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The rank order in which different occupational values are emphasised by business students is consistent with that found by earlier studies in the United States. This shows that a person's values play an important part, if not in determining his choice of a career, at least in delimiting the alternatives that are open to him. Occupational values, as used here, are not thought of as a fixed trait. Therefore, one may raise the question: Why cannot a person pick a profession irrespective of his occupational values and then adjust his values to the demands of the profession he has chosen?

In my opinion this is difficult but by no means impossible to do. What are the chances of a person whose values do not conform to the demands of the career he chooses being successful in

that career? In the first place, such a person may not be aware of the demands made by the occupation he chooses. When, therefore, he learns that those demands are not congruent with his values, he may either drop out of the training institution or else face an inner conflict and lack of satisfaction in his subsequent career. Alternatively, such a person may modify his values to bring them into accord with the demands of his occupation, which is, at best, a difficult process.

Despite many limitations, the findings of this study have several broad implications. I have suggested that, by and large, national cultures play a marginal role in the evolution of occupational values. This view contradicts stereotyped notions of vast cultural differences in this respect. Further, a

knowledge of occupational values, it is hoped, can enable us to select the "right" man for the managerial role. The institutions training students for the managerial profession should be particularly interested in studies of the present kind. My findings reveal that the Indian student is highly self-centred and is likely to show little concern for others. A social consciousness, which is an important aspect of the managerial role, is typically lacking among the Indian students. Are we admitting students who are socially conscious, rather than status-seeking, and who are aware of the significance of hard work? And if we are not, which seems to be the case, it is doubtful whether our future managers will be able to meet the many challenges facing the society.

North-East Frontier Agency Tribes Impact of Ahom and British Policy

P N Luthra

The North-East Frontier Agency is inhabited by about twenty tribes, each distinct in its language and culture. The rulers of the Assam plains have adopted varying policies towards these peoples. A methodical record of the frontier tribes is available only after the advent of Ahom rule in Assam in the thirteenth century.

*The Ahoms who were constantly faced with threats from two flanks—Muslim rulers in the west and Shans and Burmans in the east—were eager to establish friendly relations with the tribes. They managed to do this by introducing, along with other measures, the *posa* system, which allowed the hill peoples a share of the produce of the fertile plains. For about six hundred years the Ahoms largely succeeded in maintaining cordial relations with the tribes through policies of great tact and diplomacy.*

When the British occupied Assam in 1826, they, unlike the Ahoms, proceeded to establish a degree of political and administrative dominion over the tribes. This was initially effected by punitive expeditions and later through the establishment of amenities like annual trade fairs. For a short period before World War One, the British became wary of Chinese encroachments into the tribal areas and set up several police posts. They did not, however, interfere in the internal life of the tribes, but they did take the initial steps in linking the frontier peoples with the rest of India.

THE North-East Frontier Agency, as it is known today, is a mountainous territory, some 32,000 square miles in area. It lies in the shape of a scythe to the north and east of the Brahmaputra valley. Herein live some 20 tribes, each with a distinct ethnic, linguistic and cultural individuality. The major tribes are, from west to east, the Monpas, Akas, Daffas, Apatanis, Adis and Tagins. In the north-east and east of the territory, which sweeps round the head of the valley, there live Idus, Taraons, Kamans, Khamptis, Singphos, Tangsas, Noctes and Wanchos. Each tribe is divided into numerous clans

which are generally exogamous. The number of clans dividing a tribal group can be appreciated from the fact that among the Idus who number about 10,000, there are about 450 clans.

A habitation so severely divided into small groups had never formed a single political unit. From time immemorial, not only the tribes but even the clans and, in certain cases, the villages have led a separate existence. Various factors have driven these tribes, clans and villages into isolation. In the case of the Noctes and the Wanchos, for whom head-hunting had religious connotations, villages of the same tribe were

naturally constantly at war with each other. Among the Idus, clans mutually fought for economic gains. The situation was the same among the sub-tribal groups of Padams, Minyongs, Gallongs and Pasis of the Adi tribe. Among the Akas, there existed a semblance of tribal entity in that at the head of the tribe there was an elective Chief or Raja who, with his council, governed the village communities of the tribe.

The area of the North-East Frontier Agency was thus inhabited by a miscellany of tribes, independent of each other, varying in language and culture,

without any common bonds, living under the shadow of mutual fear and hostility. Dense forests, deep ravines and wide water gaps separated the clans and sub-tribes of these people from one another. These tribes were riven with acute competition and rivalry when in 1228 Sukapha entered Assam through Pangsau, the eastern gate of the Patkoi hills. The history of the frontier tribes and their migration into what is now known as the North-East Frontier Agency, has yet to be written in precise terms. However, claims to antiquity can be judged from the fact that at least one of the tribes, called the Idus, have it that Rukmini, the consort of Lord Krishna, belonged among them. Rukmini according to Idus, was carried away by Lord Krishna, which infuriated them and led to conflict between the two. The Idus admit that they came off worse and, to symbolise the humiliation of their defeat, they decided to partly cut off their hair. This earned them the name 'Chulikata', a descriptive term whose origin was only recently unveiled when Bhishmaknagar fort was unearthed 18 miles from Roing in Lohit District. As to the authenticity of the legend, mythologists and historians will, no doubt, have a good deal to say.

ADVENT OF AHOM RULE

Any continuous or methodical record of the frontier tribes only began from the 13th century with the advent of Ahom rule in Assam. The first confrontation of the Ahoms with the frontier tribes took place in 1228, on the slopes of the Patkoi hills, when the Tangsas, Noctes and Wanchos of Tirap District offered opposition to the advance of the Shan conqueror. Sukapha, the founder of the Ahom dynasty in Assam, overpowered these tribes and adopted the most barbaric and cruel extremes to demonstrate his superiority over them. Records narrate how some of the tribals were cut to pieces, or boiled, and how the flesh of a younger brother was forced down the throat of the elder brother. Happily, however, such inhuman treatment on the part of Sukapha did not constitute the Ahom policy towards the tribal people. On the whole, the Ahoms displayed tact, diplomacy, and statesmanship, of a high order in formulating a *modus vivendi* with the tribes. The Ahoms were more concerned with carving out a kingdom for themselves out of the rich plains of the Brahmaputra valley. Their main political aim was to consolidate their

hold over the plains of Lakhimpur in the east up to what was then the Kamrup kingdom in the west. This was in itself a major operation for it meant overcoming the resistance of a large number of kingdoms and principalities of Kacharis, Chetias, Saikias, Morans, Borahis, and so on. This historical operation continued for some 450 years and it was not until the close of the 17th century that the Ahoms became the masters of the valley extending up to Manas in the west.

The policy of the Ahoms was influenced by a number of factors. Being foreigners in the land, they had to tread the ground with circumspection. To achieve a stable rule, they had to identify themselves socially and culturally with the people. They faced threats on all flanks. Mughals in the west, who had their eyes on Assam and indeed made efforts to annex it with force. In the east, they were apprehensive of a Shan or Burman offensive, in their wake, to wrest their newly-won kingdom. In the north and south of the valley, there lived a conglomeration of tribes who asserted their wild and rugged freedom by launching attacks on the plains whenever opportunity offered itself. Thus while concentrating on the main object of conquering the valley, the Ahoms were eager to establish friendly relations with the tribes so that their resources were not dissipated in guerilla warfare in the hilly terrain of the tribal people. They saw special advantage in forging friendly terms with the Tangsas, Noctes, and Wanchos, who could not only warn the Ahoms of any invasion from across Burma but could also help to oppose it.

The Ahoms were shrewd enough to realise the importance of conciliating the tribal people. In order to achieve it, they introduced the *poso* system for the Akas, Daflas and Miris on the northern frontier. This was both a clever and a humane measure. The Ahoms realised that the hill people raided the plains to seize goods which did not exist in the hills or were available in only small quantities. The *poso* system, therefore, permitted the hill people to obtain a share of the produce of the fertile lands of the Duar areas. In the case of Nagas, the Ahoms adopted the system of Naga-Khats, whereby revenue-free lands and fishing waters along with Pikes were granted to the Noctes, Wanchos and other Naga tribes on the borders of the Lakhimpur and Sibsagar Districts. The Naga-Khats were managed for the Nagas by Assamese agents, called Naga-Khatias,

who were posted by the Ahom government.

The Ahoms knew that the Mishmis in Lohit District carried on large-scale trade of their hill produce with the plains of Assam. The economy of the Mishmis depended primarily upon such barter. The Ahoms exploited the economic need of the Mishmis and permitted this trade to continue only on the condition that the Mishmis recognised the overlordship of the Ahoms.

MATRIMONIAL ALLIANCES

The Ahoms came to Assam in very small numbers — about 9,000 in all. As their dominion expanded, they were compelled to increase their community and for this they forged matrimonial alliances in order to assimilate the local people. Those who were thus ethnically assimilated enjoyed the same privileges as the true Ahoms. High ranks were offered to new entrants into their community. The Ahoms Buranjis record that, during the reign of King Pratap Singh, the post of Borphookan, or Viceroy, of Lower Assam was given to a son of Banfera Wanchos.

This is not to say that the Ahom concern to conciliate the tribal people displayed any weakness on their part. Conciliation was invariably backed by show of force when the situation so demanded. They undertook punitive expeditions against the tribals and insisted on the surrender of evil-doers who were punished for their misdeeds. But the hand of goodwill and friendship was extended soon after the conflict whose sole objective was to act as a deterrent.

The Ahoms realised the importance of maintaining vigilance over the tribal people and, therefore, appointed frontier wardens. Thus the Sadiya Knowagohain was charged with overseeing the tribes in the Sadiya area, viz. the Akas, the Miris, and the Mishmis. Similarly, the Solal Gohain was responsible for looking after any threat from the Akas and the Daflas. These Gohains were assisted by the Duarias, or the guards of the passes, on the frontier between the hills and the plains.

During Ahom rule, the terms 'Bori' and 'Abori' came into use, indicating the attitude and the policy of the Ahoms towards certain tribes. 'Bori' signified those tribes which had submitted to the political control of the Ahoms and who had agreed to abide by certain terms and relations, such

as *posa*. So long as these terms were honoured, there was no bar to friendly intercourse. Indeed, on many occasions the Boris joined the Ahom army. A British officer wrote in 1883, "The Assamese army appears at this time [1660] to have been largely recruited from Nagas and Miris and it is evident that they were quite able to hold their own against the well-trained armies of Hindustan". There were, however, numerous occasions when the terms of agreement were broken and the Ahoms took armed action to push back the raiders into the hills.

On the whole, the Ahom policy towards the tribals was successful. It achieved reconciliation with certain tribes and led to assimilation of certain others. The Ahoms profitably used the tribes in the ranks of their army. There was no occasion when a tribe invoked the help of a foreigner against Ahom rule. On the other hand, there were instances when a tribe invited the intervention of the Ahom government in its inter-tribal conflicts. This is exemplified by the Banfera Wanchos who invited Ahom assistance against Banchang Nagas living to their south. It is due to their tact, resilience, and diplomacy, that the Ahoms were able to enjoy sovereignty for some 600 years in a country which was surrounded by ferocious hillmen who delighted in depredation and loot.

The Snake Pillar in the Gauhati Museum bears the inscription of a treaty arrived at with the Mishmis by the Ahoms in 1532:

"I, Dihingya Borgohain, do hereby declare on the strength of this stone-inscription and copper table that the Mishmis with their wives and children will henceforth inhabit the entire hills near the Dibang river... Should the other neighbouring tribes ever invade the Mishmis, they would become slaves of the Mishmis".

The above demonstrates the Ahom policy towards the tribes: It meant conciliation, non-interference in their independent existence, and assistance to meet their needs if they were friendly.

BRITISH POLICY DIFFERENT

When the British occupied Assam in 1826, they inherited the *ad hoc* relations which had existed between the Ahoms and the hill tribes of NEFA. The later years of Ahom rule had been enfeebled by internal conflict and Burmese invasions. The weakening Ahom rule emboldened the hill tribes to violate their obligations and to make the best use of the prevailing chaos. The area which now constitutes the

eastern part of Tirap District and the southern part of Lohit District, being on the route of the Burmese invasions of 1816, 1819, and 1822, was the most affected. The Singphos and the Khamptis were the main tribes deeply involved in the lawlessness and turmoil of the day. The Singphos joined hands with the Moamarias towards the close of the 18th century, and they terrorised the surrounding tribes of Nagas and the Khamptis. They also frequently raided the plains of Assam to capture slaves. The Khamptis, on the other hand, used this opportunity to consolidate their hold on the Tengapani basin with a view to developing it into an independent state.

The British policy towards the tribal people ran a different course from that of the Ahoms. Geo-politically, the British were in a far more advantageous position than the Ahoms had been. The western flank offered no threat to the British, and the eastern flank was secured for them by their conquest of Burma in 1854. The northern frontier with Tibet was dormant, for China had not yet become a power. Practically throughout the 19th century the British sensed danger to India from the Russian Czar, however, through the north-west mountain passes of Hindukush. The British defensive machinery in India was, therefore, geared to forestall any Russian advance into India from the north-west. That Russophobia led to the three Afghan wars, which cost the British so dearly and which left a black mark on the history of British rule in India.

The British were determined to establish peace in Assam and, unlike the Ahoms, they intended to extend their dominion over the frontier tribes. The British came into conflict with the Singphos first. Their aim was to contain this tribe within its mountainous habitat and, if possible, to push it back to its original home in Burma. The British also intended to release the captives held by the Singphos and to prevent them from taking any more slaves. Emancipation of the slaves was as much a philanthropic as a political objective. The movement against slave trade had agitated England since 1789. This agitation ended with the passing of the anti-slavery Act in England in 1811 which was further bolstered by the Act of 1833. The movement in England naturally influenced British policy in India. This may be considered as the first act of humanism on the part of the British government in the hills of North-East India.

Such humanism had a twofold advantage — it abolished slavery and at the same time did away with the primary incentive for the raids of the Singphos. The drive against the Singphos led to the sequel of defining the political relationship between the Singphos and the British.

The relation with the Khamptis was determined by attempts to define it in specific terms and by insistence of the British on faithful and scrupulous observation of mutual obligations.

Armed conflicts with Singphos and Khamptis came to an end in the early part of British advance into the eastern corner of India. After the annexation of Burma in 1854, the importance of the Singphos and the Khamptis as frontier tribes disappeared.

INVOLVEMENT WITH POSA

With the Abors, Mishmis, Daffas and Akas — the tribes who lived along the Tibetan frontier — the British got first involved over the issue of *posa*. In this, they accepted the Ahom tradition, and limited their efforts to codifying and firmly implementing the terms of that ancient relation. Thus, in 1844, an agreement was signed with the Monpas of Towang, whereby the Monpas' claims on the plains were bought out by the British government by payment of an annual sum of Rs 5,000. Similarly the peoples of Shergaon and Rupa were granted a *posa* of Rs 2,526. Likewise, Thembang and Rahung were allowed *posa* of Rs 145,13 annas and 6 pies.

In the case of the Akas, the dominant rival of the British was in the person of Thagi Raja — a Chief of the Kovatsun clan of the Akas. During a punitive expedition in 1829 to put a stop to the raids of Thagi Raja, the British captured him. In 1832 he was released but, instead of living peacefully, Thagi Raja conducted a massacre of Balipara village and of the police outpost there in 1835. Punitive expeditions were launched against him again till his surrender in 1842. An agreement was signed with the Akas by which the two clans of this tribe agreed to live in peace on payment of Rs 536 per year to the Kovatsun clan and Rs 164 per year to the Kutsun clan. The demarcation of the boundary with the Akas took place in 1874; but in 1875, the Kovatsuns rose again and claimed the territory up to Bhorali river. An expedition was mounted in 1883 to put an end to Aka intransigence.

Against the raids of Daffas, the

British introduced a blockade, along with a military expedition. In 1910, another expedition was launched. The net result of the British display of power was that the Daffas started to come down to the area near the Inner Line for permanent resettlement. By 1922, about 1,000 of them were counted as living in the British territory. The Daffa resistance thus came to an end.

The hill Miris were inoffensive and were awarded a *pos*. A friendly mission was despatched to their land in 1911-12.

The Apatani tribe had offered no hostility. Only on one occasion did they raid the tea garden of H M Crowe, taking away his gun, killing two men, and taking three captive. This incident was followed up by a punitive expedition in 1897, when the Apatanis were overpowered. Thereafter the Apatanis offered no problem to British rule.

As regards the Padams and Min-yongs, of what was then known as the Abor tribe, the British record describes the situation as follows:

"Since our occupation of Assam, several operations were undertaken against the Padams and the Min-yongs, but none were strikingly successful. The blusterers continued to hold an exaggerated opinion of their own power and a corresponding contempt of our Administration which culminated in the barbarous massacre in 1911 of the Assistant Political Officer, Williamson, Gregorson, and 42 followers at Komsing. A military expedition sent in 1912 to exact reparations brought home to the Abors the power and resources of the Government and since then their country has been surveyed and explored and a loose political control has been established over their hills".

The Idu tribe had carried out various attacks on individuals and villages. They were blockaded several times, which led to good behaviour on their part.

The Taraons and the Kamans posed no major difficulty, because they were by disposition quiet and their main interest lay in trade with Sadiya. The only incident of note was when Fathers M Krick and M Baur, two French missionaries, were murdered in 1854 by one Kai-i-sha. A punitive expedition was launched in 1855, followed by Needham's expedition to Zayul in 1885. Further expeditions were sent in 1911 and 1912 to the Mishmi area under Williamson putting an end to any opposition on their part.

By 1839, the Khamptis had established their hold over Sadiya area and their Chief had declared himself the Sadiya

Khowagohain. He treacherously attacked the British camp at Sadiya in that year, killing Colonel White. The British immediately struck back with an expedition, and, in 1842, by proclamation, Sadiya was incorporated in the Province of Assam.

The above will show that the British delivered crushing blows to the hill tribes whenever the latter violated peace. In this respect the British followed a much firmer policy than the Ahoms had done. The punitive expeditions of the British went much deeper into the hills of tribes in order to bring the lawless to book. The police operations conducted by the British were thus decisive in liquidating tribal arrogance or any sense of martial superiority on their part. Military expeditions and promenades were a regular feature of British rule, and these succeeded in producing an impact of British power and prowess on the tribes.

ESTABLISHMENT OF ANNUAL FAIRS

Side by side with punitive expeditions, the British introduced a system of commercial intercourse, by establishing annual fairs along the foothills where the tribes which behaved well could come down for trade and benefit from peaceful commerce with the plains people. These fairs exerted a steady but deep influence on the tribal mind. Thus Darranga, Udalgiri, north Lakhimpur, Sadiya, and Margherita, developed into trade marts. The tribal people, through transactions at these fairs, came to appreciate the value of money and were lured to these marts by urges of profit. In time, these organised fairs became vital for maintaining the life of the tribal people in the hills. The British introduced a new punishment for the uncompromising tribes, by forbidding them to take part at these fairs whenever they violated peace. This proved a very effective punishment, and many rebellious villages submitted when kept away from the trading centres. Thus, the Dibang or Mizamghat column, mounted in 1911 to punish the Mishmis of the Sissiri valley, was given the powers "to inform the people that all prohibition against visiting Sadiya and trading will be withdrawn as long as orders are obeyed".

Unlike the Ahoms, the British had the political aim of extending their dominion over the tribal people. Whereas they were not in any hurry to actually administer the tribal areas, they

were quite clear that the tribal people should consider themselves British subjects. There were also certain compulsions flowing from geo-political considerations. Towards the close of the 19th century, rumours were afloat that Russia was entering the chessboard of power politics in Central Asia. News was circulating at the time that Russia had come to an agreement with China to oppose any British influence in Tibet. This posed a threat to the security of British India.

The British were, therefore, anxious to demarcate a suitable boundary between India and China. In mounting the expedition in 1912, to exact reparations for the murder of Williamson, one of the primary objectives laid down was "to carry out such survey and exploration as may be possible in order to obtain the knowledge requisite for the determination of a suitable boundary between India and China in this locality as to which at present we know practically nothing. Recent events on the frontier of Burma have shown an urgent necessity of coming to an understanding with China about our mutual frontier, of preventing Chinese intrigue within our limits, and of keeping her as far as possible removed from the present administrative area. We accordingly proposed to depute a staff of Survey Officers with the punitive force".

The concern of the British about any possible extension of Chinese influence in the tribal area was so marked in 1912 that the despatch of a punitive expedition to avenge the murder of Williamson was supplemented with a friendly mission from Bomjur through the Mishmi country. The British records say that they saw "no reason to anticipate opposition on the part of the Mishmis whose headmen, indeed, on the occasion of Mr Williamson's recent journey to Wallong asked that they should be recognised as British subjects". The British records go on to say that the idea of sending the friendly Mishmi mission was a step "specially desirable by the advance of China to Rima". Thus political considerations loomed large in the determination of British policy towards the frontier tribes. India was precious beyond measure to the British, and they were not taking chances against any Chinese advance into the frontier tribes. This political consideration was reason enough for the British to extend their dominion over the frontier tribes. The punitive expedition thus came to serve a double purpose: first, to effect the

surrender of the chief instigators and perpetrators of the Williamson massacre, and secondly, to check any advance on the part of the Chinese across the frontier between India and Tibet. The head of the expedition was, therefore, charged with the following terms of reference:

"If during the course of the expedition Chinese officials or troops are met, endeavour should be made to maintain amicable relations. If, however, such officials or troops be met within the territory of tribes on this side of recognised Tibetan-Chinese limit, they should be invited to withdraw into recognised Tibet-China limits and, if necessary, should be compelled to do so."

The expedition was also asked "to submit a proposal for a suitable frontier line between India and Tibet".

British policy on the North-East Frontier was thus not limited to how the tribes should be treated. This, indeed, was only a part of the much bigger and more vital consideration, viz. the security of British India and the policy and steps necessary to stem any expansion of Chinese influence over the frontier tribes to the detriment of India as a whole.

A SUITABLE BUFFER

The British looked upon the tribal territory as a suitable buffer; and significantly, there was no urgency on their part to extend the actual administration over the frontier tribes so long as Tibet was a dormant neighbour. But in 1911, news had reached them that "the Chinese Government have approved of the despatch of a force down the Dibang river towards the Abor country". Again, there were reports that "a party of Chinese appeared in the Aka country close to the administrative frontier of Assam". There was even further news to say that "the Chinese officials at Rima have sent summons to the Mishmi tribal headmen to appear before them with a view to the annexation of the Mishmi country".

These reports caused much concern to the British Government in India, leading to the formulation of a policy to determine the frontier line across the tribal territory as would best preserve the British interest in Assam. The British realised that on the administrative border of Assam, there existed some of the wealthiest districts where large sums of private European capital had been invested and where the European population outnumbered the European population of almost any other district in India. There was thus a strong economic stake in the deter-

mination of British policy towards the frontier tribes.

The Ahom policy towards the tribes, on the other hand, had rested content with taking such steps as would prevent the tribes from disturbing the peace of the valley. The Ahoms went to the extent of introducing the *pos* system with a view to providing the tribal people with certain articles and commodities which were not available to them in the hill area. The Ahoms did not plan the annexation of tribal people nor the extension of Ahom administration into the tribal territory. The British were firm that the tribes should realise "the necessity of observing properly as subjects of the Queen". Furthermore the British had a policy of extending the administration over the tribal people and, for this purpose, the necessary administrative machinery was fashioned from time to time. It will thus be seen that, although in the earlier years the Deputy Commissioner of Lakhimpur District was given the responsibility of looking after the tribal area, by 1945 three separate frontier tracts, viz. the Balipara Frontier Tract, the Sadiya Frontier Tract, and the Itanagar Frontier Tract, each under a Political Officer, were created to deal with the extensive and important administrative work of the frontier tribes.

In 1914, the famous McMahon line treaty came into being. It is difficult to say why efforts were not immediately made to extend the administration over the tribal area right up to the McMahon line. This may have been due to the outbreak of World War I. However, there is no evidence of any determined plan on the part of the British to carry the administration up to the McMahon line after the War ended in 1919. One of the reasons perhaps was the enormous cost and expenditure in establishing and feeding the administrative centres in the rugged country of the frontier tribes. Thus, when considering the necessity of a post of Wallong in 1914, British records state:

"Another important point in connection with the establishment of a post at Wallong is that of the immense cost of rationing the post from Sadiya would entail".

Financial considerations apart, the Chinese or Russian menace which had appeared in Tibet at the beginning of the 20th century was no longer in evidence after World War I. In the years after the First World War, the Chinese were busy with their internecine war

while Russia was busy evolving a new socialist state. Consequently, though the earlier British policy did not change in its essential principle, the earlier urgency for administering the tribal territory had somewhat waned. British policy towards the tribes was, therefore, very much conditioned by the bigger events across the tribal territory which were of consequence to the security of British India as a whole.

The British were, moreover, eager to explore the tribal territory from the geographical and scientific angles. Thus the expedition by Needham of the Lohit valley in 1885, to Rima in Zayul Province of Tibet, was intended to find out whether the Tsangpo river joined the Irrawadi in Burma or whether it ran through the Lohit District. British scientists, such as Kingdon Ward, the explorer botanists and scientists of the British Museum, etc. were now and again afforded opportunities to tour the tribal area to collect flora and fauna to enrich botanical and geographical knowledge.

COMMERCIAL CONSIDERATIONS

Commercial considerations too weighed very heavily with the British. Tibet was known to be a profitable market, and reports had arrived about the sale of British broad-cloth in Tibet at a fabulous profit. Tibet was also known to be rich in gold and an inviting market for tea. British trade interests, therefore, started clamouring for suitable action to oust the Russian trade from the rich field of Tibet. The Chinese had a monopoly of tea trade and the British directors of the East India Company wanted it to be replaced by the Indian export of tea to Tibet. Many of the expeditions — such as that through Sikkim or through what is today the Kameng District or along the Lohit valley to Rima — were thus aimed at discovering trade routes so that British goods might be profitably sold in the markets of Tibet through a direct land route.

The British were torn between two courses of action: one dictated caution and forbearance so as not to alienate the tribes, and the other dictated by commercial enterprise pressed them to a 'forward' policy. Notwithstanding the temptations of lucrative trade, political expediency won the day. Commercial enthusiasm was kept in check for the sake of imperial interest. Thus the Inner Line Regulation was passed to prevent any friction between the tribes and British commerce which

was eager to expand tea cultivation within the hills.

Political interest, generally overrode commercial consideration. Even in the sphere of administration, the policy of non-interference in the internal affairs of tribes was adopted so as to leave them to develop and change in their own way. The extension of British administration meant the opening of police check-posts in the interior, and the insistence that the tribal folk consider themselves part of British India. The British flag had to fly over the tribal territory without interference and rivalry. The headquarters of British administrators remained in the plains of Assam, such as Charduar, for the Political Officer of Balipara Frontier Tract or Sadiya for the Sadiya Frontier Tract. The British had no programme for the development of the tribes or the extension of welfare services to them. Thus, in 1947, when Independence came to India, there were only two Lower Primary Schools in the entire North-East Frontier Agency. Such was the low level of social welfare development achieved over a period of 120 years of British rule over the frontier tribes.

The British did not levy any taxes, except for an occasional poll tax or house tax, payable by tribes which had shown intransigence against the advance of British influence. British law, which applied in Assam or in other parts of India, was also not extended to the tribal territory. In fact, special laws for the administration of justice, which respected the customary codes of tribes, were introduced so that the settlement of disputes and crime might continue uninterrupted according to the ancient tradition of the tribal people.

The British conceded that the tribal people were the owners of their land. They took pains to enforce the principle that forest trees and other produce were tribal property. When punitive expeditions or British administrators on tour in tribal territory, wanted land, trees, or any other items, they sought permission from the people and paid compensation for what they took.

The British refrained from any deliberate or systematic efforts to introduce change in the pattern of tribal society. The solid fact of British policy lay in the creation of a strong and stable government in the plains which, while it did not meddle in tribal affairs, insisted upon and enforced scrupulous adherence to agreements and the need of peaceful co-existence. This had a

deep and permanent effect on the tribal mind. The tribal freedom to manage their own affairs, to enjoy the rights of total possession of their land and plantations and uninterrupted liberty within their area, were fully maintained. The result was that, people looked upon the British as some kind of a distant benign superior authority which they could approach to seek a solution of their difficulties. The tribal recognition of British authority made them invite the British for mediation between warring groups or in matters of land disputes or in murder cases or if the property of a person was seized by another.

BEST DETERMINED IN THE FIELD OF BATTLE

The blows dealt by superior British arms made the tribal people recognise the fact that the British were the masters. This demolished any psychological barrier between the two and led to the frank and free admission by the tribal population that they were subjects of the British government who had defeated them in physical combat. Among the warlike tribes, superiority was best determined in the field of battle, and only the winning side could claim it. This fact has been demonstrated by the hypothesis put forth by the Naga hostiles who state that they came under the British because the British

defeated them. After the departure of the British, the Naga people had every right to resume their independence.

British rule represented a new era in the history of North-East Frontier. It was during the British rule that the process of gradual penetration into the hills had started. It was the British who made the people realise that they belonged to India and it was during the British period that the political jurisdiction of India was extended on the McMahon line principle. The British took the initial steps to link the economic interests of the frontier people with that of the rest of India by organising marts and fairs along the foothills. The British also were the first to introduce a high ethical conception of life through measures such as the abolition of slavery or the renunciation of head hunting. It was also during British rule that the tribal mind was diverted towards India to seek a solution to their difficulties in every-day life. All these are positive achievements of British rule. They constitute the initial spadework and the clearing of obstacles, on which further programmes of work of socio-economic development, more intensive administration of the people, and their integration with the rest of India, was to be built by the National Government of India which took over the reins of power in 1947.

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