

# STRUGGLES OF ADIVASIS OF ASSAM

(With special focus on the Adivasi martyrs,  
Christoson Munda and Mangri Mem)

*Mr. Wilfred Topno*

---

## 1. INTRODUCTION

***Ainai ke Sahek Janena  
Lekin ainai karek nahi janena  
Sob Jait milke ninda karena  
Holo raure matiyai rahila***

***Hey! Adivasi re Bhai man  
Ka karla itna din  
Cha bagan me rai ke...***

The excerpt is from a song of Zubin Garg, the film fair Award winner 2006, for the song "Ya Ali". It is composed by Subil Bagh (lyricist of Chal Gori –commercially most successful and popular video album 2004)  
It means –

***You bear exploitation, injustice  
However, you never exploit others  
All community dishonor you  
Nevertheless, you say not a word***

***Hey! My Adivasi Brethren  
What you have done  
Remaining so many years in the Tea Garden***

This is the plight and situation of Adivasis in Assam. They are being exploited, but the community never reacted. Of course, they had reacted against the British colonial rule. During the freedom movement when the father of the nation declared non-violence against British, Adivasis too co-operated. And their movement was so strong that the mighty British soldiers had to go back to their own barracks leaving the battlefield.

There are about 60 lakhs of Adivasi people in Assam. Major chunk of it is in the Tea Gardens. However the economic condition of the community is poor. 70% of the ex-tea population is landless(Umanada Phukan). Tea industry employed only 5,85,044 persons in the year 1991<sup>1</sup>. Today this number may increase but not much because of casualisation of labour (labour chatai). 45% of

the community is illiterate. Their political and social condition is very poor compared to other communities of Assam.

Adivasis took part in the freedom fight and many of them sacrificed their lives. Christoson Munda and Mangri Mem sacrificed their lives during the freedom struggle.

The backbone of the economy of Assam is the Tea Production. Therefore the contribution of Adivasi Tea Labour should be counted and due share must be granted. However, in reality they are considered as second-class citizens of Assam. The development schemes never reach the Tea Gardens (Adivasi inhabited) areas. Education, Health and livelihood programs of government are never implemented well in Adivasi inhabited areas. They are just left in the hands of the company whose policy is '**Low cost, High profit**'. Today the situation of the Adivasi tea labourers is very pitiful. They are living in sub-human conditions. The Tea Industry is going through a crisis and several tea Gardens are closed down making lakhs of Adivasis jobless. Government could revive 'Assam Transport Corporation' then why not 'Assam Tea Corporation' which has all the merits. It is because in these tea gardens majority of the people are Adivasis and they are non-important for the government of Assam. The names of Christoson Munda and Mangri Mem are lost from the history of Assam who had sacrificed their lives for the freedom of Assam.

Government and the elite of Assam have not only neglected but also systematically destroyed the evidences of Adivasi heroes. Even the community was made insignificant by leveling them as coolie<sup>2</sup>, Tea & Ex-Tea Tribe<sup>3</sup>, Black Tribe<sup>4</sup>, Seuj Assomia<sup>5</sup>, Seuj Potiya, etc,. This is nothing but strategically demoralizing and pushing back the community from the path of development. It is a mystery that government of Assam levels them as Tea Tribe but no Tribal facility has been given to them where as in the states like Orissa, West Bengal, Jharkhand and Tripura there is no one termed as Tea Tribe but Adivasis are able to get all the facilities as Tribal.

## **2. SHORT HISTORY OF ADIVASIS OF ASSAM**

A general belief about the history of Adivasis in Assam is simultaneous with the history of Tea Gardens. Historians and Sociologist never tried to link the community beyond the establishment of tea Industry. But there is sufficient evidence that adivasis are connected to north east even before the establishment of tea industries in Assam. The Santhal colonies of west Assam is evidence that Adivasis were not brought to Assam only for Tea Industries. (Thus leveling them as tea tribe is not valid.)

The connection and relation of Adivasis and Assam and northeast can be traced back to immemorial dates. The first settlers of Assam were the Khasis and Synteng<sup>6</sup>. In the article "The Races of North east India"<sup>7</sup> Stephen Fuchs says that linguistically these tribes belong to the Austro-Asiatic or Mon-Khamer. Through their language they formed a link between the Munda tribe of further west in central India as well many other tribes in Burma and Indo-China border. They resemble them culturally also; they erect stone monuments in the name of

their dead ancestors like the Mundas and Hos of Chotanagpur. Historians say that once upon a time Kol-mundas and Khasis were living together in the north east, and Khasis adopted the language of kol-mundas .<sup>8</sup>

Some believe that the Khasis were not cultivators therefore, Mundas called them “Ka –si” (in Mundari meaning not ploughing-non cultivator)<sup>9</sup>. The earliest ruler according to legend was Mahiranga . The legend also tells us about Marang Buru<sup>10</sup>. Kamrupa temple and Kamrupa devi has relationship with the magic prayer of Santhal where the recitation of Kamrup Guru said again and again.<sup>11</sup> The great ruler Naraka<sup>12</sup> Sur was the son of Janaka. Janaka had a daughter Sita who was married to Lord Ram. Sita’s name is kept so because Janka found her during ploughing the land. Only in Mundari the meaning of Sita fits with the statement (Si- tan meaning ‘si’-plough ‘tan’ –(do)ing )<sup>13</sup>.Therefore Janka was Munda hence sita and Naraka were munda. Hence there is a lot of possibility to relate adivasis with the north east. Dr.Grenson believed that the Adivasis have gone to Chotanagpur through north east.

Assam came under East India company on 24<sup>th</sup> February 1826<sup>14</sup> through the Treaty of Yandabo between king Hpogyidoo and East India company. During the colonial period Adivasis were again brought as slaves to the tea plantation of Assam. I say slave because slavery was abolished only in the year 1843 from India <sup>15</sup>.

### **3. IMMAGRATION OF ADIVASIS TO ASSAM**

#### **Why did Adivasis come to Assam?**

There were two major factors for migration of Adivasis to Assam.

- Firstly, there was scarcity of laborers in Assam. The tea industry grew so fast that there was great demand for Laborers. The planters appointed Arkatis as Agents to recruit Laborers. Government also supported Planters with the black laws of workmen’s Breach of contract Act 1859. Agents were sent to collect Laborers from different parts of the country. The agents lured and forced the innocent tribals to sign agreements<sup>16</sup>. Catholic Mission Co-operative Society established by Fr. Hoffman also encouraged Adivasis to go to Assam. This same agency was approached by the Government for recruiting Laborers.<sup>17</sup> Thus through this Agency a large number of Adivasis were sent to various places including Assam.
- Secondly, the situation in Chotanagpur also contributed to the extreme miseries of the Adivasis. They suffered very badly in terms of alienation from their lands. Chotanagpur became hopeless and non-promising land for Adivasis when colonial rule imposed land taxation and captured the forest resources and minerals. The replacement of –collective ownership of land by private ownership use for profit which was facilitated by the land tenure system . The major reasons for migration of Adivasis were-(1) Land tax introduced by Major Wilkinson, the Governor General’s Agent in the year 1837(Land tenure), 8 anna on the plough. Adivasis had no money to pay. They never used money. (2) Famine and epidemic during the year 1896-1900. (3) Unrest and insecurity

due to several wars between British and Local leaders (Birsa Munda ulgulan (Revolt) , Sidu & Kanhu 'Hul' (Revolt).)

First batch of Adivasis came to Assam in 1841. But they all died due to famine and diseases. In 1858-59 about 400 labours were brought to Assam. This increased to 84,915 on May 1863. Thus lakhs of people were brought to Assam. This number increased as the areas of tea plantation increased. During this time Large number of Adivasis died due to diseases<sup>18</sup>.

Adivasis were brought from Chotanagpur and other places through the legal provisions for Workman's Breach of Contract Act XII of 1859 and its amended act of 1865, where workers could be punished for striking work and where the minimum wage was also stipulated for the workers. There were two systems of recruitment. The first was called Arkatti system, the other Sardari system<sup>19</sup>. In Sardari system, the labourer who already required went to different area and brought labourers. In the year 1842 Assam Tea Company opened a steam boat Service between Guwahati to Kolkata. The labourers were brought by steamer. In 1889 railway was introduced. Labourers were brought by train.

***It is to be noted that these Adivasis migrated to Assam not for their personal gain or to exploit resources of Assam for their gain (like other emigrants ) but they were forced to come for building the tea industry and other infrastructure which gave Assam a strong economical base.***

#### · **John Henry Lawton and Dunlop & BEGG**

Once while Adivasi labourers were brought through a steamer, on the way they were abducted by a gang of **Henry Lawton** during the year 1863 – 70. Usually Dunlop and BEGG charged Rs.3/- per man and Rs.1/- for a woman. But John Henry Lawton Charged Rs.30/- per man and Rs.25/- per women. John Henry Lawton collected sufficient money and went to Shimla, lived there for some years and died in 1870. His tom Stone is found at Shimla. This is the fact that Adivasis were brought to Assam under great suffering and misery. Thousands died on the way and thousands died after reaching the tea estates in Assam.

## **4. THE FREEDOM STRUGGLE AND ADIVASIS OF ASSAM**

The history of freedom struggle in Assam is incomplete if the struggle of the Adivasi plantation labourers is not counted. However, the great scholar Amulandu Guha has rightly accounted the labourers fight and given name the freedom struggle of Assam, the fight and the struggle against Planter as '**Planter Raj to Swaraj**'. This clearly shows that Adivasi Plantation Laborers fought the fight against colonial British. The conflicts began in 1904 -1905, when labourer demanded better facilities from the Tea Garden management. There were several strikes in the tea Gardens during 1911 to 1937. There were 210 cases reported where the laborer- Planter conflict took place. Out of them 141 were cases of rioting and unlawful assembly, arising from the issue of inadequate remuneration and trying economic conditions<sup>20</sup>. The Chargola Exodus<sup>21</sup> not only shows the great sacrifice of 3000 Adivasi Laborers but this also inspired the Railway workers to fight against the British. From 1916 to 1937 there was

continued labour unrest in the gardens of Assam Valley. Who united the labourers? Whose hand was there in all these uprisings? It seems that congress was not interested in the labourers affairs.

*“Congress circles were as much right of the growing number of plantation strikes. Congress men did not want get involved in to them and persistently tried to disown them.”* (Planter Raj to Swaraj ,P-136).

Thus, congress did not give importance to the strikes of tea laborers. Adivasis themselves organized and fought against Planters. A large number of Adivasi Tea Labourers sacrificed their lives for the freedom of Assam and India.

## 5. POST INDEPENDENCE & PRESENT STRUGGLE

India got freedom on 15<sup>th</sup> of August 1947 but the Adivasi community was not free from the slavery of colonial planters. Still the gardens were under colonial planters. The Indian Government never paid attention, neither did Assam Government. Adivasis organized themselves under the leadership of their own community and continued the struggle for their right as Indian citizen. Here I like to mention the major organizations and their struggle for society.

- **Adivasi Council of Assam (ACA):-** After independence Adivasis were mainly demanding for Scheduled Tribe status in Assam. Visit of Jaipal Singh Munda (MP) the “Manrang Gomke”(Chief Leader or Head ) in the month of March 1958 ignited the mass on scheduling issue(14<sup>th</sup> March 1958 Hindustan Standard ). He said how same constitution will differ for two brothers one at Assam and other in Bengal. Being the member of constitution drafting committee he knew that only political tactics will provide ST status to Adivasis. Therefore, Jaipal Singh Munda and Sushil Bage (MLA Bihar) visited Assam to organize people to demand ST status. During his visit, 1958 Adivasi council of Assam was formed and meetings were held at several places under the leadership of Francis Hans, Bishal Topno of Lakhimpur and Simon Soren of Gossaigaon. .
- **Assam Tea Tribe Student Association (AATTSA):-** Chotnagpuria Chatra Sangha formed under the leadership of Simon Singh Horo & Santosh Topno on 28<sup>th</sup> December 1947<sup>22</sup>. The same organization later came to be known as Assam Tea Tribe Student Association. During 1984-85 it lead a strong movement under the leadership of Lokeswar Kurmi (President) and Bhagirath Karan (Secretary). Their movement ended with an accord with AGP Government. According to understating AATTSA got four AGP tickets for Assembly seats. All of the AATTSA leaders lost in the election. However AATTSA created a fake identity such us Tea Tribe which is not accepted by Experts. On 14<sup>th</sup> August 2006 Mr. Silvius Condapan raised the bill at parliament to include Adivasis in the ST list. Tribal Minister said that with regard to 97 communities, which are clubbed under one caption of tea tribes, the State Government has itself stated in its latest report that they do not have primitive traits and that they are not geographically isolated. The RGI has

stated that they have furnished their comments four times - in the year 1978, 1981, 1995 and 2005 but he did not support the proposal<sup>23</sup> because Assam Government sent wrong report. In the year of 1985 central government was about to give Scheduled Tribe status to nine Adivasi tribes of Assam. But the then labour minister Barki Prasad Telga and ATTSA leader Mr. Bagirath Karan opposed and sent a resolution to Assam government to oppose the central government's move. Struggle for Scheduling is still going on in several forms.

- **All Adivasi Student's Association of Assam (AASAA) :-** AASAA was formed on 2nd July 1996 as a result of the ethnic clash of Kokrajhar. Initially it worked well to solve the problems of Adivasis. It was a strong organization during 1996 to 2003. For the first time it was able to raise the demands of Adivasis at Delhi. Adivasi masses were able to lead strong movement demanding their rights from the government under the leadership of Justin Lakra of Gossaigaon (president), Joseph Minz of Iakhimpur (general secretary) and Bosco Chermako of Gossaigaon. Several leaders of AASAA sacrificed their life for the society and are listed names in martyrs list. ***Philimon Hemrom (Srirampur) sacrificed his life in police firing on 5<sup>th</sup> July 2000. Andrius Marandi Asst. General Secretary of AASAA gave his life at the gun of Bodo extremist on 8<sup>th</sup> March 2001.*** Eight Adivasis shed their precious blood in the police firing on 25<sup>th</sup> July 2002 during the bandh called by AASAA in demand of rehabilitation of Kakrajhar Adivasi IDPs and scheduling. The Martyrs were ***Jiten Tanti, Arun Tanti, Nathenial Munda, Dambu Hasa Purti, Sanika Sawasi, Mangra Mund and Basudeo Kherwar.*** Hundreds of student were arrested and tortured whose names were not recorded.

Another great contribution of the movement was formation of organization. All Adivasi Womens Association (AAWAA), Adivasi Sahitya Sabha (ASS) and many NGOs were formed to work for Adivasi Society. Several Adivasi Mahasabhas were organized which took resolutions and plans to strengthen the community. A section of youth started underground movement like Adivasi Security Force (ASF), Birsa Commando Force (BCF) Adivasi National Liberation Army (ANLA), and Adivasi Cobra Militant (ACM).

The movements and organizations have today lost their strength due to lack of leadership. Today other organizations are also silent about the grave situation of Adivasis for several reasons.

- **The trade unions:-** trade union started in the year of 1939 with the registration of labour organizations of Assam. Syllate Cachar Cha Bagan Mazdoor Union and Upper Assam Tea Company Labour union registered on 27<sup>th</sup> April 1939<sup>24</sup>. Assam Cha Mazdoor Sangha formed under the banner of Indian National Trade Union Congress (INTUC) on 9<sup>th</sup> August 1958 is the largest trade union in the tea garden of Assam with largest membership. The organization today becomes just a means to capture the political power for congress. It raises fund for the congress from the labourers and provides vote bank<sup>25</sup>. They are not interested in the development of the labourers and the

community. Because of this trade union congress retains its power in Assam. The former congress president of Assam Debokanto Baruah said, "So long as Alis and Coolies are with the congress party, it does not care for any body."<sup>26</sup> Several leaders were elected to parliament and legislative Assembly but no body cared for the community. Leaders like Pawan singh Ghatwar, Silvius Condapan, Prithvi Majhi etc are elected from this community but they have done nothing for the community.

## **Tea Garden Situation**

The situation of Tea garden is deteriorating. The extortion by extremist groups and other problems resulted to closing down of many tea gardens creating large scale unemployment. The wage of the labourers is very low compared to labourers elsewhere. A Tea labourer gets wage less than Rs. 50/- but the minimum wage in the state is Rs.66/-. There is high child labour in tea gardens. Lack of Education, health facilities and Sanitation make tea Labourers live in an inhuman conditions. Sukumar Bogasi (Assomor Arthaniti 1997) says that during their studies at several tea gardens they found that the labourers are living in sub –human conditions. Umanada Phukan points out that 70% of Ex-Tea population are land less. Land alienation is one of the major problems in the community.

## **The carnage of Kokrajhar and Adivasi IDPs**

Ethnic conflict of 1996 displaced 2 lakh people and killing 8 thousand Adivasis<sup>27</sup> . "Still Assam has large number of Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) including 33,362 persons in Kokrajhar district and 74,123 persons in Gossaigaon district" (**India Human Right Report of 2006**). They are some from forest area and some of them are Patta holders (***Uddipana Goswami***).<sup>28</sup> It is shame for a country that is not able to rehabilitate the IDPS after so many years.<sup>29</sup> The greater society does not feel the pain and sufferings of Adivasis who are in the concentration camp of government of Assam, living for last 15 years. More than one lakh people are still in the concentration camp (relief camp) of Kokrajhar District. I say concentration camp of Assam (similar to Nazi) because it is made to kill the Adivasis who are in the camp through non –supply of food and water<sup>30</sup> . They are also pushed to die of famine and epidemics.

## **6. CHRISTOSON MUNDA AND HIS FIGHT AGAINST BRITISH**

Christoson Munda was the leader who organized Labourers, Adivasis as well as local Assamese peasants against the British from 1904 to1916. It is

mentioned in the Labour Enquiry report of 1921 that Christoson Munda was a pastor of Lutheran Church of Phulbari Tea estate. He went to Munda country (Present Khunti Area of Ranchi district of Jharkhand) his home and came across the Birsa Munda "Ulgulan" (1889-1900). Christoson Munda was much influenced by the "Ulgulan"(Revolution). After his coming back to Phulbari he organized the labourers as well as the local peasants against the British planter. It is also reported that the Christian labourers collected donation for Birsa Munda Movement and sent to Chotanagpur several times. Some people must have had to travel to Chotanagpur to reach the donations or they might have been sent in the hands of Christoson when he went for leave.

During those days British started 'Hats'(village market). The Huts were the centre of economic exchange. The moneylenders who were from the non-locals and exploiters were the main target. Christoson with his friend and local peasants joined together and attacked the 'Huts' destroying, looting and burning the market houses. Interestingly the Adivasis from tea garden and local peasants fought together in this anti -hats movement as stated by Sanjay Barborah<sup>31</sup>. Christoson Munda being a Pastor visited several places probably Sonajuli T.E, Helem, Kacharigaon, Kathon Tea etc, where Lutheran Mundas existed during those days. He organized and motivated them to fight against the planters. Several hats (market) were destroyed. Police hunted for Christoson Munda and finally arrested. The great freedom fighter was publicly hanged at Phulbari tea estate in the year 1916. That never stopped the movement. After this incident labourers of several tea garden rose against the planters demanding better wages. About Christoson Munda the then Deputy Commissioner of Darrang reported to the labor enquiry committee as follows-

*"The Lutheran denomination was before the war supervised by a German pastor and it is not impossible that their present attitude is partly the out come of his teaching. Many of these native Christians are literate and their religious interests are looked after by pastors and Pundits of their own caste. Sometime before the riot the chief resident pundit, **Christoson**, obtained leave to go to his country from where he returned shortly before the riot. Since his return the Manager had noticed a gradual growth of a feeling of sullenness and discontent amongst the coolies for which no apparent cause could be assigned. No grievances were formulated but a spirit of 'Ca' 'canny' began to pervade all forms of garden work. The manager was at first inclined to blame his Jamadar and Mohurries for this attitude but the riot showed that the manager's suspicion was unfounded as these men were the first to be attacked by the rioters.*

These feelings of discontentment had come to the forefront some two days before the occurrence when the laborers who had been sent out to do specific work deliberately skipped the work." It is, I believe beyond doubt", concluded the Deputy Commissioner,

*"That these Munda Christians have been influenced by the social and semi-political propaganda which appears to be now pervading the Munda country. The Manager had noticed that for sometime before the riot correspondence between the coolies and their own countrymen had enormously increased and it was also reported that a number of subscriptions had been sent by Christian coolies*



*towards the expenses of this social and political propaganda in their own country. The visit of the Pundit to his own country appears to have increased his sympathy with the movement, and on his return there is no doubt that he and his friends have attempted to spread it on the garden and on other gardens in the east, of the district where Christian Mundas are to be found.*"<sup>32</sup>

*.(P-166-167, Tea Garden Labourers of North East India –S. Karotemprel B.Dutta Roy )*

We do not have much information about Christoson Munda but from the above document and other evidences are sufficient proof that great fighter existed in Phulbari Tea estate of Assam. <sup>33</sup> 16 October 1921 laborers of Monabari & Kathoni Tea Estate rose against the management demanding better facilities. Soon after on 21 March 1921 tea workers of Helem T.E created a serious situation. The workers attacked Mohri (clerk) Jamadar and other staff of the tea garden and badly wounded. Again on 9 & 10 October Labour of Sonajuli and Kacharigaon tea estate attacked the manager and Jamadar. (Planter Raj To Swaraj).

In 1942 when the freedom struggle was in its full swing hundreds of people were arrested at North Lakhimpur. Among them there were several Adivasi Laborers like Mahachal Gond, Sambhuram Gond, Pratap Gond and Gajadhar kurmi. In the same year when the mass was trying to hoist the flag at Dhekiajuli police Station, Dayaloo Panika, Mongol Kurmi and Ramcharan Kurmi sacrificed their lives. Arjun Ghatwar was sent to jail for Six months because he led the Adivasis to oppose the British when Madan Mohon Malavya was not allowed to enter Assam.<sup>34</sup>

## **7. MANGRI MEM (MALOTI MEM) THE FIRST WOMAN MARTYR OF ASSAM**

During 1921 non-cooperation movement was declared by M. K. Gandhi the father of the Nation. All sections of people joined the movement. Mangri Mem or Maloti was a beautiful girl. She was married to an English man and hence she was known as Mem (Mem Saheb). Though she was wife of a saheb she never forget her community of tea garden. She joined the anti-Alcohol movement in the Tea Garden. She was killed during police firing at the agitation program on 2<sup>nd</sup> April 1921. She is the first women martyr from Assam<sup>35</sup>.

Recently some writers have said that she was 'alcohol addicted woman' married to 'three English men' ("Homver" 10<sup>th</sup> June 07)<sup>36</sup>, which are unbelievable and debatable issues. Facts and reality should be brought into light for such a freedom fighter who sacrificed her life for the freedom of the country. During those days English men have used labours as slave. Getting girls for their sexual satisfaction was not difficult,<sup>37</sup> then why three English men go to same woman? Why would a congress volunteer go to an alcohol addicted woman who was excommunicated from the society? Some evidence show that congress workers had no interest in tea labourers matters.<sup>38</sup> Therefore the labours joined themselves in the freedom movement thus Mangri joined the movement.

It is possible that she was a respected and noble woman that is why she is called “Mem”, a sign of respect. We have come across a number of people who have married to “sahibs” but they enjoy same status like other members in labor society; they were not excommunicated from the society.

It is also possible that Mangri was a beautiful and noble girl. She might have had attractive personality that is why she was married to sahib and came to be called Maloti Mem. She had love for her people therefore; she did not accompany her husband and live among his people like many other Anglo-Indian families. She joined anti-Alcohol movement to save her community from the dire effects of alcohol. She sacrificed her life for the country and became first women martyr in Assam.

If today her character and morality is being questioned it is up to her community and countrymen for whom she shed her blood to stand for. She embraced death so that we may have life in free country. Therefore it is up to us how we visualize her either with the bad accounts of her character which may not be all true or with a noble character that inspires the community.

Presenting Mangri as characterless woman is an example of Mythological or liturgical discrimination.<sup>39</sup>

Labour martyr **Banku Orang** of Santak Tea estate was the first martyr from Adivasi community.

## 8. CONCLUSION

Today Adivasi society is caught up on the cross road. It is unable to decide which path to go. The path of non-violence, which first martyr Mangri Mem, showed is vanishing where they have traveled for last 200 years reaching no where. Exploitation and injustice have bonded the Adivasi society and are sucking blood like the octopus. Seeing the helpless situation a portion of desperate youth want to follow the Christoson Munda’s or Birsa munda’s violent movement to liberate the society from the custody of octopus and to get their constitutional and human rights. Thousands of youth are vanishing from the villages and tea garden lines and residing in Jungles. The outfit organization Birsa Commando Force (BCF), Adivasi Cobra Militant (ACM) and Adivasi National Liberation Army (ANLA) are formed by these unsatisfied youth.

Adivasis are traditionally peace loving and faithful. That is why they are considered as the first class labourers and for the same reason they are recruited in large number in the tea garden. However, every thing has a limit. The patience has also limit. Today the limit of patience gradually ending from the Adivasi society. However, the educated and intelligentsia of the Adivasi community believes in non violence and a silent but systematic revolution in attitude, social status, economic self confidence and political participation and dignified citizens of free India.

## REFERENCES AND NOTES:

1. Statistical Hand Book Assam 1995.
2. Coolie word was used to denote Adivasi Tea worker during and before 1950, Govt. records and Report like the Labour enquiry report of 1921, 1906 etc.
3. Tea and Ex-Tea Tribes is used widely even today, Govt. has opened Tea & Ex-Tea tribe Directorate, where as this type of department not found in west Bengal and other tea cultivation state where Adivasi are working.
4. **Assam Movement** – By M.Hussain .
5. The name given by Assam Sahitya Sabha president during Patsala conference of Assam Sahitya Sabha.
6. **Asomiya jatir itibrito** – Assam Sahitya Sabha.1995
7. **The Catholic Church in north East India.** Sebastian. Karotemperl.
8. **Asomiya Jatir itibrito-** Assam Sahitya Sabha 1995.
9. **Adivasi Awaz.** vol-3 P-7ff.
10. **Van Exem S.J. -The religious system of Munda Tribe,** Haus Volker und Kulturen, 1982.
11. **Adivasi Awaz .**vol-3 march 97
12. **Kalikha Puran**
13. **Ramayana**
14. **V.R.Trivedi- important events of Assam.-V.R.Trivedi**
15. **V.R. Trivedi- Important Events of Assam-** p-33.
16. **Sebastian Karotemperl SDB & B. Dutta Roy –(Tea Garden Labour of Northeast India)** Vendrame Institute, Shillong ,1990
17. **Dr. Philip Ekka S.J.-Tribal movements-Tribal Research and Documentation Centre (TRDC)** Jaspur, 2003.
18. **Susil Kurmi –Cha bagisar Katha.**p-22 Assom Sahitya Sabha .1990
19. **Sanjay Borbora –Struggle of the Tea Plantations of Assam Then and Now.** The indentured system of recruitment was carried out fewer than two systems. The first (phase) was called the *Arkatti* system, characterised by unlicensed recruiting from Chota Nagpur and other parts of (tribal) central and South Eastern parts of the subcontinent. The second (phase) was called the *Sardari* system and was characterised by recruitment of new labourers by those already employed in the tea estates. -Sanjay Borbora –Struggle of the Tea Plantations of Assam Then and Now.
20. **Sanjay Barbora-** Struggles in the Tea Plantations of Assam: Then and Now
21. **Amulandu Guha -Planter Raj to Swaraj** (1977), New Delhi
22. **Dineswar Tasa, KACHASONA,** Souvenir of ATTSA, Sonari 1983 (–P-79 )
23. During the debate on the ST bill raised by **SLIVERIUS CONDAPAN** on 14th August 2006 Tribal minister **SHRIMATI MEIRA KUMAR** said that The RGI has not supported the proposal. And, the reason that they have given is that this has been done mechanically. On the recommendations which have come from Assam, the RGI has made an observation that this has been done mechanically without giving due consideration to ethnographic details and concluding in the end of a discussion, the community deserves to be included in the Scheduled Tribe list. In regard to 97 communities, which are clubbed under one caption of tea tribes, the State Government has itself stated in its latest report that they do not have primitive trades and that they are not geographically isolated.
24. **Bhagawati Prakashan -Asomor Sromik Andolonar itihah Aru Dhara.—P-36**
25. **Dr.Rudraman Thapa-The Daink Janambhumi** 1st June2001. (Assamese Daily New paper, Jorahat.)

26. **Bhawani Sing- Political Alienation in Assam**—“Ali and coolies Doctrine” –p-73  
 27. AASAA ‘Memorandum to Prime minister of India 2001.  
 28. **Internal Displacement, Migration, and Policy in Northeastern India -Uddipana Goswami.**

“In the Adivasi IDP camps, however, there are as yet people who have *pattas* and have not been rehabilitated – even though they were officially to be covered under the first phase of rehabilitation. (Goswami 2006)”

29. Mr.Dilip Sharma presented a video presentation of the pitiable condition of Deosiri Camp in the “Internal Displacement workshop” at IIBM Guwahati organized by “Centre for Northeast India, South and Southeast Asia Studies (**CENISEAS**) on **28th & 29th** January2005. After the presentation the participants commented that it is shameful to know that after so many years there are still one Lakh people residing in camps, the inmates of the relief camp are suffering and Govt. has failed to rehabilitate the Citizens.

Stephen Lakra informed on 17th june2007 at Medha Patker’s program, Guwahati University.

30. That supplies are stopped from time to time.

31. **Sanjay Barbora –Struggles in the Tea Plantations of Assam: Then and Now-**

‘The *hats* were a peculiar pre-capitalist institution, where surplus was exchanged for other commodities. With the introduction of cash as the medium of exchange especially in the plantation system, these weekly markets (*hats*) started to act as the main points of exchange for the non-plantation sector. It was the only place where the worker could spend her/his earnings. The mart was incomplete without the presence of the moneylender (almost always a North Indian, belonging to the traditional money-lending caste), the local peasant, worker and he planter whose presence was determined by the fact that he had to control this localised market, in the last instance.’

32. **RamKrishna Chatterjee** –“Christian Missionaries and Labour migration to Assam Tea Gardens in Times colonial.”- **Sebastian Karotemprel & B.Dutta Roy.**- Tea Garden Labourers of North East India (1990)–Vendrame Institute, Shillong,

33. Phulbari Tea State—Company: Williamson & Magor Tea—In 1890 when the garden was planted, a profusion of wild flowers dotted the green countryside. Phulbari, means a flower garden. District-Sonitpur. Area under tea- 818.66 hectares. Production- 1709177 Kgs. *web:www.williamsonteaassam.com (also see Annexure-II about field Study)*

34. **Susil Kurmi –Cha bagichar Katha** —Assam Sahitya Sabha .1990.

35. <http://pibguwahati.nic.in/nemirror-aug2005.pdf>. (Web page obtained on 19th June2007)

During those days the Assamese people fought united irrespective of caste, creed and religion. Even the first Assamese martyr was from the tea garden community. She was Mungri alias Malati Mem from the Lalmati tea estate, Darrang.

36. **Homver, 10th june 2007- Numal Mahota** (Asomiya Prodidin, Daily News paper, Guwahati Publication)– writes that she was married to a Sahib. When this sahib left her other two sahibs lived together one after other with Moloti. But after some time both of them left her promising they will come back, but never came back.

37. ....If there was any lack of object obedience, boot and kick were their fate. Further, it was often difficult for young coolie women to protect their modesty and chastity from the wicked ness of the planter.

38. **A.Guha -Planter Raj to Swaraj.** “Congress circles were as much right of the growing number of plantation strikes. Congress men did not want get involved in to them and persistently tried to disown them.”-**P-136**

-Some say that even the name of Maloti Mem was not written in the congress List of Martyrs. Only because of Amiya Kumar Das who had great sympathy to the labor community Mangri's name was brought in to light.

**39. Mythological or liturgical Discrimination:** - High class of people in India strategically exploited the low class people through the mythologies and literature. They justify the castism and untouchability pointing mythologies and ancient literatures like Puranas, Vedas, Ramayana etc. However the irony truth of these literature are that they describe Adivasis who were non -Aryan as Banaras (Monkeys), Bhills (bears) etc, hiding their real identity.