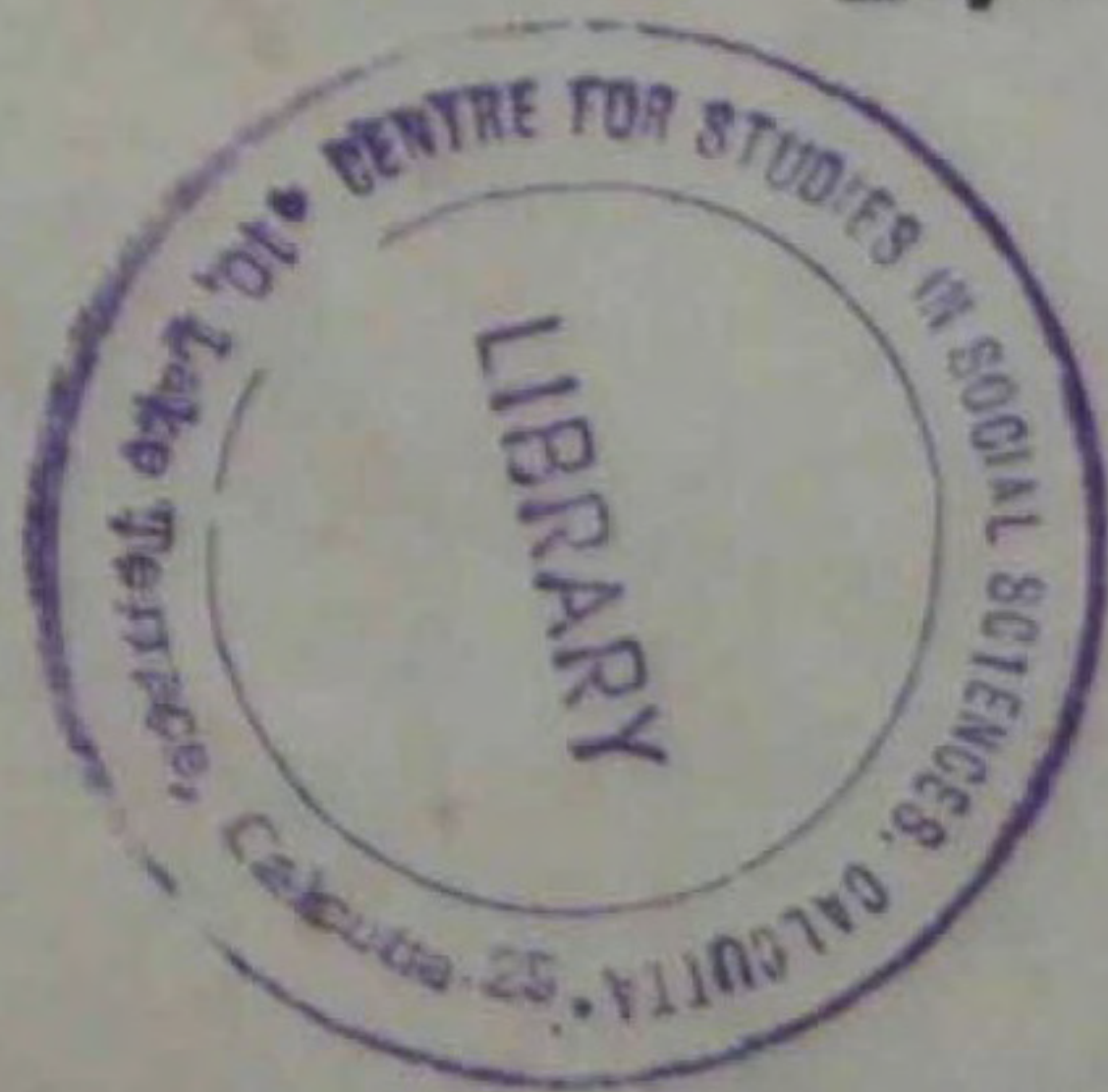


Occasional Paper No.82

**Wastelands Colonization Policy and the  
Settlement of Ex-Plantation Labour in  
the Brahmaputra Valley :  
A Study in Historical Perspective.**

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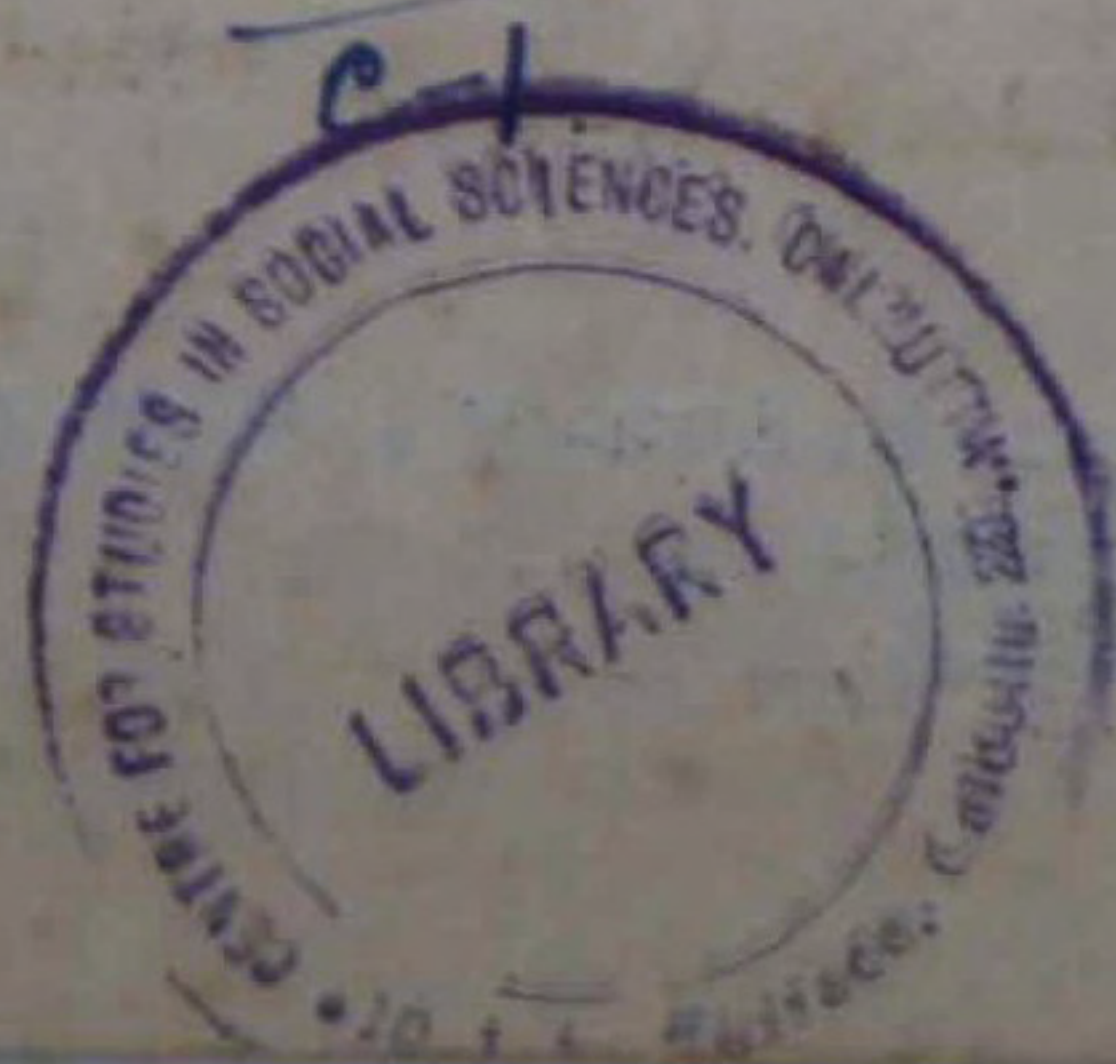


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I

Ex-tea garden labourers have come to constitute a significant section of the population of Assam today. According to recent estimates, their magnitude was around 16 lakhs<sup>1</sup> accounting for nearly a tenth of the states' population in 1971. A distinct segment, the immigrant ex-tea labour society, had gradually emerged in the Brahmaputra Valley -- distinct both in their economic and social dimensions from the local populace. Very little has been written till date on this society in India, except for a study in the context of contemporary Assam.<sup>2</sup> The history of this community, their transformation into a peasantry, has been almost ignored in academic literature. The present paper aims to focus on the settlement of ex-tea labourers on land in the Brahmaputra

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\* An earlier draft of the paper was presented to a seminar on 'Tea Garden Labourers in North East India - A Multidimensional Study' organised by the North East India Council for Social Science Research, and Sacred Heart Theological College, both of Shillong, held between 25-27 February 1985, at Shillong. I am grateful to Amalendu Guha, Sunil Munsri and Partha Chatterjee for comments which helped me to revise the paper.

1. U. Phukan, The Ex-Tea Garden Labour Population in Assam (Delhi, 1974) p.vi.
2. ibid.



Valley<sup>3</sup> and the interactions between the three forces - the tea planters, the government and the ex-plantation workforce.

## II

In the late nineteenth century land was abundant in the Brahmaputra Valley of Assam. This situation instigated the British administrators to undertake 'the extension of cultivation and the colonization of wastelands' as one of the important issues of discussion at the policy level. The significance of the subject could be observed from an official report.

'.... the soil of Assam is of the richest description, and that with sufficient labour there is no limit to its productiveness; when it is remembered that Assam proper has an area of nearly 21,000 square miles and a scanty population of about 2½ millions, importing instead of producing and exporting supplies of food, it may be inferred that immigration is far below the requirements of the province, and that this accounts for millions of acres still lying fallow'.

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3. The Brahmaputra Valley in this paper comprises what was commonly known as 'Assam Proper', the five old districts of Kamrup, Darrang, Nowgong, Lakhimpur and Sibsagar. These have recently been reorganised into nine districts - Kamrup, Barpeta, Nalbari, Darrang, Sonitpur, Nowgong, Lakhimpur, Dibrugarh, Sibsagar and Jorhat. Districts referred to throughout this paper are, however, the old ones.
  4. 'The Colonization of Wastelands in Assam', being a reprint of the official correspondence between the government of India and the Chief Commissioner of Assam, (Calcutta, 1898) p.2.



Official attempts were made for organised colonization by importing people from more densely populated tracts of India. But they did not succeed. Independent immigration proved to be 'a great practical difficulty'. Moreover it was felt that the recruiting for this purpose (populating wasteland tracts), should not be from the same zone as was tapped by the tea planters, the primary employers of immigrant labour in the region. The Chief Commissioner of Assam, Sir Henry Cotton, observed in this connection:

'It is very easy to offer tracts of country, and say "you may take it on favourable terms, and bring it under cultivation", but there is a great risk that if this be done thoughtlessly and without proper precautions, it may result in an immense number of immigrants settled in Assam, being drawn away from their present occupations. It is the tea industry that would suffer in that event, and we do not desire that the country should be exploited at the expense of the tea industry'.<sup>5</sup>

### III

Labour in tea plantations were recruited in the main on the basis of agreements under the indenture system. Tenure of work varied, according to the agreements, or Acts, between three and five years. Labourers thus recruited were known as Act labourers. The other segment of the workforce, the non-Act labourers, included 'all immigrant labourers and their children who had not contracted under the Act and the local labourers'.<sup>6</sup>

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5. ibid., p.7.

6. Report on Labour Immigration into Assam for the Year 1882, (Shillong, 1883) p.5.



By the last quarter of the nineteenth century the terms of agreement of a significant section of the indentured workforce in tea plantations had expired. More commonly referred to as 'time-expired labour' or 'ex-tea garden labour', very little is as yet known about this segment of the labouring population. In the tea plantations of the Brahmaputra Valley, one component of the time-expired labourers got themselves 're-engaged' by taking up local contracts,<sup>7</sup> distinct from their earlier tenures, whereas a significant number sought independent livelihood in land. In the face of the general shortage of labour required for tea and the high cost involved in the importation of labour, it was quite natural that planters would want their labourers to re-engage after the expiry of their contracts. This was common in similar plantation regions in other parts of the colonial world as well.

The actual magnitude of labourers in the Valley, whose contracts had expired, is difficult to ascertain prior to 1883. Between 1883 and 1900 their increase was almost threefold. Lakhimpur, Sibsagar and partly Darrang districts, being the primary recruits of immigrant labour in the region, accounted for a major share.

Ac labourers, whose contracts had expired each year accounted for a significant share, i.e. between 19 and 37 per cent from 1883 to 1900 for the valley as a whole. With a few exceptions, this was representative of the districts as well. However, by the 1880s, non-ac labourers had come to constitute around two-thirds of the workforce in tea. The share of time-expired labourers to the total workforce thus went down considerably (Table 2).

Being subjugated under legal as well as extra-legal compulsions, the natural inclination of these labourers, the bulk

7. The legalisation of this system was marked by the introduction of Bengal Act VII of 1873, which introduced free and direct recruitment in the region.



of whom had had some attachment to land in their villages, was to move away from the plantations and settle with some land. The planters, on the other hand, had their own economic interests to keep them in the proximity of the tea gardens in order to avail of their services, whenever necessary. The government, in its efforts to colonize the wastelands did not discourage the settlement of time-expired labour apparently. It had, however, more dominating interests to serve. The settlement of ex-tea labourers provides a reflection of the interplay between these three forces.

#### IV

The interest of the administration in colonizing the wastelands in Assam is evident. Its views on the extension of cultivation by time-expired labourers of tea gardens was beset with contradictions. The primary aim was to clear the wastelands. It did not want to achieve this end at the cost of planting interests. The settlement of ex-tea garden labourers took place in such a background.

The concern for the development of the region reigning over that of tea is evident from the initial part of the report on colonisation, a tone which changed subsequently.

'In the Assam Valley ... (the) immigrant population cannot now be less than 400,000. A very considerable number of these coolies, after their time is up on the gardens, cultivate land in the Province, either holding direct under the government, or in some cases holding as under-tenants from Assamese landlords. The increase of land brought under cultivation by time-expired coolies every year is very large, and as far as it goes is a very satisfactory symptom'.<sup>8</sup>

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8. 'Colonization of Wastelands', op.cit. p.7.



The government was however not very optimistic about the extent to which time-expired labourers could colonize the wastelands.

The immigrant labourers normally settled down with their families, either remaining with the tea gardens, or taking up independent cultivation. Cotton observed that he 'should much regret to see encouragement afforded to these people to return to the overcrowded districts from which they come'. The increasing area of government land taken up by time-expired labourers substantiates the fulfilment of official desire, though this forms only a part of the total area taken up by these people (Table 3).

In spite of the apparent concern expressed towards the development of the province, the point which became increasingly evident from official reports was that of the administration protecting the interests of the tea enterprise. On the subject of the settlement of ex-tea labour the opinion was,

'It is not desirable that the extension of cultivation by this means should be unduly encouraged. One of my predecessors in an unguarded moment was induced to issue orders that land revenue free for three years would be given to all tea coolies who would settle in the province when their terms of agreement were worked out. The object of these orders was to encourage immigration by offering land for cultivation on favourable terms to intending immigrants, but their effect was to do so at the cost of the tea industry; they raised a storm of protest from tea planters, and they were prudently withdrawn'.

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9. ibid., p.43.



Henry Cotton went on further to repeat what he had written earlier on this point, that he had pledged himself again and again that he would never be party to any scheme for the exploitation of the province at the cost of the tea industry.

'I welcome this cultivation of land by time-expired tea coolies, so far as it is natural and spontaneous, and no one is better aware than tea planters of the benefits of such cultivations to themselves; but I am not prepared, except at the request of the tea industry to give it any special or artificial stimulus'.<sup>10</sup>

A culmination of the above was the proclamation of the conditions of lease of wastelands for colonization purposes. Clause VII(a) of the lease rules stated that, 'at least 90 per cent of the persons employed or settled on the grant shall neither be labourers or coolies imported by tea planters or others for purposes of tea or other special cultivation, or by any person or company for the purpose of working on coal mines, nor cultivators settled on any other grant under these rules'.<sup>11</sup> The note added to this clause mentioned that it was primarily intended for the protection of the tea industry.

The matter received the attention of the Labour Enquiry Committees in early twentieth century. Reporting on the fact that the extent of cultivation by time-expired tea labourers was 'comparatively trifling', it was observed by the Labour Enquiry Committee of 1906 that,

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10. ibid., p.43.

11. ibid., p.51.



'In no other part of India, it is believed, would progress in this respect have been so slow; the policy elsewhere is to help the new settler by the grant of a revenue-free term and encouragement is given to the breaking up of wasteland. In Assam the case has been different; the grant of a revenue-free term has been withheld except in special tracts as a rule at a distance from the tea areas'.<sup>12</sup>

The Enquiry Committee very strongly criticised the attitude of the Assam administration which did not want to 'unduly encourage' the extension of cultivation by ex-garden labourers. It reported that in 1888 the then Commissioner of the Assam Valley had advocated that persons interested in tea should be informed that they might promise intending emigrants land revenue-free for three years if they settled in the country at the expiry of their agreements, and that tahsildars and mauzadars might be authorized to offer time-expired tea garden labourers the same concession.<sup>13</sup> The Commissioner, quite naturally anticipated that such proposals 'might raise a storm among the owners of tea property'.

V

The planting community were critical in their response to the proposal of the government to colonize the wastelands and 'to promote a movement of the Indian population from the congested districts'. While observing on paper that the endeavour

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12. Report of the Assam Labour Enquiry Committee, 1906, J (Calcutta, 1906), p.119.

13. ibid., p.89.



to convert a wasteland into a populous country was a 'laudable one', it was made clear in no uncertain terms that 'the burden of colonisation should not rest entirely on the shoulders of the Tea Industry'.<sup>14</sup>

A large and representative meeting of proprietors of tea estates and others connected with the industry in India observed:

'Tea planters will be relieved to find that the Chief Commissioner is fully alive to the necessity of adopting precautions to prevent any facilities for bringing land under cultivation resulting in the enticement of coolies from the tea gardens, but it will be necessary to know on what terms independent immigration is to be introduced before we can speculate against the abuse of it to the detriment of the tea planter'.<sup>15</sup>

There were in fact two broad areas in which one could analyse the response of the planting community. The first related to the positive effects of the colonization policy, whereby labour would become cheaper and more freely available locally, 'when a country became more thickly populated'. The second, more directly related to the settlement of ex-tea garden labourers was that, 'it would be difficult to get the coolie to re-engage', if they got any incentive to cultivate independently.

The annual reports of the Indian Tea Association (ITA) the organisation of European tea planters, in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century, bear testimony to this duality.

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14. From Assam Branch, Indian Tea Association, to Government of Eastern Bengal and Assam, Indian Tea Association (ITA), Annual Report, 1906, p.130.

15. 'Colonization of Wastelands', p.16.



The ITA, especially its Assam Branch have throughout expressed their opinion very emphatically on the role of the planting community in the colonization of wastelands. They were aware of the extent to which the plantation workforce was being 'absorbed into the general population' in the rural areas where there were 'practically no foreigners other than ex-coolies or cultivators'.<sup>16</sup> In the same report, it was further observed that,

'...no coolie hitherto has become a cultivator until after the expiry of his original indenture, so that being acclimatised he becomes at once a valuable asset, as a rent paying raiyat, to government, while his loss as an acclimatised and probably a trained hand to the estate which imported him is one that has to be replaced by a further expenditure of capital'.<sup>17</sup>

The Association was aware of the fact that coolies drawn from the agricultural classes in other provinces, having once realised how prolific the soil in Assam was, and also having acquired a competence sufficient to start them, should revert to village life. A note of warning was however not absent.

'so long as this movement is spontaneous and natural our Association is silent; but it would justly deprecate and stoutly resist any artificial stimulus to hasten colonisation at the expense of the industry or create any precedent for giving time-expired coolies land on a rent-free period outside the zone of gardens, as was ordered by a former Chief Commissioner, viz., to all coolies on the expiry of their original indenture'.<sup>18</sup>

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16. From Assam Branch, ITA to Government of Eastern Bengal and Assam, ITA Annual Report, 1906, p.129.

17. ibid., p.130.

18. ibid., p.130.



In spite of their strong reservations regarding the extension of cultivation by time-expired labour, the planting interests were bound to admit the inevitability of such trends. The industry admitted the fact that this was bound to be the natural outcome of importing an 'agricultural class' into a region where in the background of the 'prevailing high rates of paddy and almost certainty of good crops,' a coolie could start as a cultivator with comparative ease.<sup>19</sup>

It is therefore obvious that the main concern of the planting interests in the colonization policy was the fear of losing labour to rice land. It was observed by a proprietor of a tea company in 1897 that 'at present coolies renewed their engagements, but if other men of similar position were working their own lands, it would be more difficult to get them to re-engage'.<sup>20</sup> On the other hand, 'the Government having given the industry easy terms to settle its labour near the gardens may feel itself entitled to offer similar easy terms to induce the hardier class of settlers, such as Sonthals, Dhangars and Kols to move on and break new land, an offer which the nomadic and aboriginal classes (the very pick of our labour) would not be slow to take advantage of, and which would inevitably result in their taking their relations and friends direct away from gardens, and involve the Industry in substantial loss'.<sup>21</sup>

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19. See Assam Branch ITA to Government of Eastern Bengal and Assam, ITA Annual Report, 1908, p.138.

20. 'Colonization of Wastelands', p.19.

21. Assam Branch ITA to Government of Eastern Bengal and Assam, ITA, Annual Report, 1908, p.138.



A similar fear was expressed in a 'Memorial of Jorehaut Planters' with regard to the proposed Rent Law for Assam in 1884. 'Its plain meaning', according to them was 'that on however distinct an understanding a man may let out a holding to another, he can not get it back from the latter after the expiration of the contract period'. This led to the planters' apprehension that if the contract of a labourer, who rented land from a planter to grow rice expired and he left the garden to erect 'a hut on a plot of government land', he would have the right to continue to hold the land. The planter, according to the memorial, 'would have no remedy available to take his land from the coolie if the latter only paid his rent duly, even if the latter takes employment in a neighbouring garden to which he draws his fellow labourers' from the former garden'.<sup>22</sup>

It is for these reasons that the ITA strongly recommended that in the transition period from indenture to free labour, no encouragement should be given which would weaken the 'slight hold' which they claimed was maintained by the industry over its diminishing labour force.

As a compromise solution between colonizing wastelands and protecting their labour interests, the Association suggested ways in which land could be provided to the labourers sufficiently near the gardens so that planters could avail of their services.

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22. 'Memorial of Jorehaut Planters with regard to the proposed Rent Law for Assam' to Chief Commissioner of Assam; ITA, Annual Report, 1884, p.103.



'We do not minimise the advantages gardens would have were villages of the immigrant classes settled all round them, and for this reason we recognise that here the aims of government and the interests of the industry are identical; though, in the method of bringing this about, the true interests of the industry must be adequately safeguarded'.<sup>23</sup>

In spite of such statements, the overall attitude of the planters to the colonization scheme was very clear. The voice of the planters was clearly expressed in the ITA Report in 1906, where they were 'constrained to assert that under the present proposals, the maximum gain would accrue to government and the coolie only a minimum to the Industry'.<sup>24</sup>

If left to themselves, the planters would have preferred to tie the labourers to their plantations permanently through various means, instead of only for the initial contract period. But the colonial government, even as it was committed to serving the long and short term interests of the planters, had other problems to think about. Some of these originated in the general thrust of Indian colonial policy initiated by the imperial legislative council and the British Parliament. The other concern of the Assam government was with agrarian policy outside the tea plantations and the need to increase land revenue. Under such circumstances, it had to think of an alternative to the total repatriation of tea-garden labourers to their distant homeland. In a long-term sense, this alternative had a real motive of helping the planters. Ex-tea garden labour settlement in the neighbourhood of plantations provided such an

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23. ITA, Annual Report, 1906, p.131.

24. ibid, p.131.



alternative. On the one hand, it increased the land revenue collection of the state exchequer and added to the population of under-populated Assam, and, on the other hand, by establishing the labour settlements nearby it provided for convenient labour supply sources for seasonal excess requirements of the planters.

## VI

Available data do not allow us to estimate the magnitude of the ex-tea garden labour settled on land in Assam. One could draw on figures in the 1920s to get an approximate idea of the relative share of ex-garden coolies in the land held by immigrants 'of all categories' as well as the total settled area in the Assam Valley Division.<sup>25</sup> Of the total settled area of 5574,968 acres immigrants held 446,003 acres, or 8.0 per cent. The breakdown was as follows :

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25. Assam Valley Division, Land Revenue Report 1920-21, (Government of Assam, Shillong), and as cited in A. Guha, Planter Raj to Swaraj : Freedom Struggle and Electoral Politics in Assam, 1826-1947, (New Delhi, 1977), p.258.



	<u>Area in Acres</u>	<u>Per cent</u>
a) Ex-garden coolies	227,362	50.98
b) Marwaris	17,120	3.84
c) Non-cultivator clerks	10,008	2.38
d) Nepali	58,040	13.01
e) Santhal	43,133	9.67
f) Mymensinghia, Railway coolies and U.P. men	89,740	20.12
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Total land held by immigrants	446,003	100.00
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Ex-garden coolies accounted for a predominant share in the land held by immigrants. In fact, it was reported in the ITA Annual Report of 1906, that, in rural areas of Assam there were practically no foreigners other than ex-coolies or cultivators.

In the late nineteenth century, our period of study, when the scheme for the extension of cultivation and colonization of wastelands was being considered at the policy level, the only quantitative information on the area taken up for cultivation by such labour-force was partial, since of the three forms in which land was taken up, i.e. as tenants of tea planters, as tenants of private landholders, and land held directly from the government, data is available only for the third category. For the second, it is available intermittently.

Data relating to the area held directly from the government, available district wise between 1879 and 1899 shows interesting features both in regard to magnitude and distribution. (Table 3) In the Assam Valley, this area increased almost 45 times between 1879 and 1896. There were inter-district difference, both in the rate of increase, and in their relative



magnitudes. The three Upper Assam districts - Darrang, Lakhimpur and Sibsagar, the prominent tea areas, witnessed a comparatively higher rate of growth. Between 1885 and 1899 this growth was more significant. Kamrup had the lowest share, which could perhaps be explained by the lower share of immigrants in the district.

One could arrive at a very rough approximation of the number of ex-tea garden labourers holding land direct from government. In the Labour Immigration Report of 1883, it could be calculated for two districts - Nowgong and Sibsagar, that each labourer held about one and a half acres of land. Assuming this to be a general average we could possibly estimate that in 1899, above 45,000 labourers held land direct from the government.

The area held as sub-tenants of private landholders is difficult to assess in the late nineteenth century. As observed in the Report on Labour Immigration for 1913-14, sub-tenancies were not ordinarily recorded in Assam, but steps were being taken for the collection of approximate figures showing the land cultivated by ex-tea garden coolies, who were not themselves patta-holders. The figures for sub-tenancies (though not available districtwise) are available from 1915-16 onwards, as given below. These figures show that the area taken up <sup>by</sup> sub-tenants accounted for less than 1 per cent of the land held directly from the government each year.



Year	Area in acres	
	Land held directly from government	Land held as sub-tenants of private landholders
(1)	(2)	(3)
1915-1916	221,161	30,798
1916-1917	235,094	32,346
1917-1918	245,610	34,059
1918-1919	252,247	32,967
1919-1920	257,923	34,863

Source: Report on Labour Immigration into Assam, (Government of Assam, Shillong) for the respective years.

On the third form of holding land, i.e. as tenants of tea planters, there is practically no information. It is known from the annual reports on labour immigration that government land were settled with tea planters on special terms to enable them to allow their coolies to cultivate, although the proportion given out to time-expired labour was not specified separately. The planters did have apprehensions about taking up blocks of government land to rent out to their labourers. These apprehensions were on many counts. First, they had the fear that the coolies, whose terms of agreement were over might continue to hold the rights to the land even if they settled on government land and took employment elsewhere, as long as they duly paid their rents.<sup>26</sup> Second, if such proposals were made by the government earlier, land adjacent to estates could have been available to planters to allot to their labourforce, whereby their services could be made available.

26. See ITA, Annual Report, 1884.



According to the Assam Branch, of the Indian Tea Association, 'gardens have allowed Marwaris, Babus and others to acquire adjoining lands with a view to sub-letting at very high-rates, hence the coolie has been driven, further away on to government land'. It was therefore 'estimated but few gardens would derive any benefit from the proposals'.<sup>27</sup> The Royal Commission on Labour in India, reported that, 'in the absence of any tenancy law applicable to the garden grants, the enjoyment of this concession is entirely at the discretion of the garden manager'.<sup>28</sup> Land was usually allotted by managers to those families which could provide labour on the garden.

In his introduction and reply to the letter by Hon'ble J. Buckingham, an Additional Member of Council, on 'The Tea Garden Coolies of Assam' reprinted in the 'Indian Churchman' in July 1894, Rev. Charles Dowding wrote that, '97,000 people have settled down to cultivation and hold 40,000 acres from government and were it as much as 5000 acres from planters, 45,000 acres in all, this gives two souls per acre'. The reason for the low figures was explained by 'the strong pressure which planters were able to exert and did exert, to make coolies re-engage, instead of going away and becoming cultivators on their own account'.<sup>29</sup> Dowding further observed :

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27. ITA, Annual Report, 1906, p.131.

28. Royal Commission on Labour in India, Report, (London, 1932), p.384.

29. 'Indian Churchman', Calcutta, July 1894, p.xii. I am grateful to Ramkrishna Chatterjee for this reference.



'Time-expired coolies are shy of holding land from planters, because, as they quite reasonably observe, "If we take the Sahib's land he has a dakhal over us, a hold upon us, which we cannot tell how he may use; if we take land from government, we pay our yearly rent and bas! no one has any further claim on us". If the Tea Industry is therefore to turn any considerable portion of its still un-tilled grants to account for food supply, it must not wait for time-expired coolies to do the work'.<sup>30</sup>

## VII

Much has been written on plantations, developed in the tropical colonies of the third world. Any analysis, however, of the ex-plantation labour or the emancipated slave society transformed into a peasantry has been almost conspicuous by its absence. The little that has been written has by and large concentrated on the West Indies.<sup>31</sup>

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30. ibid.

31. For details see G.L. Beckford Persistent Poverty: Underdevelopment in Plantation Economies of the Third World (London, 1972); A.H. Adams Sugar without Slaves: The Political Economy of British Guiana, 1838-1904 (London, 1972); B.W. Blouet, 'The Post-emancipation Origins of the relationships between the estates and the peasantry in Trinidad', in A. Dawson and I. Rutledge (ed.), Land and Labour in Latin America (Cambridge, 1977); W.K. Marshall, 'Notes on Peasant Development in the West Indies since 1838', Social and Economic Studies, Vol.17, No.3, September 1968; S.W. Mintz Caribbean Transformations (Baltimore, 1974).



The emancipation of slaves in 1838 gave a boost to peasant development in the West Indian islands. The process was gradual, existing 'alongside and in conflict with the plantations'. The planters, who sought to control the legal bases of society so as to preserve existing rights and privileges, manipulated the land and labour laws of the colony to prevent the establishment of a class of small independent farmers. In short, labour being scarce in these colonies, this was the only way in which they could be kept attached to plantations even after emancipation. The extent to which ex-slaves could detach themselves from plantations depended however, on the availability of land. In the smaller islands, where land was in short supply, the choice of the ex-slaves was limited to continued work on the plantations. In the larger territories, on the other hand, where land was more easily available, the ex-slaves were able to establish themselves in independent cultivation.

If we take Assam in isolation from the rest of India, then one could compare the two situations to a certain extent, despite our awareness that in the Caribbean, there was no pre-existing peasantry as was present in Assam. But since in Assam, the peasant economy was almost stagnant and was only marginally integrated with the market, the growing and sizeable plantation sector had much more impact on various aspects of the colonial economy. Hence, loosely, one could call Assam a plantation economy, and the process through which an ex-slave population in the West Indies or the ex-labourers in the Brahmaputra Valley gradually developed into a peasantry was almost the same. This was because both faced similar oppositions in a planter-dominated economy and society.



Table-1

Time-Expired Labourers in the Brahmaputra Valley,  
1883-1900.

Districts/ Year	Kamrup	Darrang	Nowgong	Lakhimpur	Sibsagar	Brahmaputra Valley (Assam Proper)
(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)
1883	182	1961	268	4066	4175	10652
1884	198	2817	449	5368	8314	17146
1885	129	3952	389	4406	10555	19431
1886	249	3219	462	5350	10404	19684
1887	228	3364	606	3816	11553	19567
1888	123	2851	448	4047	10431	17900
1889	128	3553	608	3695	9096	17080
1890	16	2335	281	2943	9141	15716
1891	35	3615	374	4952	9619	18595
1892	66	4780	534	6396	12420	24196
1893	154	6546	869	8472	10743	26784
1894	138	7171	937	9992	12079	30317
1895	79	6841	724	8618	10198	26460
1896	117	7372	956	9401	9567	27413
1897	114	7824	1164	12543	11566	33211
1898	124	9822	1448	14599	13145	39138
1899	69	7534	1581	12745	11392	33321
1900	95	8090	2196	12675	13516	36572

Source: Report on Labour Immigration into Assam,  
(Government of Assam, Shillong), for the  
respective years.



Table-2

Share of time-expired labour in the workforce in Tea

Districts/ Year		Kamrup	Darrang	Nowgong	Lakhimpur	Sibsagar	Brahmaputra Valley (Assam Prop)
(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)
1883	1.	54.3	42.8	14.6	35.9	33.6	34.9
	2.	9.5	10.7	3.7	10.9	8.3	9.3
1884	1.	42.3	43.1	20.5	34.2	37.8	37.4
	2.	9.8	13.8	4.6	13.2	14.7	13.2
1885	1.	24.3	41.5	15.6	26.2	37.7	33.9
	2.	4.5	14.9	3.2	8.9	15.9	12.3
1886	1.	35.9	34.7	20.3	30.8	37.7	34.4
	2.	8.9	11.3	3.7	10.6	15.2	12.1
1887	1.	41.2	35.0	29.5	22.9	44.3	35.6
	2.	8.3	10.6	4.9	7.0	15.7	11.2
1888	1.	27.3	23.6	24.7	21.2	36.3	28.8
	2.	4.4	7.7	3.3	6.8	13.0	9.3
1889	1.	26.7	24.3	27.3	35.6	30.1	24.6
	2.	3.9	8.8	4.3	5.4	10.3	7.9
1890	1.	2.7	14.2	10.2	21.9	27.5	20.2
	2.	0.5	5.4	1.8	4.0	10.0	7.0
1891	1.	5.3	19.2	11.5	15.4	27.4	19.2
	2.	1.0	7.6	2.3	6.1	10.0	7.6
1892	1.	7.8	21.4	14.0	19.9	32.7	24.9
	2.	1.9	9.3	3.3	7.3	12.2	9.3
1893	1.	16.5	26.9	21.1	23.8	27.9	25.9
	2.	4.8	12.7	5.3	9.3	9.8	9.9
1894	1.	20.3	31.3	22.7	28.3	32.6	30.3
	2.	4.2	13.2	5.7	10.7	10.6	10.8
1895	1.	11.6	29.8	17.5	24.4	27.5	26.4
	2.	2.2	11.5	4.1	8.5	8.5	8.7



(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)
1896	1.	20.9	29.7	18.3	24.4	25.0	25.5
	2.	3.1	11.2	5.0	8.7	7.4	8.4
1897	1.	20.6	28.5	18.1	30.4	27.6	28.2
	2.	3.0	11.0	5.5	10.0	8.1	9.1
1898	1.	20.9	33.7	18.5	30.9	28.7	30.0
	2.	3.3	14.1	7.2	11.5	9.0	10.7
1899	1.	14.2	30.5	23.9	27.8	26.2	27.5
	2.	2.0	10.4	8.1	10.0	7.8	9.0
1900	1.	24.5	31.2	36.6	24.7	33.2	29.4
	2.	2.9	10.3	11.7	9.3	9.1	9.4

- Note: 1. Time-expired labour as % of Act Labourers at the end of the previous year.
2. Time-expired labour as % of total work-force in tea of the previous year.

Source: Same as Table 1.

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e-1.



Table-3

Land held by time-expired labourers directly  
from government

Districts/ Year	Kamrup	Darrang	Nowgong	Lakhimpur	Sibsagar	Brahmaputra Valley (Assam Prov.)
(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)
1879	-	756	37	-	832	1625
1880	56	1254	77	73986	990	3117
1881	56	1535	128	972	448	3139
1882	-	1617	189	1178	761	3745
1883	14	2140	392	1483	809	4838
1884	14	2469	437	1505	1224	5647
1885	14	3063	520	2237	1856	7680
1886	11	4389	620	2650	5289*	12959*
1887	15	4814	853	3071	6254	15007
1888	15	5742	1224	3872	8109	18962
1889	49	6371	1425	4404	9217	21466
1890	42	7454	1895	4897	10639	24927
1891	42	8327	2069	5724	11732	27894
1892	92	10631	2362	6585	12306	31976
1893	92	8648	2241	8288	11908	31177
1894	94	3094	2800	10675	13131	29794
1895	130	11319	3831	12590	14240	42110
1896	155	14347	4193	11612	16275	46582
1897	211	16327	5891	15737	17763	55929
1898	244	17780	5409	17294	19700	60427
1899	179	22436	6713	19458	22446	71232

Note : \*includes land held from managers and private landholders.

Source : Same as Table 1.