

## Preface

Tribes are the most backward section of the society. Their lives bear the indication of wide spread underdevelopment. For centuries, these people lived far away from the larger section in isolated hilly tracks and forested areas which retarded their overall development. Very recently, they have come in contact with the modern society where people avail better living in terms of their access to food, cloth, shelter, education, health and occupation. The wide gap between these two segments of population emphasises the need of development of the tribal people. And this development activity is greatly supported by the Constitution of India. Actually, after independence, the Constitution of new India aims to establish equality among its citizen. Hence, the weaker section of the society is identified and the tribes are regarded as the most backward section of the society. They are referred as the Scheduled Tribes in the Indian Constitution. For the development of this backward section, they are provided special privileges so that they move forward and join the mainstream population. Now, after all these efforts are the tribal people developed? To know their present status, it is essential to focus on their socio-economic condition and assess their level of development. Detailed information about their present condition helps to structure the path of their future development. So, the present research work has attempted to conduct a micro-level study and selected Dakshin Dinajpur district as the study area. The tribal population of this district has received very little attention. Dakshin Dinajpur is not a tribal dominated area yet they constitute a large segment of its population but a proper concept about this part of population is almost lacking. In Hunter's 'A Statistical Account of Bengal'(1872), Sengupta's 'West Dinajpur District Gazetteer', Strong's 'Eastern Bengal District Gazetteer', they have mentioned about few tribal communities like Santal, Dhangar, Kol, Pahariya, Bedia etc. of this area though none of these is a detailed study of tribal communities. The single source of information about the tribes of this district is the Census Report which provides mere dry data but not a structured concept about the condition of the tribal people of this district. This research work have studied the present condition of the tribal people of Dakshin Dinajpur and assessed their level of development considering their social, economic and health condition. Besides, the study has attempted to find out the socio-economic gap among the major tribal groups of this district. The study have highlighted the major problems, the tribal people face here and also made some recommendations which may help the policy makers for the future development of the tribal people of this district.