

Deceived Dreams: Shedding Light On The Silent Voices Of Tea Garden Labours'

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ABSTRACT

The continuous migration process in Assam and throughout India is not a new phenomenon. Migration has always occurred throughout India, in different regions at different times, even before the arrival of the British. Assam and North East India can be identified as the main centers of migration compared to other parts of India, as these regions are home to various ethnic groups. Of those communities, the tea community of Assam is regarded as an essential component of the state's culture and economy, but their ancestry is linked to an intriguing history of migration. Tea was originally found in the Brahmaputra Valley by British merchant Robert Bruce before the British East India Company annexed Assam. A commercial tea plantation was established in 1833 following the company's annexation of Assam. Thousands of laborers from north India were brought in by British tea planters to plant tea commercially in upper Assam. Thus began the importation of laborers into Assam, whose numbers progressively increased annually. The bulk of laborers in Assam were brought in by European tea planters through the use of middlemen and false promises. Thousands of them perished on their way to Assam and the rest of them were subjected to Planters' atrocities and inhumane treatment. This paper primarily examines the history of Assamese tea labor migration and its impact on the state's economy and society.

KEY WORDS Assa¹m, British, China, Indentured, Labour, Migration, Tea

INTRODUCTION

Along with mortality and fertility, migration is one of the factors that determines the demography of a certain region. Both fertility and mortality work as biological components, unlike migration, which is operating independently and making considerable changes in the demographic distribution and composition. Migration is the main factor influencing population redistribution as regional fertility and mortality differentials decline (Beck 1985). In 1993, the United Nations defined migration as the relocation of populations from one administrative or national boundary to another. Throughout the history of India's north-eastern region, we have seen constant changes in demography due to migration. Since ancient times, people of South-East Asian origin have migrated to present-day Assam, eventually settling down in the fertile lands. Later on, through royal patronage, many caste Hindus of mainland India also made Assam their home. The Treaty of Yandaboo in 1826 marked the initiation of British rule in Northeastern India, establishing firm territorial boundaries for the first time. Perceiving local

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inhabitants as inadequate for economic development, the colonizers began importing tribal and lower-caste Hindus from regions like Madhya Pradesh, Bihar, Bengal, and Andhra Pradesh to work as indentured laborers in tea plantations (Barpujari, H.K, 1993: 40). Additionally, the British administration saw the influx of officers, lawyers, and clerks from Bengal, sparking tension with the Ahom nobility. This friction was exacerbated by the presence of Bengali officials, predominantly from Sylhet, after Assam's separation from the Bengal Presidency in 1874. To address population growth, the British encouraged Muslim peasants from former East Bengal to settle in Assam's fallow and wasteland areas during the late 19th and early 20th centuries. Development of modern industrial capitalism and the consequent colonization of Asia, Africa and other parts of the world by the British triggered a massive mobilization of Indian agrarian communities across these diverse geographical localities (Behal, 2013: 2). With the increasing demand for raw materials and tropical agricultural products in the West, large-scale plantations were established using European capital, requiring a workforce sourced from various regions of the Indian subcontinent. Beginning around 1839, British planters organized extensive efforts for recruiting and transporting laborers from different parts of India and its subcontinent (Ibid, 2013: 2). The research paper aims to explore the 19th-century history of colonial Indian labor migration to the tea plantations of Assam.

DISCOVERY OF TEA

Assam stands as one of the oldest and most renowned tea-growing regions globally, with a captivating history surrounding its discovery. The discovery of tea in Assam in 1823 was initiated by Major Robert Bruce and his brother C.A. Bruce, both Scottish, led to the emergence of the tea industry. (Gait, 2006:129). Until the mid-nineteenth century, tea and China were nearly synonymous, and Botanists believed that China was tea's only native homeland. Despite tea growing wild in Monsoon Asia, its leaves necessitated extensive processing. Before its diffusion through early modern trade networks, tea consumption was deeply rooted in settled agriculture, particularly in East Asia. The Chinese Empire had cultivated, consumed, and traded tea for centuries before it became a global commodity in the industrializing West (Mintz, 1985). The indigenous tea plant, *Camellia sinensis*, discovered in Upper Assam, inspired optimistic imperial vision, and they thought Britain might soon get independence from costly Chinese tea and the monopolistic Canton trade. The prospect of commercial tea production in remote Assam promised imperial subjects the chance to partake in civilization, commerce, knowledge, and faith (British Parliamentary Paper, 1837). C.A. Bruce procured numerous tea plants and seeds from the Singpho Chief of Sadiya, with some delivered to David Scott, the agent to the Governor-General on the North-East Frontier of Bengal. Subsequently, after a series of experiments, the authenticity of the tea plants found in Upper Assam was confirmed (Griffiths, P., 1967: 36-41). The Tea Committee's letter outlining the discovery of tea in Assam reads thus,

"It is with feelings of the highest possible satisfaction that we are enabled to announce to his Lordship in Council that the tea shrub is beyond all doubt indigenous in Upper Assam, being found there through an extent of the country of one month's march within the Honourable Company's territories, from Sadiya and Beesa to the Chinese frontier province of Yunnan, where the shrub is cultivated for the sake of its leaf. We have no hesitation in declaring this discovery to be by far the most important and valuable that has ever been made in matters connected with the agricultural or commercial resources of this empire. We are perfectly confident that the tea plant, which has been brought to light, will be found capable, under proper management, of being cultivated with complete success for commercial purposes, and that consequently the object of our labours may be before long fully realised." (Mann, Harold, H, 1918: 7).

After the successful discovery of indigenous tea in Assam, efforts were made to establish tea nurseries and gardens. In 1835, the first tea nursery with Chinese tea plants was set up at the

confluence of Kundil and Brahmaputra river, Sadiya, but it yielded no significant results. However, in 1837, a successful tea garden was established at Chabua, located 18 miles from Dibrugarh. This marked the beginning of a momentum in tea production and garden openings in Assam, with quality tea being produced. Initially, the Chinese technique was followed for manufacturing tea. The Calcutta Courier reported on November 21, 1836, about a small quantity of indigenous seed green tea produced at Sadiya in Assam by Chinese tea planters brought by Mr. Gordon as

"a small quantity of tea (of the green species, from indigenous seed) prepared at Suddaya in Assam by the Chinese tea-planters brought round by Mr. Gordon has arrived in Calcutta." (The Calcutta Courier, 21 November 1836)

In Upper Assam, both Chinese and indigenous seeds were used for tea cultivation, yielding satisfactory results. By 1839, several East India Company nurseries were planted with Chinese seeds at Jaipur, Chabua, Chota Tingri, and Hukanpukri. Additionally, Bruce established a nursery with indigenous plants at Sadiya, near the official China nursery. Indigenous tea tracts were discovered across Upper Assam, and native chiefs were encouraged to nurture them (Griffiths, P., 1967:53).

The letter written by the Court of Directors to the Tea Committee on 23rd January 1839 shows that the tea produced in Assam was of good quality. The letter reads thus,

"We receive with much satisfaction the samples of Assam Tea (twelve Chests) alluded to in your letter dated 23 May 1838, and which arrived in November last, under the designation of paho and souchoung. Specimens of each sort have been very extensively distributed, and it affords us much pleasure to communicate to you, that we have received very favorable reports regarding it, as well from the most respectable brokers and tea dealers as from several individuals and various corporation towns and scientific bodies to whom it has been submitted." (Griffiths, P., 1967:53)

SCARCITY OF LABOUR

The establishment of tea production in Assam marked the beginning of a demand for labor among planters. Tea cultivation being labor-intensive, the newly established gardens in Assam required a significant influx of inexpensive workers. These workers were essential for tasks such as jungle clearing, soil leveling, bush pruning, and leaf plucking (Akhtar, S.M., 1939:16). In the early phase of cultivation, the planters used the skilled Chinese labourers. As the skilled Chinese labourers import cost was very high and also they demanded the increment of their wages, the British government employed local Assamese and tribal people in the tea estates (Misra, 2007: 10-14). The Assam Company returned numerous Chinese recruits to Calcutta, labeling them as 'turbulent, obstinate, and rapacious', while opting to keep the 'most experienced tea-makers and the quietest men' (Antrobus, p. 378-380). Additionally, the ecology of Upper Assam resulted in significant labor expenses. During the rainy season, many newcomers to these densely forested areas fell ill, often contracting malaria and other ailments. Lacking proper care, the attrition rate was high. During June to September in 1840 and 1841, more than half the Chinese could not work and were dismissed. To replace the dismissed hands, the Company tried to recruit local, unskilled labour. British grievances against Chinese tea-growers overtook earlier enthusiasm. Unraveling the true experiences of these unidentified Chinese laborers proves challenging amidst the overarching condemnation within the colonial archive. Previously, Europeans praised the Chinese for their universally recognized skills and refinement. Their expertise in tea, a commodity associated with luxury and civilization, further enhanced their reputation. However, upon direct interaction with Chinese tea-growers, Assam Company managers condemned them as being 'too great gentlemen' (Masters, 1967, p. 65).

The tea enterprise failed to recognize that its demands often incited uncooperative behaviour. For the British, it was insupportable that Chinese labour should consider certain tasks to demean them. J.W. Masters, the tea superintendent fulminated, 'they object to do anything else but make tea. When spoken to, they threaten to leave the service if they are insulted by being asked to work 'The Chinese migrants' work and livelihood expectations were influenced by established employment and migration networks in Southeast Asia. They held strong beliefs about what they were entitled to, drawing from their previous experiences. They felt aggrieved by the Assam Company and its recruiters for not meeting customary employer obligations. They anticipated wages and terms of service consistent with the standards set by the Straits credit-ticket system. When these workers reached Upper Assam there was a marked gap between their contracts and their employers' demands. The nature of work was a contentious issue. In this first stage of the tea enterprise, an essential task was to clear the forest undergrowth. To clear Assam's luxuriant jungles required considerable inputs of manual labour. Although the Chinese men were hired to grow and process tea, the scarcity of general labour meant that they were often summoned to perform all kinds of gruelling tasks, while physically debilitated in new surroundings and overwhelmed by disease and unfamiliar food. As a result, the Assam Company began to employ local recruits. Initially, locals were allotted only to the manual tasks that the Chinese were unwilling to undertake. Upper Assam's indigenous inhabitants appeared well suited to such tasks. Many of its 'wild' people such as the Nagas were already accustomed to clearing jungle with fire and axes in their practice of shifting cultivation.

But this demand for labour could not be managed locally. Amalendu Guha mentions that the Kachari tribes of Darrang district of Assam were recruited for the tea gardens. As most of the people of Assam engaged in agriculture, some of the cultivators from nearby villages of the gardens preferred to render their services as garden labourers during the off season. (Guha, Amalendu, 2006:13) With most Assamese individuals engaged in agriculture, some nearby villagers opted to work as garden laborers during off-seasons. However, the preference for an independent lifestyle was common among Assamese people, leading to frequent wage increase demands from those working in tea gardens (Gait, Edward, 2006: P412). S.M. Akhtar highlighted the issue of opium addiction contributing to lethargy and apathy among Assamese workers, affecting their suitability for tea garden labor (Akhtar, S.M., 1939:16). Griffith states,

"In the first half of the nineteenth century, the lands now occupied by the Assam tea planters were mainly dense and uninhabitable jungles. In the clearings here and there, the villagers enjoyed an almost self-sufficient economy and were therefore not much interested in the employment offered by the early planters, while the population of the more developed parts of Assam was, as a rule, neither inclined nor compelled by circumstances, to leave home in search of work."

As mentioned by Griffiths, the Royal Commission on Labour also observed the problem of the scarcity of labour for the tea gardens of Assam. The report says,

"From the point of view of the employers, the outstanding problem during the whole history of tea planting in Assam has been the scarcity of labour. Where the bulk of the tea gardens stand today was, seventy years ago, uncultivated and nearly uninhabited jungles, and for the expansion of the industry it has been necessary continuously to import fresh labour." (Griffiths, P, 1967:267-268)

Edward Gait further emphasizes that the majority of Assamese people owned land and cherished their independence, making it unavoidable for planters to seek labor from outside the region. S.M. Akhtar again writes,

"The Cacharis, however, was a better and finer race, but they were very limited in number, while the hill tribes- the Bhutias, Abors, Mishmis, and the like- were of predatory habits and preferred a more 'lively' way of getting their living than toiling on the limited area of an Assam tea garden. Some of these latter classes, however, were

employed by the Assam Company and later by the Jorehaut Company but it was released soon after the establishment of the industry, that the local supply was not enough to meet the growing demand for labour.” (Akhtar,S.M 1939:17).

Under these circumstances, the process of importing labour from other places in India started. Gita Bharali highlights that due to a shortage of laborers, planters resorted to recruiting workers from regions like present-day Jharkhand, Bihar, and Uttar Pradesh as indentured laborers, subjecting them to harsh conditions akin to slavery. Many were displaced from their land and livelihood due to the Permanent Settlement of 1793, designed to ensure steady tax revenue for the colonial regime. Facing poverty, these workers had little choice but to seek alternative means of survival. Consequently, they were coerced into following labor contractors and ended up as indentured laborers in Assam (Datta, 2003: 251-264).

RECRUITMENT PROCESS:

Initially the contractors' system was implemented to bring labor to the tea gardens of Assam. Contractors gathered workers from Chota Nagpur and Cooch Behar and transported them to Calcutta. From there, they were taken to Assam via steamboat along the Brahmaputra River. The journey from Calcutta to Assam lasted approximately three to four weeks (Akhtar, S.M 1939 & Kurmi, Rameswar,2019:72). Under the Licensed Contractors' system, contractors hired unlicensed individuals to recruit laborers for the tea gardens in Assam. Those willing to go to Assam had to appear before a registering officer to confirm their consent to migrate and their understanding of the reasons for their migration. Once this process was completed, their names were registered, and they were held in a depot for three days. Subsequently, they signed a contract certificate before being sent to Assam (Grunning, J.,1909: p.3). These labourers were typically recruited from the poorest and least educated segments of society. Recruiters often took advantage of these vulnerable individuals. The primary target for labor recruitment was impoverished regions such as Bengal, Bihar, Orissa, Chota Nagpur, Central Provinces, United Provinces, and Madras. People in these areas, facing daily hardships, were enticed by false promises of lucrative wages and various amenities. It is noteworthy that frequent uprisings occurred in the Chota Nagpur plateau during the latter half of the 19th century. The revolt of the Kols, for instance, stemmed from oppressive land laws imposed by the British. E.T. Dalton stated,

“Up to A.D 1831, when the most serious revolt of the Kols of Chota Nagpur occurred, there can be no doubt that the changes of government which had taken place were not beneficial to them. They were neglected by their new masters, oppressed by aliens, and deprived of all the means they had formerly possessed of obtaining redness through their own chief.” (Delton, Edward, Tuite 1872:170)

Planters paid contractors and agents a fee, usually ranging from Rs.120 to Rs.150 per recruit under a penal contract, especially at the beginning of the 19th century. Agents frequently resorted to criminal methods, as documented in court records, including abduction, fraud, confinement, intimidation, and violence, often targeting married women and children. Many emigrants suffered and died due to overcrowding, inadequate food, and poor hygiene conditions during transit to the plantations. Those who survived were sold to the planters. The emerging system of indentureship relied on contracts with varying lengths of tenure. Planters preferred longer terms, justifying it as a form of repayment for the expenses incurred in importing laborers. One planter explicitly described it as debt bondage, stating One planter presented his explicit policy of debt bondage: "In two or three years, he has become thoroughly acclimatized and a skilled laborer. He is, by his labor, repaying the garden which has imported him, the expenditure it has been put to. He is acquiring money and cattle and would settle down" (Report of the Labour Enquiry Commission, 1896, p. 3). New recruits were settled using coercive methods written into legislation, such as advances that created indebtedness enforceable in criminal courts, and family employment tactics to discourage others from

leaving. Indentureship was legally applied only in Assam, while in Dooars and Darjeeling, workers were considered "free agents" without any formal agreements or contracts.

A system combining both private contracting and sirdar recruitment served as the primary method of labor acquisition. Under the contract system, private, often unlicensed contractors worked for specific agency houses or planters. The arkutti (subcontractors) were allegedly responsible for employing fraudulent and coercive methods during the initial recruitment phase. Dwarkanath Ganguli says,

“Arkatis infiltrated into the remotest villages and towns in disguise as honest recruiting agents. Whenever a suitable opportunity occurred, and such opportunities came frequently, they resorted to all sorts of nefarious and fraudulent practices for tempting or forcing unfortunate men and women in the countryside to sign what was ostensibly an honest labour service contract, but was practically a trap for reducing them to slavery.” (Ganguli, Dwarkanath (1951: v).

On the other hand, the sirdari method involved individual planters sending back influential and willing "headmen" to recruit their relatives in Chotanagpur. While this method became dominant from the early 1900s onwards, contractors and arkutti remained influential middlemen until the turn of the century. Due to administrative dissatisfaction with this uncontrolled form of recruitment, an increasing number of contractors were mandated to obtain licenses. Licensing aimed to organize this increasingly commercialized flow of labor within the colonial administration's jurisdiction.

In 1878, the Tea Districts Labour Association (TDLA) was established to address recruitment issues directly. Despite the TDLA's efforts, the arkutti, often feared as much as a man-eating tiger, continued to trouble colonial administrators. While arkuttis faced wholesale condemnation, some "low-class" European contractors were also criticized. Furthermore, the intended immigrants themselves were seen as lacking a "high sense of honor," actively seeking the best terms for themselves rather than being solely victims of unscrupulous behavior. In addition to the extra expenses and planters' unease towards contract recruitment, stories of disease and death during the arduous journey to Assam hindered a steady supply of new recruits. Colonial unease with the unsavory reputation of arkutti was not merely a matter of patronizing disdain, but rather a genuine concern that local communities, including both middlemen and recruits, were undermining the primary objectives of regulated recruitment: acquiring immigrant workers efficiently and economically.

The sirdari system, administered by the TDLA, was preferred by colonial planters due to its enhanced supervision and organized control over sirdars. Sirdars were prone to absconding, especially if recruited during times of famine, only to return later to find prosperity in their hometowns. Consequently, it was not uncommon for sirdars to fail to return from their native lands, and these instances of "desertion" were communicated through coded telegraphic messages between depots and plantations. For example, the code word "termagant" indicated that the sirdar was refusing to return to the plantation (Report of the Assam Labour Enquiry Committee, 1906, p. 46). Planters were provided with detailed instructions on selecting sirdars, reflecting administrative concerns about their character. It seemed as though the specter of the arkutti, described as a heartless rascal, loomed over the sirdars, posing a threat to their loyalty to their employers. The recruitment industry for Assam plantations was rife with fraud and deception, influenced by both push and pull factors in immigration. Despite some revisionist arguments suggesting a safety net and voluntary emigration, substantial official evidence contradicts these claims. Colonial officials, often aligned with British planters due to shared cultural and racial backgrounds, documented numerous cases of abuse, deception, and coercion within the recruitment system. This evidence emerged from official inquiry commissions and reports by recruiting district officials, highlighting the widespread nature of fraudulent practices in the industry.

POPULAR MEMORIES OF MIGRATION

Assam saw a migration of tea laborers from various regions of India, including Bengal, the United and Central Provinces, Madras, Chhattisgarh, Jharkhand, etc., from different tribes like Munda, Chaotal, kol, Kharia, Bhumij, Ghatowar, Baraik, Sabar, Gauda, Skandha, Baiga, Bheel, Saora, Bhuia, Paharia, Urang, Parja, Mali, Teli, Dom, Rajput, Than, Mal, kandapan, Hari, Sarban, Hool, Nowar, Napit, Patra, Sero etc. as the European tea planters enticed them with promises of prosperous lives and financial incentives. Following 1852, when tea cultivation became commercially successful, a large number of European planters rushed into Assam alongside those laborers. When the tea planters expanded their cultivation the demand of cheap labourers had been also increasing. Following the demand of tea in European markets the British government also decided to extend the tea cultivation in different parts of upper Assam and facilitate the whole process in terms of labourers recruitment by passing "Indian Emigration Act 1873." Even by passing of "The Free Simple Grant 1861 the British colonial government decided to hand over the fertile lands to the tea companies. Due to preconceived notions of prejudice that these people only possessed physical strength and lacked intelligence, European tea planters primarily targeted those tribal communities. The majority of the time, those people were derisively referred to as "Bagania" or believed to be a group without a past. However, in order to learn about their origins and migration narrative, one must first understand their culture, which is primarily reflected in their folklore. The colonial office data only included the total number of laborers imported into various parts of India; however, oral traditions are the only way to learn how many laborers actually survived the importation process, how many were hired for tea gardens, and how cruelly they were treated. The only trustworthy source for learning about their suffering and the true reason behind their migration to Assam is their folklore and songs. Their traditional folk songs captured the whole story of their emigration, their miserable living conditions, and the cruel treatment they endured at the hands of the colonial planters. The majority of their folk ballads told the tales of their betrayal by the Colonial tea planters-

Chal mini Assam jaibo
Desh boro dukhre Assam deshre.
Cha bagan hariyal.

(Come let's go to Assam my girl/as there is great misery in our country/let's go to Assam the land of Lush green tea plantations.)

In the song, the Arkatis are referred to as 'Shyam'. The language used suggests that workers from Bengal are questioning the Arkatis about why they have been cheated-

Ki nitur Shyam
Phaki diya anili Assam.

Which simply translates to hard hearted Shyam you have cheated us and brought us down to Assam (Source: Bijon Tanti, a teacher and singer of traditional songs from Dolu Tea Estate).

ki bolibo dukher katha
are bolile je gow lage betha
mazdur salan karile assame
railgardi sole ghane ghone
mator char saka
are raigardir dah saka
phaki diye Assam anile.

(What to speak about misery/ if we speak it's sadness us/ Imported Workers to Assam/ Train runs frequently/ Car has Four Wheels/ Train has ten wheels/ brought us to Assam by telling lies).

Oral songs serve as significant works reflecting the oppressive and exploitative culture of the colonizers. In 'Chal Mini Assam Jabo', the lyrics reveal the nefarious activities of the Babus and the power dynamics employed by the colonizers:

Bahar ki bahar maja bagi
Ton ton ton bqjay
Babura sahay Tillay jaai
Ek dui teen char koray kromosho bajiyajaaai
Maiyia lokey pata tulay
Purush lukey kodal mara.
Dhola ghora tilai guritejaaai
Tilar uppar Babu Baisa,
Maiyia lukey ghiriya boisey
Sahosro gopini majhe. (Source: Das 2009. Sthan Nam)

The above songs reflect on the licentious character of the supervisors (Tilla Babus) who used to, while away their time be with the girls (maiya lukey) of the tea gardens. The well-known jhumur song "Ranchi che bhejali kuli" originates from the tea plantations in Assam and was documented by cultural activist Kali Dasgupta during the 1960s.

Rachi che bhejal kuli
Dedalai kalam churi Dale,
Dale Babu Nazara bhaithaise
laxe laxe laxe re Dale,
Dale Babu Nazara bhathaise
Kur mara chalak chuluk
Pata tula dogi dog
Aina dekhi khupa bandhe Ure je Kapoor re
Rachi che bhejal kuli
Dedalai kalam churi
Rode barxhane maya pata ke Tulane
laxe laxe laxe re Dal.

The song describes the life of a tea plantation laborer in Assam during the Colonial Raj, depicting the hardships and sense of entrapment experienced by the worker. It portrays the fear and helplessness felt by the laborer, who faces the constant threat of punishment for not meeting productivity quotas. The lyrics express resentment towards the contractor responsible for bringing them to Assam and convey a longing for escape from their dismal existence. Despite the documented history of migration and indentured labor from regions like Bihar, Jharkhand, Bengal, and Odisha, the song highlights how music served as a means for migrants to express their memories and experiences, preserving their stories for generations to come. Thus the folk songs and other oral narratives of the tea communities given above explains how they were brought to the tea gardens by the colonial tea planters, who enticed them to Assam with promises of better lives in order to further their commercial interests.

CONCLUSION

History favors legends over human beings. It favors grandeur over cruelty, lofty words over silent actions. Monuments are always preserved by history, but the contributions of the men who built them are often forgotten. Tea laborers' toil, sweat, and sacrifice were the cornerstones of the Assam tea industries' growth and development during the colonial era. The evolution of the tea industry in the sparsely populated areas and tradition bound rural society in Assam under colonial state could be considered as the historical special contribution of these labourers. The historical event of their migration and recruitment in the tea industry of Assam was the marker of their present day identity. Their history was rife with brutality, torture, and migration caused by destitution. They had no idea what kind of misfortunes awaited them when they were brought to Assam. Due to poor health and mental instability, a great number of them also died while traveling to Assam. When they reached Assam they were kept in a unhealthy condition, the promises made to them by planters' agents were proved to be false ones. The European tea

planters also treated them inhumanely. They were not even provided minimum requirements by the tea planters. However, over time, these communities of indentured laborers integrated into Assamese society and contributed significantly to the state's socio-cultural and economic life. The Assamese tea community is one of the rare instances in history where diverse groups of people with various ethnic and cultural identities came together in one location through migration to create a singular, vibrant, and lovely cultural atmosphere.

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