

CHAPTER II

ORIGIN AND GROWTH OF AGRICULTURAL LABOURERS IN ASSAM SINCE 1961

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CHAPTER II

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2.1 Origin

There seems to be very few studies dealing with the issue of genesis of agricultural labourers. The Indian Council of Social Science Research (ICSSR) has published a survey of those few works which are specifically concerned with this issue [Vyas and Shivamaggi (1955)]

From these surveys it appears that there are two important schools of thought with regard to the origin and growth of the class of agricultural labourers in India.

According to first group of scholars [e.g., Patel (1952); Malaviya (1955); and Ghosh [(1965) etc.] genesis of the agricultural labourer as a class could be traced to the caste system and the influence it has on the nature of economic activities to be pursued by different groups.

It may be useful for us to briefly recapitulate these works which suggested above. Surendra J. Patel (1952), relying partly on census data, reported that the agricultural labourers in large numbers was essentially a 19th century phenomenon that emerged from the loss of land by small cultivators and the loss of occupation by artisans who faced the competition of the products of British industries or the modern industrial sector of British India. The British era also introduced new types of tenure under which land revenue was assessed at high rates, was payable in cash, and in large parts of areas, individuals were held responsible for the payment of land revenue. This led to the destruction of the old village collectively. They also brought about changes in customary law and made it possible for owners to sell their land. The monetisation of the economy, stagnation of agriculture and the pressure of population on land accelerated the process. Peasants were forced to sell their land either to the state

or to superior tenure holders e.g., Zamindars, for non-payment of rents, or to the money lenders for non-payment of debt. This was the process by which the peasant was turned into a landless agricultural labourers.

There is a concensus of opinion that in pre-nineteenth century India, there was no noticeably large class of agricultural labourers. There were domestic and menial servants. But their numbers were small and they did not form a definite group of persons whose role or major occupation was work on the land of others for compensation in kind or cash. 'The large scale of agricultural labourers represents a new form of social relationships that emerged during the late 19th and early 20th centuries in India' [Patel (1952)] .

Thus according to the author in pre-19th century India, rural labourers did exist but their number was exceedingly small. During the period of British rule in India, the numerical importance of agricultural labourers increased, and they came to represent a new form of social relationship.

H.D. Malaviya (1955) and K.K.Ghosh (1969) also point out that agricultural labourers did exist in ancient and medieval India often in conditions of slavery or serfdom, but there are no data to enable the making of reliable estimates of the numbers involved, while there is early evidence about the aggrestic serfdom , landless labourers may be identified sharply only after the beginning of the British period.

According to Mukherjee (1957) the genesis of agricultural labourers which is based essentially, on the relationship between caste and occupations is elaborated. According to Mukherjee the land owners belonged to the upper caste, tenants to the intermediate castes, and landless labourers to the lower castes. Thus, the present day labourers are not necessarily the descendants of the pre-British peasant proprietors but, it is maintained, there was a class of landless labourers in the past, as it exists today. Since there was a sizeable group of lower caste population at the lowest rung of the village hierarchy, the

existence of landless labourers appears to be quite plausible argues the author. He points out that this should not be taken as a proof in support of the sociological theory of the origin of landless labourers. For it neglects the essential characteristics of the agrarian crisis in British India which had resulted an increasing number of caste Hindus, mainly belonging to intermediate and lower caste and Saiyad Muslims joining the ranks of agricultural labourers. V.R. Joshi (1958) in his study of the growth of agricultural labourers in Uttar Pradesh states that they mostly belong to lower and untouchable castes like Lunia, Pasi and Chamar.

2.2 Growth of Agricultural Labourers in India and Assam

Some attempts have been made to compare population data of various census rounds beginning the year 1871 to study the trend of growth of agricultural labourers over decades. G.J.Patel (1952) and V.R.Joshi (1958) for example have attempted to provide estimates of the proportion of agricultural labourers for the years 1871 to 1931. Dharma Kumar (1965) has done the same for the yearly 19th century. H.D.Malaviya (1955) has presented Census figures on the number of agricultural labourers for 1921 and 1931. It is seen from most of the analyses that during the last three decades of the 19th century, the agricultural labourers formed a small number of the total agricultural population and showed a declining trend. But from 1901 onwards the number of agricultural labourers shows a rising tendency (Table 2.1). It may be pointed out that we have placed all the Tables at the end of the chapter.

Various explanations have been put forward by different authors [e.g., Patel (1952); Joshi (1958); Ghosh (1969) for the rise or fall in the proportion of agricultural labourers for the period 1871 to 1951. Most of the writers cited above take the view that the decline in the proportion of agricultural labourers has been continuously rising, though the rates vary from decade to decade for different economic and administrative factors.

For example, increase in the proportion for the period 1891 to 1901 was partly due to the fact that at the time of the 1901 census, agriculture was in bits and pieces because of famines and scarcities. But this proportion rose much less in 1911 owing to average prosperity of agriculture being higher.

The period from 1911 to 1921 was also a period of general agricultural prosperity, of rising agricultural prices and of rising wages rates mainly due to the Great War. As such the proportion of agricultural labourers did not increase considerably.

There was an abrupt rise in the proportion during 1921 – 31. It has been argued by Patel that this tremendous increase was mainly due to the transfer of land to the hands of non-agriculturist. As rise in the agricultural population was not followed by a corresponding increase in the proportion of the cultivators or tenants but by a large increase in the numbers of non-cultivating owners, it caused a spurt in the proportion of the agricultural labourers.

In the period 1931-51 Joshi observes that the proportion of agricultural labourers went down sharply whereas the proportion of cultivators showed an increase. According to him the reason for this change was that the agricultural wages and prices continued to remain high during the period thus lessening demand for agricultural labourers. The change was further accelerated because of the impending land reform legislation and then Zamindari Bill. According to the Agricultural Labour Enquiry (ALE) of 1950-51, the proportion of agricultural labour families to the total rural agricultural families was 38.1 percent. This does not suggest any fall in the agricultural labour population since 1931. The census figure for 1951, on the contrary, indicates declining proportion of agricultural labourers (18.1 percent). Joshi has argued that the reasons for this divergence are the difference in the methods of enumeration, classification and the definition adopted.

An interesting thing that may be seen from Table 2.2 is that the proportion of agricultural labourers is higher in most of the southern states than in the other states of India. This phenomenon possibly rises not only from the economic factors described above but also from the institutional and historical differences like, land ownership pattern or mode of labour contracts etc.

All our discussions and evidences are centred that- it would be wrong to treat the phenomenon of growth of agricultural labourers as indicating a process of proletarianisation of the rural poor. Various factors (e.g., eviction of tenants, new-farm technology, natural increase in the population of agricultural household, disintegration of village industries and lack of employment opportunities to them etc.) are operating differentially in different regions of India leading to the swelling numbers of agricultural labourers.

By looking at Table 2.3, it can be observed that during 1961 to 1971, total number of agricultural labourers in the state was 187416 and 405998 respectively. That means during this period 218582 number of agricultural were added. It is seen that there was 117 percent growth of agricultural labour during this period which has been shown in Table 2.4.

Now district-wise analysis shows that during 1961 to 1971, North Cachar Hills district has the highest growth of agricultural labourer which was 371 percent as shown in table 2.4 and the lowest growth in agricultural labour was in Goalpara which experienced only 99 percent of growth rate in the same decade.

As per 1971 and 1991 census reports, total number of agricultural labourers was 405998 and 844964 respectively, whereas during the same decade, total number of agricultural labourer as additional force of 438966 were added and it is seen that there was 108 percent growth of agricultural labourers in the state as shown in Table 2.4.

District-wise analysis shows that North Cachar Hill district has the highest growth rate of agricultural labourers and it stood at 251 percent during 1971-1991 whereas in the Lakhimpur district there was decreasing trend of agricultural labourer during the same decade and it stood at -23.45 percent only. It was noted that in Kamrup district agricultural labourer was 29609 in 1961 and by 1971 it was increased to 59332 and the growth rate was 100.39 percent during the same period.

As per 1971 Census, total number of agricultural labourers in the Kamrup district was 599332 but in 1991, it was increased to 157630, however, after 1981, Kamrup district was trifurcated and two more districts, namely, Barpeta and Nalbari districts were added. In Barpeta district which is our study area, as per 1971, there were in total 21777 agricultural labour and it increased to 60891 in 1991. This shows that 39114 additional agricultural labourer force was added in the same decade, and in percentage terms there was 180 percent growth of agricultural labourers in the same decade.

During 1971-91, the growth rate of agricultural labourer in the state was 108 percent, whereas Barpeta district has 180 percent growth rate of agricultural labourers and, therefore, it shows a higher growth rate as compared to the state as a whole during 1971-1991.

As per 1991 census report, total number of agricultural labourers was 844964 and it increased to 1263532 in 2001. There was an addition of 418568 agricultural labourers during 1991-2001. The growth rate of agricultural labourer during the same period stood at 50 percent. North Cachar district witnessed the highest growth rate of agricultural labourer during 1991-2001 and it was 58 percent, whereas Dhubri district had the lowest growth rate of agricultural labourers, which was only 7.14 percent during 1991-2001.

It may be noted that only 5 districts out of 23 districts in the state were experiencing increasing trend of agricultural labourer in the state whereas, 18

districts of the state had decreasing trend of agricultural labourers during 1991-01. But as a whole in the state the growth rate of agricultural labourers since 1961 has been increasing at diminishing rate and it was 116.63 percent during 1961-71, and during 1971-91 it stood at 108 percent, whereas during 1991-2001 there was 50 percent growth of agricultural labourers in the state.

But as per 1991 Census report, the total number of agricultural labourer in Barpeta district was 60891 and it was 48921 only in 2001. It is seen that the growth rate of agricultural labourers in the Barpeta district, which is our study area, was 19.66 percent.

As per 1951-61, decadal growth of population in Assam was 34.98 percent as shown in table 2.5 and this has slightly decreased to 34.95 percent during 1961-71. By 1971-91, the decadal growth rates was 53.26 percent, whereas by 1991-2001 it came down to 18.85 percent growth rate. In our study area (Barpeta district), 1951-61 decadal growth rate was 32.62 percent and it was increased 35.81 percent during 1961-1971. In 1971-91, decadal growth rate increased to 43.02 percent. Since 1951, the decadal growth of agricultural labourers in the Barpeta district has been increasing at increasing rate but during 1991-01 the agricultural labourers increased by decreasing rate with 18.53 percent.

As far as the trend of agricultural labourer are concerned, since 1983 total agricultural labourers has been increasing which has been shown in Table 2.8 and it was 30867 thousand in 1983, and it increased to 36262 in 1993-94 and 44184 thousand in 1999-2001. It shows that the rate of increase of agricultural labourer household increased by increasing rate. In Assam too, the agricultural labourer household stood at 463 thousand in 1983 and it increased to 816 thousand in 1993-94 and by 1999-2000 it had gone upto 632 thousand.

Now it is observed that since 1983, the rate of decadal growth of agricultural labour household has been increasing at increasing rate upto 1991-

94, but during 1999-2000 the decadal growth of agricultural labour household has been increased at decreasing rate.

A detailed picture of various types of workers has been presented in Table 2.6 and 2.7 . These two Tables focus the district-wise classification of main workers as percentage basis and numbers. The main workers have been classified in Table 2.6 and 2.7 as cultivators, agricultural labourers, household industry workers and other workers. So far as agricultural labourers are concerned, Dhubri district with 23.8 percent of agricultural labourers occupies first position and north Cachar Hills (4.9 percent) occupies last position among the district of Assam and Barpeta district occupies 6th position with 15.8 percent. Kokrajhar district with 22.5 percent and the district Nagaon with 19.9 percent occupy the second and third position respectively with respect to the the number of agricultural labourers among the districts. Table 2.4 also shows that in Assam the increasing rate of agricultural labourers in 1961-71 was 116.63 percent and 49.53 percent for 1991-2001. 116.63 and 49.53 percent for 1991-2001. Table 2.8 shows that in India also the increasing rate of agricultural labourers sharply increased to 32.23 percent in 1999-2000 than 30.7 percent and 30.34 percent in 1983 and 1993-94 accordingly.

2.3 SUMMARY

In the summary, we can say that the establishment of British rule was responsible for the emergence of a distinct class of agricultural labourers. Secondly, caste system, loss of land by small cultivators and loss of occupation by artisans due to competition of modern industrial sector of British India are some of the important causes. Other causes are responsible for the growth in the number of agricultural labourers are the imposition of revenue on land and non-payment of debt to the money lenders. These are the causes by which the peasants were turned into landless agricultural labourers. According to different studies in pre-19th century, Indian rural labourers did exist, but their number was exceedingly small.

In this chapter we have cited various explanations given by different authors on the growth of agricultural labourers. According to them, the number of agricultural labourers had been continuously increasing though the rate varied from decade to decade due to different economic and administrative factors. After 1901, the agricultural labourers increased due to famines and scarcities. The period from 1911 to 1921 was the period of agricultural prosperity and there was no growth in the numbers of agricultural labourers. But during 1921-31 the growth was high due to increased number of non-cultivating owners. In the period 1931-51, the agricultural labourers went down due to high agricultural wages and for lower demand for agricultural labourers.

An interesting thing that we have shown in this chapter is that the proportion of agricultural labourers are higher in most of the southern states than in the other states of India due to some economic, institutional, historical reasons and differences in land ownership.

It could be found that in Assam the growth rate of agricultural labourers in the period 1961-71 was very high. During the period 1971-91, the growth rate of agricultural labourers was lower than the period 1961-71. The growth rate of

agricultural labourers in the period 1991-2001 further lowered down than the growth rate of previous period. As a whole, in the state of Assam the growth rate of agricultural labourers since 1961 has been increasing at diminishing rate according census data.

In this chapter, we also analysed the district-wise growth rate of agricultural labourers in Assam. According to district-wise analysis, North Cachar Hills district has the highest growth rate of agricultural labourers. In our study area (Barpeta district) the rate of growth of agricultural labourers are higher than the state growth rate. In the Barpeta district, the growth rate of agricultural labourers since 1961 has been increasing at diminishing rate according to census data.

Table 2.1 : Growth of Agricultural Labourers in India : 1871-2001

| Year(s) | Patel | | Joshi | | Vyas | | 1991 & 2001 Census Report | |
|---------|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|
| | No. of Agricultural Labourers (in million) | Proportion of Agr. Labourers to total Agr. Popn. | No. of Agricultural Labourers (in million) | Proportion of Agr. Labourers to total Agr. Popn. | No. of Agricultural Labourers (in million) | Proportion of Agr. Labourers to total Agr. Popn. | No. of Agricultural Labourers (in million) | Proportion of Agr. Labourers to total Agr. Popn. |
| 1871-72 | 18.2 ^a | 18.0 ^a | 18.2 | 18 | - | - | - | - |
| 1881 | 12.5 ^a | 15.0 ^a | 12.5 | 15 | - | - | - | - |
| 1891 | 25.5 | 13 | 18.7 | 10.9 | - | - | - | - |
| 1901 | 52.4 ^a | 25.1 ^a | 33.5 | 17.4 | - | - | - | - |
| 1911 | 50.6 | 22 | 41.2 | 18.2 | - | - | - | - |
| 1921 | 27.8 | 26.2 | 37.9 | 20.2 | - | - | - | - |
| 1931 | 42.2 | 38.0 | 33.5 | 30.5 | - | - | - | - |
| 1951 | - | - | 44.8 | 18.0 | - | - | - | - |
| 1961 | - | - | - | - | 26.2 ^b (30.6) | 7.3 ^b (8.5) | - | - |
| 1971 | - | - | - | - | 45.6 | 10.4 | - | - |
| 1981 | - | - | - | - | 55.4 ^c | 11.0 | - | - |
| 1991 | - | - | - | - | - | - | 11625159 | 27.4 |
| 2001 | - | - | - | - | - | - | 9823264 | 26.5 |

Note to the Authors

- a) Those figures are over estimates owing to the inclusion of some non-agricultural labourers. The 1901 figures seem to be inflated by a very large number of destitutes as a result of the preceding famines.
- b) 1961 figures are adjusted for 1971 definition. The 1971 census used labour time disposition criterion over the reference period (one year) to define as workers only those who spend the major part of their time in economic activities. Thus the adjustment is made by excluding the workers who are engaged in the secondary activities in the 1961 concept figures in brackets indicate actual 1961 census figures.
- c) The figures has been taken from Census of India 1981 series I Paper III of 1981, provisional population : workers and non-workers and also census data for 1991 and 2001 from primary census Abstract, Census of India.

1) Note

* The discrepancy bet. Col(2) [Patel (1952)] and col (4)[Joshi (1952)] is presumably due to the fact that the former series includes 'unspecified labour' in the years 1891, 1901, 1911 and 1931. Joshi states that his figures have been standardised for all the years without including the category 'unspecified labour'.

* 1991 & 2001 data are from PCA Census of India '91 and 2001.

Table 2.2 :Proportion of Agricultural Labourers to total Workers in Major States of India : 1951-2001.

| Zones | State | 1951 | 1961 | 1971 | 1981 | 1991 | 2001 |
|-----------|----------------|------|------|------|------|------|------|
| East | Assam | 3.3 | 3.5 | 9.6 | - | 12.9 | 13.2 |
| | Bihar | 23.9 | 23.0 | 38.9 | 35.4 | 37.2 | 48.0 |
| | Orissa | 18.5 | 17.0 | 28.3 | 27.2 | 28.9 | 35.0 |
| | W.Bengal | 15.3 | 15.3 | 26.5 | 25.1 | 24.5 | 25.0 |
| West | Rajasthan | 7.6 | 4.1 | 9.3 | 7.4 | 10.1 | 10.6 |
| | Gujrat | 18.3 | 14.8 | 22.5 | 22.8 | 23.0 | 24.3 |
| | Maharashtra | 30.4 | 23.8 | 29.3 | 26.8 | 27.0 | 26.3 |
| North | Punjab | 11.4 | 7.6 | 20.1 | 22.8 | 23.3 | 16.3 |
| | Haryana | - | - | 16.2 | 16.4 | 19.5 | 15.3 |
| | Uttar Pradesh | 7.5 | 11.3 | 20.0 | 16.3 | 19.2 | 24.8 |
| South | Andhra Pradesh | 33.4 | 28.6 | 37.9 | 36.7 | 40.8 | 39.6 |
| | Kerala | 25.6 | 17.4 | 30.7 | 28.2 | 25.7 | 15.8 |
| | Karnataka | 19.6 | 16.4 | 26.7 | 23.0 | 28.8 | 26.5 |
| | Tamilnadu | 23.2 | 18.4 | 30.5 | 31.5 | 34.2 | 31.0 |
| All India | | 19.5 | 16.7 | 26.3 | 25.2 | 26.2 | 26.5 |

Note and sources :

- i) Manabendu Chattopadhyay (1985), for figures from 1951-1981, based on various decennial Census Reports. Figures for 1951-1981 are for proportions of Agricultural Labourers to total workers.
- ii) Figures for 1991 are proportions of Agricultural Labourers to Main Workers as given in Census of India 1991, paper 3 of 1991, Provisional Population Totals : Workers and Their Distribution.
- iii) Figures for 2001 are proportion of Agricultural Labourers to total workers as given in Census of India 2001, PCA, Total population Table A - 5.

Table 2.3 : No. of Agricultural Labourers in different district of Assam: 1961-2001.

| Sl.No. | District/State | 1961 | 1971 | 1981 | 1991 | 2001 |
|---|--------------------------------|-------------|-------------|------|--------------|--------------|
| 1. | Kamrup | 29609 | 59332 | - | 47187 | 34895 |
| 2. | Barpeta* | | | | 60891 | 48921 |
| 3. | Nalbari* | | | | 49552 | 25226 |
| 4. | Nagaon | 22552 | 60273 | - | 72792 | 86087 |
| 5. | Marigaon* | | | | 21337 | 28903 |
| 6. | Goalpara | 38522 | 76589 | - | 36642 | 28629 |
| 7. | Dhubri* | | | | 80118 | 85840 |
| 8. | Kakrajhar* | | | | 43429 | 34760 |
| 9. | Bongaigaon* | | | | 41709 | 30118 |
| 10. | Darrang | 21147 | 42621 | - | 56871 | 47004 |
| 11. | Sanitpur* | | | - | 58403 | 33526 |
| 12. | Sibsagar | 13201 | 29576 | - | 15025 | 7510 |
| 13. | Dibrugarh* | | | | 15160 | 11463 |
| 14. | Tinsukia* | | | | 13668 | 10221 |
| 15. | Jorhat* | | | | 10590 | 7731 |
| 16. | Golaghat* | | | | 16606 | 13667 |
| 17. | Lakhimpur | 10407 | 29927 | - | 14908 | 11216 |
| 18. | Dhemaji* | | | | 7999 | 5310 |
| 19. | Cachar | 32581 | 98228 | - | 52140 | 29921 |
| 20. | Karimganj* | | | | 34651 | 24916 |
| 21. | North Cachar | 1887 | 783 | - | 983 | 1551 |
| 22. | Karbianglong* | | 8111 | - | 10515 | 14940 |
| 23. | Hailakandi* | | | | 19691 | 13996 |
| 24. | Garo Hills | 3265 | | | | |
| 25. | United Khashi & Jayantia Hills | 13875 | | | | |
| 26. | Mizo Hills | 33 | 558 | | | |
| | Assam | 187416 | 405998 | - | 844964 | 1263532 |
| Proportion of Agr. Labourer to total workers. | | | | | | |
| | | 3.5 percent | 9.6 percent | - | 12.9 percent | 13.2 percent |

Source : Census of India, 1961, Assam General Economic Table Part IIB
 Census of India, 1971, Series 3 Assam, Part IIA, General Population
 Census of India, 1991, PCA, Part IIB, Assam.
 Census of India 2001, Assam Series 19, PCA, Table A-5.6, 6.78, 48 & 49.

*Indicates subdivisions of the preceding district before 1981.

Table 2.4 : Percentage Growth Rate of Agricultural Labourers in Different District of Assam : 1961-71, 1991-2001.

| District/State | 1961-71 | 1971-91 | 1991-2001 |
|----------------|---------------|--------------------|------------------------|
| Kamrup | 100.39 | 166.00 | (-) 26.05 (-) 19.66 |
| Nalbari | | | (-) 49.09 |
| Nagaon | 167.26 | 56.17 | (+) 18.26 |
| Marigaon | | | (+) 35.46 |
| Goalpara | 98.82 | 164.00 | (-) 21.87 |
| Dhubri | | | (+) 7.14 |
| Kokrajhar | | | (-) 19.96 |
| Bongaigaon | | | (-) 27.79 |
| Darrang | 101.55 | 170.00 | (-) 17.35 |
| Sonitpur | | | (-) 42.60 |
| Sibsagar | 124.04 | 140.00 | (-) 50.02 |
| Dibrugarh | | | (-) 24.38 |
| Tinsukia | | | (-) 25.21 |
| Jorhat | | | (-) 27.00 |
| Golaghat | | | (-) 17.70 |
| Lakhimpur | 187.63 | (-)23.45 | (-) 24.76 |
| Dhemaji | | | (-) 33.62 |
| Cachar | 201.49 | -12.00 | (-) 42.61 |
| Karimganj | | | (-) 28.09 |
| North Cachar | 371.33 | 251.00 | (+) 57.78 |
| Karbianglong | | | (+) 42.08 |
| Hailakandi | | | (-) 28.92 |
| Assam | 116.63 | 108 percent | (+) 49.53 |

Source: Census of India – 1961, Assam, General Economic Table, Part IIE(i) ;
 Census of India – 1971, Series 3, Assam, Part IIA, General Population Table;
 Census of India – 1991, PCA, Part IIB, Assam.
 Census of India – 2001, Assam Series 19, PCA, Table A5, A6, A7, A8 & A9.

Table 2.5 : Percentage Decadal Variation in Population since 1951 for State and District.

| Sl.No. | State/Dist. | Percentage Decadal Variation | | | | |
|--------|----------------|------------------------------|---------------|----------|---------------|---------------|
| | | 1951-61 | 1961-71 | 1971-81 | 1981-1991 | 1991-2001 |
| 1.* | Kokrajhar | +46.44 | +54.28 | - | +76.75 | +15.05 |
| 2.* | Dhubri | +27.44 | +40.45 | - | +56.47 | +23.43 |
| 3 | Goalpara | +37.10 | +45.88 | - | +54.12 | +23.07 |
| 4 | Bangaigaon | +60.80 | +40.29 | - | +64.64 | +12.23 |
| 5 | Barpeta | +32.62 | +35.81 | - | +43.02 | +18.53 |
| 6 | Kamrup | +37.73 | +38.80 | - | +65.72 | +25.75 |
| 7 | Nalbari | +49.62 | +42.02 | - | +49.27 | +11.98 |
| 8 | Darrang | +44.75 | +43.24 | - | +55.63 | +15.79 |
| 9 | Morigaon | +37.89 | +37.51 | - | +50.90 | +21.29 |
| 10 | Nagaon | +35.91 | +38.99 | - | +51.26 | 22.30 |
| 11 | Sonitpur | +35.82 | +27.62 | - | +57.14 | +17.80 |
| 12 | Lakhimpur | +50.46 | +43.39 | - | +56.29 | +18.34 |
| 13 | Dhemaji | +75.21 | +103.42 | - | +107.50 | +18.93 |
| 14 | Tinsukia | +35.92 | +31.02 | - | +47.03 | +19.53 |
| 15 | Dibrugarh | +30.64 | +22.93 | - | +37.78 | +12.43 |
| 16 | Sibsagar | +23.36 | +19.47 | - | +38.76 | +15.95 |
| 17 | Jorhat | +24.17 | +17.47 | - | +33.10 | +15.84 |
| 18 | Golaghat | +26.04 | +30.85 | - | +58.12 | +14.21 |
| 19 | Karbi Anglong | +79.21 | +68.28 | - | +74.72 | +22.57 |
| 20 | N.Cachar Hills | +36.95 | +40.00 | - | +98.30 | +23.47 |
| 21 | Cachar | +22.60 | +23.96 | - | +47.59 | +18.66 |
| 22 | Karimganj | +22.96 | +25.13 | - | +42.08 | +21.35 |
| 23 | Hailakandi | +27.23 | +23.61 | - | +45.94 | +20.92 |
| | Assam | +34.98 | +34.95 | - | +53.26 | +18.85 |

* indicate population figures for these two districts are recasted due to transfer of 20 villages from Dhubri to Kokrajhar District after 1991 Census.

Source : Census of India 2001, Provisional population table, Annexure-2.

Table 2.6 : Percentage distribution of total workers in different district of Assam (2001 Census of India)

| Sl.No. | Name of district | percent of main workers to total workers | percent of marginal workers to total workers | percent of cultivators to total workers | percent of agricultural labourers to total workers | percent of household industry workers to total workers | percent of other workers to total workers |
|--------|--------------------|--|--|---|--|--|---|
| 1 | Kokrajhar | 70.0 | 29.9 | 43.0 | 22.5 | 3.6 | 30.9 |
| 2 | Dhubri | 84.9 | 15.1 | 37.2 | 23.8 | 3.7 | 35.3 |
| 3 | Goalpara | 76.6 | 23.4 | 36.9 | 18.3 | 4.7 | 40.1 |
| 4 | Bongaigaon | 79.5 | 20.5 | 38.8 | 17.7 | 3.0 | 40.4 |
| 5 | Barpeta | 79.0 | 21.0 | 40.6 | 15.8 | 5.3 | 38.3 |
| 6 | Kamrup | 82.9 | 17.1 | 24.6 | 9.0 | 5.6 | 60.8 |
| 7 | Nalbari | 76.0 | 24.0 | 38.1 | 14.0 | 5.8 | 42.0 |
| 8 | Darrang | 76.6 | 23.4 | 45.4 | 15.4 | 3.3 | 36.0 |
| 9 | Marigaon | 76.1 | 23.9 | 52.5 | 19.7 | 3.3 | 24.4 |
| 10 | Nagaon | 77.8 | 22.2 | 38.4 | 19.9 | 3.4 | 38.4 |
| 11 | Sonitpur | 73.3 | 26.7 | 33.8 | 12.9 | 2.9 | 50.4 |
| 12 | Lakhimpur | 57.9 | 42.1 | 68.0 | 7.0 | 2.4 | 22.6 |
| 13 | Dhemaji | 62.1 | 37.9 | 72.9 | 7.3 | 2.7 | 17.1 |
| 14 | Tinsukia | 75.0 | 25.0 | 31.2 | 6.2 | 1.8 | 60.8 |
| 15 | Dibrugarh | 72.5 | 27.5 | 29.0 | 7.6 | 2.3 | 61.2 |
| 16 | Sibsagar | 66.7 | 33.3 | 35.0 | 6.9 | 3.0 | 54.6 |
| 17 | Jorhat | 68.8 | 31.2 | 37.8 | 7.8 | 4.2 | 50.1 |
| 18 | Golaghat | 69.4 | 30.6 | 45.3 | 10.3 | 2.8 | 41.6 |
| 19 | Karb Anglong | 70.1 | 29.9 | 58.7 | 13.8 | 3.7 | 23.9 |
| 20 | North Cachar Hills | 78.4 | 21.6 | 48.9 | 4.9 | 2.4 | 43.8 |
| 21 | Cachar | 78.3 | 21.7 | 23.0 | 13.4 | 3.2 | 60.3 |
| 22 | Karimganj | 77.5 | 22.5 | 25.0 | 15.1 | 4.5 | 55.4 |
| 23 | Hailakandi | 76.8 | 23.2 | 34.9 | 14.3 | 3.2 | 47.7 |
| | Assam | 74.6 | 25.4 | 39.1 | 13.2 | 3.6 | 44.0 |

Source : Census of India 2001; A-5 State Primary Census Abstract of total population 2001.

Table 2.7 : Distribution of Main Workers in Different Districts of Assam (2001 Census)

| Sl.No. | Name of the Dist. | Main Workers | | Distribution of Main Workers | | |
|--------------|--------------------|----------------|----------------|------------------------------|--------------------------------|----------------|
| | | Main workers | Cultivators | Agr. Labourers | House hold industry workers | Other workers |
| 1 | Kokrajhar | 234771 | 112484 | 34760 | 6440 | 81087 |
| 2 | Dhubri | 399201 | 150921 | 85840 | 12782 | 1496548 |
| 3 | Goalpara | 209928 | 81929 | 28629 | 6800 | 92570 |
| 4 | Bongaigaon | 233087 | 91776 | 30118 | 5628 | 105565 |
| 5 | Barpeta | 408537 | 175608 | 48921 | 16656 | 167352 |
| 6 | Kamrup | 697810 | 168929 | 34895 | 26173 | 467813 |
| 7 | Nalbari | 291665 | 116903 | 25226 | 11765 | 137771 |
| 8 | Darrang | 404428 | 189816 | 47004 | 9458 | 158150 |
| 9 | Marigaon | 200132 | 110619 | 28903 | 3995 | 56615 |
| 10 | Nagaon | 566195 | 220436 | 86087 | 14022 | 245560 |
| 11 | Sonitpur | 465283 | 157753 | 33526 | 9208 | 264796 |
| 12 | Lakhimpur | 288052 | 173020 | 11216 | 5350 | 98466 |
| 13 | Dhemaji | 155431 | 109940 | 5310 | 2810 | 37371 |
| 14 | Tinsukia | 349847 | 93216 | 10221 | 4599 | 241811 |
| 15 | Dibrugarh | 342708 | 77594 | 11463 | 5310 | 248341 |
| 16 | Sibsagar | 287319 | 68083 | 7510 | 5302 | 206424 |
| 17 | Jorhat | 285092 | 88492 | 7731 | 6413 | 182456 |
| 18 | Golaghat | 269896 | 117158 | 13667 | 5138 | 133933 |
| 19 | Karb Anglong | 231638 | 145876 | 19940 | 5332 | 65490 |
| 20 | North Cachar Hills | 55031 | 25177 | 1551 | 636 | 27667 |
| 21 | Cachar | 364814 | 89517 | 29921 | 8156 | 237220 |
| 22 | Karimganj | 235016 | 64647 | 24916 | 6513 | 138940 |
| 23 | Hailakandi | 138216 | 50918 | 13996 | 2634 | 71388 |
| Assam | | 7114097 | 2680092 | 636351 | 181120 | 3616534 |

Source : A-5 State Primary Census Abstract of total population 2001.

Table 2.8 : Rate of Increase or Decrease Agricultural Labour Households - Major States : 1983 to 1999-00

| State | Number (000) | | | % of rural Household | | |
|------------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|----------------------|--------------|--------------|
| | 1983 | 1993-94 | 1999-00 | 1983 | 1993-94 | 1999-00 |
| Andhra Pradesh | 3929 | 4583 | 5408 | 41.55 | 41.56 | 42.52 |
| Assam | 463 | 816 | 632 | 19.45 | 22.98 | 17.26 |
| Bihar | 4028 | 4844 | 4884 | 37.11 | 39.22 | 42.52 |
| Gujrat | 1267 | 1959 | 2063 | 30.69 | 37.83 | 34.82 |
| Haryana | 512 | 364 | 464 | 20.24 | 15.87 | 18.71 |
| H. Pradesh | 17 | 26 | 42 | 2.19 | 2.85 | 4.00 |
| Jammu & Kashmir | 52 | 11 | 59 | 6.35 | 3.33 | 5.30 |
| Karnataka | 1762 | 2180 | 2943 | 36.59 | 37.33 | 41.70 |
| Kerala | 1148 | 1102 | 969 | 31.7 | 28.22 | 21.83 |
| Madhya Pradesh | 2302 | 3332 | 2699 | 30.15 | 34.85 | 34.29 |
| Maharashtra | 3031 | 3937 | 4851 | 38.55 | 41.17 | 41.17 |
| Orissa | 1725 | 1516 | 2719 | 36.41 | 25.46 | 43.32 |
| Punjab | 561 | 706 | 680 | 25.26 | 27.69 | 24.59 |
| Rajasthan | 545 | 576 | 502 | 11.1 | 9.97 | 7.89 |
| Tamilnadu | 3117 | 3761 | 4231 | 42.24 | 42.08 | 45.15 |
| Uttar Pradesh | 3040 | 3061 | 4189 | 18.01 | 15.31 | 19.68 |
| West Bengal | 3139 | 3252 | 4305 | 38.50 | 32.57 | 38.23 |
| All India | 30867 | 36262 | 44184 | 30.70 | 30.34 | 32.23 |

Source : i) Rural Labour Enquiry : Report on Wages and Earnings of Rural Labour Households, 1983, Labour Bureau, Shimla.
ii) Rural Labour Enquiry : Report on Wages and Earnings of Rural Labour Households, 1993-94 Labour Bureau, Shimla.
iii) Rural Labour Enquiry : Report on General Characteristics of Rural Labour Households 1999-2000, Labour Bureau, Shimla.

CHAPTER III

Levels and Pattern of Income of Agricultural Labourers

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