

Chapter II

Mungpoo Cinchona Plantation: Its Evolution and Growth

The present chapter deals with the organisational structure of the Cinchona plantation, its evolution and change, demographic aspects of the labour force, their ethnic and other social backgrounds. While discussing the evolution of Mungpoo Cinchona plantation, we will also see as to how and why the other units of Cinchona and other medicinal plantations were established in the hill areas of Darjeeling District. In this regard, the evolution and the growth of Cinchona plantation has been viewed from the different periods of its development such as Formative period (since inception to 1950), Transitional period (1950 to 1984) and the Present period (1984 onward).

Growth In The Formative Period

Ever since its inception (1862) to 1864, Mungpoo Cinchona plantation was under the control and management of the Botanical Garden of Calcutta (Sibpur). Then it went under the control of the Forest and Excise Department till 1945. In 1946, it was transferred to the Ministry of Trade and Commerce of Government of West Bengal (Dozey: 1989:218).

The organisational hierarchy in the formative period was quite simple. However, the structure had been evolved in a bit different way with the addition of new units of plantations in the various areas of the Directorate of Mungpoo Cinchona plantation.

Evolution of Management : The Superintendent of Mungpoo Cinchona plantation was the overall in-charge of the plantation during the first two decades.

There was only one manager below the Superintendent in the plantation. The manager had to supervise an Assistant Manager, Quinologist, Sardars and Gallawalas besides two office staff. There was an Assistant Manager who had to supervise the roles and responsibilities of the Sardars and Gallawalas. With the establishment of Munsong Cinchona plantation in 1900 A.D., a slight modification had been done in the management hierarchy. Mungpoo was made the Directorate of Cinchona plantations. In this situations, a separate manager was appointed for the Munsong division alone. Similarly, a new post of Assistant Superintendent was *created* at Mungpoo Cinchona plantation. The Assistant Superintendent was to assist the Superintendent of Cinchona plantations at Mungpoo. In the year, 1904, a new post of General Manager was created at Mungpoo Cinchona plantation.

It was quite interestingly noted that till 1950, all the top ranking managerial personnel were the Britishers from England. During the twenties of the present century, a few clerical staff were nominated from Bengal and Bihar plains. In 1950, the post of Superintendent was *redesignated* as the Director of Cinchona plantations of Darjeeling District. The post of Assistant Superintendent was abolished in the same year.

Intermediary Staff : The intermediary staff consisted of the following:- The Sardars were the overall in-charge of the plantations. Each Sardar was responsible for recruitment, employment and supervision of his workers in his divisions who were mainly engaged in the respective caste Dhura (divisions) in the plantation. He had also to assist manager, Gallawalas (labour recruiters from Nepal and Sikkim) and the Gangman of the plantation. There was only one Gangman in Mungpoo plantation. The gangman was to look after the daily works of the plantation workers. He had to maintain Muster Roll. He had also to collect the particulars of works done by the Fieldmen every day. The Fieldmen were to supervise the workers employed in the field and supply necessary particulars about the works done by the workers everyday in the field. Each division had a Fieldman. The Mali was to look after the nurseries and forests of the plantation. The Munsis had to assist the Assistant Manager, Manager and Assistant Superintendent of the plantation. The clerks had to keep records up-to-date regarding the pay and accounts of the office. The Chaukidars were to look after the bungalow of the Superintendent, Manager, Assistant Manager and Assistant Superintendent. The Chaprasis had to assist Malis regarding the forest management of the plantation. The Havildars/Naiks were to look after the law and order situations of the plantation and to arrest the workers who found escaping the plantation. The Syce had to pull horses in transporting goods from Teesta Bazar and Sonada, near Darjeeling town, the then known as Gundri Bazar. The Rotiwalas had to supply refreshment to the

workers and office staff. The carpenter was to do wooden works of the plantation. The Sweepers were to clean offices, bungalow and other premises of the plantation. The Peon was to do the works of a postman. The Motor Drivers/Mechanics had to drive vehicles and repair the motor vehicles of the plantation. The Fitters had to repair and fit motor parts and other machines of the Quinine factory.

Evolution of Work Force : The plantation workers were classified into Marad, Aurat and Chokra. By "Marad", it was understood a category of workers, both male and female who had their work experience of more than fifteen years. Similarly, by "Aurat", it was understood for the workers who had more than five years of work experience but less than fifteen years in the plantation. In the same manner, by "Chokra", it was understood for the workers who had less than five years of their work experience in the plantation.

By materialising such a three tier classification, hardly any worker could aspire for promotion to the intermediary category. The same policy had been adopted in case of the intermediary staff such as Gangman, Fieldman, Chaprasis, Malis, Havildars/Naiks, Carpenters, Fitters, Gallawalas and Sardars who were to retire from the plantation with the same posts which were designated to them at the time of their appointment. All the intermediary staff were mainly the local people and a few Bengalis and Biharis by their ethnic background.

The plantation workers were treated as good as agricultural workers who were technically called as unskilled work force of the plantation. They were not extended any facilities of the industrial society.

On the contrary, the factory workers were technically called as semi-skilled workers who were employed with better job facilities and could carry a better socio-economic position among the working class of Cinchona plantation.

Reorganisation of Factory : Since 1874, the Quinine Factory had only one production unit at Mungpoo Cinchona plantation industry which was reorganised during the latter half of 1910. The factory was reorganised into six operational units such as (a) Grinding House, (b) Oil Extraction unit, (c) Purifying Unit, (d) Carpentry Unit, (e) Blacksmith Unit and (f) Masonary Unit. An Assistant Quinologist was appointed to assist Quinologist as the coordinator of the various units of the Quinine factory. The factory workers in each unit were divided into contingency and non-contingency categories.

Reorganisation of Plantation : A certain people from the working force of the plantation were converted into the contingency staff of the management, giving them the status of semi-skilled type. By doing so the rest of the workers were treated as unskilled daily rated plantation workers.

The plantation staff like Sardars, Gallawalas, Gangman, Fieldman, Malis, Munsis, Chaukidars, Chaprasis, Baidars and Horticultural Overseers were converted into the category of

contingency menials with the delegated power and responsibilities of the supervisory staff of the management of the Cinchona plantation.

The non-contingent workers were consisting of two categories, viz., daily rated plantation workers and casual workers who were also treated as un-skilled workers. The daily rated plantation workers were treated as regular workers who were employed on the principle of "No Work No Pay" basis. But a regular worker could work continuously for the year and had to abide by the official formalities of the plantation industry.

On the other hand, the casual workers were mainly employed for certain months of the year. Thus, their employment as casual workers could depend to a large extent on the work load of certain seasons of the year, such as plantings/replantings (April-May) of Cinchona and other medicinal plants and their uprootings during the months of December to March every year. They were not bounded by any legal bureaucratic formalities of the plantation industry.

Due to the non-availability of the adequate unskilled workers in the region, the planters had to employ as much as daily rated workers as possible so that the workers could not run away from the hazards of the plantation system. However, the planters could simply enroll the smaller kinds of the workers as casual workers to attract them further in the plantation at Mungpoo.

Growth in the Transitional Period

Besides the separation of Cinchona plantation with that of other medicinal plantations having two Directorates one at Mungpoo for Cinchona and another at Rongo for other medicinal plants, the plantation industry had to face the problem of its expansion on the one hand, and the issue of its closure by the Government of West Bengal on the other.

Evolution of Management: The post of the Superintendent of Cinchona plantation was redesignated as the Director who was to be posted at Mungpoo itself. A new post of Director was created at Rongo Epecac plantation. Ever since its inception, there was only one manager at Mungpoo who had to look after its five divisions such as Mungpoo, Rungbee, Labdha, Reyang and Resep. In 1950, each division was given with the charge of a manager. Another four managers were appointed for Latpancher, Sittong, Munsong and Rongo divisions of the plantation. For the first time in the history of Cinchona plantation, two Bengalis by their ethnic background were appointed as the managers at Mungpoo and Munsong divisions.

With the reorganisation of the top ranking management structure of the plantation, the working force of the plantation was again reformed into establishment and non-establishment sections. The Contingency staff of the plantation and the factory units of the formative period became the establishment staff of the plantation industry while the non-contingency workers of the Quinine factory of the past became the non-establishment workers while the

plantation workers of the past became the unskilled but regular or loosely termed ^{as} 'permanent' workers of the plantation. The casual works were to be given to the unemployed members of the families of the regular workers by assessing their socio-economic position through an annual household survey. The child workers were also employed under the scheme of casualisation of Cinchona plantation works in all the divisions of Mungpoo Cinchona plantation.

Establishment of Research Unit: During the transitional period, two units of research laboratories were established at Mungpoo, one for Botanical and another Chemical aspects of Cinchona plants. An Administrative Officer was appointed for the Research unit. He was known as the In-charge of the unit. A few establishment staff such as Horticulturist, Analytical Chemist, Assistant Horticulturist, Soil Chemist, Assistant Chemist, Botanist and Soil Surveyor were appointed in the unit. Those staff were mainly the Bengalis. The rest of the establishment staff such as Fieldmen for research nursery, laboratory assistant, agricultural assistant, agriculturist etc were appointed from the local people of the region.

During the second half of the fifties, other establishment *Staff* such as Assistant Managers in all the divisions, a Surveyor in each division and divisional officers were appointed in all the divisions. Ethnically all those staff were Bengalis.

In 1970, the two separate Directorates of the Cinchona and other medicinal plantations were once again amalgamated into one, i.e., the Directorate of Cinchona and other Medicinal plants, having

Mungpoo as its headquarter. Rongo division was given under the charge of a manager and an assistant manager who were also Bengalis from Cooch Behar and Malda districts of West Bengal.

Evolution of the Quinine Factory : Ever since its inception (1874), the Quinologist had been treated as the overall in-charge of the factory. During the period, a few other establishment staff such as Chemist, Foreman, Chargeman, Assistant Foreman, Electrician, Boiler Attendant were also appointed in the factory. Excepting the Quinologist who was a Bengali by his ethnic background, all the staff were Nepalis by their ethnic background and the Matwalis by caste status.

During the period, a Sales Depot was opened at Calcutta with a Sales Manager who was also treated as an establishment staff of the plantation.

Growth In The Present Period

During the transitional period (1950 to 1984), Cinchona plantations had to face the problem of increasing unpopularity of Cinchona medicines in the international perspective due to the emergence of American synthetic Cinchona products like Quinicine, Paludine and Mapacine. Yet during the second half of the sixties of the present century, the synthetic drugs became very unpopular due to their fatal reactions to the patients. In this situation, the government of West Bengal withdrew the previous (1956) order for reduction of acreage of Cinchona plants and total uprootals of

the Cinchona bushes within the ten years (Sharma :1984;2). Further, to renovate the industry, the government of West Bengal through the Director of Cinchona and other Medicinal plants, Mungpoo, issued an order in 1982 to the Indian Science Academy, New Delhi to form a reorganisation committee and the committee suggested for modernisation of the industry in 1984.

Another reason for the reorganisation of Cinchona plantation was to engage the mounting population and to meet the problem of unemployment. Moreover, the Cinchona plantation had to extend its areas with other similar medicinal plants which could only be grown in the given ecological niche of the country.

The Reorganisation Committee of the Cinchona plantation industry incorporated all the sections of the plantation industry in the reorganisational scheme in 1984, i.e., Administration, Plantation, Research and Factories in a comprehensive manner giving separate elaborate structure of each unit of its own from the other. Thus, the different units had their own functional sphere.

In addition to the Director of Cinchona and other Medicinal plants, Mungpoo, four Deputy Directors one each for plantation, factory, research and personnel were to be appointed as the top ranking management officers.

A Research and Development Officer was appointed as the overall in-charge of the research unit. Besides, the other establishment staff of the transitional period, a few other establishment staff such as Genetics, Plant Pathologist, Agronomist, Pharmacist,

Work Assistant, Planter, Nursery Mali, Gangman etc were appointed in the unit. They were mainly the local people of the region. The Research and Development Officer was a Bengali.

Besides the other establishment staff of the past, a few other staff such as Plant Engineer, Senior Analyst, Supervisor, Junior Analyst were also appointed in the Quinine factory after 1984.

An Emetine factory was established in 1986 at Mungpoo itself. The factory was made of six sections such as Grinding House, Oil Extraction Unit, Purifying section, carpentry section, Blacksmith section and Masonary section. A chief Chemist who ^{was} a Bengali was to act as the overall in-charge of the factory. Besides the Chief Chemist, there were other establishment staff such as Production Chemist, Process Control Chemist (both Bengalis), Senior Analyst, Junior Analyst (both Nepalis), Production Supervisor (Bengali), Laboratory Assistant, Factory Foremen and a Laboratory Attendant (Nepalis) in the Emetine factory.

A diosgenin factory was established at Gairibas of Rongo division of the plantation in 1984 with a Chief Chemist (Nepali) as the overall in-charge of the unit. Besides that other establishment staff like laboratory Assistant, Foremen, Boiler Attendant (Nepalis), Production Chemist, Senior Analyst, Supervisor (Bengalis) and an Electrician (Nepali) were also appointed in the factory.

Finally, two Experimental divisions of Cinchona plants were also established at Ambotia (Kurseong) and Naxalbari (Siliguri) sub-divisions of Darjeeling District in 1990 with an Assistant

Manager in each division.

Expansion of Plantation: The Cinchona plantation which was started in 1861-62 had only 100 Cinchona plants at Rungbee valley of Mungpoo (O'Malley : 1947:140). In 1887, Sittong area on the adjoining area of Mungpoo was opened. The area under the plantation reached to 12,800 acres in 1947 in Mungpoo region alone. In 1900 A.D., a new division was added at Munsong area of Kalimpong sub-division with 8,000 acres of land. Thus, altogether there were 20,800 acres of land under the Cinchona plantation in 1947 (Ibid). Similarly, in 1938 another plantation was established at Rongo area of Kalimpong sub-division with 600 acres of land. Again, in 1943, still another division was opened at Latpancher of Kurseong sub-division with 8,000 acres of land and in the process, the Sittong division of Mungpoo Cinchona plantation was merged with Latpancher division.

It is seen from the above contention that the area under the Cinchona plantations had been increasing very rapidly during the formative period in Mungpoo, Munsong, Latpancher and Rongo areas of Darjeeling District of West Bengal.

In spite of difficulties during the transitional period, a new Quinine Factory was established at Mungpoo in 1976. So, to be more precise, the Cinchona and other medicinal plantations had once again started growing well with the extension of its area in Ranjuvalley division with another two thousand acres of land.

Growth of Plantation Workers : The demography in regard to the plantation workers of the formative period was not available. Yet, with the influx of Bahuns and Chhetris along with Kami, Damai and

Sarki castes in the plantation, the demographic scenario had witnessed a rapid change mainly after the sixties of the present century. This had enforced the management to conduct population survey which helped the people to commute the exact number of workers during the period. It was during the transitional period the terms Marad, Aurat and Chokra had been redesignated as Adult, Adolescent and Child workers on the basis of age as prescribed criteria by the Plantation Labour Act, 1951 which states that an adult worker is one who has completed 18 years, an adolescent is a worker who has completed his/her 15 years but not completed 18 years and a child worker is one whose age is above 12 years but not above 15 years.

Table 1
Plantation Workers in Mungpoo (1960-67)

Sl. No.	Category of Worker	Total	Percentage
1.	Male	608	52.8
2.	Female	502	43.7
3.	Child	39	3.4
Total		1149	99.9

Source : Barailly : 1967:3

The table No. 1 indicates the fact that Cinchona plantation was quite predominantly a male dominated industry though the percentage of female (43.7%) workers was more or less same with that of the male counterpart (52.8%).

Table 2
Casual Workers in 1960-67

Sl. No.	Category	Total	Percentage
1.	Male	36	18.8
2.	Female	60	31.4
3.	Child	95	47.7
Total		191	97.9

Source: Ibid: 4

The percentage of child workers (47.7%) was highest followed by the female workers whose percentage was 31.4% while the percentage of male workers was very low i.e., 18.8% only. The obvious reason for employing such a large number of female and child workers was due to the financial crisis of the industry which hardly permitted for the employment of additional regular workers in the period. Such a trend to employ more and more casual workers had been observed to be a permanent phenomenon before and even after the modernisation of Cinchona plantation industry.

Table 3
Contingency Workers in 1960-67

Sl. No.	Name of the Unit	Contingent Worker	Percentage
1.	Plantation	137	46.9
2.	Factory	155	53.1
Total		292	100.0

Source : Ibid : 3

The above table No. 3 transpires the fact that the percentage of the contingent workers was 53.1% in the Quinine factory which was much higher (46.9%) than the contingent workers employed in the plantation sector. It really proved that the prospect for promotion of plantation workers in the contingency cadres was almost nil. It was also due to the reason that only the contingent staff was considered to be the establishment staff who were regulated by the provisions of West Bengal Civil Service Rules which provided incentives including the retirement benefits after their superannuation.

The percentage of the plantation workers had not been increased considerably during 1969-70 of the present century.

Table 4

Plantation Workers in 1969-70

Sl. No.	Category of Worker	Total	Percentage
1.	Male	607	52.3
2.	Female	492	42.3
3.	Child	61	5.4
Total		1160	100.0

Source: Minimum Wage Board : 1969:2

If we compare the above figure with that of 1967, it reveals the fact that the number of workers both male and female had been reduced while the number of child workers were increased

from 3.4% in 1967 to 5.4% in 1969-70.

The spirit of above discussion makes it apparent that the employment opportunities had been deteriorated during the seventies. In spite of the gradual increase of land under the plantations, the actual area under the Cinchona and other medicinal plants was not much increased during the late seventies and early eighties of the present century. This had resulted into the high preference for the employment of casual workers rather than providing them with regular jobs in the plantation. So, the land-labour ratio of 6 workers per acre as recommended by the Minimum Wage Board of Government of India had never been fulfilled in the plantation, Mungpoo.

The reorganisation of Cinchona plantations in the present phase not only helped to add new factories with modern technology but also added many divisions such as Ramphu, Ambotia and Ranjuvalley. Such addition also brought new lands under the plantation universe. There were altogether 26,176 acres of land under the Cinchona plantations of which 8,639 acres were under the Cinchona plants, 275 acres under Epecac, 111 acres under Dioscorrea, 63 acres under other medicinal plants and 3,130 acres under the forests. The rest of the land, i.e., 13,958 acres were under factories, bungalows, Khetland and labour Dhuras (Chatterjee: 1990:4-8). The production scenario of Cinchona plantations shows that the industry has been tremendously grown after 1984.

There were 9,387 workers including the casual workers having 26,176 acres of land in 1985-86 in Cinchona plantations. Here if we see the land-labour ratio, it comes nearly to 38 workers per acre (Ibid:4-8). It shows that the basic principle of Minimum Wage Board of Government of India has not been adhered to by the plantation industry. Very interestingly, during the recent years, the number of regular workers has been further reduced to **1,172** in 1991-92.

The Mungpoo Cinchona Plantation: Its Physical Aspect

The Mungpoo Cinchona plantation is located at the distance of 33 Km. away from Darjeeling Sadar Sub-Divisional town on the south-eastern direction. The altitude range of the plantation is between 900 to 6,200 ft. above the sea level and the average rainfall ranging from 280 to 320 cms. per year and minimum and maximum temperature range from 4°C to 31°C. The only motorable road known as Takdha-Rambhi road which connects Darjeeling town on the north and Rambhi Bazar on the south. On the east, there is Reyang Jhora and on the west, the plantation is bordered around by the Kali Jhora beyond which there is Jore-Bunglow area of Darjeeling town. On the north-east, there is a dense forest which is also under the control of Cinchona plantation. Similarly, on the extreme south, there is Rambhi forest under the plantation.

The Mungpoo Cinchona plantation has a hospital with 16 beds and the hospital has 12 contingent staff and a non-resident doctor, two Quinine factories, 3 scientific laboratories, a labour welfare

centre which is known as Rabindra Memorial Labour Welfare Centre. A total of 8 primary schools and one Higher Secondary School (Saraswati Higher Secondary School) are there in the plantation.

Similarly, there are a play ground, two plantation nurseries- one for Cinchona and another for Epecac. Besides these, there is a motorable road which goes upto the Saraswati Higher Secondary School and the distance from the factory premises to the higher secondary school is 2 Km. only. Most of the Cinchona plants have been grown in the extreme southern and northern corners of the plantation.

There are three offices in the plantation, one at Directorate office another at Manger's office, Mungpoo and still another is at Cinchona and Emetine factories.

An Epecac nursery is located at the south-western direction of the plantation at the distance of 5 Km. down from the Cinchona plantation. The soil is mostly brown and grey-brown sandy loam having 4.5% to 7.5% acidity content (Research Laboratory, Mungpoo: 1991).

The supply of water both for the factories and residential lines is being done from a water reservoir located at the top of the plantation beyond which there is a dense forest.

There is a labour library, a recreational hall and a drama hall in the plantation. The main marketing bazar where the workers buy their necessary articles and foodstuffs is Resep Bazar. Apart from this, there are smaller shops both at Nali Dara and Nirmala

Chowk, near the factory premises.

Just above the scientific laboratory, a trial house has been constructed for the trial and error purposes of Cinchona and Epecac plants. A dry house (Godowns) is there just above the factory premises. There is another research laboratory (Annexure). Still another research and development laboratory is located just above the new Quinine factory of the plantation. Most of the labour residences have been constructed on the western flank of the plantation since the areas are found to have been suitable for the workers' colonies, locally known as labour Dhuras. The plantation in this fashion is a south-faced slanting spurs ecologically located in the most favourable zone for growing rich Cinchona plants in the hill region of Darjeeling District.

There are four churches, a Buddhist monastery and two Hindu temples in the plantation. A Himul Cooperative Milk Dairy is also there in the plantation.

The residences with Chimneys at the top of the roofs are meant for staff and the big quarters are given for the officers. These quarters are well ventilated, lighted and with good timbered furniture. The plantation workers are given Kuccha and Paccka houses measuring 17' x 24' in sizes and with thatched roofs for Kuccha houses. By and large, the house type shows the social hierarchy of the plantation social structure. This can be understood even if a stranger penetrates the plantation for the first time. He can easily identify the workers' colony or Dhuras having Kuccha and Semi-Puccka houses while the managerial staff have

cemented (Puccka) houses with Chimneys at the roofs.

There is a Police Depot and a Sub-Telephone Exchange in the plantation. Mungpoo Cinchona plantation is the head quarter of Cinchona and other Medicinal plantations under the Ministry of Trade and Commerce of the Government of West Bengal.

There are other divisions of the Cinchona plantation at Munsong, Latpancher and Rongo besides the Dioscorrea factory at Gairibas area of Kalimpong sub-division of Darjeeling District. All these plantations are administered by the Directorate of Cinchona and other Medicinal plantations, Mungpoo.

The Mungpoo Cinchona plantation has five divisions. They are as follows: (a) Mungpoo, (b) Labdha, (c) Rungbee, (d) Ranjuvalley and (e) Resep. The total area of the plantation is 10,089 acres of which 3,089 acres are under Cinchona plants 62 acres are under the Epecac and other plants and still other areas are under the crops like Cardamum, orchards, Khetland and so and so forth. The rest of the areas are under the officers' residences, workers' colonies, factories and forests.

There are 1,172 regular workers who are known as permanent daily rated non-establishment workers of the plantation (Chatterjee: 1990:4).

To illustrate further in detail, the Mungpoo Cinchona plantation has nearly 800 acres of medicinal plants and 1500 acres of land under the forests. Labdha division has about 960 acres of land under the medicinal plants and 500 acres are under the forests and Ranjuvalley division has nearly 550 acres of land under the

medicinal plants and 600 acres at Mungpoo division, 2,146 acres at Rungbee division, 3,662 acres at Labdha division and 1,322 acres at Ranjuvalley division. This means that the total acreage of the entire Cinchona plantation at Mungpoo comes nearly to 10,026 acres (Chatterjee : 4-8).

Each of the above mentioned divisions remain connected with jeepable and pony roads. In each division where the medicinal plants can not be grown, an extensive afforestation programme is being undertaken and nearly 2,544 acres of land are covered with forests. The model and semi-pucca labour houses of 17' x 24' size are found. The former are with wooden wall and C.I. sheet roof and the latter are thatched with mud-plastered bamboo nets. For the workers, there is a play ground, recreation centre as per the provisions of the Plantation Labour Act, 1951. The Mungpoo Cinchona plantation generates its own electricity (about 60 MW) from a hydel source to run the factories and research laboratories. The century old Quinine factory has been modernised and renovated and a new Emetine factory has also come up in the plantation.

On the average, the Mungpoo Cinchona plantation harvests yearly 1,20,000 to 1,30,000 Kgs. of dry Cinchona, the quantum of which is to be increased after the full fledged functioning of the New Quinine factory by 1992-93. In addition to this, the plantation harvests yearly 2,500 to 2,600 Kgs. of dry cardamum fruits and about 2 to 5 metric tons of Tung fruits every year. The plantation's annual planting/replanting programme is 100 to 120 acres of Cinchona, 2,000 to 2,500 units of Epecac, 20 to 30 acres of forests depending

on the availability of fund as well as other suitable lands for extension. The experimental nurseries of Research and Development section have been continuously maintain germ-plasm of wildy growing medicinal plants of high altitude forests. It also rear up the germ-plsm of important phytochemically screened plants (Chatterjee: 1990:5).

Population in the Plantation: The ethnic composition of the staff of the plantation will reveal an interesting picture. Mostly the high ranking officers are from the plain areas of West Bengal and the rest of the intermediary staff are the local Nepali people.

Table 5

Ethnic Background of the Gazetted Officers
(As in 1991)

Sl. No.	Name of the Post	Caste/Community	No. of Person
1.	Director	Bengali	1
2.	Deputy Director	Bengali Nepali	3 1
3.	Administrative Officer	Bengali	1
4.	Accounts Officer	Bengali	1
5.	Manager	Bengali Nepali	3 2
6.	Asstt. Manager	Bengali Nepali	5 9
7.	Chief Chemist	Bengali	1
8.	Production Chemist	Bengali	1
9.	Quinologist	Bengali	1
10.	Asst. Quinologist	Bengali	2
11.	Analytical Chemist	Bengali	1
12.	Research/Development Officer	Bengali	1
13.	Horticultural Overseers (Divisional Officer)	Bengali	5

Source : Manager's Office, Mungpoo :1991.

The table No. 5 shows that mostly the top ranking officers hail from the Bengali community. There are 189 Nepalis of which only two Bihari Mason Grade II are there as the technical hands in the factory at Mungpoo. Besides, there are 60 non-establishment or non-pensionable staff. These staff hail from the local castes and tribes of Darjeeling hills.

The plantation workers of Mungpoo have 1071 households with 6354 persons. The traditional Nepali society can be conceptually classified into the two groups, viz., Tagadharis and Matwalis on the basis of certain social and ritual criteria. Mungpoo Cinchona plantation workers have preserved this tradition still today, in spite of considerable changes in their culture. Some of the Tagadharis have been adapting the way of life lead by the Matwalis in the plantation. Among the Tagadharis, Chhetris are on the front in this respect. Even some of the Chhetris, as Matwalis do, are carrying their rituals with the sacrifice of the animals and using locally made wine known as Jnar or Nigar (made of fermented millets).

Table 6
Caste/Tribe and Population of the workers

Status	Sl. Caste No.	Total Household	Male	Female	Percentage	Percentage	Total Pop.	Percentage
T A	Jharra 1	127 (11.9%)	421	381	12.7	12.5	802	12.6
G A	Thimaha 1.	123 (11.5%)	388	380	11.7	12.5	768	12.1
D H	Thakuri 2	(0.2%)	10	6	0.3	0.2	16	0.2
A R	Bihari 2	(0.2%)	6	6	0.2	0.2	12	0.2
I S								
M A	(Setho) 1. Newar	45 (4.2%)	137	111	4.1	3.6	248	3.9
T W	2. Mangor	21 2.0%	58	46	1.7	1.5	104	1.6
A L	3. Gurung	17 1.6%	53	45	1.6	1.5	98	1.5
I S	4. Rai	312 29.1%	998	906	30.1	29.7	1904	29.9
	5. Limbu	132 12.3%	383	344	11.2	11.3	717	11.3
	6. Bhujel	8 0.7%	15	25	0.5	0.8	40	0.6
	7. Sunuwar	3 0.3%	5	6	0.2	0.2	11	0.2
	8. Thami	3 0.3%	8	11	0.2	0.4	19	0.3
	9. Tamang	88 8.2%	279	242	8.4	8.0	521	8.2

Contd..

Table 6 (Contd...)

Status	Sl. No.	Caste	Total Household	Male	Female	Per-centage	Per-centage	Total Pop.	Percentage
	10.	Sherpa	33	95	91	2.9	3.0	186	2.9
	11.	Lepcha	82	255	245	7.7	8.1	500	7.9
	12.	Dukpa	18	60	46	1.8	1.5	106	1.7
(Kalo)	1.	Kami	38	110	114	3.3	3.7	224	3.5
	2.	Sarki	1	4	3	0.1	0.1	7	0.1
	3.	Damai	16	45	26	1.2	1.3	71	1.3
		Total	1071	3320	3034	100.0	100.0	6354	100.0

The table No. 6 indicates that the percentage of the Matwali castes is 74.9% while the percentage of the Tagadharis is only 25.1%. On the whole, the Matwali castes constitute the major working force of the plantation than the Tagadharis. Among the Tagadharis, Bahun is dominant caste though its percentage is little higher (12.6%) than the Thimaha Tagadharis (Chhetri, Thakuri and Bihari) with 12.5%. The Tagadharis (both Jharra and Thimaha) are purely Hindus hailing from Nepal. They are called Tagadharis which means they wore sacred threads and are not supposed to drink or use wine in the rituals. Next to the Chhetris, there are Thakuris and Biharis. But these two castes seem to have been almost insignificant in so far as their separate caste identities are concerned in the plantation.

Traditionally, Thakuris were treated to be the ruling caste in Nepal. They had royal patronage in Nepal. But after migrating to the Cinchona plantation, they have been gradually assimilating among the Chhetris. Thus, Thakuris and Chhetris form an integral part of the Thimaha category of the Tagadhari group. They cannot do priestly jobs. Socially, they seem to have been absorbing themselves into the Matwali way of life and found to have claimed themselves as the descendents of Khas Matwalis of Nepal Himalayas.

Similarly, among the Setho Matwalis, Sherpa (2.9%), Lepcha (7.9%)^{and} Dukpa (1.7%) are treated as scheduled tribes. They along with Thami (0.3%) and Tamang (8.2%) castes, are predominantly Buddhists. The other groups of the Matwalis such as Kami (3.5%), Sarki (0.1%) and Damai (1.3%) are scheduled castes. They are known

as Kalo Matwalis and like Setho Matwalis namely, Rai, Limbu, Gurung, Mangar, Newar etc. they are also Hindus but largely practice animistic rituals. It is because of the fact that they have been easily absorbed by the Setho Matwalis in their socio-economic life. Historically, they were treated as untouchables by Bahuns, Chhetris and Thakuris in Nepal, but the Matwali castes had no such conception of so-called untouchables. In other words, the Setho Matwalis had no difference with the Kalo Matwalis in Nepal.

Among the Matwalis (Setho and Kalo), the most dominant castes are Rais (29.9%) and Limbus (11.3%). They were the early migrants in the plantation from Nepal and Sikkim. Following Rais and Limbus, Tamangs migrated to the plantation. The main reason for migration of these castes were due to the fact that they were ousted by the House of Gorkhas in Nepal during the latter half of 18th century. These three castes strictly practised animistic religion in Nepal and vehemently disagreed to follow the Brahmanical rites practised by the Bahuns and Chhetris in Nepal during the latter half of 17th century. It is observed that these three castes along with the other Setho Matwalis (including the scheduled castes like Kami, Damai and Sarki) and scheduled tribes like Sherpa, Lepcha and Dukpa etc) have formed the most dominant group in the plantation.

It is also noted that Sherpas are found to have been the migrants from eastern Nepal to the Cinchona plantation following Rai, Limbu and Tamang castes in the beginning of 19th century. It is observed that among the Lepchas, the indigeneous Lepchas did not

prefer to work in the plantation as they were shifting cultivators. Only the Lepchas who were ousted from Sikkim to Nepal during the Chowgel dynasty had migrated to the plantation as Kamane coolies. The migrant Lepchas were mainly landless agricultural labourers in Nepal. The poor economic condition forced them to migrate to the plantation for employment. Thus, Lepchas, Sherpas, Rais, Tamangs, Thamis and Dukpas had migrated to the plantation mainly during the formative period of Cinchona plantation. They were beef eaters which was then prohibited strictly in Nepal. This may be the strongest reason for their migration to Munflan (India). Pradhan (1991:239) has very succinctly supported the view which to him was to be the immediate cause of migration in Bengal Himalayas. They were followed by castes like Gurungs, Mangers and Newars who were also not in favour of following Hindu rites and rituals in Nepal and gradually migrated to the plantation at Mungpoo.

The Tagadharis, as it is revealed from the study in Mungpoo Cinchona plantation, are the latest migrants. They migrated here from the urban areas of Darjeeling and Nepal after the forties of the present century. Another reason for why they migrated to Munflan was due to the establishment of Panchayati Raj administration in Nepal and opening of Terai belt of Nepal due to Indo-Nepal Anti-Malarial Project. This helped the landless Tagadharis to make an easy pretext to migrate to the plantations for permanent employment as wage labourers and white colour jobs.

Migration of Workers: Historically speaking, the workers were imported from Nepal and Sikkim. So far only two generations of the migrants have been found to have working in the plantation at

Table 7
Caste/Tribe and Birth Place of the Workers

Sl. No.	Caste/Tribe (Total)	Within Plant		Outside Dist.		Within Dist.		Outside Dist.		Within Country		Outside Country	
		M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F
1.	Bahun (802) (Total Pop.)	383	327	8	25	3	8	2	4	1	4	24	13
2.	Chhetri N=768	314	275	29	44	18	26	6	10	7	5	14	20
3.	Thakuri (N=16)	10	4	-	-	-	1	-	1	-	-	-	-
4.	Bihari (N=12)	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	5	6	-	-
5.	Newar (N=248)	113	77	12	18	5	10	2	4	3	1	2	1
6.	Mangor (N=104)	46	27	5	5	4	8	-	5	1	-	2	1
7.	Gurung (N=98)	47	28	1	10	3	3	-	1	-	2	2	1
8.	Rai (N=1904)	900	730	36	97	31	36	10	18	3	11	18	14
9.	Limbu (N=717)	320	284	20	37	10	9	7	5	6	2	10	7

Contd..

Table 7 (Contd..)

Sl. No.	Caste/Tribe (Total)	Within Plant		Outside Plant		Within Dist.		Outside Dist.		Within Country		Outside Country	
		M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F
10.	Ehujel (N=40)	10	13	3	6	2	3	2	1	-	1	-	1
11.	Sunuwar (N=11)	3	2	1	2	-	1	-	-	-	-	1	1
12.	Tamang (N=521)	192	145	25	34	22	22	5	7	4	7	31	27
13.	Thami (N=19)	5	6	1	4	2	1	-	-	-	-	-	-
14.	Sherpa (N=186)	82	74	4	6	1	5	1	4	2	-	5	2
15.	Lepcha (N=500)	239	206	6	19	1	7	1	7	5	3	3	3
16.	Dukpa (N=106)	55	41	-	1	5	2	-	1	-	1	-	-
17.	Kami (N=224)	87	73	9	19	4	8	1	6	4	5	5	3
18.	Sarki (N=7)	3	2	1	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
19.	Lamai (N=71)	33	17	7	-	2	9	-	-	-	-	3	-
N=6354		2843	2331	168	328	113	159	35	74	41	48	120	94
		(44.7%) (36.7%)		(2.6%) (5.2%)		(1.8%) (2.5%)		(0.5%) (1.2%)		(0.6%) (0.8%)		(1.9%) (1.5%)	

N = Total Population, M = Male, F = Female

Mungpoo Directorate of Cinchona plantation in Darjeeling hills.

The above table No. 7 very succinctly indicates that the Tamangs are the first generational migrants among all castes and tribes (58.1%). They are followed by Bahuns (39.6%). The percentage of migrant Rais is 34.4% and the Limbu immigrants is 18.3%. The percentages of other castes and tribes are also not negligible.

It is however revealed from the study that excepting the first *gen*erational immigrants as mentioned above, all other castes and tribes were immigrants from Nepal and Sikkim during 1860's when the plantation was opened at Ranjuvalley of Mungpoo region which was then under a Lepcha family (Hunter : 1876 : 126).

If we compare the percentage of the Tagadhari and Matwali immigrants in the plantation, it is seen that the Tagadharis (33.3%) are the later immigrants than the Matwalis (66.7%) who immigrated since the beginning of the plantation. It was because of the fact that the Tagadharis had much better socio-economic positions in Nepal (Kansakar: 1985 : 2-7), due to their close association with the royal palace.

Again, if we see the percentage of the immigrants within the country, it is noted that the Tagadharis (22.8%) are far below the Matwalis (77.2%). It is true for the simple reason that quite a large percentage of the Matwalis were immigrated in the plantation from the other parts of the country such as Sikkim, Bhutan, Burma, Assam and other parts of North-East India (Sinha :1986:1-10) as they were forced to do so due to some political tensions in North-East India, Burma, Bhutan and Sikkim (Ibid).

Education of the Workers: It is well known that modern education was brought by the missionaries in Darjeeling during the later phases of 18th century (Dewan:1991). The Christian missionaries began to open schools in Darjeeling in 1840's but those schools were initially meant for the Europeans and Anglo-Indian people only. However, there were some influential people in Nepal, Sikkim and Bhutan who got admission for their children in those schools. In the same process, a lower primary school was opened at Resep Dhura (Resep Bazar of Mungpoo) in 1865 which was meant for Christian children of Lepcha tribe at Mungpoo. The children of the Hindus and Buddhists were not allowed for admission in the school. The same thing had been continued in the plantation till the beginning of 19th century when a greater relaxation was started to be given for the children of the plantation workers which provided ample scope for studying in the school. But most of the Hindu people did not send their children to the school for fear of their children being influenced by the Christianity. To meet the situation, Shri K. P. Sharma, son of a Sardar who was also a social reformist in Mungpoo, started secretly organising the workers and opened a library at Mungpoo which was then known as Saraswati Pustakalaya (Now Saraswati Higher Secondary School, Mungpoo) during 1940's. Later on two schools, one at Resep and another at Gopal Dhura were opened in the early fifties. Here in this respect, the role of later immigrants (mainly Bahuns) who were the custodians of Sanskrit education in Nepal, cannot be forgotten for the Mungpoo plantation also. Most of the Brahmins were educated in Sanskrit discipline in

Nepal and India (Benaras) and the same educative quality was brought along with their immigration to the plantation.

Here, in this context, it can be said that the earlier immigrants (mostly Matwalis) had little interests about educating their children as they used to think that educating their children means to convert them into Hindu ethos through education and socialisation by Bahun tutors in the schools.

Yet the change of place and in the process of adaptation to the plantation environment, the Matwalis had to accept the lingua franca i.e., Nepali language as brought about by the Brahmins and the Chhetris of Nepal, Sikkim and Bhutan. The Nepali language became the only means of communication of feelings, problems and solutions so that they could identify themselves as part and parcel of garden community of Mungpoo Cinchona plantation as the peripheral society of Darjeeling hills within the mainland of Bengal.

Thus, it has been observed since after 1950 the children of the Matwalis were increasingly attracted by the modern education. This was perhaps due to the two important factors- (i) fall of Cinchona price in the world market and Matwalis' inclination to non-plantation employment and (ii) Nepali as a medium of instruction at the school level since 1961 in the entire hill areas of Darjeeling district.

Table 8
Caste/Tribe and Education of the Workers

Sl. No.	Caste/Tribe	Total Pop.		Illiterate		I -		IV		V -		X		XI		-XII		Under-graduate		Post-graduate	
		M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F
1.	Bahun	421	381	121	163	103	91	148	110	24	12	24	12	21	4	4	1				
2.	Chhetri	388	380	133	185	82	80	112	96	29	10	29	10	27	8	5	1				
3.	Thakuri	10	6	3	2	2	2	2	2	1	-	1	-	2	-	-	-				
4.	Bihari	6	6	2	5	3	-	-	1	1	-	1	-	-	-	-	-				
5.	Newar	137	111	46	66	32	19	49	21	4	2	4	2	6	3	-	-				
6.	Manggar	58	46	30	30	13	9	14	6	-	1	-	1	1	-	-	-				
7.	Gurung	53	45	12	18	7	6	24	16	3	2	3	2	7	3	-	-				
8.	Rai	998	906	394	543	274	195	276	145	26	11	26	11	20	9	8	3				
9.	Limbu	373	344	148	191	86	65	124	78	6	6	6	6	8	3	1	1				
10.	Bhujel	15	25	6	14	6	5	3	5	-	1	-	1	-	-	-	-				
11.	Sunuwar	5	6	3	3	1	1	1	1	-	1	-	1	-	-	-	-				
12.	Thami	8	11	6	8	1	-	1	3	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-				
13.	Tamang	279	242	120	144	74	55	61	40	15	3	15	3	7	-	2	-				

Contd..

Table 8 (Contd..)

Sl. No.	Caste/Tribe	Total Pop.		Illiterate		I -		IV		V - X		XI - XII		Under-graduate		Post-Graduate	
		M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F
14.	Sherpa	95	91	28	45	10	17	44	26	4	1	9	2	-	-	-	-
15.	Lepcha	255	245	76	104	72	65	88	67	10	5	7	3	2	1	-	-
16.	Dukpa	60	46	21	29	18	8	21	9	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
17.	Kami	110	114	35	75	32	25	35	10	3	2	5	2	-	-	-	-
18.	Sarki	4	3	4	3	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
19.	Damai	45	26	21	20	13	4	10	2	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Total		3320	3034	1209	1648	829	647	1013	638	127	57	120	37	22	7	-	-
		(19.1%) (25.1%) (13.1%) (14.2%) (15.9%) (10.1%) (2.0%) (0.9%) (1.9) (10.6%) (0.3) (0.1%)															

The above table No. 8 indicates that the percentage of illiterates among the Tagadharis is 21.5% while the percentage of illiterate among the Matwalis is 78.5%. The percentage of Tagadhari workers in the primary education (I to IV standard) is 24.6% while the percentage of the same among the Matwalis is 75.4%. Again, the percentage of the Tagadhari workers in the category of V to X is 28.7% which is much lower than the Matwalis (71.3%). In the same way, the percentage of Tagadharis who are educated upto XII standard is 41.5% whereas the percentage of the same among the Matwalis is 58.5%. The percentage of the graduates among the Tagadharis is 35.0% while the percentage of it is 65.0% among the Matwalis. Finally, the percentage of post-graduates is 37.9% among the Tagadharis while it is 62.1% among the Matwalis.

It is seen from the above discussion that the percentage of educated persons among the Matwalis is considerably much higher than the Tagadharis. It is also observed that the percentage of illiterates among the Tagadharis is lower than the Matwalis. But the number of students in the higher classes from the Tagadharis is low compare to the Matwalis. It is because of the fact that the Tagadharis normally discourage girl children from going to schools after they cross 16 or 17 years of age, rather they give such girls to marriages. This may be the reason why the Tagadhari girls are found in less number in the higher classes. This has resulted into the cumulative decline in the percentage of educated people among the Tagadharis in the plantation. Such restriction

is not found among the Matwalis who are equally encouraging both girls and boys for higher schooling and college education. In the process, Matwalis have adapted better in acquiring higher education for their children.

But, on the whole, it is also observed that the overall percentage of literates among all castes and tribes is much lower in the higher classes than in the lower classes. The number of post-graduates is very high among the Matwalis than the Tagadhari. The table No. 8 has interestingly portray the fact that today there is a stiff competition among all castes and tribes in regard to the question of getting good jobs with higher educational qualification. Recently, West Bengal Civil Service Rules have been followed here according to which the establishment posts will be given to those who have acquired requisite educational qualifications and experiences. This is the reason why most of the establishment staff are hailing from the Matwali castes. Again, excepting one or two Thimaha Tagadharis, all the school teachers are Matwalis in the plantation.