

# A Study on the Policies of Colonial State and the Govt. of India: Labours in Assam and Tutsa Tribe of Arunachal Pradesh

**Basant Giri**

*M. Phil, Research Scholar, Centre for Historical Studies  
Jawaharlal Nehru University  
E-mail: vasantgiri8@gmail.com*

**Abstract**—*With all the remarkable places/sites in North-East India, it is needless to mention that it is a Paradise for tourists and researchers. Undeniably, contribution of Tourism in India's GDP isn't ignorable and to increase this potential of Tourism better utilization of technology and information is the need of this hour so that the awareness about North-East India could prevails not only inside but outside the country as well.*

*The awareness about the North-East India is the need of this hour for not only the region's development but to reduce the cases of racial discrimination which is gradually rising in the cities like Delhi, Mumbai and Bangalore etc. Hence, tourism can be a medium through which these issues can be managed. Tourism in North-East India has recently been giving much emphasis on the policies related to promotion of sites and also to encourage the entrepreneurs (which seems to be unsuccessful in the rural places such as rural districts of Arunachal Pradesh etc). However, this paper focuses on the policies of colonial period which might be able to act as a catalyst in the development of North-East region and also might be useful to tackle the issue of racial discrimination. This study delves on the strategy of Edward Gibbon Wakefield and also consults documents and files in Assam State Archives. The study finds that careful implementation of these policies would help tourism department in achieving its goal.*

## **1. FOCUS OF TOURISM IN NORTH-EAST/BACKGROUND**

Recently to promote the art and culture of North-East India several events were organised in various cities of India. In 2015, an event was organised at the Taj Mahal Palace in Mumbai on August 1. The event was named 'Colours of North East' and the festival was organised to create awareness and to invite the film makers so that they can make North Eastern states as their next film destinations. In this event many celebrities came such as

Sunita Khound, Angarag Mahanta, Anaya Brahma and Papon. Another such event held in New Delhi March 2015 to promote North Eastern states was 'North East Business Summit.' This event which was organised to show the strength of North Eastern states of India and to present significant business opportunities. This NEBS has put an effort to bring together the representatives of ASEAN and BIMSTEC countries to engage in different aspects economic activity in North East India. This event was focussed on:

- Connectivity, Both hardware and software for greater regional cooperation.
- Increase the potentials of marketing activity in the exotic destinations of North East India by promoting local festivals of region.
- To enhance the connectivity issue by introducing small aircraft services within N. E States.
- High Priority to Tea export from NE region by government of India with special thrust on organic tea, etc.

Similar event which took place in New Delhi Feb. 9, 2016 named Destination North East, 2016, where I volunteered was also an initiative taken to promote the sectors like Tourism, Agriculture, Food Processing, Skill Development & Entrepreneurship, IT, Handloom & Handicrafts, Livelihood, Micro-Finance and Start ups. In this event many handicraft items native to the North East India were shown, traditional attires of N-E India were highlighted with a touch of modern fashion sense. The event also organised a meeting where discussions took

place regarding possibilities of entrepreneurship in different sectors. Several such events took place after that as well. However, the result doesn't seem to be as successful as these events were (Data?). These lavishly organised events did show some results but the message these events were trying to convey still lacked something, hence didn't do any better in the context of rural places of North Eastern states in India as there are still some tribes and sites in the rural places which are unknown or very less information is known about them such as Tutsa tribes of Arunachal Pradesh and the sites like grave yards of world war 2 soldiers in Jairampur, Changlang district, Arunachal Pradesh.

## 2. HYPOTHESIS/FINDINGS

The paper does not attempt to enumerate the sites and tribes of North East India who/which didn't get the spotlight or couldn't get the benefit of the policies which the Govt. of India enacted with the help of DoNER. This study attempts to find out the lacunae in the policies which the government has enacted to develop the North Eastern states through several departments such as Tourism department. No doubt the department of tourism and DoNER are doing an excellent job. However, it is also undeniable and apparent that the policies were not able to assimilate each and every tribe/sites in the North East India. Hence, the paper tries to compare the policies of colonial period to assimilate every tribe and community and the policies of Govt. of India. There is no doubt that British/Company enacted their policies to exploit the people of India for their own self interest but the approach they made to include every sections of the society made their policies successful. The best example to understand this is the implementation of Sardari system in the Tea plantation and coal mines of Assam during the colonial period. However, lack of recognition and assimilation of lower section of the society especially the backward classes of North East India resulted in failure of the policies enacted by the Govt. of India with the help tourism department and DoNER.

## 3. COMPARISON OF POLICIES OF COLONIAL STATE AND THE APPROACH MADE BY GOVT. OF INDIA TO UNDERSTAND AND DEVELOP THE NORTH-EAST INDIA

The policy which was adopted by the colonial state and worth understanding in this context is Sardari system. After the establishment of Tea estates two methods of labour recruitment for the tea plantation was introduced,

the first method was contractual method and the other method was Sardari recruitment/system. The first method was carried by the Company's agents who were hired especially to recruit the people to work in the Tea plantation of Assam. However, as mentioned by the J. F. Grunning, Sardari system of recruitment was much preferred over this contractual mode of recruitment<sup>1</sup>. It is because the *Arkattis* or agents would charge 80 to 150 per coolie, which means excessive expenditure in the words of Mr. Gruning. The other reason pointed out was the efficiency in work of those labourers brought by the agents, that is recruiting agents later became more concerned about their earning instead of efficient and strong labour who could tolerate the conditions of gardens. On the other hand the Second method which was Sardari system was carried out by the sardars who were leaders/representatives of people or group of people. In this method the recruits Sardars use to bring to work in the garden were almost free or a very less amount of money was paid for them as comparison to the charges charged by the *Arkattis*/agents. The reason behind this was that *Arkattis* would bring the recruits on the basis of contracts, however, Sardars would bring them from their villages or someone whom they know/relative etc; they (Sardars) personally use to handpick the recruits who were fit for the job. This always made the recruits chosen by sardars more preferable as they were strong and efficient in their job. The other drawback of recruiting through contracts was that the recruits couldn't leave by their own wish they had to wait until the contract period was over this obviously interfered in the process of emigration to Assam from other places as recruits felt trapped. However in sardari system recruits would go and bring their family who would again become the labour force in the gardens.

Class of labourers	1901	1902	1903-1904	1904-1905	1905-1906
Sardari adults	8102	7988	5031	4196	5482
Contractors' adults	6147	6088	6095	2868	3961

The table gives the detail of the coolie immigration into the Assam province.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Grunning J. F (1909), *Recruitment of labour for Tea garden in Assam*, record no. 6710, Assam State Archives.

<sup>2</sup> Govt. of India. *Resolution on immigrant labour in the Assam districts of Eastern Bengal and Assam for the year ending the 30<sup>th</sup> June 1906*, Assam State Archives. 1906.

Although, the system was very much exploitative towards a particular section of the society which were unemployed and in need of employment, they (backward and unemployed section) found themselves trapped in the tea gardens and in the pits of coal mines of Assam. The best suited example in this context would be the exploitation of Gorkhas by the colonial state. Gorkhas were recruited by the colonial state for the military purpose, in the coal mines, and in tea gardens etc. In one sense it might also look like the policies which were enacted were biased and focussed towards a specific community as they were recruiting Gorkhas in large number. However, what is important to understand is the recognition by the colonial state that which community is suitable for the specific job and it's (State's) effort to recruit the specific community (magars and Gurung) from the farthest districts in Nepal when Sikhs and Hill natives were easily available. It is striking and spectacular at the same time to see that how much effort colonial state can put to acquire group of people from certain community. The significant thing which is worth noticing in the colonial policy is that, how it (Colonial State) deliberately narrowed down the effects of the policies towards the sections of the society which could provide benefits to the state previously by colonising and building the empire and later by making it (State) economically stronger.

On the other hand the Policies enacted by the Govt. of India with the help of various departments to develop North-East India seems to be lacking that sort of effort like colonial state had put. There is also no doubt that Govt. of India has enacted very efficient policies to understand the geographical needs of North-East India and has been very successful to some extent, however, it seems that those policies were not effective enough and that is why the results and benefits of the policies were not able to reach every part of the North-Eastern region. For example, first of all there is almost no information about the Tutsa tribe of Changlang district, Arunachal Pradesh in a detailed manner. As far as the North-East festivals are concerned, till now no events have ever tried to promote the culture of Tutsa tribe. The Villages they reside that is Yankang, Phangtip, Wotlom, Phungsa, Kangkho, Jongrom and Changra which is the farthest one might not have been ignored by the Govt. of India totally but there has been no record that these villages were ever mentioned in any of the events

held/organised by the tourism department of North-East or DoNER. The ignorance to understand the tribe's culture reached its apex point when the attire of Longchang, a sub-tribe of Tangsa tribe is mistaken with The Tutsa cultural attire (based on images in the internet of Tutsa tribe)<sup>3</sup>. Besides this, the improper management of the biggest graveyard of soldiers who fought in World War 2 which is in Jairampur, Changlang district, Arunachal Pradesh also shows the inefficiency of policies implemented by the Govt. of India. This paper does not assume that no initiative has been taken towards these issues; however the study attempts to find out an efficient policy which would help in tackle and manage the issues existing and emerging. Similarly like above mentioned problems/issues there are other issues which are related to the sites in the North-East India which holds an immense potential to attract the tourist but due to the poverty of spotlight these sites are not able to contribute in the development of North-East India. Some of these sites are Vijaynagar in Changlang district, Arunachal Pradesh and Willong Khullen village in Senapati district in Manipur.

Hence, this paper tries to perceive the similarities in the goals/aims of both the States that is the colonial Indian state and the present Indian Govt. of India which to flourish and prosper itself and its citizens. However the colonial State's achievements/developments were limited to the English citizens, which is not similar in the case of present Indian government, hence, the paper studies the differences in the policies enacted by both the government. The paper tries to understand the approaches made by both the government for their policies to be successful. The study finds that policies enacted by the colonial state were more detailed in its nature which is not same in the case of approaches made by the Indian govt. for example to recruit the Gorkhas from Nepal colonial state use to conduct expeditions to understand the community. Many colonial officials made a whole report on the community, about

---

<sup>3</sup> [https://www.google.co.in/search?client=ms-android-motorola&ei=sCqhWueXAYv3vATowYvQCw&q=tutsa+tribes+in+north+east+festival&og=tutsa+tribes+in+north+east+festival&gs\\_l=mobile-gws-serp.3...7468.33949..34304...11...482.9127.0j16j20j2j2.....1..mobile-gws-wiz-serp.....3..0j46j35i39j0i131j0i67j0i46i67j46i67j0i2i159i67j0i46j0i10j0i13j0i22i30j33i160j0i22i10i30j0i13i30j0i8i13i30j33i21.%2FsWS1PVqVd0%3D](https://www.google.co.in/search?client=ms-android-motorola&ei=sCqhWueXAYv3vATowYvQCw&q=tutsa+tribes+in+north+east+festival&og=tutsa+tribes+in+north+east+festival&gs_l=mobile-gws-serp.3...7468.33949..34304...11...482.9127.0j16j20j2j2.....1..mobile-gws-wiz-serp.....3..0j46j35i39j0i131j0i67j0i46i67j46i67j0i2i159i67j0i46j0i10j0i13j0i22i30j33i160j0i22i10i30j0i13i30j0i8i13i30j33i21.%2FsWS1PVqVd0%3D)

their food habits, relations, language, culture, social values etc. After analysing all those factors related with the community they would start their recruitment on the basis of geographical distribution of community in the region<sup>4</sup>.

Tehsil	Zillas in Nepal from which obtained	
	Magars	Gurungs
1) No. 2 West	In small numbers and not of the best type.	From Lamjung and Gurkha in large number and of a good type if carefully selected.
2) No. 3 West	In Ghiring, Rising, and Dhor in good number and of fairly good type. In Kaski and Tanahu in fair numbers and of good type, especially from Tanahu.	In Ghising, Rising and Dhor in a very small number and of a fair type. In Kaski in a very large numbers and of a good type. If carefully selected excellent material can be found in Tanahu.
3) No. 4 West	In Gaerhung and Bhirkot in good number and of good type. In 4,000 Parbat in good number of an excellent type, mostly Puns.	In Bhirkot in good number. From the Ghandruk area in good numbers and of good type. If carefully selected good material from pallo Nawakot, Payung, Sataun, and Gaerhung.
4) Palpa	In great number, but very careful selection is required if the best material is to be obtained. It is advisable to leave the area of the foothills, immediately over the border and the lower regions of the Gandak (Kali) alone.	In small number but not of good type.

5) Gulmi	In 4,000 Parbat in large number, mainly Puns. A good type can be obtained but they are liable to be coarser than those East of the Kali. From Galkot, Musikot, Isma, Gulmi, Dhurkot, Argha, and Khanchi in large numbers, but careful selection is required.	In small numbers and not of the best type.
6) Piuthan	In good number, but careful selection is very necessary.	In very small number.

The table above shows that which were the districts and tehsils in the eastern area of Nepal from where Gurungs and Magars the most sought tribes of Gurkhas were recruited.<sup>5</sup>

Govt. of India has also made many reports on communities but those reports couldn't include all the societies and geographical sites and even if they did it was not done in an efficient manner. Hence, the study finds the approach made by Govt. of India to understand the communities in many ways different than the approach made by colonial state such as it is not able to include and focus on the development of every community which it is supposed to do. The only similarity in the Indian govt. approach is that it is as limited as colonial government was, but in the case of colonial approach the limitation was intentional, however in the case of Indian govt. it is inefficiency.

#### 4. CONCLUSION

It is needless to say that the policies which were enacted and implemented by the colonial state was very much exploitative towards the Indians as it was structured in a way to provide benefit to the English at the expense of Indians and that is why the study does not suggest in any way to adopt such exploitative policies, However, the study tries to put the spotlight on the efficiency of methods/policies used by the colonial state. This study attempts to highlight the importance of detailed research on a specific community, geographical region, culture, art, social values etc to make an efficient policy to govern a state and make it strong. The study shows the need of detailed research on many sites and

<sup>4</sup> Morris, C. J. *Gurkhas: Handbooks for the Indian army*. Delhi: Government of India, 1933.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid, page no. 132 and 133

communities as it is the need of this hour to develop them by promoting about them and to promote diligent and careful work on these places and communities is a must.

Another thing this study focuses on is assimilation of every section of the society. Like the sardari system which saw the benefits of assimilating people who were efficient in their work similarly the Govt. of India must focus on every section of the society and not only focus on the rich entrepreneurs like film industries etc. The Govt. of India with the help of department of Tourism and DoNER should enact a policy or organise events which would discuss the development of backward communities like Tutsa tribes of Changlang, A. P. Hence, The study does not talk about specific region or community in North-East India but talks about it as a whole and the approaches need to make by the Indian govt. for successful inclusion of every community and sites so that North-East India could develop inclusively and not partially.

## REFERENCES

- [1] Grunning J. F, *Recruitment of labour tea garden in Assam*, Assam State Archives. April 1909.
- [2] Morris, C. J. *Gurkhas: Handbooks for the Indian army*. Delhi: Government of India, 1933.
- [3] Govt. of India. Resolution on immigrant labour in the Assam districts of Eastern Bengal and Assam for the year ending the 30<sup>th</sup> June 1906, Assam State Archives. 1906.
- [4] Appointment Department's Political Branch. *Recruitment of Gurkhas for coal mines of Assam*, Assam State Archives. 1925.
- [5] Carrothers. W. A. *Emigration from the British Isles*. U. S. A, New York, A. M Kelley, 24 East 22nd Street, 1966.
- [6] [https://www.google.co.in/search?client=ms-android-motorola&ei=sCqhWueXAYv3vATowYvQCw&q=tutsa+tribes+in+north+east+festival&oq=tutsa+tribes+in+north+east+festival&gs\\_l=mobile-gws-serp.3...7468.33949..34304...11....482.9127.0j16j20j2j2.....1..mobile-gws-wiz-serp.....3..0j46j35i39j0i131j0i67j0i46i67j46i67j0i2i159i67j0i46j0i10j0i13j0i22i30j33i160j0i22i10i30j0i13i30j0i8i13i30j33i21.%2FsWS1PVqVd0%3D](https://www.google.co.in/search?client=ms-android-motorola&ei=sCqhWueXAYv3vATowYvQCw&q=tutsa+tribes+in+north+east+festival&oq=tutsa+tribes+in+north+east+festival&gs_l=mobile-gws-serp.3...7468.33949..34304...11....482.9127.0j16j20j2j2.....1..mobile-gws-wiz-serp.....3..0j46j35i39j0i131j0i67j0i46i67j46i67j0i2i159i67j0i46j0i10j0i13j0i22i30j33i160j0i22i10i30j0i13i30j0i8i13i30j33i21.%2FsWS1PVqVd0%3D)