathers.

The marriage rite is performed by the Ojhai or the village priest on a scheduled date. Marriage as a result of love is also traced in the surveyed hamlets. Child marriage is a rare exception in the survey hamlets. During field trips, it is learnt that eight love marriage came off in the different hamlets. Dowry system exists, but the traditional dowry in respect of bride-price is not in vogue. Divorce is initiated by the mutual consent of the husband and the wife.

### *Educational facilities*

The hamlets Ananta Sardar para and Arjun Kumar para have one Junior Basic School which is situated at the heart of the hamlets. As there is no higher educational centre in these hamlets or nearby hamlets, one has to move to Kalsi Senior Basic School which is at a distance of 12 kilometres and to Jolaibari High School at a distance of 16 kilometres. There are only two boys who are reported to be reading in class IX in Belonia Vidyapit High School. Feeding centre is situated at Ananta Sardar para and the same is, it is learnt, discontinued for paucity of funds.

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Majority of the people of the surveyed hamlets are illiterate and a few among them are able to read only and some of them have attended different stages of education. A negligible number of females had got education up to different stages, otherwise majority of them are illiterate. The older generation is indifferent to education but the younger generation is more inclined to education.

It has been reported by the people of Ananta Sardar para and Arjun Kumar para that the teacher of the school is always irregular. He always comes to school from a distance of twelve kilometres daily. Roads of the interior tribal villages become rather impassable during the monsoon. Hence the attendance of that so called teacher in the rainy season becomes contemptible. It is suggested that, the teachers of the interior villages may be instructed for residing near the schools. In spite of different schools situated in and around the hamlets, it may be opined that the people of all the surveyed hamlets have remained backward from the range of literacy.

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cultivation in character, people by convention attach to the lands. Naturally the question how much land is under their occupation may crop up for proper calculation. Besides agricultural lands, one is in need of a small plot of land to construct at least a simple cottage with a view to inhabiting safely.

It is observed that the yield of the land is very lamentable in some of the areas of the surveyed hamlets due to march in the same land. It is most necessary to reclaim the marshy land by way of excavating channels on both sides of the tilla land with a view to enhancing the output.

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4. Gidda Kr. para	—	04.20	02.40	—	02.00
5. Brisha Kr. para	—	02.20	01.80	—	02.20
6. Sutna para	—	02.60	02.20	—	02.00
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4. Gidda Kr. para	—	04.20	02.40	—	02.00
5. Brisha Kr. para	—	02.20	01.80	—	02.20
6. Sutna para	—	02.60	02.20	—	02.00
7. Kaifang	—	01.60	00.80	—	01.00

TABLE—37  
*Distribution of Households by landowner and landless*

Name of the Hamlets	No. of families	land owner	% distribution	land-less	% distribution
1. Ananta Sardar para	18	13	72.3%	05	27.7%
2. Arjun Kr. para	28	10	35.7%	18	64.3%
3. Kanu Tripura para	11	05	45.4%	06	54.6%
4. Gidda Kr. para	16	14	87.5%	02	12.5%
5. Brisha Kr. para	07	06	85.7%	01	14.3%
6. Sutnapara	11	09	81.8%	02	08.2%
7. Kaifang	03	01	33.4%	02	66.6%

Out of 94 households as shown in Table—37, 15 households are big cultivators who possess above 2 acres, 43 households possess 1 to 2 acres and thus occupy the middle position in status and 36 households are landless.

#### *Agricultural Method*

From the investigation, it transpires that all the hamlets seem to possess a considerable lion's share of the land resources as tilla lands of the surveyed hamlets. It is a happy sign that the people of these areas have started to practise the plantation of turmeric, ginger etc. on the tilla lands. Irrigation facility is very poor. So people of these areas are less interested in Bodo cultivation. In this respect, it is suggested that charras' water in rains may be stored by construction of dams in different places.

During my survey, it reveals that some modern agricultural methods of the government have not been received with enthusiasm and good will by some tribals of this area. The Village Level Workers may be instructed to discuss with the tribals about the above factors for time to time.

#### *Livestock & Poultry*

Possession of cultivable lands is not enough for operation, to make the land fit for cultivation, bullocks and buffaloes are equally important for cultivation. Poultry birds, particularly the fowls are very important to the tribals for worship as well as consumption. It is learnt that all the fowls are of local or country breeds. It has been reported that epidemic for cattle and fowls often breaks out. The use of herbal medicine is common. So the establishment of A.I. Centre at Tairuma Bazar for treating these livestock is most needed. Table—38 below shows the statistics of the livestock and poultry of the surveyed hamlets.

TABLE—38  
Distribution of Livestock & Poultry.

<i>Name of the Hamlets</i>	<i>Bullock</i>	<i>Milch</i>	<i>Pig</i>	<i>Goat</i>	<i>Poultry</i>
1. Ananta Sardar para.	18	05	23	02	45
2. Arjun Kr. para.	22	04	31	—	37
3. Kanu Tripura para.	06	02	07	—	24
4. Gidda Kr. para.	12	02	20	—	29
5. Brisha Kr. para.	04	—	—	—	05
6. Sutna para.	04	—	—	—	04
7. Kaifang	02	—	—	—	11

#### *Tools & Implements*

Table—39, shows data on the number of tools and implements in use in the surveyed hamlets. It can not be denied that the number of tools and implements have relation with the number of workers and their position. Based on information, the statistics of the tools and the implements in use has been formulated.

TABLE—39  
Distribution of Tools & Implements

Name of the hamlets	Plough	Spade	Harrow	Sickle	Takhal
1. Ananta Sardar para	06	13	06	17	19
2. Arjun Kr. para	11	21	11	26	28
3. Kanu Tripura para	03	09	03	09	11
4. Gidda Kr. para	06	12	06	19	19
5. Brisha Kr. para	02	06	02	08	09
6. Sutna para	02	08	02	11	11
7. Kaifang	01	02	01	03	03

### ECONOMICAL STATUS

#### Income

Like other areas of Tripura, the people of all the surveyed hamlets depend on cultivation. Generally the tribals of the surveyed hamlets are engaged in different categories of occupations which are as follows :

- a) Cultivation on their own lands.
- b) Share-cropping work on the land let out by others.
- c) Daily labourer in construction of roads, reclamation of lands, plantation of trees in the forest gardens.

There is no village industry in and adjacent to their hamlets, so the people of this area have to depend on cultivation as their primary occupation and labourers as their secondary occupation. The availability of job springing from cultivation is not adequate for the people of the tribes. They get no regular job in all seasons for earning. As a result, they drag a miserable existence. It is worth mentioning that usually the tribals can manage their meals and other necessities of life only for six months out of the output from cultivation. So the cultivators have to search for second source of income like that of constructional work, relief work etc. Yet, a good number of days of the year they go without any work. As they have no work during some portions of the year, manpower is lost heavily. On the other hand, the landless people have to depend on earning from daily labour. The engagement of the work becomes the same.

In my short survey at different hamlets, I am given the information that the average annual income of the cultivator is about Rupees five hundred only and the rate of daily labourer per soul varies from rupees four to five for man and rupees three to four for woman.

#### Expenditure

The economic life of the people of the Noatia tribe is nuder developed. During my survey, I have come to learn that daily labourers have no ample scope for regular job. One of the salient feature of their economic life is that people who earn something spends lavishly in mirth and drinking rice-beer heavily without thinking a bit for the

morrow. They have had little knowledge about controlled expenditure. As a result, a large number of people often drags miserable existence of life. Over and above, they never like to keep proper accounts of their income and expenditure.

It is worth mentioning that the expenditures on consumption of meal is very significant. Generally seventy five percent of the total income is spent in this regard. As a result, eighty five percent people of the surveyed hamlets go on deficit budget which are made good from different agencies like loan from money-lenders or any other sources. In absence of any assistance, the people of the surveyed hamlets have to survive unfed or underfed.

#### *Loan & Indebtedness*

It is learnt from the people of the hamlets of Ananta Saradr para and Arjun Kumar para that the average indebtedness is heavy. They are over head and ears in debt. The people borrow paddy for seed as well as consumption purposes. The paddy is costlier at the time of taking loan and much cheaper at the harvest times when they repay the loan with interest. Therefore, the rate of interest is never less than fifty percent. Sometimes the mahajans or the money-lenders deal in some other articles like cloth, ornaments and different objects of domestic requirements. The price of such articles are realised in exchange of articles produced by the tribal hamlets at exorbitant high rates. During my field trip, it is learnt that about 60 households are indebted with an amount of rupees one hundred to one thousand.

The tribals are illiterate and simple and cannot understand the book-keeping of the clever mahajans or the money-lenders and fall easily into the clutches of the so-called village mahajans. As regards the condition of the people of the surveyed hamlets viz., Kanu Tripura para, Gidda Kumar para, Sutna para and Kaifang, it may be said that a considerable number of people are so poor that they cannot get loan as and when necessary for want of security. Generally the loan is available from the village mahajans who extend loan against a guarantee or security. It is a matter of sheer dis-appointment that those wretched people donot possess any guarantee or security against the loan either in cash or kind at a high rate of interest. Therefore, the people of the above surveyed hamlets usually cannot have loan. Yet, it is learnt at the time of survey that some tribals of the above hamlets took insignificant loan from the money-lenders or known persons with an understanding that they would repay the loan physical labour during agricultural operation. The rate of such loan is 50% to 60%. I have been informed that about 40 households are indebted with an extent of rupees twentyfive to one hundred.

From the above surveyed hamlets, it is learnt that the paddy loan which is repaid in exchange of labour is more lucrative to the tribals. Paddy loan is taken throughout the year for inproductive purposes like consumption and it is to be returned along with interest thereon after the harvesting season.

## SUGGESTIONS

In the foregoing pages, I have presented a report on the findings of my survey in different aspects of the socio-economic life of the Noatia tribes of Belonia sub-division. Based on findings of the investigations, the following suggestions are appended for the welfare of the socially depressed sections of the aboriginals of the territory.

1. Landless tribals should be provided with work by establishing co-operative farming. Wood-crafts may be established in the hamlets. Adequate measures should be taken for training the tribals in the production of these articles. Publicity should be extended for sale of the products.

2. School teachers of primary schools of tribal villages should be instructed for residing near the schools. Strictness should be observed by the authority concerned in this respect.

3. Most of the tribals of the surveyed hamlets are landless cultivators. A vigorous search should forthwith be made for cultivatable lands in the tribal areas. The lands thus searched out needs distribution among the landless tribals. It goes without saying that the poorer section of the tribal community who deserves every care and consideration, claims to receive priority at the hands of the land distributors. It is suggested that nothing like favouritism or nepotism will creep in to the distribution of the land found out by vigorous search.

4. Irrigation facilities should be accorded to wherever possible so that bodo-cultivation may come into besides several seasonal crops of high yielding.

5. In the tribal areas, the government employees of different categories are posted to look into the social and economic conditions of the tribal people. The officers act as medium between the government and the people, and they transmit the demands and problems of the tribals to the State Government for solving their problems. In this respect, a point may be discussed about the frequent transfer of the employees from one place to another. Their transfer are so frequent that they cannot give full attention to the needs and problems of the tribals for redress. Considering the basic problems of the tribals and their remedies, the employees assigned to the tribal works should not be disturbed without acute reason in the interest of the tribals at large.



**PART—VII**  
**KAILASHAHAR**  
**VILLAGE BACKGROUND**

*Location*

The following hamlets of Kailashahar sub-division under Chailenta Multipurpose Block Kumarghat Block Development offices have been surveyed in relation to socio-economic life of the Noatia tribes and findings that emerged are appended hereunder :

<i>Name of the hamlets</i>	<i>Number of families</i>
1. Sridangchara	56
2. Baishnab Charan Roaza para	45
3. Durantamani Roaza para	11
4. Hakrai Roaza para	07
5. Mangal Roaza para	15
6. Brata Kumar Roaza para	13

Sridangcharra is a forest hamlet. It is situated within Kumarghat Block Development office in Kailashahar sub-division in the district of North Tripura and is about 5 (five) kilometres away from Kumarghat market.

The above hamlet is bounded on the north by Assam-Agartala Road and on the south by Machra Road and on the east by Sermun tilla and on the west by Kacharitala tilla.

The hamlet Baishnab Charan Roaza para is situated within Dakhin Dumacharra Gaon Sabha under Kailashahar sub-division in the district of North Tripura and is about 7 (seven) kilometres away from Manughat Police Station.

The above hamlet is bounded on the east by Manu river and on the west by Longtharai Reserve Forest and on the north by Uttar Dumacharra and on the south by Longtharai Reserve forest.

The hamlets Durantamani Roaza para, Hakrai Roaza para, Mangal Roaza para and Brata Kumar Roaza para are situated within Mainama Gaon Sabha under Kailasahar sub-division in the district of North Tripura and are about 4 kilometres away from Manughat primary Health Centre.

All the above hamlets are bounded on the east by chisincharra Tribal colony and on the west by Manu river and on the north by Manughat and on the south by Chailengta Bazar.

*Communication*

All the surveyed hamlets do not suffer from said plight in communication facilities and as such they stand enviable to other areas of the territory. The hamlet Sridangcharra has a bus road known as Assam-Agartala Road passing by the hamlet, at a distance of one to three kilometres. The feeder tracts maintained by the dwellers of the same hamlet are not fit for easy communication to the outsiders. But the tribals are accustomed to it and can cross those paths with ease.

The hamlet Baishnab Roaza para has a good communication facilities. The government has contemplated to construct a road from Manughat to Fatikroy. Recently, the construction of the road from Manughat to Dumacharra Bazar has already been completed. It is learnt that the government has also undertaken the construction of the rest portion within this financial year and thus it will do great help in respect of communication facilities for the people at large. There are many feeder tracts in between the hamlets which connect different hamlets.

There is a metalled road from Manughat to Chamanu passing by the edges of the hamlets of Durantamani Roaza para, Hakri Roaza para, Mangal Roaza para and Brata Kumar Roaza para, at a distance of one to four kilometres. Due to hilly nature of the areas, there are some feeder tracts connecting different hamlets.

During the monsoon, the up and down hilly tracts of the different surveyed hamlets cause great hindrance and trouble to investigators and outsiders who cannot easily pass along the tracts for penetration in to the hamlets but to the tribal folks it is otherwise, they find no difficulty to move along these tracts.

#### *Characteristics of the hamlet*

Different tribals and some caste Hindus have been dwelling in the surveyed hamlets. It is learnt that there is no class distinction among the inhabitants in respect of social and economical spheres: only distinction is observed in times of different worships and matrimonial ceremonies. Most of the males and a good number of females are bilinguals i.e. Bengali and Kok-borak languages speaking.

The people of Sridangcharra have no market facility in and around the hamlet. They have to go to the market at Papiacharra which is at a distance of 5 kilometers. The people of Durantamani Roaza para, Hakrai Roaza para, Mangal Roaza para and Brata Kumar Roaza para have a market at Mainama which is situated almost in the vicinity of their hamlets. They have a good market at Chailengta, at a distance of 6 to 7 kilometres.

There is a market at Dumacharra known as 'Dumacharra bazar' where the people of Baishnab Charan Roaza para and other hamlets make direct sales to traders and purchase their daily necessities in the weekly market. I have had an opportunity to witness that market day (monday) at the time of my survey. I have seen shopping of the aboriginals in that market. It is observed, on market day, it is a stream of tribals with head-load and backbasket full of different goods, being transported to the market up and down the hills from miles away. On market day, the sylvan people generally wear their best costumes and colourful adornments made of metals and flowers to exhibit their taste, liking and economic status. The women folks go to the market with babies in their back tied by a piece of cloth. The men folks move to the market along with their wives early in the morning. Usually the sylvan people set out for market in batches at dawn and return to their abodes before sun-set. Once a week, the aboriginals enjoy weekly market day where they come across their friends, relations and other village elders from different places and have a cozy day for discussing and exchanging their views, ideas and different problems etc.

Another interesting item is observed on that market day, I have come across some Mundas (proto-Austroloids) of both male and female folks in the Dumacharra Bazar. Those Mundas, it is learnt, came from Chotanagpur plateau and took refuge into this region during the British period. Some scholars opine that they were attracted to make entry into East Bengal during the British region for developments of indigo cultivation. But it is an object of deeper study.

Hinduism gains ground in Tripura especially among the people of Noatia tribe. They worship cults. Their tendency grows towards worship of gods and goddesses day by day. I have had an opportunity during my field trip to meet a Noatia Baishnab named Chandidas Baishnab son of Rashikdas Baishnab of Baishnab Charan Roaza para and he is worshipping the cult of 'Jagannath', 'Balaram' and 'Subhadra' in deep meditation. I also have been reported by the said Baishnab that he received initiation from another Baishnab and since he has been practising utterance of sacred mintras to worship etc. three daily and regularly.

It has also been reported that one Ananda Mohan Tripura of Noatia community of the same hamlet went to Gaya to perform oblation. It may safely be said that they have devotion to Hindu religion and faith in spiritual power. Further I have been informed that some members of the Noatia community of Uttar Dumacharra worship the goddess Durga in every year with the help of Brahman Pandit in place of traditional tribal priest.

#### *Different facilities*

Most of the hamlets have good sources of drinking water and people of those hamlets have either government ring-wells or kuchha wells belonging to well-to-do households. The hamlet Baishnab Charan Roaza para has good sources of drinking water. In Dakshin Dumacharra Gaon Sabha, there are six government ring-wells and seven tube wells. Besides, there are some privately owned kuchha wells. There are one ring-well and three tube wells and the people of Durantamani Roaza para, Hakrai Roaza para, Mangal Roaza para and Brata Kumar Roaza para obtain drinking water from those sources. The hamlet Sridangcharra has no good sources of drinking water. The people have to depend on water of Sridangcharra which passes through the hamlet.

The people of Baishnab Charan Roaza para has one A.I. Sub-centre (Village Veterinary Centre) situated at Dumacharra Bazar which at a distance of 1 to 2 kilometres. The people of Durantamani Roaza para, Hakrai Roaza para, Mangal Roaza para and Brata Kumar Roaza para have no facility of veterinary hospital within easy reach. They have to go to Chailengta, at a distance of 5 kilometres and the people of Sridangcharra have to go to Kumarghat, at a distance of 5 kilometres and to Pechartal, at a distance of 7 kilometres. All the surveyed hamlets have no medical facilities within the hamlets. The inhabitants have to depend more or less on herbal medicines to be obtained from village quacks.

### *Hamlet Organisation*

It is learnt from the surveyed hamlets that, with regard to social leadership in a tribal society, generally the Roaza or the hamlet chief offers a very fertile ground for the development of the respective hamlets. Among the Noatia population, it is observed that the Roaza, the Panchayat Pradhan, the Panchayat Secretary along with members appear to have been straining every nerve for the solution of village problems. Their decisions are binding and obligatory where village problems are concerned.

## DEMOGRAPHY

### *Population*

The population of the Noatia tribe in Kailasahar sub-division as per Census 1971 is nil. During my socio-economic survey of different sub-divisions, it is observed that a huge number of tribals belonging to Noatia community have been inhabiting in Kailasahar sub-division. It seems that the enumerators of Census Department posted the Noatia tribes into Tripuri Community, because some of the Noatia tribes of different sub-divisions use the surname 'Tripura'. As for instance, the honourable M.L.A. Shri Gopinath Tripura hails from the Noatia tribe belonging to Uttar Dumacharra Gaon Sabha under Kailasahar sub-division. Hence I think, the enumerator of Census Department took him for one of the Tripuri clan. Thus although such careless treatment of the tribes in the Census, may serve the administrative purpose, to some extent, it is of little use to a research personnel. During my survey it reveals that some of the Tribal Extension officers and the Tribal Supervisors have no idea of different clans of Noatia tribals, so how can we expect from enumerators of Census Department better knowledge of the Noatia tribes. It is learnt that, about 1500 Noatia population have been inhabiting in Kailasahar sub-division.

There are 147 families in the surveyed hamlets. The total population comes to 653 consisting of 324 males and 329 females. The average size of the family is 4.4. Different castes and tribes have been inhabiting in the surveyed hamlets and they are Noatia, Chakma, Riang, Tripuri and Garo of tribal community and Pal, Nath, Sutradhar, Sil, Banik and Brahmin of Hindu community. Table—40 shows the general distribution of population of all the surveyed hamlets of Kailasahar sub-division.

TABLE—40

### *Distribution of Population*

Name of the hamlets.	Number of families	Number of Population	Number of males	Percentage distribution	Number of females	Percentage distribution
1. Sridangcharra	56	209	158	51.1%	151	48.9%
2. Baishnab charn Roazapara.	46	115	57	49.9%	58	50.4%
3. Durantamani Roaza para.	11	56	28	50%	28	50%
4. Hakrai Roaza para	07	28	13	46.6%	15	53.6%
5. Mangal Roaza para.	15	85	39	45.8%	46	54.2%
6. Brata Kr. Roaza para.	13	60	29	48.4%	31	51.6%

### *Composition of family*

Most of the households of the surveyed hamlets have nuclear type of family. Some of the households have joint type of families. A very few special joint type of families are found among the surveyed hamlets. It is learnt that the people of the surveyed hamlets prefer nuclear type of families. General custom of the families is to make their sons separated after their marriages.

The family among the Noatias is patriarchal in nature. The family is characterised by descent, and succession reckoned through the male. The opinion of the mother is nonetheless taken into account but she has no right or status in the eyes of social law, custom and usage.

### *Marital Status*

Monogamy is the general characteristic of the tribe but polygamy is not altogether obsolete. The Noatias of the surveyed hamlets do not take a bride from other tribes. But there is no social bar for a Noatia to marry a girl of Tripuri, Jamatia communities. One of the most prominent marriage type is known as marriage by negotiation. The guardians of the groom and the bride meet at the house of the bride's father and decide the bride-price. Such traditional bride-price is however, of a rare item of the marriage at the surveyed hamlets.

As in the case of the Hindus, among the Noatias also, the dowry system is gaining increasingly popularity. Divorce may be effected with the special sanction of the hamlet council after a hearing from both the parties. The system of re-marriage of a widow or a widower also exist in their society. Love marriage is in practice though very few. During my field trip, it is learnt that the people prefer timely marriage. Early marriage is not favoured. Seven widows and eleven widowers are found in the hamlets during my investigation.

### *Educational facilities*

The hamlet Sridangcharra has one Junior Basic School which is situated in the heart of the hamlet. The roll strength of the school is 35 having one teacher. As there is no higher educational centre in and around the hamlet, one has to go to Papiacharra Senior Basic School which is at a distance of 5 kilometres. There is only one tribal boy who is reported to have been reading in class VII in Papiacharra Senior Basic School.

There is one Junior Basic School in the centre of the hamlets of Durantamani Roaza para, Hakra i Roaza para, Mangal Roaza para and Brata Kumar Roaza para. The hamlets enjoy the facilities of both the Senior Basic School and the High School. The Schools are situated

at Mainama, at a distance of 1 to 2 kilometres. The hamlet Baishnab Charan Roaza para has one Junior Basic School.

During my field trip, I have an occasion to witness the activities of a feeding centre. I have noticed the fixed number of students do not turn up to have free meals daily in the feeding centre. So, after cooking Supervisor of the feeding centre has to look for adult boys and girls to share the excess boiled rice mixed with pulse.

All the surveyed hamlets have primary schools in or adjacent to their hamlets, yet some tribals cannot but prohibit their children from going to schools for education due to poverty and medium of instruction for the students of Classes I and II.

During my investigation, I have come across one Matriculate and one B. A. inmates of the Noatia community of the surveyed hamlets. In fine, I should say that, a large segment of population of Sridangcharra, Durantamani Roaza para, Hakrai Roaza para, Mangal Roaza para and Brata Kumar Roaza para is illiterate.

## AGRARIAN STRUCTURE

### *Land & its utilisation*

Land is one of the basic factors of population. The tribals are born hill cultivators. So every cultivator should possess land. But the situation is different. Due to influx of refugees from defunct East Pakistan now called Bangladesh, some tribals mortgaged their lands to the village mahajans or the money-lenders and did not have the land returned. As a result, some tribals have become landless. Sridangcharra is a forest hamlet. During my survey it reveals that the cultivators of the Noatia Community of this forest hamlet have little or no attachment to the lands they hold there. The reason is not far to seek. Their right to their lands are yet uncertain. It has been reported that these forest hamlet cultivators are denied government loans or any grant simply because they live in a forest hamlet. It is, therefore, suggested that they should be given tenurial right forthwith to the lands, they possess and the hamlet ought to be released from the Forest Department. Further, it is reported that some landless destitute tribal inhabitants of Mainama Gaon Sabha have deserted their hamlets.

Because of absence of current land revenue records, it is not possible to get official data on holdings. As a result, for lack of reliable data, I shall have to satisfy, to some extent, with rough estimation based on information collected from local sources. The Table—41 below, the data is shown in respect of lands possessed by the tribals and the distribu-

tion of households owned by landowner and landless is furnished in Table—42.

TABLE—41

*Distribution of operational Holdings*

Name of the hamlets	In Acres				
	Total lunga land	Total tilla land	Total Home-stead lands	Total lunga land under cultivation	Total tilla lands under cultivation
1. Sridangcharra	54.40	03.60	06.40	22.00	01.40
2. Baishnab Charan Roaza para.	98.20	68.40	09.80	85.40	31.20
3. Durantamani Roaza para.	08.80	01.80	02.40	08.80	00.40
4. Hakrai Roaza para.	14.00	09.40	01.80	12.00	04.00
5. Mangal Roaza para.	18.40	06.20	04.20	16.00	02.00
6. Brata Kumar Roaza para.	14.20	02.80	03.80	13.00	02.20

TABLE—42

*Distribution of households of landless and landowners*

Name of the Hamlets	No. of families	No. of land-owners	% distribution	No. of land-less	% distribution
1. Sridangcharra	56	33	58.9%	23	41.1%
2. Baishnab Charan Roaza para.	45	39	86.6%	06	13.4%
3. Durantamani Roaza para.	11	08	74.1%	03	15.9%
4. Hakrai Roaza para.	07	05	71.4%	02	18.6%
5. Mangal Roazapara	15	08	53.3%	07	46.7%
6. Brata Kumar Roaza para.	13	05	38.5%	08	61.5%

Out of 147 households as shown in Table—42, 83 households are big cultivators who possess above 2 acres and 15 households possess 1 to 2 acres and thus occupy the middle position in status and 49 households are landless.

*Agricultural Method*

During my Survey, it is observed that the tilla lands seem to occupy a considerable large part of the land resources in these areas. Some

tribals have been practising different plantation of turmeric and ginger on the tilla lands. The tribals who possess lunga lands have been practising plough cultivation. Irrigation facilities of the surveyed hamlets are not much satisfactory. So the cultivation of Bodo paddy is not practised in a large scale.

Improved agricultural methods are not easily accepted by some Noatia tribals due to illiteracy and lack of knowledge. In general, plough cultivation and plantation of garden crops are the general methods of cultivation of the different surveyed hamlets.

#### *Livestock and Poultry*

Cattle are the valuable assets for the cultivators. Among the poultry birds, fowls are regarded as a valuable kind of food. In times of worship, it is most essential to the tribals. They have to sacrifice the fowls during worship to please the deity. It is a good source of additional income to many. Of course majority of the tribals consume a good lot of eggs and fowls. It has been reported by the people of the surveyed hamlets of Durantamani Roaza para, Hakrai Roaza para, Mangal Roaza para and Brata Kr. Roaza para that livestock often suffer from various diseases. Fowls suffer off and on from a sort of poultry diseases like 'Ranikhet'. There is no medical facilities in the modern sense of the term within the hamlets. In case of poultry, usually the tribals care little to have help from the veterinary hospital but in case of cattle, they rush to A.I. Sub-centre.

The livestock enterprises are characterised by the presence of pigs in most of the households and lesser number of milch cows. Porks are used in every festivals by the affluent tribals. Table—43 below, shows the population of livestock and poultry in different surveyed hamlets.

TABLE—43

#### *Distribution of Livestock & Poultry*

<i>Name of the hamlets</i>	<i>Bullock</i>	<i>Milch</i>	<i>Pig</i>	<i>Goat</i>	<i>Poultry</i>
1. Sridangcharra	02	—	—	—	14
2. Baishnab Charan Roaza para.	54	02	34	09	92
3. Durantamani Roaza para.	08	05	17	02	19
4. Hakrai Roaza para.	08	05	19	—	14
5. Mangal Roaza para.	14	07	15	—	10
6. Brata Kr. Roaza para.	06	04	10	—	11

#### *Tools & Implements*

Generally the prestige of farmers depends not only on the possession of lands and cattles alone but also on the number of implements used by them for the cultivation purpose. Over and above, the number of tools and implements used by the farmers reflect their position in cultivation. Table—44 below, displays the total number of tools and implements



collected at the time of survey. All these tools and implements are traditional. No modern implements are used by them. It is learnt that those were purchased from the local markets.

TABLE—44

*Distribution of Tools & Implements*

<i>Name of the hamlets</i>	<i>Plough</i>	<i>Spade</i>	<i>Harrow</i>	<i>Sickle</i>	<i>Takhal</i>
1. Sridangcharra	01	11	01	42	46
2. Baishnab Charan Roaza para.	27	48	27	61	63
3. Durantamani Roaza para.	04	12	04	14	14
4. Hakrai Roaza para.	04	07	04	11	11
5. Mangal Roaza para.	07	14	07	18	19
6. Brata Kr. Roaza para.	03	17	03	18	17

## ECONOMICAL STATUS

*Income*

The tribals are born cultivators. They were practising jhuming or shifting cultivation. It involved great waste in terms of soil erosion and damage of forest. Now the tribals are trying to abandon the jhuming or shifting cultivation. This practice has long become out dated. The government of Tripura is giving jhumia settlement. It is a good sign that new settled cultivation is the principal source of livelihood of the tribals. But the cultivation cannot keep the tribals engaged throughout the whole year. Moreover, labour force is excess in comparison with land and capital. So the tribals have to search for other job for their survival.

Sometimes the condition becomes worse when the daily labourers as well as the cultivators both seek for job. There is no ample opportunity for giving work to both the categories throughout the whole year. As a result, sometimes some tribals have to pass their day or days unfed and underfed. Although female folks of the tribals participate in the work and thus earn something, yet the fate of the tribal becomes worse due to lack of adequate source of work in the area.

The primary occupation of the cultivators is ploughing, sowing transplanting and harvesting at different times. The tribals cultivate some plot of land which they own. Sometimes, somebody are engaged in share-cropping. They do share-cropping business where half of the produce goes to land owner and the rest half comes to him. From time immemorial, the tribals of this area have been engaging themselves in weaving. Now they do not have adequate quantity of yarn for that job. The other secondary occupation is collection and sale of forest produce articles.

Considering the economic position of the tribals of the surveyed hamlets, it may be easily said that the average annual income per household of the cultivators is about rupees five hundred only and that the rate of daily labourers is Rs. 3/- to 4/- per soul.

### *Expenditure*

The expenditure pattern of the surveyed hamlets reveals that the expenditure exceeds the income. The socio-religious function like birth, marriages, funeral rites etc. occupy important position in the fabrics of the tribals culture. There, the tribals incur heavy expenditure on these occasions to enjoy the festivities. Since they spend beyond their economic capacities, they are compelled to take loans from the mahajans or the money-lenders by mortgaging their lands or selling their lands.

All the surveyed hamlets prepare more or less rice-beer or country liquor. This rice-beer is necessary for different worships and marriage ceremonies in keeping with the tribal characteristics. Further, it is another characteristic of most of the tribals to spend what they earn. Generally they do not think for the morrow.

It may be concluded by saying that most of the tribals of the surveyed hamlets run on deficit budget.

### *Loan & Indebtedness*

During my investigation, it is learnt that the tribals cannot but borrow to meet up their day to day expenditure as their source of income is not regular. During the monsoon, the labourers have to face a great deal of difficulty for want of work. It has been reported that there is no source of additional work after sowing and harvesting. Finding no other alternative they have to go to the money-lenders for borrowing money at an exorbitant rate of interest. Usually they borrow money with an understanding that they will repay the loan at the time of harvest. But it is a pity to note that they cannot repay the loan during their life time. So the debt is passing from father to son and then to grand son and thus from one generation to another.

On the other hand, it is the utter drawback for them that those so-called daily labourers who have no lands or assets for mortgage as security, cannot claim for loan. As a result, they have very limited scope to borrow from the money-lenders during the time of dire-need.

Sridangcharra is a forest hamlet. The people have no lands of their own. So they do not possess anything which can be kept as a security against the amount to be borrowed. The people of Baishnab Charan Roaza para are more or less stable in respect of economic status. They borrow from the money-lenders of the adjacent market or their known persons in times of marriages ceremony, funeral rites etc. They have to repay the loan at the time of harvest. The rate of interest varies from the persons to persons. It is learnt that about 27% households are indebted and the amount of loan varies from the extent of rupees one hundred to one thousand. They have to repay the loan within the same

agricultural year. Generally, no fresh loan is granted before repayment of the previous loan.

As regards Durantamani Roaza para, Hakrai Roaza para, Brata Kumar Roaza para and Mangal Roaza para, the common indebtedness is in the terms of paddy. The custom of taking loan is mostly concentrated in paddy from known persons with an undersanding that they would repay the loan at the time of harvest season. From the investigation it is found that about 70% families are indebted in kind of paddy.

In general, the people of the surveyed hamlets take loan for both productive and unproductive purposes. Sometimes they take loan for immediate consumption when they do not have any work. Some tribals take loan for purposes concerned with cultivation. The rate of interest in terms of paddy is eighty kilograms of paddy against one hundred rupees.

### SUGGESTIONS

Based on findings of the socio-economic spheres of the Noatia tribals of Kailashahar sub-division as depicted in the foregoing pages, the following suggestions are furnished for the development and up-lift of the socially depressed sections.

1. As the lands are up and down, the crop condition is not satisfactory. The seedlings are not of good quality for which the yield is very poor. Therefore, for improvement of land for better cultivation, the land is to be levelled by grading the soil. Besides, the supply of good seeds and manures is the crying need.

2. During the monsoon, the charras submerge the paddy fields on both side, resulting in heavy loss of crops, besides making the paddy fields uncultivable in the wake of sediment of sands caused by the floods. So it puts a great hindrance to the development of agriculture. Hence, construction of bundhs on the two sides of those charras is the crying need of the moment.

3. Feeding centres scheme should be co-ordinated with the primary schools. Free food should be supplied after the lapse of one or two periods.

Vegetable gardens in the vicinity of the school premises or on the adjacent lands of the schools may be treated as demonstration plots and the output of the gardens may be used as an item of feeding scheme. Free nutritious food may be supplied to the tribal boys and girls at least once a week.

4. Some of the surveyed hamlets seem to face irrigational problems. Naturally, the normal rains are quite adequate to the needs of agriculture during the rainy season. Different charras flowing in and around the different hamlets are also good sources of water supply for the Bodo paddy cultivation. So water in rains may be stored up by construction of bundh.

5. In regards to the prospects of poultry it may be said that diseases often break out in an epidemic form resulting in a heavy toll of lives. Accordingly, proper measures should be adopted for putting a stop to this menace.

6. During my field trip of the hamlet Sridangcharra under Kumar-ghat Block Development Office, I have paid a visit out of sheer curiosity to the hamlet Darchoi which is at distance of 2 kilometres from Kumar-ghat Tribal Rest House, where all the house-holds belong to Darlong Kuki tribes. During my survey, it is observed that there exists cordial harmony and solidarity among the dwellers. In general, the prosperity and sanitation of the hamlet are moderately good in comparison with the surveyed hamlets of the Noatia tribes. What has charmed me is the pineapple cultivation of the inmates with its picturesque beauty. I have talked with a number of Kuki tribes about their different problems. In course of my conversation, some inmates have urged me for the establishment of fruit canning centre in thier hamlet by the government enterprise. In view of the favourable trend of the cultivation of pineapple and is commercial importance, I think, there is bright sphere for action for, the establishment of fruit canning and fruit preservation centre in that area. If such a project is started by the government in that locality, the economic stability would usher and stand the people in good stead.

## PART—VIII

## KHOWAI

## VILLAGE BACKGROUND

*Location*

The following hamlets of Khowai sub-division under Teliamura Block Development Office have been surveyed in different aspects of Socio-economic life of the Noatia tribes and findings that emerged are appended below :—

<i>Name of the hamlets</i>	<i>Number of families</i>
1. Amrita Roaza para	22
2. Krishnaram Roaza para	09

The hamlet Amrita Roaza para is situated within Uttar Maharani Gaon Sabha of the Teliamura Police Station in Khowai sub-division in the district of West Tripura and is about 22 kilometres away from Teliamura Bazar.

The above hamlet is bounded on the east by Assam-Agartala Road and on the west by Khodaibari and on the north by Datalbari and on the south by Mardan Sardar para.

The hamlet Krishnaram Roaza para is situated within Badalbari Gaon Sabha of the Teliamura Police Station in Khowai sub-division in the district of West Tripura and is about 25 kilometres away from Teliamura Bazar.

The above hamlet is bounded on the east by Biladhar Chowdhury para and on the west by Bidya Chandra para and on the north by palthaimpha Chowdhury para and on the south by Amirita Roaza para.

*Communication*

The Assam-Agartala Road passes by the side of the hamlet of Amrita Roaza para which is at a distance of about 1 to 2 kilometres. There is Katcha jeepable road which starts from Assam-Agartala Road, at the point known as 41 miles (fortyone miles away from Agartala) and connects different hamlets of Maharani Gaon Sabha including Amrita Roaza para. There is another katcha jeepable road which starts from Assam-Agartala Road, at the point known as 43 miles (fortythree miles away from Agartala) and connects different hamlets of Badalbari Gaon Sabha including Krishnaram Roaza para. The people of those areas use those roads with perfect satisfaction, as such facility is not generally available in the tribal villages. In the rainy season, the roads turns into slimy for days together.

There are many up and down hilly feeder tracts, connecting different surveyed hamlets. During the monsoon, those hilly tracts become miry and are not feasible for one to cross but the tribal people can easily pass along those tracts in the wake of their living in those places for ages together.

### *Characteristics of the hamlet*

All the surveyed hamlets have homogeneous population where exists perfect solidarity and harmony among the dwellers. No instance of social or economical clash is heard at the time of the survey.

As the density of population in these areas is very poor, it could not give rise to the growth of any market in this locality. So the tribals of the surveyed hamlets have to depend on a market named Kulai Bazar which is at a distance of about 20 kilometres from Amrita Roaza para and about 23 kilometres from Krishnaram Roaza para and an another market named Teliamura Bazar which is at a distance of about 22 kilometres from Amrita Roaza para and about 25 kilometres from Krishnaram Roaza para.

It is already narrated in the foregoing pages that Hinduism gains ground among the Noatia tribes. It is observed here also and I have had an opportunity to find a Noatia sage wearing rosary of beads. His name is Bhabani Charan Noatia, son of Kunja Mohan Noatia of Krishnaram Roaza para and he is worshipping the cults of 'Lingam' regarded as Shiva in deep meditation. It is learnt that the same sage had the same 'Lingam' from another Noatia who got it from a place of Atharamura hill.

### *-Different facilities :*

There is no source of drinking water like ring-well, tube-well or any pond in the surveyed hamlets. The people have to depend on nearby charras from where they have to fetch drinking water. The general health of the people of the surveyed hamlets is not satisfactory. It is perhaps due to scarcity of pure drinking water.

There is no medical facility in the truest sense of the term in the surveyed hamlets. In case of urgent necessity, they have to depend on the village quacks. The people of the surveyed hamlets have been practising jhuming or shifting cultivation and owing to the nomadic life, it is learnt, they do not foster pigs.

### *Hamlet Organisation :*

Each village had its own village organisation which does not exist now-a-days. All the functions of the traditional village council are at present carried on by Roaza of each hamlet.

All the Roazas of different hamlets meet together along with elderly persons of the hamlets and distribute the jhum lands among the proper persons of the locality. Each Roaza of the different hamlets deals with petty like divorce, adultery and breach of social norms. He tries the matters in consultation with some elderly members of the hamlets and tries his level best to compromise the matters.

It is learnt that Shri Mani Mohan Noatia son of Chandra Kumar Noatia of Amrita Roaza para is discharging the function of the hamlet chief after the death of ex-hamlet chief named Amrita Kumar Roaza.

## DEMOGRAPHY

*Population :*

The general distribution of the population is presented in Table—45 based on information during the survey. It consists of moderate rate of population. There are no other communities save and except the Noatias where mutual understanding coupled with amity is found among the dwellers in their day to day performances.

There are 31 households in all in the surveyed hamlets and the total population stands 106 consisting of 61 males and 45 females. From the survey, it reveals that the average size of the households is 3.4.

I have been reported that twenty households from Amrita Roaza para, fourteen households from Krishnaram Roaza para which stand at the periphery of the bottoms of Atharamura have deserted to various places due to inadequate of jhum lands with good and favourable condition.

TABLE—45  
*Distribution of Population*

Name of the Hamlets.	No. of families	No. of members.	No. of males	% distribution	No. of families	% distribution.
1. Amrita Roaza para	22	78	47	60.2%	31	39.8%
2. Krishnaram Roaza para	09	28	14	50%	14	50%

*Composition of family :*

During my field trip, it is learnt that all the surveyed hamlets have nuclear, joint and special joint families. It is observed that there is strong tendency towards the nuclear type of family. The family among the Noatias is patriarchal in nature.

As per the information gathered, it is found that there are seventeen nuclear type of families, two joint type of families and three special joint type of families in Amrita Roaza para and the hamlet of Krishnaram Roaza para has six nuclear type of families and three joint type of families. Average size of the nuclear family is small and it consists of three to four members.

*Marital Status*

It is learnt that timely marriage is the profile of the surveyed hamlets. Generally marriages come off at the age of twenty for male folk and fifteen for female folk. The general type of marriage among the Noatias of the surveyed hamlets is the marriage by negotiation. But the bridegroom has to face a test in accordance with the traditional system of marriage of the Noatia Society. According to that system, the groom is chosen by the bride sitting by an oven at night. This is the widely practised type of marriage at the surveyed hamlets.

Monogamy is observed among the people of the surveyed hamlets and polygamy is unknown to them. Child marriage is not in vogue, Conventions of divorce prevails among them and it is executed when both husband and wife mutually agree to the proposition. But if the husband intends to divorce his wife having no consent to it, the demands of the wife must have to be fulfilled. In both the cases, divorce is effected by the adjudication of the Roaza who decides the matter along with the elderly members of the hamlet.

There is no social bar among the Noatia society to love marriage which is widely practised type of marriage among them. This system of marriage is absent in the surveyed hamlets. Marriages of widow and widower are in vogue. During my survey, two widowers and two widows are found in the different hamlets.

#### *Educational facilities :*

Majority of the Noatia tribes of the surveyed hamlets are illiterate. A very few among them can write his or her name. All other surveyed hamlets of all sub-divisions of Tripura have primary schools in and around the hamlets. It is interesting to note that there is no school in the surveyed hamlets where no primary school is situated in and around the hamlets and hence, it stands as an exceptional case.

There is a junior basic school at Maharani which is at a distance of about 7 kilometres from Amrita Roaza para. It is learnt that none of the boys or girls of these two hamlets read in that institution. In course of conversations with the inmates, it is learnt that the guardians have urge for education of their wards but they have no scope for the same. Some leading personnels of different tribal communities of these localities applied to the Block Development Officer of Teliamura for an institution having no effect as yet.

There is a feeding centre with numerical strength of forty children in Amrita Roaza para and the same is, it is learnt, at present discontinued for paucity of funds.

It is suggested that a primary school may kindly be sanctioned forthwith in Amrita Roaza para or adjacent to the hamlet for the literacy improvement of the depressed sections of the society.

## AGRARIAN STRUCTURE

#### *Land & its Utilisation :*

Jhuming or shifting cultivation is the general practice of the tribals of Amrita Roaza para and Krishnaram Roaza para of Khowai sub-division. The tribals use the land for only one crop after which the land is left for some years for the growth of fresh vegetation in the forest.

Jhuming or shifting cultivation is highly unproductive in view of the fact that both the output per acre and the output per cultivator in Jhuming are very low. Further, this system of cultivation involves great waste in terms of erosion of soil and destruction of forest produces.



It is learnt from the Tribal Extension Officer of Teliamura Block Development Office that the government has distributed 6 acres of lands recently per household for their settlement by adopting permanent cultivation. It is further learnt that tenurial rights will be extended to the jhumias shortly. But alas! it is observed at the time of survey that they have been practising jhuming or shifting cultivation with full energy and vigour as before. I have been reported that the tribals were given seedling of banana, pine-apples etc. by the government. During my survey, it is observed that the tribals have paid little heed to this respect.

Out of twenty two families in Amrita Roaza para, only three households have adopted both settled cultivation in the lunga lands and shifting cultivation in the tilla lands. It is observed that the quantity of lunga lands is very negligible.

Based on information collected during the survey, the data are shown in Table—46 below in respect of lands possessed by the tribals this year for jhuming or shifting cultivation and the distribution of households owned by land owner and landless is furnished in Table—47.

TABLE—46

*Distribution of operational Holding*

Name of the Hemlets	Total tilla Land	Total lunga land	Total House- stead land	Total tilla land under cul- tivation	Total lunga land under cul- tivation
1. Amrita Roaza Para	70.40	01.20	02.40	70.40	01.20
2. Krishnaram Roaza para	36.20	00.60	01.20	36.20	00.60

TABLE—47

*Distribution of households of landowner and landless*

Name of the	No. of house hold	No. of land- owner	% distribution	No. of land- less	% distribution
1. Amrita Roaza para	22	18	81.8%	04	18.2%
2. Krishnaram Roaza para	09	07	77.8%	02	22.2%

Out of 31 households as shown in Table—47 above, 18 households are big cultivators who possess above 2 acres, 07 households possess 1 to 2 acres and thus occupy the middle position in status and 60 households are landless.

*Agricultural Method :*

All the surveyed hamlets reflect the picture that most of the people have been pursuing jhum cultivation and as a result, they show no tendency for adopting settled cultivation.

In jhum cultivation, the first operation starts with the cutting of the forest vegetation. In cutting bamboos and other trees, they do not cut at the root, but a bit higher up and then allow all the forest vegetation for drying up for sometime after which the dried up materials are burnt down. By burning them, they have manures from ashes. All the materials at a time are not however completely burnt and as such they have to select another day to set fire to the remaining rubbish. Then they select sowing time followed by a shower i.e. first rain of the season. Seeds of jhum paddy along with various kinds of vegetables are shown. It is better if rain comes just after sowing, then the seeds covered with earth. In such case jhum seeds are saved from wild animals, birds and ants.

After a month or so, the wild grasses are found to grow. So frequently weeding is necessary for protecting the jhum crops. The work of weeding is practised at least thrice on an average during the entire harvest season and finally harvesting comes off.

At least after ten years of following, the plot becomes suitable for rehumming. At present, due to paucity of land, the jhumias go to the same plot of land before the full period of fallowing.

#### *Livestock & Poultry :*

Jhumias pay little heed to livestock and poultry birds for economic purposes. Due to the nomadic way of life as they have to remain in the jhum field for defending the jhum products from the wild animals for a period of five months or so, the jhum products from the fostering of livestock and poultry birds. Table—48 as prepared with the data on the distribution of livestock and poultry birds collected at the time of survey, is furnished below to display their position.

TABLE—48  
*Distribution of Livestock & Poultry*

<i>Name of the Hamlets</i>	<i>Bullock</i>	<i>Milch</i>	<i>Pig</i>	<i>Goat</i>	<i>Poultry</i>
1. Amrita Roaza para	—	3	—	—	44
2. Krishnaram Roaza para	—	—	—	—	45

#### *Tools & Implements :*

In course of field trip of the different hamlets, data on different kinds of tools and implements used by the tribals in cultivation are furnished in Table—49 below. This datum is based on information collected from the head of the families during the survey. The tools and implements by the tribals are traditional.

TABLE—49  
*Distribution of Tools and Implements*

<i>Name of the Hamlets</i>	<i>Plough</i>	<i>Spade</i>	<i>Harrow</i>	<i>Sickle</i>	<i>Takhal</i>
1. Amrita Roaza para	—	12	—	56	60
2. Krishnaram Roaza para	—	04	—	21	23

## ECONOMICAL STATUS

*Income :*

During my investigation it is learnt that, out of 22 families of Amrita Roaza para, only 18 families have income derived from jhuming or shifting cultivation. They have been adopting jhuming on tilla lands and two families get income from both settled and shifting cultivation.

It is always not feasible to have data in connection with the income of the tribals by questionnaire method. When the tribals are asked about their monthly income they furnish queer reply which shows either they can not recollect the exact amount of income or they would say, such an amount which cannot tally with the expenditure incurred through out the whole month.

During my survey, it is learnt that three families of Amrita Roaza para, both male and female folks are engaged in collection and sale of fuel from the nearby forest. It gives them an earning of about rupees three to four per day per soul. The other thirteen families both men and women are engaged as daily labourers in breaking of stones, construction of roads and other miscellaneous works. They earn wages four rupees per male folk and rupees three per female folk for the said works. The remaining three families, the adult members are disabled due to ill health of various diseases. Only three families do not engage themselves in secondary occupation of labouring other than primary occupation of cultivation. The number of family members of those families are few in number—3 to 4 members. They are full fed and can spend something after luxury articles. But they cannot lay by anything from their income.

As regards Krishnaram Roaza para, three families do not engage themselves in secondary occupation. Members of the other families have taken to both primary occupation and secondary occupation.

Considering all of their sources of earning in the two surveyed hamlets, it may be estimated that, in general, the average income per household of the tribals is about Rs. 600/- per annum.

*Expenditure :*

The expenditure pattern of the surveyed hamlets seems to be whatever is earned is spent on daily consumption and nothing is saved. Very few among them have any surplus income. During my survey, it is observed that some tribals are jolly people and care little for the morrow.

The tribal characteristics of the people of the surveyed hamlets are their alluring fascination for consumption of rice-beer or country liquor. It is learnt that they do not brew the same. These are amply available in the nearby villages. In this respect their expenditure often exceeds their income.

In fine it may be concluded that sixty percent families of the surveyed hamlets are economically backward and they are half fed & ill clad.

*Loan & Indebtedness :*

During my survey, it is learnt that most of the tribals of this area run with a deficit budget and in order to overcome the deficit they, under painful compulsion, have to go to the mahajan or the money-lenders for taking loan or look for any government grants.

Further, it is learnt that the mahajans or the money-lenders of Teliamura and Kulai introduced the system of dadan from the pretty long time for purchasing jhum products from the innocent, simple and illiterate tribals at high rate of interest and low rate of prices. Those mahajans deal in some other articles which are used in domestic purposes of the tribals. The prices of such articles are collected at high rate in exchange of articles supplied by the mahajans.

Due to promulgation of different rules for the safeguard of the tribals and introduction of emergency, the people of the surveyed hamlets are being denied the facility of having any loans from the money-lenders. But, in course of conversation, it reveals that the tribals have been taking loans from their known persons but nobody discloses any name or any amount of loan taken.

### SUGGESTIONS

Based on findings of the survey in the aspects of socio-economic life of the Noatiatribes of Khowai sub-divisions, a few suggestions are furnished below with a view to bringing about something for the development and prosperity of the socially depressed sections of the tribals.

1. Jhuming or shifting cultivation involves great waste in terms of soil erosion. This soil erosion not only impoverishes the soil in the hills but also causes floods in the plan lands. Further, this system of cultivation damages the forest. The destruction of forest means destruction of wild animals and birds. It does not deny the fact that the jhumias earn the lowest per capita income, while the settled cultivators, the highest. But we cannot expect that all the jhumias will abandon jhuming at a time. Jhuming will have to prolong in order to provide the people with their daily necessities of different vegetables, fruits and spices etc. As a matter of policy, jhuming shall have to be checked by either Multipurpose Project Officer or Block Development Officer through the introduction like Taungya system or any other system which is best suited for the purpose. Further, tenurial rights on the lands should be accepted to the tribals in which they will cultivate permanent crops. This introduction of land ownership will extend incentive to improve the lands and its productivity.

2. The tribals should be encouraged in floating cottage-industries in the realm of piggery, poultry, bee-hiving and dairy etc. besides orchards.

3. Tribals both male and female folks may be encouraged in different crafts suiting their tastes and capabilities & quite in keeping with the local needs and marketable prospects. With this end in view both financial and technical aids should be accorded to them.

4. Livestocks and poultry farming may be encouraged in the surveyed hamlets. Livestocks and poultry farming seems to have a good prospects in respect of enhancing their economical status. In this regard what is needed is perhaps a little initiative in the shape of monetary help, training of inmates and time to time proper guidance. I am sure, this will extend immense help to the economically depressed people with better avenues of life and prospects.

5. For the allround and speedy development, the proper utilisation of the women-folk in the realm of the production of wealth is the crying need. Accordingly, the tribal women deserve to be encouraged in spinning cotton yarn and weaving at least their needs, if not more on mercantile basis under the Khadi Gramodyog Centres or other sources. Hence, proper initiatives and suitable measures in this respect are needed most.

#### CHAPTER—4

#### CONCLUDING REMARKS

To have a fair-hand knowledge of socio-economic life of the poor and long neglected tribals of Tripura, a survey was carried on by the Directorate of Tribal Research, Government of Tripura and accordingly I was entrusted with the job of a survey work by field investigation on Noatia tribes within three months in the entire state comprising of three districts. There is no denying the fact that it is rather a Herculean task to draw up an accurate and precise picture within such a short period notwithstanding one's strenuous and sincere efforts in right earnest. By undertaking extensive and thorough tours, I have tried my level best to accomplish the task, so kindly entrusted to me within the scheduled time and collected data based on informations and observations.

This study is confined to Noatia tribes out of nineteen tribals inhabiting in Tripura with their respective culture, religious faiths, dogmas and so on and so forth. The foregoing chapters present a fairly comprehensive report on the findings of the study and the same is carried on with the sole purpose of exploring a general profile of the socio-economic life of the Noatia tribes.

Different data were collected by interviews and observations. The mainsource was the head of the hamlet, besides the sources available in field work by thorough contact with the heads of families or other members of the families in absence of the heads. Informations from Gaon Pradhans, Panchayat Secretaries, Tribal Extension Officers, Tribal Supervisors have also been incorporated in the programme. These data have been presented in such a way as to make it helpful to the investigators who would work among the aboriginals in future.

The findings have emerged from the survey undertaken amidst sample population of each sub-division. For the purpose of designing the sample, the following criterions were kept in view.

- (i) Two types of hamlets adopting shifting cultivation and settled cultivation.

- (ii) Rural area and Urban area.
- (iii) Prosperous area and Backward area.
- (iv) Cosmopolitan hamlet and homogeneous hamlet.
- (v) Deserted hamlet.
- (vi) Plain land and Tillaland.
- (vii) Periphery of places both above and bottom of a hill.

To provide a perspective to the hamlet study, the following drawbacks are confronted.

1. It is a short term study for three months and evidently it cannot claim all pervasine, all-enveloping and all-comprehensine stature.
2. It is neither feasible nor desirable to complete such an important and voluminous work within such a short period for the sake of administering cent-percent justice to the issue along with its object.
3. It is more so because the tribals normally do not open their mouths of th and minds to a stranger without testing his identity and bonafidelity. The investigators are to mix with them freely in order to explore their minds and thus to acquaint themselves with their problems.
4. The inconvenience of communication and conveyance also puts a great hindrance though not an unsurmountable difficulty.

In fine, I would like to reiterate that I have strained every nerve and explored all the avennues in order to make the survey work authentic and effective so that it may act as a basis at least to some degree to any philanthropic and economic work in time to come.

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**A Sample Socio-Economic Survey of the Schedule Tribe of Tripura**  
**Questionnaire—II**  
**(For individual informant)**

1. Name of the village..... Gaon Sabha.....  
 .....Block..... Sub-Division.....  
 .....District.....

2. Name of the informant.....Age.....

3. Name of the Community..... Tribe.....

4. What is the total members in your family :

	Male		Female		Total
	Adult	Minor (0-11 yr)	Adult	Minor (0-11 yr)	

5. How many of you are literates :

	Male	Female	Total
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6. Number of educated persons :

	S.F/H.S.	Graduate	Upwards	Technical	Total
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7. How many children of the school going (0.11) are actually attending school :

	Male	Female	Total
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8. Reason for non-going school specially for 0-11 yrs. children.

9. How many members in your family are married :

	Age at first marriage.	Same Village	Outside the Village with distance.	Community of wife (gotra)	No. of living wife.	Causes of divorce if any.
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- a) Father
- b) Son
- c) Brother
- d) Sister

10. No. of widow in the family :