

The Internal Migration of Jalpaiguri District in the Colonial Era (1872-1941)



Kishore Roy Sarkar
Research Scholar,
Deptt.of History,
University of Gour Banga,
Malda, West Bengal

Abstract

In the study of social sciences, there was not much discussion about the fundamentals of internal migration, especially about 'urban to rural area'. For the sake of political and economic benefit, the Colonial authorities forced the poor workers to turn into migrants by "push and pull" factor. In the geographical and ethnological heterogeneous district of Jalpaiguri, the British government migrated to this region from the poor populace of Santal Pargana for the expansion of administrative infrastructure and the tea garden industry. The expansion of the tea garden industry fundamentally changed the social and economic organism of this district. Thus, of the non-regulating act, the farmers of bordering areas came as migrants in the region. In the urban areas of the district, the migrant middle class was developed to drive the British regulation. Through the new social and economic structure, middle-class community that does not have relations with the land becomes Zamindar-Jotedar, while the value of the land continues to increase. Essentially, through the policies of the colonial government, natural and geographic heterogeneous areas like Jalpaiguri became one of the centres of human mobility.

Keywords: Migration, Emigration, Immigrants Demography, Jalpaiguri, Western Duars, Tea Garden.

Introduction

Among the Economists, Historians, Geographers, Demographers, Sociologists and Psychologists have analysed the discussion on the free movement of the human population. They have tried to define this human mobility in their respective conventions; all disciplines define residential mobility in the basis of their own respective scale of studies. In essence, the field of population movement has become multi-disciplinary and expanded to inter-disciplinary.¹ This arbitrary movement of population has been defined as the migration in the studies of social sciences. However, in the study of modern social sciences, this human mobility has been given many synonyms of 'migration' for various reasons. In particular, those special synonyms to be used the understanding the importance of the human movement. From whatever, academic discipline examined the human migration is only a limited range of questions to ask about any particular migration phenomenon. Why population movement does occur? Who is in this migratory section? What impact does the migration class from this area have on the territory? Again, in the area where this class establishes a new settlement, the impact of migration - there is inevitable to know the answers to these questions. In various fields, social theorists have searched or continued to answer the above questions in their respective analysis.

While discussing the various aspects of migration in social sciences, there was not much talk about the research of internal migration. The study of human movement in India during the British Colonial era was very less than the studies of refugees due to partition of India. Although the British census reports of India provides a lot of information about this. Some reputed researchers have highlighted in their writings about the spread and impact of internal migration and demography; among of them are Kingsley Devis, K.C. Zacharia, C. Chandrasekaran, and Ashok Mitra. Those researchers have written in the writings of different parts of India, outlining the different types of human movements, demography, the British policies about this migration and the division of economic and colonial policies in India.²

Objective of the Study

In the Colonial period, the background of internal migration was dependent on the will-the reluctance of the ruler. The portrait of the

migration of the Jalpaiguri district was reliant on such infrastructure. In favor of the economic and political reasons, the British used 'push and pull' factor in the region's exodus. This broke the so-called social structure of this district. Colonial policies worked behind the emergence of middle class in urban areas, land ownership of agricultural field and the emergence of a new social arrangement.

The British colonial government started infrastructure development in all the colonies including India from their economical and imperial point of view. The colonial government was started railways, telegraphs, roads construction, various types of plantations, modern postal systems. The so-called development was needed for a large number of people; those who work hard on one side and demand on the other hand. Therefore, that it can be easily transferred from one province to another province for the sake of these hard working people with the assist of "push and pull factors" was taken from different provinces to employ these skilled men forces. Again, from some areas, these workers were forced to evict their origin of residence by the policy makers. Basically, such type of push and pull factor were applied to the poor tribes-peasants-workers; whose origin of residence was mostly in the marginal areas.³ These working class have established a new seasonal or permanent way to the marginal areas of the colonial government. On the other hand, it was necessary for the people of a large educated society to formulate the constitutional framework of the colonial government firmly. The entire organization of the colonial structure will stand on that from this point of view, the colonial policymakers wanted to create a subordinate employees. Those who have been appointed as part of administrative, law and order, etc. will further strengthen all the departments.

The Jalpaiguri district is a heterogeneous region on the basis of geographical and ethnical. In 1858-59, at the time of revenue survey of Rangpur district, the population of Jalpaiguri region was estimated at 189067,⁴ although Western Duars was still not associated with the Jalpaiguri. In 1865-57, the retired of survey officer mentioned that there were 49620 people in the Western Duars.⁵ In 1869, the experimental census was taken of the Western Duars that lies between the Teesta River and Jaldhaka River; the total population was found to the number of 54777.⁶ In the official report of 1864-65, the population of this region was just 29133.⁷ In these 5 years, the population of the region increased to 25644, that is 88.02% as the percentage. In 1870, the deputy commissioner made the first settlement of the Western Duars. Than the population of this region

was 100111.⁸ Even though, this experimental census was not very accurate at all. For the reason of the arrival of this huge crowd of people in this region, we can say that the employees of different departments are appointed to strengthen the administrative activities in the newly acquired Western Duars by the colonial government. Due to the tea garden industry of Darjeeling, tea garden was opened in Jalpaiguri district soon. The first tea garden in the some on train track known as the Western 2 hours of Jalpaiguri dist was opened in 1874.⁹ The beginning of the tea garden industry makes Jalpaiguri district's infrastructure economically strong. All these work required a lot of workers, which was not possible in the district's specific population. The colonel government brought the poorest workers from different parts of India to this region. The government was not the first to move labourers from one region to another. The first was the labourers' movement from Upper Burma to assist in the cultivation of crops in Lower Burma.¹⁰ Most of the labourers brought to the tea garden industry in the Western Duars region were poor labourers of Santals, Mundas, Kols in Chhotanagpur Plateau region. The labourers not only come from Bhagalpur, Santal Parganas regions, in the neighbouring areas of Darjeeling Terai and Western Duars region i.e. Rangpur, Purnea, Dinajpur and Nepal, Bhutan and Cooch Behar native state's people came to this region in search of livelihood. Apart from the tea plantation, the settlement of land for normal cultivation improved rapidly. Cultivators are very attracted to farming due to low taxes of this region.

According to the 1881 census report, the population of Jalpaiguri district was 581562, which increased by 38.9 percent from the census report of 1872.¹¹ In the 1891 census report, the total population growth in the whole region was illustrated. In this census report, our study area has been divided into two parts. The Cis-Tistan portion of Jalpaiguri, i.e. plan portions of Jalpaiguri and others part is the western Duars of Jalpaiguri and Darjeeling Terai region. Compared to the census report of 1881, the male population of Cis-Tistan portion in 1891 was decreased by 5011, which was 2.4%. Moreover, for women, this reduced number was 9010 (4.7%).¹² Contrary to what is seen in the second part of our study area, Western Duars of Jalpaiguri and Darjeeling Terai region. The growth rate of this region is relatively high. According to the census report of 1891, the male population of this portion was increased by 71406, which was 53.0% based on percentage and the increase in women was 53403 (50.9%).¹³

Table no.1: the migration table of Western Duars of Jalpaiguri district (1891 to 1901)¹⁴

Population of Western Duars	1901			1891		
	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total
Actual Population	422877	364603	787480	364319	316417	680736
Immigrants	104914	83309	188223	87914	60513	148427
Emigrants	7555	9871	17426	9631	11016	20647
Natural Population	325518	291065	616583	286036	266820	552856

According to the census report of 1891 and 1901, a large number of people were migrated to the Western Duars region. In the census report of 1891,

the number of immigrants in this region was 127780. Some of them were tea labours, as well as people from nearby areas came to the region. Again, the

number of these immigrants in 1901 rose to 170,797, which was 34.18 percent more than in 1891.

Table No. 2: Jalpaiguri District Migration rates in 1891.¹⁵

Districts	Immigrations			Emigrations		
	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total
Contiguous District						
Darjeeling	1347	891	2238	2097	1808	3905
Dinajpur	2127	2629	4756	1007	1701	2708
Rangpur	7361	8109	15470	398	735	1133
Cooch Behar	20085	16203	36288	4841	5832	10673
Total	30920	27835	58755	8343	10006	18349
Others District						
Santal Parganas	2832	239	3071	-	-	-
Saran	3430	158	3588	-	-	-
Darbhanga	920	181	1101	2	2	4
Muzaffarpur	2506	209	2715	4	-	4
Bhagalpur	1145	547	1692	-	-	-
Purnea	2537	2273	4810	528	700	1228
Lohardaga	8093	10715	18808	314	66	380
Nepal	13449	7053	20502	-	-	-
Bhutan	911	856	1767	-	-	-
North-western Provinces	2363	606	2969	-	-	--
Punjab	2832	239	3071	-	-	-

Jalpaiguri district's migratory figure is slightly heterogeneous than others part of Bengal. The way, in which the educated immigrants have progressed in the process of administrative reconstruction, it is quite evident. Based on population, the southern part of the district was a bit densely populated but the dense jungle, rivers and hills dominated the northern region. Immigrants appointed by the administrative provision chose the southern part of the district. Apart from this, due to the increase in agricultural land in the basin of the Teesta River, this is one of the reasons for population growth. In this part of the peasantry's dominance of neighbouring areas, it was found. The spread of tea cultivation in the western Duars region of Jalpaiguri was created by mobilizing the economy from one side to another, whereas immigration of different groups was making this region heterogeneous. As per the census report of 1891, a large part of the migrants coming to Jalpaiguri was the contiguous districts country. The British colonial government did not put Western doors under the Regulation Act from economic thought. The new land settlement, the large number of farming fields, the low taxes, etc. makes the region very populous. The reasons surrounding the neighbouring state of Cooch Behar, and the district's middle class agricultural groups were encouraged to migrate to the region. Again, the workers associated with farming also came to this region in the hope of getting their agricultural land profits. According to the Census report in 1891, the number of immigrants coming to this portion from the Cooch Behar native state was 36288 and 100673 people from Jalpaiguri southern part.¹⁶⁴ The number of immigrants coming from neighbouring Rangpur district - there were 14,337 people. Although the majority of the people coming from these areas are associated with farming, people in government jobs, lawyers, teachers etc are involved in this. In the tea garden industry and other businesses, the tea workers and coolies, this came to Jalpaiguri district,

most of their origin of the Santal Parganas. The tribes of Santal, Kol, and Munda etc. were originally involved in tea industry. According to the census of 1891, the incoming tribal workers permanently stayed in this region. It is necessary to mention that, not only the migrants came from Bengal, Nepal, Bhutan, Bihar and Santal Parganas, but also came from Rajasthan and North-West provinces to Jalpaiguri districts.

Table No. 3: The Immigrants in Jalpaiguri and Darjeeling District (1881 to 1951).¹⁷

Year	Number of immigrants in Jalpaiguri District	Year	Number of immigrants in Jalpaiguri District
1881	68612	1921	163,024
1891	127880	1931	158,757
1901	95,899	1941	156,765
1911	152,174	1951	278,842

Soon after the declaration of the district in 1869, the population rate of Jalpaiguri district increased. Despite the outbreak of epidemic like cholera, kala-azar, population growth did not decrease. The reason behind this increased control was that the arrival of immigrants in the region continuously. This migration flow has increased due to keeping in mind over time. In 1881, there were 68612 migrants in Jalpaiguri district. Most of them fall into internal migration. Some Nepalese and Bhutanese migrate to the Western Duars region of this district. The Jalpaiguri district had the highest circulation in 1891, which was 86.38 percent more than the migration of 1881. According to the 1921 census report, the number of immigrants coming from Rangpur, Darjeeling, Dinajpur and the native state of Cooch Behar in the bordering districts of Jalpaiguri was 45 souls.¹⁸ 242 people per thousand in remote districts, especially Santal Parganas, Bhagalpur, Lohardaga, Purnea, Muzaffarpur, Saran and bordering countries such as Nepal and Bhutan.¹⁹

After the analysis the census data from 1911 to 1921, the maximum number of migrants in Jalpaiguri district coming from Cooch Behar. During this period, the cholera and influenza in the State of Cooch Behar had the epidemic. To survive the epidemic, many people have taken shelter in nearby Western Duars region. From 1891 onwards until 1921, people from the Cooch Behar Native State were continuously migrants in the districts of Jalpaiguri for agricultural and epidemic. According to the census of 1921, the numbers of 14866 Tribal were migrated from Santal Parganas to Jalpaiguri district.²⁰ In the colonial period, the number of immigrants among all the population of Jalpaiguri was between 350 and 450 people per thousand. In 1951, this district migrated to 305189, which was 86.38 percent more than in the 1941

census report.²¹ The reason for this huge migration in this district is the arrival of the 1947 partition of the country's refugees; this concern will be discussed is not part of this article.

According to his observation, in 1911, the functional caste was not created properly in the region that is essential for the urbanism. Due to the absence of the functional castes like Barber, Cobbler, Fuller, and Sweeper in the neighbouring villages, it was brought from Bihar to the requirement of various cities of Jalpaiguri district.²² In addition, this area was not entirely new to the working classes of Bihar, but these working classes made seasonal mobility for the development of infrastructure and farming in the region.²³

Table No. 4: The Population Growth Rate of the Districts of Jalpaiguri in 1872 to 1941.²⁴

(*According to the census report of 1901 and 1941, there is little difference between the total population of Jalpaiguri in the year of 1891 and 1901)

Year	Jalpaiguri District			Year	Jalpaiguri District		
	Total Population	Decimal Increased	Decimal Increased (%)		Total Population	Decimal Increased	Decimal Increased (%)
1872	417855	-	-	1911	903,155	116,369	14.70
1881	580570	162,715	38.94	1921	936,778	33,623	3.72
1891*	680736/ 680,051	100,166	17.25	1931	983,929	47,151	5.03
1901*	787380/ 786,786	106,735	15.67	1941	1,039,513	105,584	5.65

Based on population growth, the population of Jalpaiguri district has increased significantly since the census report of 1911. By 1872, the population of Jalpaiguri district was the highest (38.94) increase in 1881. From 1921 to 1941, the rate of increase in the population of Jalpaiguri district was slightly reduced. Originally, since 1911, tea workers have created obstruction in the number of unrest-movement workers. It is necessary to mention that the approval of the free land for the sake of tea industry has stopped the spread of tea garden after some time in 1901. The horrific floods of Jalpaiguri district play an important role in the growth of population. Due to the devastating floods of 1902 and 1906, the city of Jalpaiguri district, railway-road communication, telegraph system was severely damaged.²⁵

In some areas of the district, migrant class may also receive a majority of the council. Although the greater part of migratory section was lower class worker and agriculturists. Consequently, social history of Jalpaiguri district depends on the migratory section; where many language-cultures are combined, only by economic activity. At the same time, a part of the community involved with the agricultural sector in the adjoining Duars of Jalpaiguri region goes away. British-occupied territory Duars's agricultural tax was much less than the state of Cooch Behar. As a result, peasants migrate for additional profit. People have been emigrates from Cooch Behar in Jalpaiguri district, they originally lived permanently.

Increasing migration in northern Bengal, especially the Jalpaiguri district, there is a mandatory change in traditional socio-economic cases. Prior to the British rule, this region is much like 'Asiatic mode Typology'. The 'enclave' character spontaneously

inhabited the economics of this region and the residents were bound by their own needs and requirements. Nevertheless, the determination of the British rule and the arrival of the outsiders will create a new social force in this region, which helps to change radically the socio-economic infrastructure of this region. In the case of internal migration in Jalpaiguri district, there was an important impact on the transfer of land ownership. Along with that, the value of the land was increased keeping in mind. The new land settlement introduced by the colonel government enticed people to become 'landowners' of neighbouring districts such as Rangpur, Cooch Behar, Darjeeling, Dinajpur, etc. Swaraj Basu wrote that "the large influx of people only lead to a growing demand fall and rise in land price".²⁶ Thus, the number of Rajbanshi Jotedars in Jalpaiguri district, especially in the Western Duars region, was gradually increased. Not only that the number of Rajbanshi Jotedars increased, but also the people of the class who are not related to the land, such as Marwari, Varna Hindu Bangalis became Zamindar-Jotedar.²⁷ Those who migrated to the area just needed jobs and business. Even though there was a structural occupational difference between the Jotedar, Chukainidar and Adhiyar of the indigenous Rajbanshi society of Jalpaiguri district, this society was generally characterized by 'egalitarian' character. Since 1880 the concept of 'emerging class consciousness' was replaced by this new Jotedar class of the new socio-economical structure of this region.²⁸

The state has been given a special definition by enforcing human movement in some so-called rules. In the social history of the British occupied Jalpaiguri, this movement or migration is standing on

the field of some political and economic decisions. Being organized by these administrations, the modernity of the character of the state extends, as well as securing the road to the outsiders. By the principle that the rulers follow this strategy to accelerate the migration process, the political and economic aspects of this region reach the peak of power. Actually, the movement of the migration was completely dependent on the will of the ruler in the colonial period. The establishment of tea gardens, improving communication system, and border security, etc., has always made the British colonial government demand for its own needs. The biggest example of this is seen when the Bengali enthusiasts are interested in entering the tea gardens industry. The objective of the evolution of this possibility was changed in the 1880-90 decade of land tenure in tea garden area. In fact, a form of imperialist thought that is manifesting itself.

Conclusion

In the colonial period, the characteristics of migration were not known, it would not be considered unimportant in the present context. At that time, the image of the populist was seen as a result of the formation of the policy of the English government over a marginal region. The migration phenomenon of the Jalpaiguri can be seen to formulate such policies. In the context of economic prosperity, a section of marginalized people was tried by push 'and' push 'to another marginal zone. On the other hand, in order to strengthen the system of governance, efforts are made to tempt the business community in the name of employment and to make the migratory class. From such phenomenon, the process of migrating to north Bengal was going on.

References

1. White, P. E. and Woods, R. I., *The foundations of migration study*. In: White, p. E. and Woods, R. I., (Eds.), *The geographical impact of Migration*, Longman, London, 1980, p. 1.
2. *In essence, their writings started the research-related books on internal migration and demography in India. These reputed researchers have worked in different areas of demographic profile and migration of India.* Devis, Kingsley, *The Population of India and Pakistan*, Princeton University Press, New Jersey, 1951; Singer, Milton & Cohn, Bernard S., *Structure and Change in Indian Society*, Rawat Publications, Jaipur, 1996; Zachariah, K. C., *A Historical Study of Internal Migration in the Indian Sub-Continent 1901-1931*, Asia Publishing House, New York, 1964, Chattopadhyaya, Haraprasad, *Internal Migration in India: a case study of Bengal*, K. P. Bagchi & Company, Calcutta, 1987.
3. *The British colonial government brought tribal workers from the tribal areas of Chhotanagpur and Bihar to build tea gardens and roads. In order to bring such workers to the Duars and Terai regions, they also appointed some brokers. These brokers sometimes used force enforcement policies to bring indigenous workers to this region.*
4. Mitra, A, *Census 1951 West Bengal District Handbooks Jalpaiguri*, Thacker's Press & Directories Ltd., Calcutta, p. i.
5. Mitra, A, *Census 1951 West Bengal District Handbooks Jalpaiguri*, Thacker's Press & Directories Ltd., Calcutta, p. i.
6. Beverley, H., *Report on the Census of Bengal 1872*, The Bengal Secretariat Press, Calcutta, 1872, p. 104.
7. Beverley, H., *Report on the Census of Bengal 1872*, The Bengal Secretariat Press, Calcutta, 1872, 104.
8. Mitra, A. *Op.cit*, p.i.
9. Bose, Sugata, *The New Cambridge History of India III-2 Peasant Labour and Colonial Capital: Rural Bengal since 1770*, Cambridge University Press, Reprint 2003, p. 54.
10. Chattopadhyaya, Haraprasad, *Internal Migration in India: A case study of Bengal*, K. P. Bagchi & Co. Calcutta, 1987, p. 5.
11. Bourdillon J. A. - *Report on the Census of Bengal 1881 Volume-II*, The Bengal Secretariat Press, Calcutta, 1882, p. 14.
12. O'Donnell, C. J., *Census of India 1891 Volume – III, the Lower Province of Bengal and their Feudatories - the Report*, The Bengal Secretariat Press, Calcutta, 1893, p. 46.
13. O'Donnell, C. J., *Census of India 1891 Volume – III, the Lower Province of Bengal and their Feudatories - the Report*, The Bengal Secretariat Press, Calcutta, 1893, p. 46.
14. E. A. Gait, *Census of India 1901 Volume –VI, the Lower Province of Bengal and their Feudatories Part-I the Report*, Bengal Secretariat Press, Calcutta, 1902, p. 61.
15. O'Donnell, C. J., *Op.cit*, p. 59.
16. O'Donnell, C. J., *Op.cit*, p. 59.
17. Kusari, Abani Mohan, and others, *West Bengal District Gazetteers Jalpaiguri*, Dr. Barun De, Honorary State Editor, West Bengal District Gazetteers (Publisher), Calcutta, July 1981, p.73; O'Donnell, C. J., *Op.cit*, pp. 54-55.
18. Thompson, W. H., *Census of India 1921 Volume-V Bengal Part-I Report*, Bengal Secretariat Book Depot, Calcutta, 1923, p. 135.
19. *Ibid*, with the Map of Migration Streams. pp. 135 & 141.
20. *Ibid*, p. 144.
21. Mitra, A. *Op.cit*, pp. 93-95.
22. Gruning, John F., *Eastern Bengal and Assam District Gazetteers Jalpaiguri*, Higher Education Department, West Bengal Government, Kolkata, reprint January 2011, p. 105.
23. O'Malley, L. S. S., *Bengal, Bihar and Orissa Sikkim*, University Press, Cambridge, 1917, p. 183.
24. E. A. Gait, *Census of India 1901 Volume –VIA Part-II Tables*, Bengal Secretariat Press, Calcutta, 1902, p. 6 and Dutch, R. A. *Census of India 1941, Volume-IV Bengal Tables*, Government of India Press, Simla, 1942, p. 8.
25. Gruning, John F., *Op.cit*, pp. 74-79.

26. Basu, Swaraj, *Dynamics of a Caste Movement : The Rajbansis of North Bengal 1910-1947*, Manohar Publishers, New Delhi, 2003, p.51.
27. Xara, V., *Evolution of Agrarian Structure and Relations in Jalpaiguri District (W.B)*, *Sociological Bulletin*, Volume-29, No. 1, 1980, p. 77.
28. Roychoudhury, T. K., *Land Control: Class Structure and Class relation in Western Duars 1871-1905*, UGC Seminar Paper, Department of History, University of North Bengal, 1987.