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DECLARATION

I, Sri Paranan Konwar, bearing Registration No. Ph. D./1457/2011, dated 18/04/2011, hereby declare that the subject matter of the thesis entitled “Poverty, Inequality and Human Development among the Mishing Tribe in Dhemaji and Sivasagar Districts of Assam” is the record of work done by me and that the contents of this thesis did not form the basis for award of any degree to me or to anybody else to the best of my knowledge. The thesis has not been submitted in any other University / Institute.

Place: Silchar

Date:

(Paranan Konwar)

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PREFACE

The real objective of development is not the expansion of goods and services, technological progress and social modernization; but to enhance human freedom or increase people's development choices that enable a person to mix with others without being “ashamed to appear in public.” That is why, there is a paradigm shift from “economic development” to “human development” where people are considered as the real wealth of a nation.

Assam is the hub of diverse ethnic tribes with different cultures and languages. The Mishings are the second largest scheduled tribe of Assam state, first being the Bodos. Since the adoption of five years plan, economic policies in India have been formulated with the twin objectives of growth and equality. But in reality, there is development of underdevelopment. Unbalanced growth co-exists with growing inequality. We must keep in mind that equality is a right, not a policy. A good number of the under-privileged social group is still below the level of decent standard of living. Education or health is also our right, not privilege. Thus, it necessitates to study on poverty and well-being of the tribal people in North East India like the Mishing tribe of Assam. We know that we cannot tackle the problem of absolute and relative poverty effectively, until and unless we understand and identify their causes. We are to search the answers of: What is the poverty of progress? Where is the poverty of poverty measurement? How Assam can be moved from poverty to power crushing the spirits of inequality and human development? Now focus should be on “a life of dignity for all” and initiative to move “from vulnerability to resilience”.

This present study has been organized into five chapters. Chapter I is the introductory chapter of the present study. The statement of the problem highlights the socio-economic conditions of South Asia, all-India states, North-eastern states, Assam and provides an outline of the Mishing tribe. The rationale behind this study is also explained. It portrays the profile of the study areas, viz., Dhemaji and Sivasagar districts, and discusses the theoretical framework and measurement of poverty, inequality and human development. It mentions the objectives, hypothesizes, scope and limitations of the present study.

In Chapter II, attempt was made to review the theoretical and empirical works on poverty, inequality and human development. These are reviewed in context of international and national studies. Special emphasize is laid on scheduled tribes. The literature gap has been included to justifying the present Study.

Chapter III deals with the detailed discussions on the models, such as, Ordinary Least Squares (OLS) and Logit models defining their dependent and independent variables. It incorporates the description on the measurement of poverty, inequality and human development that are used in the present study. Nature and sources of primary and secondary data are also mentioned along with the sampling design.

Chapter IV reports the estimates of poverty, economic inequality and human development among the Mishing tribe in Dhemaji and Sivasagar districts separately. It shows the econometric analysis of the determinants of poverty.

Lastly, in the Chapter V, we outline the summary of the principal findings and conclusions of the present study. Policies are suggested for future action and recommendations are made for further research related to the present theme.

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