

MIGRATION FROM EASTERN BENGAL

TO

ASSAM 1891-1931

A DISSERTATION

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BY

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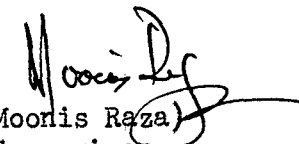
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I certify that the dissertation entitled "Migration from Eastern Bengal to Assam - 1891-1931" submitted by Miss Neelufar Ahmad in fulfilments of six credits out of the total requirements of twenty-four credits for the degree of Master of Philosophy (M.Phil). of the University, is a bonafide work to the best of my knowledge and may be placed before the examiners.

Forwarded to the Registrar

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C O N T E N T S

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

List of Maps and diagrams

CHAPTER I SCOPE AND MEANING OF MIGRATION

- a) Area of Study
- b) History of the setting up
- c) Time period
- d) Objectives
- e) Limitations of Data
- f) Analysis of Data

CHAPTER II IMMIGRATION TO ASSAM

- a) Line system in relation to immigration
- b) Geography of sending & receiving area
- c) Pressure of population on the soil in Eastern Bengal

CHAPTER III PUSH AND PULL FACTOR OF MIGRATION

- a) Push factors in areas of out-migration
- b) Conditions of the peasant class
- c) Pull factors in areas of in-migration

CHAPTER IV PROCESS OF MIGRATION

- a) Temporal Process
- b) Period 1891-1901
- c) Period 1901-1911
- d) Period 1911-1921
- e) Period 1921-1931
- f) Migration and adjacent creep

CHAPTER V SOME ASPECTS OF THE IMMIGRATION OF EASTERN BENGAL CULTIVATORS TO ASSAM

- a) Impact on agriculture and land use
- b) Impact on culture

CONCLUSION APPENDIX

BIBLIOGRAPHY

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(NEELUFAR AHMAD)

LIST OF MAPS AND DIAGRAMS

- Fig.1 Location of Administrative Units.
- Fig.2 Out-migrants from Mymensingh to Assam - 1891.
- Fig.3 Out-migrants from Dacca to Assam - 1891
- Fig.4 Out-migrants from Rangpur to Assam - 1891
- Fig.5 Out-migrants from Tippera to Assam - 1891
- Fig.6 Out-migrants from Mymensingh to Assam - 1901
- Fig.7. Out-migrants from Dacca to Assam - 1901
- Fig.8 Out-migrants from Rangpur to Assam - 1901
- Fig.9 Out-migrants from Mymensingh to Assam - 1911
- Fig.10 Out-migrants from Rangpur to Assam - 1911
- Fig.11 Out-migrants from Mymensingh to Assam - 1931
- Fig.12 Out-migrants from Rangpur to Assam - 1931
- Fig.13 Out-migrants from Tippera to Assam - 1931
- Fig.14 Emigrants from Mymensingh to Assam by distance 1891-1901
- Fig.15 Emigrants from Mymensingh to Assam by distance 1911-1931
- Fig.16 Emigrants from Rangpur to Assam by distance 1891-1901
- Fig.17 Emigrants from Rangpur to Assam by distance 1911-1931
- Fig.18 Emigrants from Tippera to Assam by distance 1891-1901
- Fig.19 Emigrants from Tippera to Assam by distance 1911-1931

C H A P T E R I

(Migration is defined broadly as a permanent or semi-permanent change of residence.) No restriction is placed upon the distance of the move or upon the voluntary or involuntary nature of the act, and no distinction is made between external and internal migration. However, not all kinds of spatial mobility are included in the definition. Excluded, for example, are the continual movements of nomads and migratory workers, for whom there is no long term residence and temporary moves like those to the mountains for the summer.

(Migration is one of the demographic dynamics of Particular concern to the geographers,) though interests in population movements is also strong among anthropologists and sociologists. There are persons like E.G. Ravenstein, E.Lee and D.J. Bouge who have analysed all kinds of migratory movements and reached into certain generalizations or it should be called "Theory of Migration". The first attempt at formulating migration theory was made by E.G. Ravenstein in his two papers of 1881 and 1889 on the "Laws of Migration". These laws which outline demographic and economic variables particularly in relation to the factor of distance represent the beginning of an attempt to relate in a systematic way the factors which enter into a temporary or permanent change in residence. As Lee and others have noted, in dealing with either short or long distance moves, the analysis must take into account factors in the area of origin, factors in the area of destination, intervening obstacles between them, and the selection or decision factor which leads to move.

The world view and perspective of the situation will vary markedly as will also the opportunities available to individuals to make move. The factors which enter into the decision to migrate may be summarized under four headings:

- a) Factors associated with the area of origin;
- b) Factors associated with the area of destination;
- c) Intervening obstacles; and
- d) Personal factors.

In every area there are countless factors which act to hold people within the area or attract people to it, and there are others which tend to repel them.

Perhaps the question most asked about migration is "why do people move"? One attempt to cover all moves under a general heading is the "push" and "pull" factors. It suggests that migration is due to socio-economic imbalances between areas, certain factors "pushing" people away from the areas of origin and others "pulling" them to the area of destination. For this reason they are of changing significance in time and space, varying in accordance with their causes, objectives, directions and intensities.

Migration influences sizes of population at origin and destination. A majority of shifts in population are due to economic imbalances between areas. Since the social structure and cultural system of both the places of origin and of destination are affected by migration and in turn affect the migrants: According to D.J. Bogue (a) Migration frequently is a major

- symptom of basic social change;
- b) Migration is a necessary element of normal Population adjustment and equilibrium;
 - c) Migration is an arrangement for making maximum use of Persons with special qualifications;
 - d) Migration frequently is a regional or national social problem; and
 - e) Migration is an instrument of cultural diffusion and social integration.

Spengler stated that the volume of migration is conditioned by inter-regional differences in the availability of economic opportunity and by distance, but Stouffer postulated that there may not be necessarily a relationship between mobility and Geographical distance but the number of migrants is directly proportional to the number of opportunities in the distance, inversly proportionate to the number of intervening opportunities.

Though Stouffer did not agree with Spengler in relation to distance and mobility but he accepted Spengler's view regarding the availability of economic opportunities and the volume of Migrants.

Certain locations developed in time depending upon the emphasis given to different economic activities. In classical theory, a fertile agricultural land was mainly considered as an economic asset, but later on other natural resources and related economic activities were considered to be of great importance in spatial patterns and processes.

It was recognized that the level of advantages at different locations changed over time and therefore, it can be assumed that a population distribution which might have been ideal for one could be wrong for another.

The employers or cultivators in an advantageous location found that there were very few workers available or much cultivable land available. On the other hand in other locations, where the relative advantages diminished, there were either too many workers for the number of jobs available or there were acute shortage of cultivable lands. When this happened, the workers in areas where the pay was lower would obviously have the incentive to move to areas of higher pay as capitalists would have to move their capital to bring the highest return or the landless cultivators of one region certainly would have the same motivation to move to areas where enough cultivable land is available.

The discovery of new resource also attracts the migratory masses, and has in some instances played a major role in the peopling of vast areas. Thus the exploitation of coal in the nineteenth century was responsible for creating the greatest European areas of high density, and the discovery of Gold helped to people Western United States after having stimulated the Spanish penetration and colonization of Latin America; whilst almost at the same time the same metal created nuclei of population in South-Western Australia and was responsible for the great urban development of the "Gold Triangle" of South Africa. Much more recently oil wells have succeeded in attracting and immobilising the nomads of the Arabian desert around towns whose economic activity is connected with oil and those of Sahara desert around the New Oasis which have been developed from deep-seated water supplies revealed by the oil borings.

Clearly, the attraction of monetary benefit is a powerful factor in governing migration, but there are others also—a more agreeable job, a more

satisfactory way of social life etc. /

In all migratory movements availability of Transport has a psychological as well as a material role. During the last century the railways, by facilitating easier travel between town and country, contributed to the dissemination of knowledge to the rural masses and made them aware of better economic opportunities elsewhere. This has helped to increase the migratory flows. The mass migration from Eastern Bengal to Assam in late 18th century was facilitated by the steamer service which was introduced in 1846⁽¹⁾

There are some migrants, however, owe nothing to the desire for gain; the search for Political or religious freedom, accompanied sometimes by the need for self-preservation in the face of persecution, has been responsible for mass exoduses which were quite contrary to the economic interests of the migrants when the Jews who fled from Nazi Germany before the war abandoned comfortable economic situations to install themselves clandestinely in a country which did not belong to them; and did not know that they were saving their own lives and preparing the way for a new state which in time would serve as a rallying ground for Jews from both East and West.

There is another psychological motivation which is less tragic, and that is the appeal of the group. It has been from a town, a region or a country, will often encourage one another in the act of migrating and re-form as a group at the end of the journey.

There are successive ^{se}generalization about the streams of migration suggested by different scholars. Validity of each of the generalizations is supported by empirical research. Following are the certain generalizations which seems to be important for our present study:

1. The rate of in-migration to a central point from each of several other points lying at a distance tends to vary inversely with the distance (Zipf⁴⁹)

(1) Early British relations with Assam by Suryyakumar Bhuyan.

2. The rate of out-migration from a central point to each of several other central points lying at a distance tends to vary inversely with the distance (Zipf 1949);
3. The amount of interchange between any two areas is directly proportional to the product of the population of the two areas and inversely proportional to the distance between them (Zipf 1949);
4. Rates of Net migration between two areas tend to be directly proportional to differences in level of living and inversely proportional to the distance between them (Mangus and McNamara, 1953, Folger 1953).
5. If two areas are in different economic regions, the relationship between distance and number of migrants may be different from the relationship within an economically integrated area (Folger 1953);
6. The number of persons going to a given distance is directly proportionate to the number of opportunities at that distance and inversely proportional to the number of intervening opportunities (Stouffer 1940);
7. Areas of low level of living tend to be areas of net out-migration, while areas of high level of living tend to be areas of net-immigration (Godrich 1936);
8. Migration streams tend to avoid areas of high unemployment and to flow with greatest velocity toward areas of low unemployment (Bogue, Shryock, and Hoermann 1957).

There are different kinds of migration within the same territorial boundary. All types of migration can be fixed within two broad categories. Firstly migration between different districts of the same province, which

EASTERN BENGAL AND ASSAM

LOCATION AND ADMINISTRATIVE UNITS

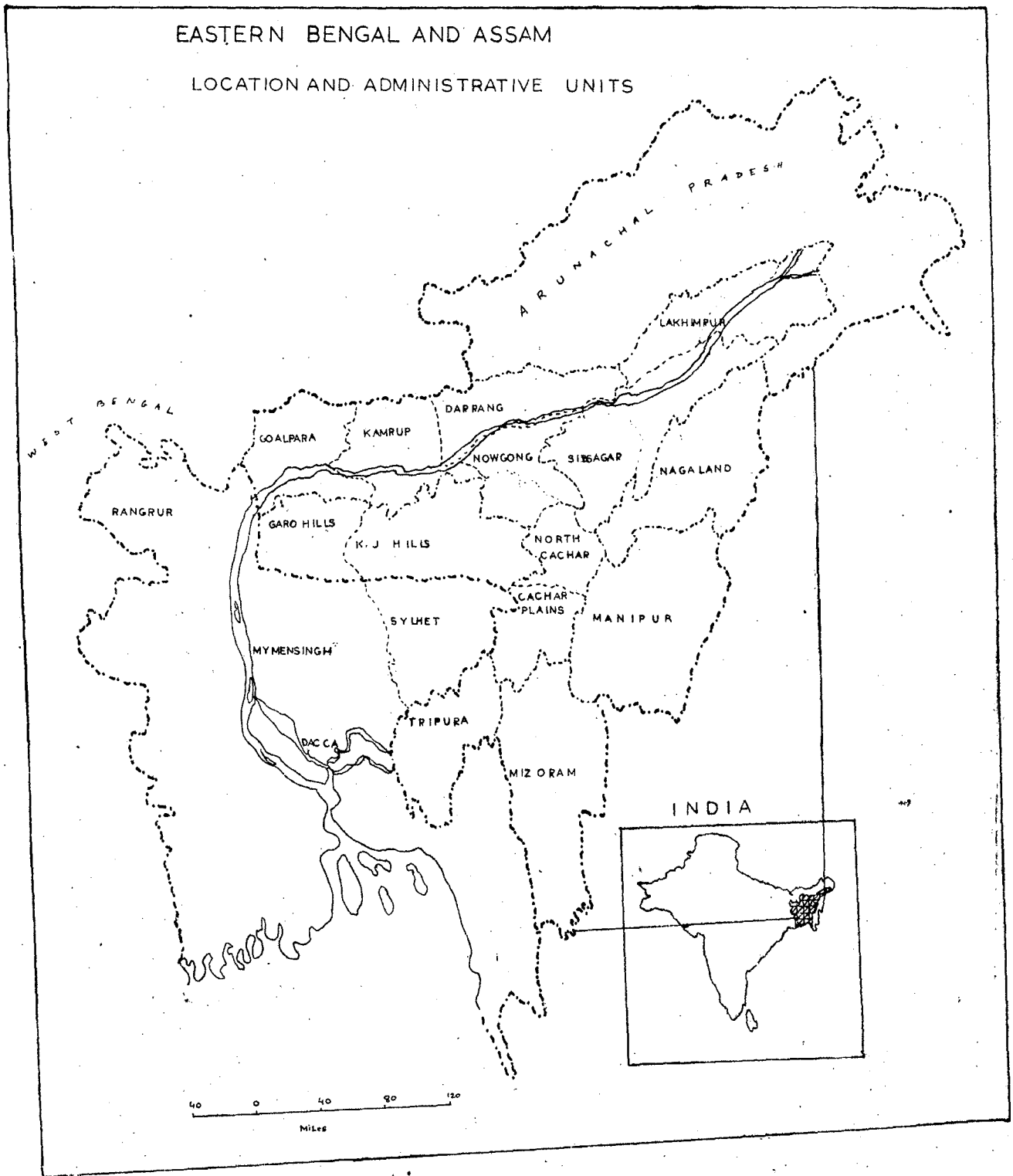


Fig- 1

has been called intra-province migration, and secondly, migration between one province to the other or inter-province migration. As we are dealing with the migration between two provinces we are more concerned with the results of the inter-province migration.

Area of Study:

Our present study comprises the area of Eastern Bengal (the present Bangladesh) and the undivided state of Assam in India. Though in early eighties of 19th century Assam was a part of Bengal presidency but it was separated from Bengal Presidency in 1874 and formed into a separate Chief Commissioner-ship, consists of two river valleys with a lofty hill tract between. On the north, the Brahmaputra valley covers an area of 20,683 sq. miles, or one-half of the whole province, and gives the name of its former dominant race Ahoms, to Assam. From its southern edge rises the hill country, a wild broken region inhabited by non-Aryan tribes. To the south of these intervening mountains lies another small valley of the Barak and Surma.

The whole province is divided for administrative purposes into eleven Districts. But there has been decade to decade variation in the area of Brahmaputra valley of Assam during the period under review. As it was involving transfer of only thinly populated forest tracts, this fact may be ignored. The area which was subjected to transfer was the portion of Naga Hills which transferred to Nowgong and Sibsagar before the Census operation of 1901. In the Census of 1901 quite a few number of persons shown as born in Nowgong and Censused in Sibsagar have not really moved their homes at all, but were living in the area transferred from Naga Hills to Nowgong⁽¹⁾.

(1) Census of Assam 1901, Report Vol. IV.

On the other hand, the districts of Eastern Bengal which have included in our study are the contiguous districts of Assam.

The areal units for our study are the different districts of Assam and all adjacent districts of Eastern Bengal including Dacca.

In India, the smallest unit for which Census data relating to migration are available is the districts. Areal units - there were all together ten districts in Assam which were taken into account. The districts are:-

- | | |
|--------------------------|-----------------|
| 1. Cachar | 2. Sylhet |
| 3. Goalpara | 4. Kamrup |
| 5. Darrang | 6. Nowgong |
| 7. Sibsagar | 8. Lakhimpur |
| 9. Khasi & Jaintia Hills | 10. Garo Hills. |

From Eastern Bengal only few districts were taken for our present purpose which are adjacent to Assam and capital Dacca. As most of the emigrants from Eastern Bengal to Assam went from the adjacent districts of Assam, we have taken into consideration the few Eastern Bengal districts which are adjacent to Assam. Another reason for this consideration is to test the hypothesis of adjacent creep.

The districts of Eastern Bengal Are:

1. Rangpur;
2. Mymensingh;
3. Dacca; and
4. Tippera.

History of the setting up:-

(In 1854, during the time of Lord Dalhousie as Viceroy, the newly constituted Bengal included Orissa and Bihar and the Surma valley, with

the districts of Cachar and Sylhet. This province being too large, a new province Assam, was carved out in 1874, and this separated the Surma valley from its natural outlet through East Bengal. Till 1901 Bihar and Orissa remained with the large province of Bengal. On assumption of office as Viceroy in 1903. Lord Curzon decided to partition Bengal, and in 1905 a new province of East Bengal and Assam was created.

But there was intense opposition to the formation of the new province because of so-called partition and eventually the partition as annulled on 1 April, 1912. The new scheme of the British provinces in Northeastern India survived till the coming of Independence in August, 1947.

Time Period:-

The period covered in our present study is from 1891 to 1931. The study is entirely based on Census data so the whole period is divided into several phases when the Census operations were taken place. The different Census years are 1891, 1901, 1911, 1921 and 1931.

There are few reasons for choosing the time period 1891-1931. Firstly, the first regular census in India was taken place in 1881, though in 1871 there was an attempt to count the population in India, but that cannot be considered as a Census. It is found that even in the 1st regular Census of 1881 there was error of under-estimation of the population and being the first official attempt, there are chances of other errors. So to avoid these errors the time period is chosen from the Census of 1891. Though there was a Census in 1941, but due to the second World War the Census

was not elaborately conducted. Thus necessary information are not available. In 1947 India was partitioned and the area of Eastern Bengal which is taken into consideration for our present study had been separated from India. Hence the study concentrates from period 1891-1931.

Though the boundary changes took place several times in the study area during this period, they do not make significant difference in our objective analysis of migration pattern.

Objectives:-

The purpose of the study is to obtain an estimate of the extent of Migration from Eastern Bengal to Assam and how far it had been influenced by the pressure on the land in Eastern Bengal districts mainly the adjacent belt of Assam. On the other hand, the study would likely to estimate the volume of migration in relation to distance.

The hypothesis of this study is the theory of adjacent creep in. We will try to find out whether there is any significant pressure on agricultural land in region "A" leading to particularly to the pouperization and expropriation of the poor peasantry, and if, adjacent and contiguous to it is an area "B" having similar geographical conditions and with considerable amount of cultivable waste and a relatively small agricultural working force, the phenomena of adjacent creep of agricultural population takes from region "A" to region "B". Its characteristics are:-

1. Massive;
2. Distance Decay; and
3. In time.

It means the volume decreases with time and distance.

Ravenstein also postulates that migrants enumerated in a particular centre of absorption will grow less as distance from the centre increases. It is accepted that Ravenstein was the first person to recognize the relationship between distance and migration in 1885.

A quarter century later, a more precise statement of the distance - migration relationship was presented by Young who hypothesized that "the relative number of migrants to a given area from each of several areas would vary directly with the force of attraction of the receiving areas and inversely with the square of the distance between the source and terminal areas".

This kind of massive movement is likely to lead (1) transfer of agricultural technology, and (2) cultural enclavisation. Because these mass immigrants always introduce their own way of technology. They usually find that the receiving areas have a very small number of agricultural working force, and a vast tract of cultivable waste are available, so they start taking up land and cultivate it in their own way with a great enthusiasm, and that way area "B" or the receiving area undergo a change in agricultural technology.

Another phenomena takes place due to this mass migration, is the cultural enclavisation. This is a phenomena which comes from psychological factor. When a new stream of immigrants enters into a completely different social system there will always be a tendency to isolate themselves and protect their own culture and way of life from the surrounding and existing culture. It happens from the fear that they might loose their own identity

as a different cultural group. So the new social group keep themselves in isolation and form a minority of different culture amidst major cultural group.

But after this initial phase there are possibilities to occur acculturation and assimilation. In these processes, the behaviour, way of life or culture of the enclave group gradually, gets assimilated with the existing culture, without their intention.

Limitation of Data:

Although India has been subjected to census surveys with considerable regularity since 1881, the data related to internal migration are generally inadequate for detailed analysis. For the majority citizens all that is known is place-of-birth and current place of residence. So the field of migration in India could not have been explored as much extensively as certain other similar demographic phenomena. There is thus a need for study which may delineate the over all picture of inter-state migration and might also comprehend the movements between the smaller regions, and describe the nature of movements in relation to the areas of "Push" and "Pull".

Unfortunately vital statistics record in India are not useable for combining with the Census information to compute Inter-Censal movement⁽¹⁾ therefore, the ultimate dependence has to be on the census data alone.

In the present analysis an indirect approach based on place of birth statistics has been adopted. Place of birth data are only an indirect tool for an analysis of migration, and for that reason suffer from numerous handicaps. Their first limitation arises from the fact that these do not

(1) Patterns of internal Migration in India - G.S. Gosal & G. Krishan.

differentiate between economic, matrimonial, natal, administrative, political casual and other migration. There is no indication available of the number of moves made, the motive behind and individuals migration or the change in occupation for which the migration may have caused. Secondly the smallest areal unit for which these data are available is the district, wherein with an average area of more than 9,000 sq. K.M. and a population exceeding 1.5 million is fairly large. Data compiled by such large units fail to indicate the distance and direction of local migration (intra-district) which is very important in migration analysis. Thirdly, the time to time changes in district and state boundaries introduce an element of non-comparability of data recorded at different Censuses, create difficulties for conducting temporal studies.

Above all, the place of birth data relate only to immigration to a particular district but fail to indicate magnitude and direction of out-migration from it. Since the names of the districts in which migrants were born are not published.

For precise estimation of migration from place of birth data, it is necessary to know the age-sex distribution of population enumerated outside the state of birth. However, in none of the Indian Censuses were place of birth statistics classified by age. Classification by sex, however, is available at all Censuses.

The tabulation procedure of the place of birth data was more or less the same in 1901, 1911 and 1921 and although some what restricted in the 1931 tabulation. In the first three Censuses, for each district in a state

it is possible to get the number of people (1) enumerated and born in the district, (2) enumerated in the district and born in each of the other districts in the state (3) enumerated in the district and born in each of the other states or provinces in the country, (4) enumerated in the district and born in each of the countries outside India.

In 1931, however, item (1), (3) & (4) were available in full, but item (2) was restricted to persons enumerated in the district and born in contiguous districts of the same State, and all other districts taken together. The change, made the study of district by district migration within the state difficult. Thus the basic data on place of birth, available for all Censuses, cover the number of people, born in a State and enumerated in each of the other districts.

But the state of birth-place data do not show when migration from state to another occurred, persons shown as having been born in one state but living in another may have migrated at any time from birth upto the date of the Census enumeration, hence the term "Life time migrants" is used for the population who migrated, it represents the survivors of a large volume migration⁽¹⁾, and does not include the unknown number of migrants who died before the Census operation, and it also omits those persons who migrated from their states of birth but had returned by the time of the Census enumeration.

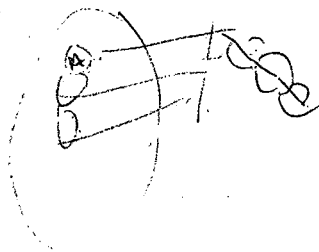
Thus a demographer or a population geographer faces number of problems while making use of birth place data for the study of internal migration in India.

(1) K.C. Zacharia. A Historical Study of migration in the Indian Sub-continent 1901-1931, Bombay.

Analysis of Data:

The birth place data is taken from the Census Reports, i.e. the number of People coming from each Eastern Bengal district. First of all to find out the percentage share of each Eastern Bengal district to the total population of each Assam Districts the data is computed. (The total immigrants from each Eastern Bengal districts are added up and the percentage share of Eastern Bengal district "A" in each Assam districts to the total number which district "A" contributed to Assam has also been worked out.)

To find out the distance decay relationship the distance from each Eastern Bengal district to each Assam district was calculated to illustrate this, it is assumed that there are districts A, B, C, D in Eastern Bengal and 1,2,3,4.....10 in Assam. Now having worked out the distance from "A" to "1; 2,3,4.....10 and "B" to 1,2,3,4.....10 etc. by calculating the distance from the headquarters of every district to the other districts were arranged according to the distance from "A" or "B", and with the percentage share of immigrants from "A" to 1,2,3,410 it will be shown that as distance increased the volume of migrants decreased.



C H A P T E R II

IMMIGRATION TO ASSAM

Introduction:

The movement of Population within India for permanent settlements and in search of gainful employments started much earlier than the 20th Century. The massive migration of farmers to Punjab Canal Colonies dates back to 1887-88. It was observed that mainly following types of areas and opportunities pulled people to immigrate into those areas:-

1. Urban industrial concentrations;
2. Plantations;
3. Suitable cultivable agricultural lands;
4. Multipurpose Project-sites and other areas with development activities; and
5. Mining areas.

In the context of a predominantly agricultural economy and a consistently fast-growing population, the small and declining size of agricultural land-holdings has been the basic factor to the process of out-migration in India. The pressure of Population has been very intense and has been relieved to some extent through large scale out-migration.

(Our Study falls into the 3rd category of areas i.e. the flow towards the cultivable agricultural lands, prominent among which are the Assam valley, Bengal's longstanding congestion of Population, scarcity of lands started pushing the farmers from Bengal Delta to Assam valley in 1900.)

It was observed that in all the above six areas, the heaviest outflow of migrants have been from those regions where per capita agricultural productivity is low due to high Population density, small size of holdings,

and over-dependence on agriculture.⁽¹⁾

Immigration has always been a most important factor in the variation of Population in Assam. The mass migration of Eastern Bengal settlers to Assam valley started from early 19th century. Another major flow was directed towards areas which experienced the development of tea plantations in Assam. The reasons for the mobility of Population may be attributed to the development of a strong push-factor in the rural areas due to the dearth of the arable lands and employment opportunities. (

| So there were two main currents of migration into Assam from different parts of India - Firstly, the emigration to the Assam tea gardens and secondly, the immigration of Eastern Bengal Colonists. The tea industry of Assam had created an enormous demand for labour, and the local labour supply was extremely limited. The demand was, therefore, met by indentured labourers from other provinces, where the population was denser and the land was insufficient to support them. As a result of a constant influx of immigrants had taken place. (

| The other class of immigrants were those who came from the neighbouring districts of Eastern Bengal to take up lands for cultivation in different districts of Assam. Though this movement started from around 1880 but for first few years it was not considered as immigration. Earlier, the migration of cultivators was described as the outcome of the interplay of a number of factors. Even in the Census Report of Assam, 1881, Sir E.A. Gait explained this movement as "It might have been thought that the amount of cultivatable land, the fertility of the soil and the low rents prevailing would have induced some portion at least of the over-crowded cultivators of Bengal

(1) G.S. Gosal and G. Krishan: Patterns of internal migration in India.

to find their way to Assam and take up land there, but this does not appear to be the case. A certain number of persons from neighbouring Bengal districts of Mymensigh, Dacca, and Rangpur have crossed the boundary and settled down in Sylhet and Goalpara, but this can scarcely be called immigration, they have only moved a few miles from their original homes and the accident of boundary alone has brought them within the limits of Assam".

Though Sir Gait did not termed it as immigration but it had been proved and mentioned in the next Census i.e. in 1891 that the event was not the mere crossing of the boundary but rather an invasion of a huge land hungry cultivators from Eastern Bengal district to Assam, who were apparently driven by the pressure on the soil at home. By the second decade of the century, this had been stabilised as a continuous phenomenon and thus became a factor for setting in motion a number of processes, some of which would be indicated here:-

- i) Land Colonization type of settlement on land by the Muslim migrants from East Bengal and introduction of Jute as a cash-crop by them, further intensified the process of emergence of land as a commodity, this in its turn disrupted the communal rights of the tribal communities over their lands;
- ii) While that section of the rural society in Assam, which flourished on unearned rent from land, welcomed the settlement of Muslim cultivators from East Bengal, the owners of small and medium size holdings perceived in it a threat to their mobility. A Political dimension was gradually added to the problem. {

Line System in relation to immigration:

(The line of division in Assam Politics is primarily not between Hindus and Muslims or on caste lines, but between the inhabitants of the Assam valley and those of the Surma valley (1) /

(The people of Assam were mostly concerned with the mal-distribution of power and resources, between the two major linguistic groups. The Assamese^{and the} Bengalees. The Bengalees had already a much larger share in government jobs than what even their numerical strength justified. On Census count, those who returned Bengali as their mother tongue far out-numbered the Assamese-speaking population of the province and tended to increase from Census to Census due to the influx of immigrants.

The large section of Assamese speaking people took the matter very seriously and insisted the government to allow only those immigrants who had domicile certificates to compete for local government jobs. This attitude was slowly penetrated into all Assamese-speaking people and transformed into a aggressive linguistic nationalism. /

The agitation persisted through-out the twenties and early thirties and there was a demand for containment of further influx of East Bengal Muslim immigrants into Goalpara and the rest of the Brahmaputra valley, the whole event was turned into a Political issue. There was only one question which had raised in the minds of not only the urban literate class but also the mass peasant class, that was if the immigration continued unrestrained, would not the Assamese be turned into a linguistic minority in their own homeland? In this context, the government had evolved the "Line System"

(1) Reports of the Delimitation Committee, pp 89.

around 1920. Under this system, a line was drawn in the districts under pressure in order to settle immigrants in segregated areas, specified for exclusive settlement. The idea of line system was first mooted in 1916 and adopted in 1920.

Colonists were settling on government waste lands by families and not singly. They were debtless cultivators, and hence could offer higher and lucrative land prices to induce Assamese peasants to sell out parts of their holdings. Local marwari and even Assamese money lenders financed the immigrants so that they could reclaim land and expand the cultivation of jute, rice, pulses and vegetables. The Assamese public opinion began increasingly clamour against the feelings of the line system. Government admitted on August 1923 that there was continuous immigration into Nowgong, but asserted at the same time that wastelands were plentifully available both for immigrants and local people.

Villages on wastelands ~~gravel~~ were classified into three categories:

- (1) Those made available exclusively to immigrants; (2) those made available exclusively to local people; and (3) those available to both. No land settlement could be made with an immigrant families beyond a ceiling of 16 Bighas. Subletting of lands to and employment of immigrants as agricultural labour by local people in Assamese lines were also prohibited.

Geography of sending and receiving Area:-

The physical characteristics of a country determine in large measure the nature of the economic activities of its inhabitants. This is particularly true of an agricultural country, for agriculture, of all industries, depends most on the natural conditions of soil and climate. The configuration of a

country, the character of the soil, the river and the mountain systems, the amount and the distribution of rainfall - all these factors determine what kinds of agricultural produce can be profitably raised in it. For a proper understanding^{of} the economic life of Eastern Bengal which is so predominantly agricultural, a study of the physical characteristics is thus an essential thing.

Eastern Bengal or present day Bangladesh comprises two sharply contrasting major physical divisions - the vast alluvial plain and the marginal hills of the East and the West.

The vast alluvial plain dominates the economy of the country, on the other ~~hand~~ the splendid river system which is of fundamental importance to the life and economic activities of the people of Eastern Bengal. The number of rivers with their ofshoots, tributaries and inter-connecting channels ensure an abundant supply of fish, serve as drainage and irrigation channels and provide very cheap and convenient water transport and communication to the people. They act as an excellent fertilizing agent over a considerable part of the province.

In respect of rainfall Eastern Bengal is more fortunate than most of the other Indian provinces. In fact with the exception of Assam there is no other province where the rainfall is so abundant and well-distributed (The annual rainfall varies from 50" in the West to 100" in the South~~East~~). The amount of rainfall and its distribution over the year are highly important in determining the fortune of the crops and therefore, the prosperity of agricultural classes in Eastern Bengal.

Over 90% of the total population of Eastern Bengal is rural and about 80% of these are engaged in agriculture and associated occupation.



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From the beginning till to day agriculture is the back-bone of the economy of Eastern Bengal. Of the various agricultural products raised, by far the most important is rice. The production of this crop is encouraged by the physical conditions of the province. There is an almost endless variety of rice grown in this province.

After rice, jute is the most important crop, but by 1840 it had no importance in international trade. It was not even mentioned by the name "jute". (1) Large-scale jute cultivation began in 1865, though early in the 19th century small quantities of jute had been grown for local use.

The rapid extension of jute trade had materially improved the condition of the agricultural classes. The Collector of Mymensingh states as follows:-

"In an economic point of view, jute has been an immense boon to the inhabitants of the districts. It has enabled them to utilize lands which were previously of little value!"

But this extension of jute cultivation caused a tremendous change in the crop production of the country. With growing demand from abroad, the jute crop, though not in direct competition with the major rice crop, began to encroach upon many aus land.

This raised the question of whether or not the benefit of this new cash-crop to the peasant was being obtained at the cost of reduced capacity for food production, not only of grains but of other crops also. In 1872 there were circulars from all the districts on this point indicated that by and large this development was beneficial.

(1) Taylor, A. sketch of the topography and statistics of Dacca, Calcutta, 1840, pp 112, 143.

Generally the proportion of arable land under jute was small; in many instances, only inferior lands were used under jute. Further extension of jute-growing would almost certainly encroach upon the main crop; rice land. Expansion in fact, went on as did increase of population and the need for more food. The area cultivated under jute reached the million-acre mark in 1872 in undivided Bengal. By 1921-30 jute had acquired great importance in the agricultural economy and was only second to rice, occupying about 11 per cent of the total cropped area in Bengal, that is, more than any other crop except rice. Around the decade 1891-1901 jute was also introduced in Assam by the Emigrants from Eastern Bengal who landed up in Assam around that period to take up land there. Before that, jute was produced in a small-scale along the Brahmaputra valley, but for the first time the cultivation of jute became important in Assam, increasing from less than 500 acres before 1901 to over 6,000 acres by 1911. (In 1901-2, Goalpara had 25.6 thousand acres under jute, which slowly increased to 26.6 thousand acres by 1911).

Geography of the receiving area:

Undivided Assam is the north eastern most province of India. But neither the present territorial distribution nor the recent name given to it goes much beyond a century. It is situated on the Eastern border of West Bengal and is a frontier state of the Indian Union. It is bounded in the north by the eastern section of the great Himalyas, on the south by Tripura, portions of West Bengal and Burma, and on the West by Eastern Bengal or present day Bangladesh.

For administrative purposes the state has been divided into two main divisions i.e. the Surma valley division, and two frontier tracts of Sadiya and Balipara. The two divisions together comprise twelve districts. Khasi and Jaintia Hill districts were merged in Assam in 1950 and formed the Khasi and Jaintia Hills districts.

Assam proper or the valley of Brahmaputra, is an alluvial plain, about 450 miles long, with an average breadth of 50 miles. On all sides but the West it is shut in by jungle-covered ranges or massive mountains. From East to West it is traversed by the main stream of the Brahmaputra and the strips of land along each bank of the great river are intersected by numerous minor streams.

The Surma valley differs from that of the Brahmaputra; in that it consists of a shallow basin, which being filled up by the silt that the enormous rainfall washes off the southern slopes of Khasi Hills.

The Central Hill tract between the Brahmaputra and the Surma valleys, comprising the districts of Naga Hills, Khasi Hills and Jaintia Hills and Goro Hills forms a long, projecting out work of the mountain system which intervenes between the watersheds of the Brahmaputra and Irawadi.

Soil of Assam is extremely fertile. Neither manure nor irrigation is required, as the rivers rarely fail to overflow their banks and deposit a fresh top-dressing of silt every year. There is abundance of wasteland on all sides waiting for tillage.

Like Eastern Bengal, Assam is also predominantly an agricultural region. The people of Assam solely dependent on agriculture. Its soil is fertile almost everywhere and suitable for cultivation and could easily support more people. Rice is the most important food crop, which is grown in Assam. Another important crop is Tea, which is a Cash-crop and today India earns a high amount of foreign exchange by exporting this cash-crop. Cultivation of jute became important in Assam around the year 1911. Before that it was only cultivated in a small scale. The emigrants from Eastern Bengal first introduced jute in Assam on a commercial scale.

Assam has almost similar climatic conditions as Eastern Bengal which is best suited for rice and jute - the two main agricultural crops of Eastern Bengal. Rainfall is plenty and well-distributed, except in Cherapunji; where the rainfall is extremely high.

Pressure of Population on the soil in Eastern Bengal:

(Undoubtedly there was heavy pressure of Population on the soil of Eastern Bengal which lead to mass peasant migration from Eastern Bengal to Assam.)

A clear indication of the pressure of the population is given by the relation between the actual number of persons supported by agriculture and the total area under cultivation in the province. The Population supported by agriculture in Bengal, according to the Census Report of 1921, is 36.9 millions, and the aggregate area under cultivation is about 24 million acres, so that the acreage per head of the population supported is about two-thirds. If we take into consideration the fact that there is a considerable number of people to whom agriculture is a subsidiary occupation

and who are not therefore included in the figure given above, the area of cultivated land per head of agricultural population becomes still less.⁽¹⁾

The total number of agricultural workers including ordinary farm servants and field labourers in Bengal is 11 millions. If we divide the area under cultivation by this number we find that there is a little over 2.1/5 acres of land for each worker in this province, and if we take the case of Eastern Bengal separately the land per head will become lesser than the whole of Bengal.

In many Western countries the area of land per worker on the basis of the agricultural population in 1911 is nearly 10 times as much as it is in Bengal. So all these facts very clearly indicate that there was a heavy pressure of Population on the soil of Bengal. This pressure influenced the economic conditions of the peasant class of Bengal, land holding became smaller per person. Besides other causes the most important factor for the poverty of the agricultural classes in Eastern Bengal is due to the small area of land which is available to average cultivator. There are several other factors which were caused by the pressure of Population on soil ultimately lead to the mass migration of Eastern Bengal (peasant class) to the Assam valley. In short the pressure acts as a great 'push' factor to the situation, which will be discussed in the next chapter.

The enclosed table shows the percentage of dependents to the total agricultural workers. As compared to Assam the percentage is very high in Eastern Bengal and indicates the pressure on agricultural land.

(1) K.B. Saha: Economics of Rural Bengal.

Percentage of cultivated area to total area in
Eastern Bengal and Assam

T A B L E I

<u>Assam</u>	<u>1921</u>	<u>% on culti- vable area</u>	<u>1921</u>	<u>% on total area</u>
	<u>% on total area</u>		<u>Eastern Bengal</u>	
	<u>Cultivable</u>	<u>Net Cultivated</u>		<u>Cultivated</u>
Goalpara	88	27	Rajshahi	74.90
Kamrup	52	46	Jessore	76.97
Darrang	72	25	Faridpur	78.26
Nowgong	92	14	Mymensigh	66.77
Lakhipur	86	14	Dacca	74.45
Cachar plain	53	32	Tippera	80.10
Sylhet	87	83		
Garo Hills	89	5		
K.J. Hills	63	7		

Source: Census of India 1911¹
Assam Part I Report Vol.III

Source: Census of India 1921
Vol.V Bengal Part I
Report

Percentage of dependents to Agricultural Population

T A B L E II

<u>1901</u>				
A	(Rent-payers { Actual worker }	B	(Agricultural labourers (total) { Actual workers }	
<u>Eastern Bengal</u>	<u>% of Dependents to total A</u>	<u>Dependents % on B</u>	<u>Assam</u>	<u>Dependents % on agri. population</u>
Rangpur	207.21	102.91	Cachar plain	51.6
Bogra	226.27	139.89	Sylhet	63.9
Pabna	338.42	99.86	Goalpara	58.0
Dacca	242.51	94.74	Kamrup	49.8
Faridpur	245.81	129.78	Darrang	36.2
Mymensigh	217.82	115.92	Nowgong	39.9
Tippera	232.52	116.29	Sibsagar	36.8
Rajshahi	202.37	117.44	Lakhipur ^N	33.8
Dinajpur	195.50	116.97	W. Cachar	46.8
Khulna	212.96	204.03	K.J. Hills	40.2
Jessore	215.77	100.94	Garo Hills	42.5

Source: Census of India 1901 Vol. VIA.

C H A P T E R III

PUSH AND PULL FACTORS OF MIGRATION

There are several factors which had driven the poor peasant class of Eastern Bengal districts to the Assam valley. The causes that pushed the people from their homeland to a unknown place are manyfolded, and it can be well-understood that if the causes were not so strong they would not have left their native home. The question arises that what can be the causes of that emigration? It is revealed from the different sources that pressure on land is the main cause leading to several other factors which were responsible for the migration of cultivators from Eastern Bengal.

The districts from which the migration mainly took place are - Mymensingh, Rangpur, Tippera and a small number from Dacca. Let us study the "push" factors in those districts.

Push-Factors in Areas of out-migration:

As a whole the peasant class of Eastern Bengal are poor and have a small agricultural holding. Both Mymensingh and Rangpur have almost the same kinds of push factors. The exception lies only with Dacca. It is found that some jobless literate persons left the place in search of any job opportunity; and hence they migrated to Assam and engaged in some clerical jobs or business etc. (1)

Conditions of the peasant class:-

The peasant class of Eastern Bengal was always a deprived and exploited class and as a consequence living in a poor economic conditions. There are several reasons for the poor economic conditions of the Eastern

(1) Census of India 1921.

Bengal peasant. Among the causes; land systems, size of the holding, relationship between landlord and cultivators, oppression by Zamindars, natural calamities etc. are important reasons.

The land system of Bengal which was existed in the late nineteenth century was mainly the result of land legislation under British administration. The well-known permanent-settlement of Lord Cornwallis declared the Zamindars' hereditary proprietors of land on a perpetually fixed land revenue with absolute rights of transfer by means of the sale, command or otherwise. Thus the revenue to be paid by the Zamindars to the government was fixed in perpetuity and their rights over their estates were established. But the permanent settlement did not safe-guard the interests of the raiyat. The regulation did not define any specific way the relation that was to exist between the Zamindars and the tenants, and no provision was made to protect the rights and privileges of the tenant class as against the Zamindars.

When the land revenue payable by the Zamindar to the State was permanently fixed, it was possible for them to grant in his turn, permanent lease of his estate to another people on a similarly fixed but higher rent. This would bring the Zamindar not only a net annual income after meeting the State demand for revenue, but also a large sum as the price of the interest created and transferred by him at the time of the execution of the new lease. The tenure-holder, who thus received the estate, would, in turn, transfer it to another man on a cash premium, and also on an annual rent which would leave him a surplus after meeting his own obligations to the Zamindar. In this way, as the process of sub-

infederation was continued, the chain of middle man became longer, and as each successive grade of intermediate tenure holder increased, the burden, which ultimately fell on raiyat, became heavier.

As the burden of raiyats increased, the cultivators work under him also suffer for that, the system of "Barga" which prevails almost all over Eastern Bengal from the time of permanent settlement till today under this "Barga" system, the produce is divided between the landlord and the tenants. Normally it is divided equally between the two parties, but under above circumstances the share of the cultivators may come down to one-third of the gross produce.

The small size of the agricultural holdings in Eastern Bengal has been brought about by a gradual process of sub-division. It is mainly the result of two causes - the growth of Population and the law of inheritance. When a raiyat dies, his holding is sub-divided amongst his heirs. In this way, with the advent of each successive generation, the holdings have been sub-divided and have gradually diminished in size. In this gradual process of sub-division of land amongst the growing population, those members of the agricultural community, whose holdings are not sufficiently large to provide a living, can neither solely depend on agriculture, nor freely seek other occupations for their livelihood. Thus, we find that though large numbers of the agricultural classes in Eastern Bengal are living in a very miserable condition on account of the insufficiency of the land they possess, very few of them are willing to go to industrial centres to work in factories.

Apart from the smallness of the agricultural holding, there is fragmentation of holdings which has an evil effect on cultivators. The chief explanation of this fragmentation lies in the manner in which a holding is normally sub-divided amongst the heirs of a deceased person. Ordinarily, a holding consists of a number of plots, each with its own advantages and disadvantages as regard situation and productivity, and every one of the heirs is given a share in each of such plots. Thus if a raiyat has three fields of approximately the same size but of different advantages, and if he has three sons, the holding may be sub-divided in such a way as to give one field to each of the sons. In this case, if each son takes a share in each plot, the holding which originally consisted of three plots would be split up into nine fragments of smaller size. Fragmentation is also caused by the transfer of land from one holder to another by means of purchase and sale. Again, when a raiyat dies without any direct heirs, his holding is likely to be divided amongst a large number of distant relatives, thus giving rise to a large number of fragments.

The evils of fragmentation are manyfolded, Firstly, it involves the waste of cultivable land in the form of boundaries for demarcating one field from another. Secondly when the fragments are scattered over a wide area, the cost of carrying manure and other things to the different plots and also that of bringing to the harvest from them to the cultivators house, becomes heavy. Another shortcoming of fragmentation is the likelihood of friction between owners of adjoining plots. Lastly, fragmentation tends to check permanent improvement of land.

Although the agriculture, as it is carried on in Eastern Bengal, does not involve the application of much capital, it is, nonetheless, true that the cultivator is frequently in need of financial assistance for meeting the expenses that have to be incurred for the ~~that~~ cultivation of his land. Besides, this, the farmer in Bengal is often driven to the necessity of borrowing for the maintenance of his family and also for various other reasons. In the jute districts of Eastern Bengal the cultivators have to borrow in a year in which the price of jute is abnormally low.

The village money-lender or 'Mahajan' was the sole source of agricultural credit in Eastern Bengal as well as in the whole of Bengal until the advent of co-operative agricultural societies in the beginning of this century.

The agriculturists of Bengal were greatly exploited by the money-lenders. The high rate of interest at which the borrowers have to contract their loans is one of the causes of the chronic agricultural indebtedness in Bengal. Sometimes it becomes impossible for the cultivator to free himself from the burden of debt. Owing to the accumulation of interests. In this manner the debt goes on increasing, and successive bonds are executed until the 'Mahajan' thinks that it is no longer safe to continue the policy⁽¹⁾. The money-lender then institutes a suit for the realization of the loan, and brings the holdings of the borrower to sale in execution of the Court's decree. Often he himself purchases it and makes a settlement with the former occupant either on a fixed produce rent or on the Barga system.

In this way a high percentage of peasants of Eastern Bengal who had small pieces of land of their own became landless agricultural labourers.

(1) Survey and Settlement Report of Dacca.

Another important phenomenon of one's being landless is the natural calamities. Eastern Bengal is a region with numerous rivers. In several cases many people become absolutely landless due to the destructive action of the river, that means their land being washed away by the rivers.

A sample survey of 50 families was carried out* in the district of Mymensingh, who had migrated to Assam valley during the period 1890-1920. It is revealed from the study that out-of 50 families 20 families became landless and migrated to Assam because of their land being washed away by rivers.

Other 30 families migrated due to poverty. Of them 13 were landless from the beginning. 10 families were from the fisherman class and they were migrated for some better opportunity. 7 families left their native land because they had small pieces of land and being unable to pay the revenue. Hence their land were confiscated by the Zamindar. It was found that nearly all the families moved with their entire family.

All the informations about the 50 families were taken from the near and distant relatives of the family concerned. The year of migration and the amount of land which they had are approximate according to the relatives.

Finally, it can be said that the economic conditions of the peasant class of Eastern Bengal were not at all good and that induced them to migrate from their native land.

✓ Pull factors in Areas of in-migration

The receiving area - Assam has an environmental conditions which is almost similar to Eastern Bengal so there was a psychological desire

* By means of personal field work.

to go and settle in such a place where one gets the same climatic as well as the environmental conditions. Hence, the Eastern Bengal settlers very comfortably accommodate themselves in Assam valley. The river valley, the fertile soil, evenly distributed rainfall, all these factors provided almost similar conditions as Eastern Bengal. So there were no hesitation in this respect from the part of the emigrants of Eastern Bengal to settle in Assam. |

| Another important factor which played the most vital role regarding the pull factors, is the availability of vast tract of fertile cultivable land. There is abundance of cultivable waste lands which can be very easily used for cultivation. This advantage was taken by the new settlers and people started coming to Assam in streams flowing towards a desirable destination. /

A migration stream is always influenced by the distance from the origin to destination. Because as distance increases the obstacles in between the two places also increased and hence the volume of the migration stream tends to decrease. Here obstacles indicates the facility of communication - money which to be spent for the journey, time, idea about the place etc. All these intervening obstacles act as disadvantages to go to a far of place. If the migrants have to travel a short distance then all the above obstacles won't be very prominent. So it is obvious that gradual flow of migration diminishes as distance increases. In our case, the distance from Eastern Bengal to Assam is very short as they are near and contiguous to Eastern Bengal. So the Eastern Bengal settlers did not face much difficulties to travel towards Assam.

Regarding communication, with the opening of steamer service in 1846 from Eastern Bengal to Assam provided a good opportunity to the emigrants from Eastern Bengal.

Besides all these advantages another important fact is that the pressure of the population in Assam was very low ⁽¹⁾ during the period of our study. The revenue demand was also very low, and is levied in a manner most convenient to the cultivators. No landlord intervened between the government and the actual tillers of the soil, and as a rule the latter class was not deeply in debt. Labour is in great demand on the tea-gardens at high rates of wages; with all these natural advantages the cultivators of Assam cannot otherwise than prosper. They raise nearly every article of domestic consumption from their own fields, and live in ease and independence. But according to Hunter they are not industrious race. They produce no great surplus for export; and do not even care to grow more rice than is sufficient for their own families. So Assam continued to import rice and other grain in order to feed the labouring population employed on the tea-gardens.

According to the returns for 1880-81 out of a total area of 30,151 sq. miles in the Brahmaputra valleys, only 6,843 or 22.6% were cultivated while 52 per cent were waste but cultivable. As the pressure on Eastern Bengal soil being to some extent relieved by the migration. This can be considered as a desirable condition which had been taken place.

It was found that in the year 1928-29, the settled area of the province of Assam increased by 1,06,716 acres to a total of 15,554.05 sq. miles and the revenue rose from Rs.10,260,348 to Rs.10,829,019. The increase in area

(1.) W.W. Hunter: Imperial Gazetteer of India Vol. II.

is for the most part due to the Assam valley where 83,424 sq. miles were newly occupied, the greater part being taken up by the muslim immigrants.⁽¹¹⁾ The rise in revenue is likewise mainly due to the Assam valley, the larger extension of cultivation by immigrants and others and the introduction of new resettlement rates in the Barpeta sub-division being chiefly responsible.

From the following ^{table} it will be evident that with the increase of immigrants from Eastern Bengal, the area under jute also increased in different districts of Assam. In Kamrup, Darrang and Nowgong where jute cultivation was almost absent before 1901, but the new cultivators had started cultivating jute in those districts also:

T A B L E III

<u>Districts</u>	<u>Area under Jute</u>			Percentage on total cropped area
	<u>1901</u>	<u>1911</u>	<u>1921</u>	
Goalpara	.67	6.0	8.5	
Kamrup	-	0.9	1.2	
Darrang	-	0.3	1.9	
Nowgong	-	0.2	1.7	
Sylhet	-	1.4	0.6	

The above table No. III shows in each successive year the area under jute increased with the increase of immigrants except Sylhet. The soil and climatic conditions of Sylhet is found much more suitable for rice cultivation. It is found that in all other districts the area under rice did not increase at all. Only in case of Sylhet the area under rice increased by:

78.55	(1901)	} Percentage on total cropped area.
82.4	(1911)	
86.6	(1921)	

So it can be assumed that immigrants to Sylhet preferred to grow rice than jute.

It is found from the above study that both the 'push' and 'pull' factors were considerably strong in sending and receiving areas. The hardpressed farmers of Eastern Bengal found a good economic opportunity for themselves in the Assam valley. The increase in settled area in Assam, increase in the land revenue in Assam and the increase of area under jute all are caused by the migration of cultivators from Eastern Bengal.

C H A P T E R IV
PROCESS OF MIGRATION

The process of migration from Eastern Bengal to Assam has mainly two different dimensions. One is the (a) migration in time and another is (b) migration in space. In the temporal process of migration we will see how the process operate in time and how it changes its volume in course of time. In the spatial process the study will focus on the distance factor and will try to show the characteristics of the process with the increasing distance.

Temporal process:-

Migration of Eastern Bengal settlers to Assam had been started during the period between 1881 to 1891. Beginning from the junction of Jamuna there is a steady stream of migration up the course of the Assam valley. In the beginning the flow was not much vigorous. People started coming from Rangpur and Mymensingh. In 1891 majority of the people came from Rangpur, but after that in each successive Censuses we find that majority of the immigrants came from Mymensingh. The case of Rangpur is different from that of Mymensingh. In Rangpur people started coming from Bogra, Pabna and a larger number from Mymensingh, moreover Rangpur was a populous district. At one time for the large increase in population of Gaibanda sub-division in Rangpur was due to the influx from Mymensingh. Rangpur has a wide trade connection in tobacco and this can be attributed as an important cause for the immigration to Rangpur. Another cause was the destructive action of the river in Bogra and Pabna. Many people became landless, ~~and homeless~~ and seek shelter and livelihood in some other

place, so they migrated to Rangpur. In this course there was a pressure of population in Rangpur and hence the people started moving for better opportunity and finally settled in Assam valley.

In the case of Mymensigh district there was already a heavy pressure on the land and this tends to move the people from their native home. The following table shows the extent of migration from Eastern Bengal districts to different Assam districts:-

T A B L E IV

Immigrants from different Eastern Bengal
districts to Assam in 1891

(A) ✓

	<u>Tippera</u>	<u>Mymensigh</u>	<u>Dacca</u>	<u>Rangpur</u>
Cachar	415	116	775	11
Sylhet	10,819	12,603	4,547	28
Goalpara	39	2,609	1,176	22,788
Kamrup	12	294	331	557
Darrang	9	50	448	159
Nowgong	11	76	445	164
Sibsagar	5	82	392	41
Lakhimpur	13	32	485	17
K & J Hills	32	118	116	12
Garó Hills	2	1,814	178	3868

(B)

Percentage distribution to total from Eastern Bengal in each Assam district.

	<u>Tippera</u>	<u>Mymensigh</u>	<u>Dacca</u>	<u>Rangpur</u>	<u>Total</u>
Cachar	31.51	8.80	58.84	.83	100
Sylhet	38.64	45.01	16.24	.10	100
Goalpara	.14	9.80	4.41	85.63	100
Kamrup	1.00	24.62	27.72	46.64	100
Darrang	1.35	7.50	67.26	23.87	100
Nowgong	1.58	10.91	63.93	23.56	100
Lakhimpur	2.37	5.85	11.84	3.10	100
Sibsagar	.96	15.76	75.38	7.88	100
K & J Hills	11.51	42.44	41.72	4.31	100
Garro Hills	0.03	30.94	3.03	65.98	100

(C)

Percentage of immigrants to the total population

Cachar	0.10	0.03	0.20	0.00
Sylhet	0.50	0.58	0.21	0.00
Goalpara	0.00	0.57	0.25	5.03
Kamrup	0.00	0.04	0.05	0.08
Darrang	0.00	0.01	0.14	0.05
Nowgong	0.00	0.02	0.12	0.04
Sibsagar	0.00	0.01	0.08	0.00
Lakhimpur	0.00	0.01	0.19	0.00
K & J Hills	0.01	0.05	0.05	0.00
Garro Hills	0.00	1.49	0.14	3.18

The table shows that Rangpur contributed the highest number of immigrants to Assam in 1891, of which the largest percentage have gone to Goalpara i.e. 82% to the total emigrants from Rangpur had settled down in Goalpara. Nearly 14% went to Garo Hills and 2% in Kamrup. The rest 2% were scattered in other districts of Assam.

During the period 1881-1891, among the districts of Assam, Sylhet and Goalpara received the highest number of immigrants from Eastern Bengal. Sylhet and Goalpara had 28,000 and 26,000 immigrants respectively. In Sylhet majority of the people came from Mymensingh and Tippera. Goalpara received most of the immigrants from Rangpur. Though Rangpur has very fertile agricultural land but there had been a considerable spread of cultivation by the reclamation of waste and silted-up marshy lands and there was very little room for further extension. The progress of jute cultivation had been extraordinary, and to some extent this was at the expense of rice. Nearly 65% of the net cultivated area were twice cropped. Rice occupied 88% of the net cropped area. So from this it can be well-assumed that the pressure of Population in Rangpur was high.

Goalpara with a vast tract of cultivable fertile land with almost similar climatic condition as in Eastern Bengal attracted the emigrants from Rangpur to settle in Goalpara. Nearly 3,000 people from Mymensingh went to Goalpara. In the beginning of the phase people from Mymensingh just went to its contiguous district to Sylhet but gradually they moved farther in distance. Though Sylhet is a tea district but there was a considerable number of immigrants to Sylhet who had settled as cultivators. It was found that the Eastern Bengal settlers reclaimed many of the extensive low-lying basins which are locally known as 'haors'. So Sylhet

had two distinct types of immigrants i.e. the Garden coolies as well as the cultivators from Eastern Bengal.

Table IV shows that Tippera also sent a considerable number of emigrants to Sylhet. Tippera is a very densely populated district in Eastern Bengal with a density of 845 persons per sq. mile. Nearly 11,000 people went from Tippera and settled down in Sylhet. Most of them were cultivators. Nearly 400 people had gone to Cachar plain from Tippera. A very few people migrated from Tippera to other districts of Assam. The number varies from 39 to 2 in different districts.

Dacca had sent nearly 5,000 people to Sylhet. It is found that from Dacca a large number of males of the literate and educated class working elsewhere in clerical jobs or in business. The density of population in Dacca is far greater than elsewhere in Bengal. In the process, little land remained waste, and even village pastures being gradually absorbed. So there was a heavy pressure on the soil as well as on job opportunities for literate persons. So a considerable number of emigrants from Dacca had moved to Sylhet. Being a tea district, Sylhet was offering some opportunity in the tea industry as a clerk, or some other jobs. About a thousand people from Dacca went also to Goalpara. Goalpara is not a tea district and people went from Dacca either for the purpose of taking up land for cultivation or business purposes. Some 800 people went to Cachar plain and a somewhat evenly distributed emigrants from Dacca were found from Kamrup to Lakhimpur.

Cachar plain received 400 people from Tippera, 116 from Mymensingh and only 11 persons from Rangpur.

From the study of period 1881-to 1891 it is found that the migration process from Eastern Bengal districts to Assam started in the year 1891.

It is found that Rangpur had sent the highest number of immigrants to Assam among the Eastern Bengal districts and in Assam Sylhet received the highest number from Eastern Bengal.

Though Goalpara had received about 26,000 people altogether in 1891 but the percentage increase of total population of Goalpara in 1881-1891⁽¹⁾ was only 1.36 per cent. Due to the inter-district migration and prevalence of 'Kalazar' which had kept down the population of Goalpara so the increase was solely due to immigration.

Sylhet gained 9.4 per cent during the decade 1881-1891. This increase was due to both immigration and the increase in district born population. About 3.7 per cent was due to immigration from other provinces. It was found from the immigration Report that imported labour strength to the tea gardens in Sylhet was not much, because a large portion of the coolies being indigenous Sylhetians. So the immigrants were mainly from Eastern Bengal and other parts of Bengal who had come as coolies in tea gardens."Unfortunately details of the birth districts of the immigrants, Censused in 1881 were not available, and it is difficult to say what extent this immigration from adjacent Bengal districts for the cultivation purposes has increased!"(2)

In Kamrup, the prevalence of 'Kalazar' and unhealthy climate caused a considerable net decrease in the population. The actual rate of decrease was 3.1 per cent but due to inter-district migration (+ .65) and inter-provincial migration the net loss being reduced by 1.6 per cent.

(1) & (2) Census of India 1891 - Assam Reports.

To the total immigrants from Eastern Bengal to Kamrup the percentage share of different districts are as follows:

Rangpur	46 per cent
Mymensingh	25 per cent
Dacca	27 per cent
Tippera	1 per cent

But regarding the proportion of immigrants to the total population of Kamrup the percentage is very negligible. Only .1 per cent of population constitute as immigrants from Eastern Bengal.

In Darrang 67 per cent of the total immigrants to Darrang went from Dacca. The actual number of only 300 persons. These people went there in search of job and better opportunity. In fact Darrang is not very near to Dacca, so those who went there, must have had some knowledge about the opportunity and it is logical to conclude that illiterate cultivators would not have gone there for cultivation purposes leaving aside nearer fertile places like Goalpara, Sylhet, Cachar etc.

The percentage of Eastern Bengal settlers constitutes only 0.20 per cent to the total population of Darrang.

In Nowgong the total increase of population in the period 1881-1891 amounts to 10.81 per cent and out of that 2.45 per cent was due to immigration from other provinces. Eastern Bengal immigrants represents .18 per cent of the total population in Nowgong.

Sibsagar and Lakhimpur are the main tea-districts in Assam. Owing to the rapid expansion of tea-industry, Lakhimpur and Sibsa-

received large number of immigrants from other provinces. Immigrants came mostly as garden coolies and also partly due to the demand for labour at the coal mine and for the railways. A very few people went to Sibsagar and Lakhimpur from Eastern Bengal and nearly all of them went from Dacca. It is obvious that those people did not go there, neither for cultivation purposes nor for garden activities. This is because the traditional Bengali cultivators are very much orthodox to maintain their livelihood as cultivators, and it is definite that people from Dacca did not go all the way from Dacca to Lakhimpur or Sibsagar for cultivation purposes. So it is supposed that some jobless persons went for seeking opportunity either in the tea garden or in the railway construction work.

Regarding the Hill districts of Khasi-Jaintia and Garo hills, a very small number of Eastern Bengal people went there to work. Only .11 per cent of the total population of Khasi-Jaintia were from Eastern, Bengal and most of them were from Mymensingh and Dacca. Quite a few number of Eastern Bengal people settled in the plain area of Garo Hills; They were mainly from Mymensingh and Rangpur. These two districts are bordering the Garo Hills and nearly 5 per cent of the total population of Garo Hills were constituted by these people.

OUT MIGRANTS FROM MYMENSINGH TO ASSAM 1891

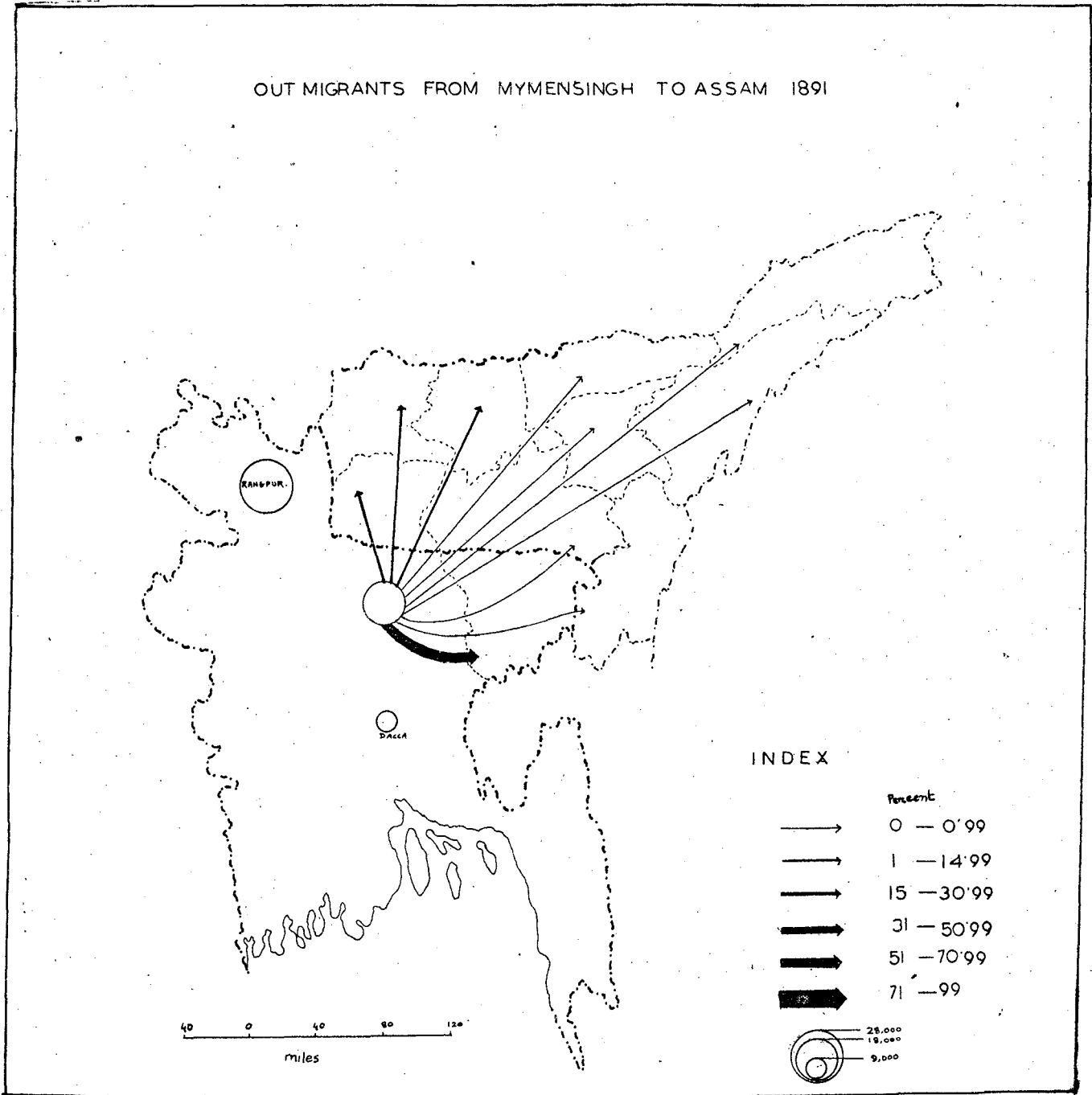


Fig- 2

OUT MIGRANTS FROM DACCA - TO ASSAM 1891

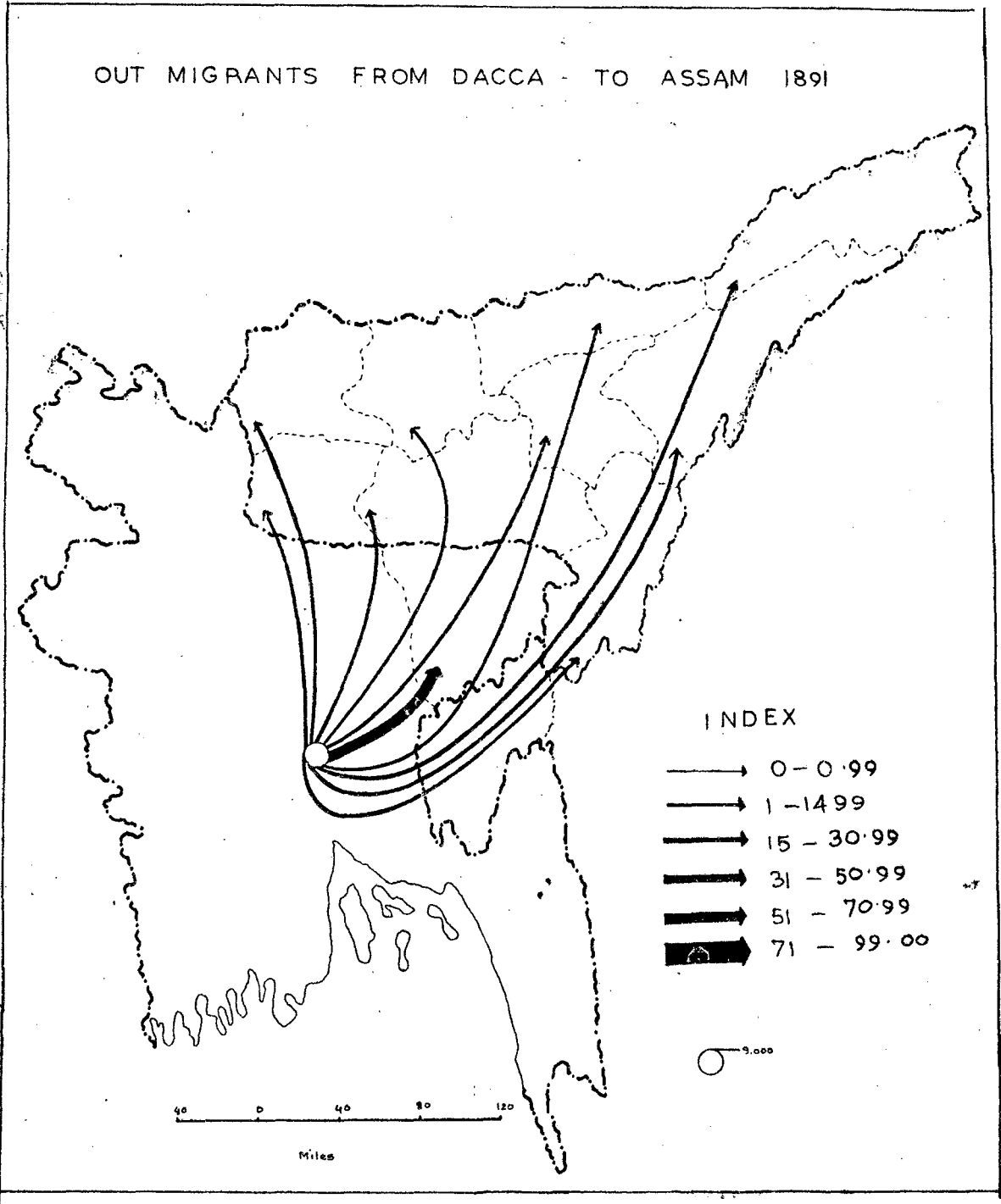


Fig - 3

OUT MIGRANTS FROM RANGPUR TO ASSAM - 1891

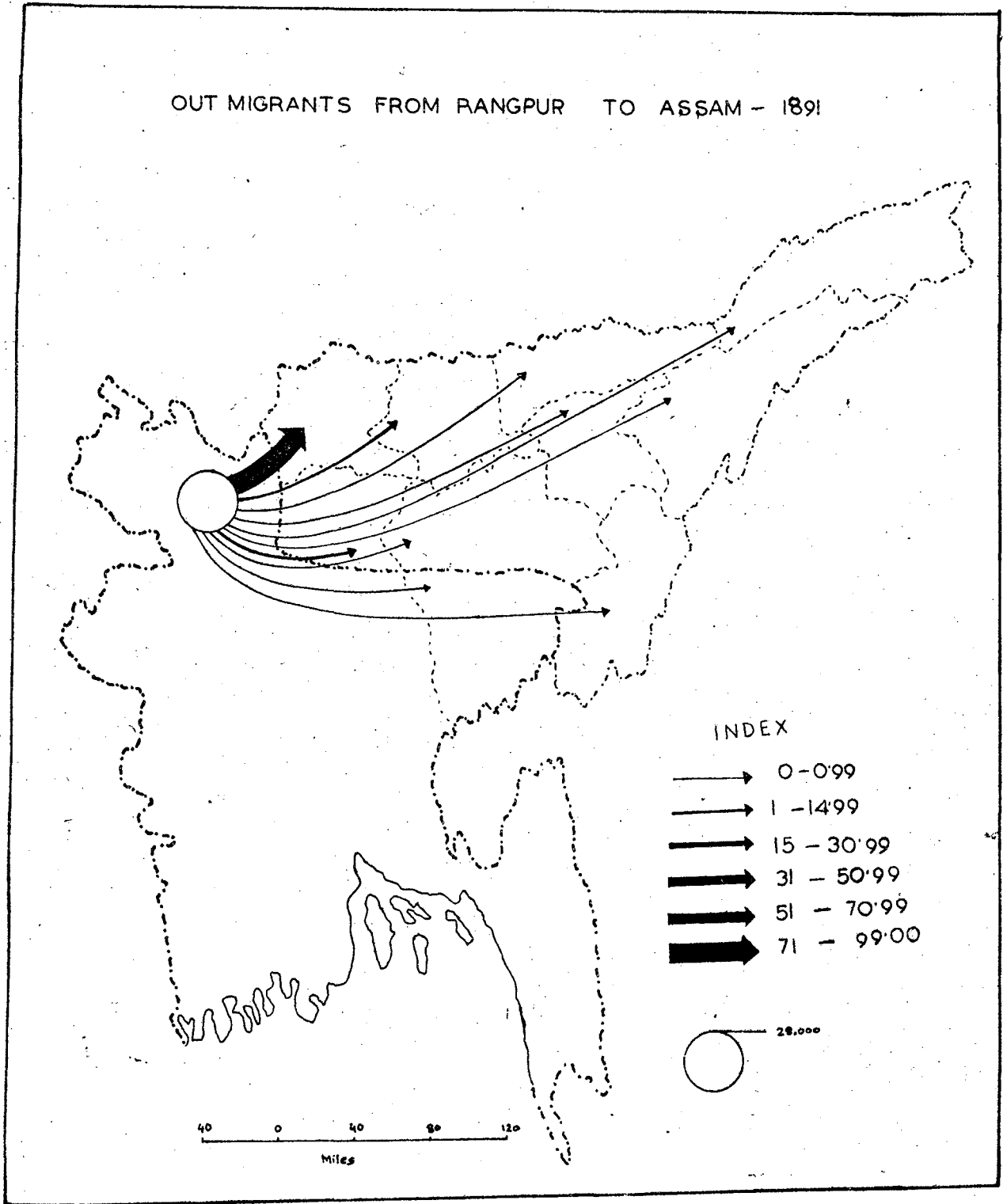


Fig - 4

OUT MIGRANTS FROM TIPPERA TO ASSAM 1891

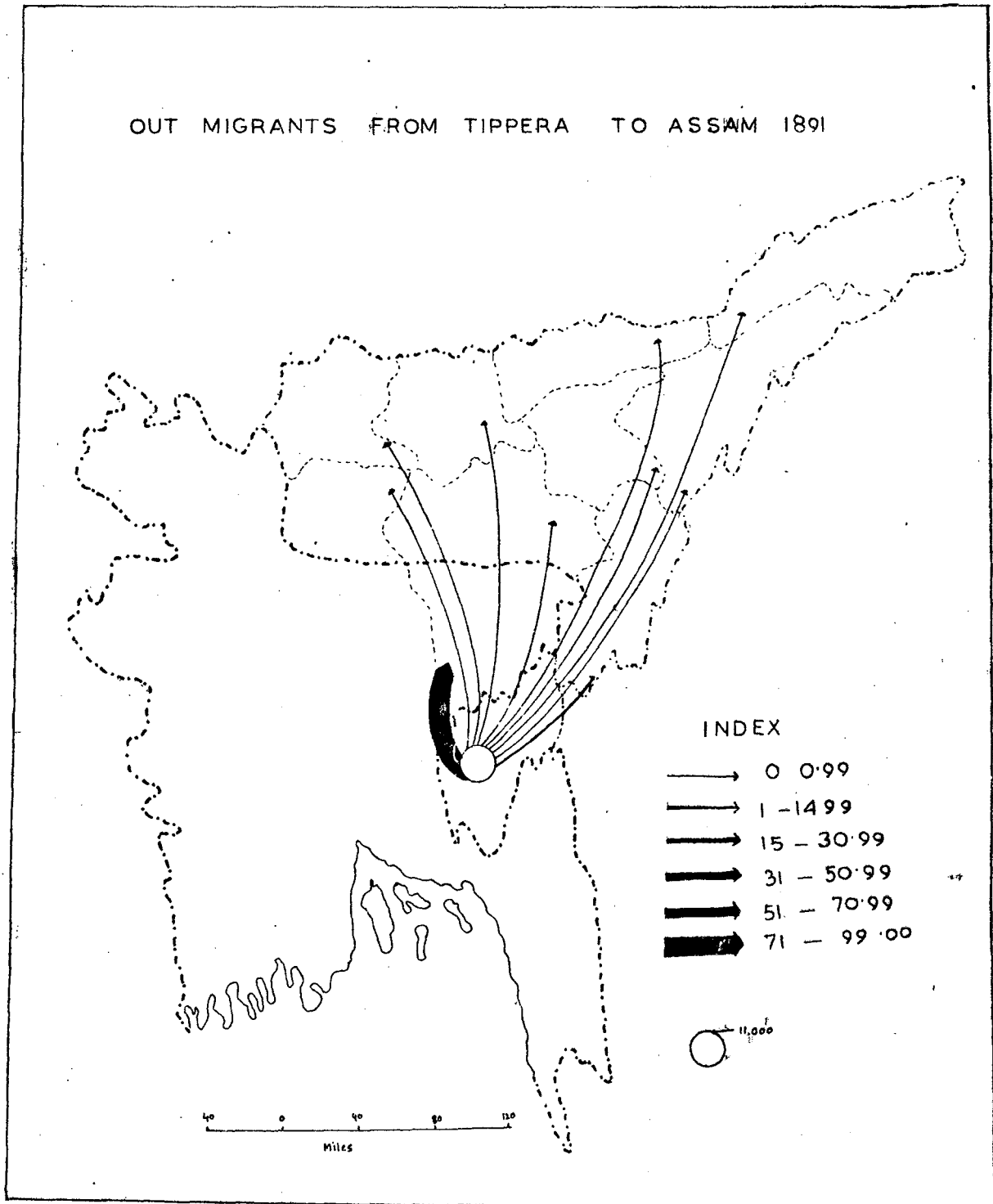


Fig- 5

T A B L E V

Percentage of out-migrants from each districts of Eastern Bengal (Percentage to the total emigrants from each districts).

	<u>1891</u>										
	Cachar	Sylhet	Goal-para	Kamrup	Darrang	Nowgong	Sib-sagar	Lakhim-pur	Garo Hills	K.&I Hills	Total
Mymensingh	.65	70.82	14.66	1.65	.28	.42	.46	.17	10.19	.66	100
Dacca	8.71	51.13	13.22	3.72	5.03	5.00	4.40	5.45	2.00	1.30	100
Rangpur	.03	.10	82.43	2.01	.57	.59	.14	.06	13.98	.04	100
Tippera	3.65	95.26	.34	.10	.07	.09	.04	.11	.01	.28	100

Source: Census of India - Assam 1891
Vol. II Tables.

Period 1891-1901

Now let us compare the situation of 1901 with 1891. During the decade 1891-1901 the influx of immigrants from Eastern Bengal district formed the subject of question and unfavourable comment in the legislative council by members representing certain constituencies of Assam valley. The great majority of those immigrants were cultivators, who had crossed the frontier in search of land, ~~majority~~ majority of them found in Sylhet and Goalpara.

In 1901 Darrang, Sibsagar and Lakhimpur - the known tea-districts, had only 161 persons from Rangpur whereas 15,611 persons born in Rangpur and censused in Goalpara. In these three tea districts 69,323 persons

censused who were born in Lohardaga, whereas in Goalpara only 284 immigrants from this district were found. It is obvious that we shall not be far wrong if we assume that the natives of Lohardaga were garden coolies and natives of Rangpur were cultivators. By applying this principle, it appeared that immigrants from Chhotanagpur, Burdwan, Patna, Bhagalpur and Orissa came to tea-gardens as coolies. While those from Mymensingh, Rangpur, Dacca, Tippera were cultivators, clerks and traders. The former class numbered 83 per cent of the whole, while the latter only 16 per cent.

The gross increase in Assam during the last ten years was 11.8 per cent leaving out the lasai Hills and Manipur, for which figures for 1891 are not available. There was an increase of 5.3 per cent in the Surma valley, 5.7 per cent in Brahmaputra valley and 11 per cent in Assam valley. A considerable portion of the increase in the Hills is, however, due to the presence of over 20,000 persons in the north Cachar sub-division who were engaged on the construction of the Assam-Bengal Railway line and excluding them the rate of increase comes to only 6.5 per cent.

Let us take up each of the districts in Assam in detail:-

Cachar:-

It was calculated that 23 per cent of the population of Cachar plain in 1901 were born outside the province, the majority of them were coolies, and about three fifths of the total came from the neighbouring province of Bengal, Manbhum, Hazaribagh, Bankura and Ranchi. From Eastern Bengal, Cachar received about a thousand of immigrants from Dacca and nearly 500 from Tippera. Other Eastern Bengal districts have a very negligible share

in accounting immigrants to Cachar. To the total population of Cachar of Eastern Bengal contributed only .43 per cent/which Dacca is represented by .30 per cent, Mymensingh .03 per cent and Tippera .10 per cent, all of them enumerated in Cachar plain and most of them came for cultivation purposes. In comparison to 1891, the rate of increase of immigrants from Eastern Bengal is very insignificant. It was .33 per cent to the total population in 1891, where in 1901 it was found to be .43 per cent. The .10 per cent increase was due to the influx of from Dacca.

		Tippera		Mymensingh		Rangpur		Dacca		
		1891	1901	1891	1901	1891	1901	1891	1901	
Cachar	(	31.51	23.45	8.80	7.65	.83	.74	58.84	62.14	) Percentage to (total immigrants
	(0.01	0.10	0.03	0.03	0.00	0.00	.20	.30		) Percentage on (total population

Sylhet:-

The total population of Sylhet has increased by 4 per cent during the last ten years. The large portions of the increase was due to immigration from other provinces, in which Eastern Bengal districts contributed only .15 per cent of increase. It was found that in 1901 the percentage of Eastern Bengal settlers, was 1.44 to the total population of that year, and the increase from previous Census was only .15 per cent. In both the years Mymensingh and Tippera contributed the major portion. To the total immigrants received by Sylhet from Eastern Bengal, the percentage share of

T A A B L E VI

Immigrants from different Eastern Bengal
districts to Assam in 1901

(A)

	<u>Tippera</u>	<u>Mymensigh</u>	<u>Dacca</u>	<u>Rangpur</u>
Cachar	472	154	1,371	15
Sylhet	11,690	15,289	5,428	73
Goalpara	40	2,402	1,409	15,611
Kamrup	33	226	570	139
Darrang	30	192	915	108
Nowgong	17	652	666	88
Sibsagar	24	115	866	26
Lakhimpur	58	62	998	27
K.J. Hills	30	76	157	11
Garó Hills	7	2,857	54	1,204

(B)

Percentage distribution to total from
Eastern Bengal in each Assam district.

	<u>Tippera</u>	<u>Mymensingh</u>	<u>Dacca</u>	<u>Rangpur</u>	<u>Total</u>
Cachar	23.45	7.65	68.14	.74	100
Sylhet	35.99	47.07	16.71	.22	100
Goalpara	.20	12.34	7.23	80.21	100
Kamrup	3.40	23.34	58.88	14.35	100
Darrang	2.40	15.42	73.49	8.67	100
Nowgong	1.19	45.82	46.80	6.18	100
Sibsagar	2.33	11.15	85.94	2.52	100
Kakhimpur	5.07	5.41	87.16	2.36	100
K.J. Hills	10.95	27.74	57.30	4.01	100
Garro Hills	.17	69.36	1.31	29.21	100

(C)

Percentage of immigrants to the total
population of the district

Cachar	0.10	0.03	0.30	0.00
Sylhet	0.52	0.68	0.24	0.00
Goalpara	0.00	0.51	0.30	3.37
Kamrup	0.00	0.03	0.09	0.02
Darrang	0.00	0.05	0.27	0.03
Nowgong	0.00	0.24	0.25	0.00
Sibsagar	0.00	0.01	0.14	0.00
Lakhimpur	0.01	0.01	0.26	0.00
K.J. Hills	0.01	0.03	0.07	0.00
Garro Hills	0.00	2.06	0.04	0.87

each Eastern Bengal district are as follows: (1891-1901)

		Tippera		Mymensingh		Rangpur		Dacca		
		1891	1901	1891	1901	1891	1901	1891	1901	
Sylhet	{	38.64	35.99	45.01	47.07	.10	.22	16.24	16.71	Percentage on total immigrants
	{	.50	.52	.58	.68	.00	.00	.21	.24	Percentage on total population

It shows that in all the cases the increase is very little, and the highest share is from Mymensingh, next is Tippera and Dacca. So the study concluded that the total 2 percent of increase from other provinces in the decade 1891-901, .15 per cent is from adjacent districts of Eastern Bengal, and that of .15 per cent people were immigrants as cultivators and the rest were garden coolies.

Goalpara:-

The increase in the total population of Goalpara is very low in the decade 1891 to 1901. There was a net loss to Goalpara of 7,293 persons from inter-district migration within the province. A considerable number of persons crossed the border into the plains of the Garo Hills. 'Kalazar' is said to have been most prevalent at the foot of the Garo Hills, and that may have had something to do with the decrease in Goalpara. Moreover, the tea industry, which is the principal cause of immigration to other districts of Assam is of no importance in Goalpara and therefore, there was no immigration of garden coolies to Goalpara. But situated as it is on the

confines of the province, it received a considerable number of foreigners and 9 per cent of the population censused in 1901 were born outside Assam. Probably the most important event in the province since 1881 was the invasion of a vast horde of land-hungry Bengali immigrants from the districts of Eastern Bengal and particularly from Mymensingh and Rangpur. In 1901, 22,025 persons were enumerated in Assam who had born in Mymensingh and of those only 2,402 were found in Goalpara. The total from Mymensingh which received by different Assam districts in which Goalpara shared only 11 per cent.

The total immigrants to Goalpara from Eastern Bengal, were given as the percentage share of each Eastern Bengal districts in the decade 1891-1901 as follows:-

T B B L E B

		Tippera		Mymensingh		Rangpur		Dacca		
		1891	1901	1891	1901	1891	1901	1891	1901	
Goalpara	{	.14	.20	9.80	12.34	85.63	80.21	4.41	7.23	Percentage on total immigrants
		0.00	0.00	0.57	0.51	5.03	3.37	0.25	0.30	Percentage on total population

It shows that Goalpara received the highest percentage from Rangpur district and Rangpur contributed 80 per cent to the total emigrants went to Goalpara from Eastern Bengal. Next comes Mymensingh and then Dacca. There was a net increase of 2.50 per cent of the immigrants from Mymensingh and nearly 3 per cent from Dacca. Goalpara is purely an agricultural district and cultivators of Eastern Bengal attracted only by the vast tract of

uncultivated fertile land, and it shows by the increasing number of Eastern Bengal immigrants in each successive censues.

Kamrup:-

The population of Kamrup showed a decrease during the decade 1891-1901. The prevalence of 'Kazazar' had kept down the population of Kamrup. It was shown that there was a net decrease of .7 per cent during the decade 1891-1901. Earthquake of 1891 was one of the important causes of decrease. It was a severe earthquake which effected the levels of the country. Nearly all buildings in Gauhati were wrecked, and roads and bridges were destroyed. Large tracts of fertile land were rendered unfit for cultivation. After the earthquake, the flood of the Brahmaputra were of exceptional severity, and agriculture received a serious set back. In consequence there had been a considerable volume of migration from the district. The proportion of immigrants is lower in Kamrup than any other districts in the plains of Assam. In 1901 foreigners formed less than 3 per cent of the total population in which Eastern Bengal contributed only .14 per cent as compared to .17 per cent in 1891. So there was a slight fall in the proportion of immigrants from Bengal This is presumably due to the earthquake.

T A B L E C

		Tippera		Mymensingh		Rangpur		Dacca		
		1891	1901	1891	1901	1891	1901	1891	1901	
Kamrup	{	1.00	3.40	24.64	23.34	46.64	14.35	27.72	58.88	Percentage on total immigrants
		0.00	0.00	.04	.03	.08	.02	.05	.09	Percentage on total population

The table shows that in all the cases the percentage of immigrants had fallen down. The census also shows that the indigenous population of Kamrup also decreased by .7 per cent in the decade 1891-1901. This is due to the black fever or 'Kalazar' epidemic coupled with the greatest natural calamity in the history of Assam i.e. the earthquake of 1897. In fact after the devastation occurred by the earthquake, the local people started migrating to other districts and the flow of immigrants also became less. Only in the case of Dacca the number of immigrants increased slightly. In the year 1891, Kamrup received the highest percentage from Rangpur, and in 1901 Dacca contributed the major portion of the immigrants.

Darrang:

Darrang shows an increase of nearly 10 per cent during the decade. Though there had been a satisfactory increase in the total population of the district, it is mostly due to the increase in immigrants from other provinces. The migrants from ^{other} provinces are for the most part coolies recruited for the tea gardens of Tezpur and Bishnath. The immigrants from Eastern Bengal districts increased by .15 per cent to the total population during the decade. In 1901 the percentage of immigrants from different Eastern Bengal districts is .35 per cent to the total population, in which Dacca contributed .27 per cent, Mymensingh .05 per cent and Rangpur .03 per cent.

T A B L E D

		Tippera		Mymensingh		Rangpur		Dacca		
		1891	1901	1891	1901	1891	1901	1891	1901	
Darrang	(	1.35	2.40	7.50	15.42	23.87	8.67	67.26	73.49	)Percentage to total immigrants
)									
	(	0.00	0.00	0.01	0.05	0.05	0.03	0.14	0.27	)Percentage to total population
)									

The table shows that in both the years Dacca contributed the major portion of immigrants to Darrang. In all the cases the number had increased slightly except in Rangpur where the percentage had decrease by .2 per cent. It seems that cultivators from Mymensingh and Rangpur did not go to Darrang. Only some professionals and traders from Dacca went to Darrang.

Nowgong:-

The population of Nowgong decreased by .24 per cent during the decade 1891-1901. This being due to high mortality among the indigenous population, coupled with an increase in emigration, and a decrease in immigration from other districts. In 1901, the settlers of Eastern Bengal formed about .49 per cent to the total population of the district. It is stated in the Assam District Gazetteer, that the flow of Eastern Bengal settlers had been much greater in Nowgong than any other district except Goalpara, and according to the Census of India (1931) Nowgong is the next best favoured district after Goalpara by the settlers of Eastern Bengal. In 1901, out of the total immigrants from Eastern Bengal to Nowgong, 50 per cent were from Mymensingh and rest 50 per cent were from Dacca. Besides

this Nowgong had few thousand immigrants from the crowded and flooded parts of the Surma valley. There had been an insignificant increase in the number of immigrants to tea-gardens, and ultimately there had been a decrease in the total population.

T A B L E E

		Tippera		Mymensingh		Rangpur		Dacca		
		1891	1901	1891	1901	1891	1901	1891	1901	
Nowgong	(	1.58	1.19	10.91	45.82	23.58	6.18	63.93	46.80	) Percentage to total immigrants
	{	0.00	0.00	0.02	0.24	0.04	0.00	0.12	0.25	) Percentage to total population

Sibsagar:-

It is one of the main tea growing districts of Assam. The population of Sibsaagar increased by 24.4 per cent. The number of persons born and enumerated in the district increased nearly 17 per cent and the rest of the increase is due to the increase in immigrants from other provinces. The immigrants from Eastern Bengal constitutes only .15 per cent to the total population of the district in 1901, of which Dacca shared almost the whole bulk i.e..14 per cent and only .01 per cent from Mymensingh. The total number came from Dacca and Mymensingh together was 980 persons, in which 866 persons from Dacca. As Sibsaagar is a tea producing district, the immigrants from other provinces came as garden coolies. The people from Eastern Bengal all came as professionals particularly clerks and traders.

T A B L E F

	Tippera		Mymensingh		Rangpur		Dacca		
	1891	1901	1891	1901	1891	1901	1891	1901	
Sibsagar	.69	2.33	15.76	11.15	2.88	2.52	75.38	85.94	Percentage on total immigrants
	0.00	0.00	0.01	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.08	0.14	Percentage on total population

Lakhimpur;-

The case of Lakhimpur is also the same as Sibsagar. This is also an important tea-producing area in Assam, and the persons born outside the province, and censused in Lakhimpur were mostly garden coolies. Eastern Bengal represented .28 per cent of the total population. Nearly all of them went from Dacca. Certainly they were not cultivators and went all the way from Dacca to Lakhimpur to take up land there. So obviously they went for business purposes or for any other kinds of jobs in the tea-garden.

T A B L E G

	Tippera		Mymensingh		Rangpur		Dacca		
	1891	1901	1891	1901	1891	1901	1891	1901	
Lakhim- pur.	2.37	5.07	15.85	5.41	3.10	2.36	22.84	87.16	Percentage on total immigrants
	0.00	0.00	0.01	0.01	0.00	0.00	0.19	0.26	percentage on total population

Garro Hills:-

There was an increase of 13.74 per cent to the total population in Garo Hills during the decade 1891-1901. The considerable increase being due to the increase in the number of persons born in the district and persons

born in Eastern Bengal and enumerated in Garo Hills was only to the extent of 2.97 per cent. This shows a decrease in the number of Eastern Bengal settlers as compared to 1891. It was 4.81 per cent in the year 1891. But the contrast is that in 1891 Rangpur contributed the major portion i.e. 3.18 per cent and in 1901 Mymensingh shared 2.06 per cent. In both the years cultivators from Rangpur and Mymensingh just crossed the border and settled down in the plains of Garo Hills.

T A B B L E U

		Tippera		Mymensingh		Rangpur		Dacca		
		1891	1901	1891	1901	1891	1901	1891	1901	
Garo Hills	{	0.03	0.17	30.94	69.36	65.98	29.21	3.03	1.31	Percentage on total immigrants
	{	0.00	0.00	1.49	2.06	3.18	0.87	0.14	0.04	Percentage on total population

The above study of the decade 1891-1901 of all the Assam districts has shown that the emigrants from Eastern Bengal particularly cultivators from Mymensingh and Rangpur did not proceed further up the valley from Goalpara, very insignificant number of persons were found in other districts of Assam from Eastern Bengal.

T A B L E VII

Percentage of out-migrants from each Eastern Bengal Districts (Percentage to the total Emigrants from each districts)

	Cachar	Sylhet	Goal- Para	Kamrup	Nowgong	Sib- sagar	Lakim- pur	Garo Hills	K.J. Hills	Darrang	Total
Mymensingh	.69	69.41	10.90	1.02	2.96	.52	.28	12.97	.34	.87	100
Dacca	11.02	43.65	11.33	4.58	5.35	6.96	9.02	.43	1.26	7.35	100
Rangpur	.08	.42	90.22	.80	.50	.15	.15	6.95	.06	.62	100
Tippera	3.80	94.26	.32	.26	.13	.19	.46	.05	.24	.24	100

OUT MIGRANTS FROM MYMENSINGH TO ASSAM - 1901

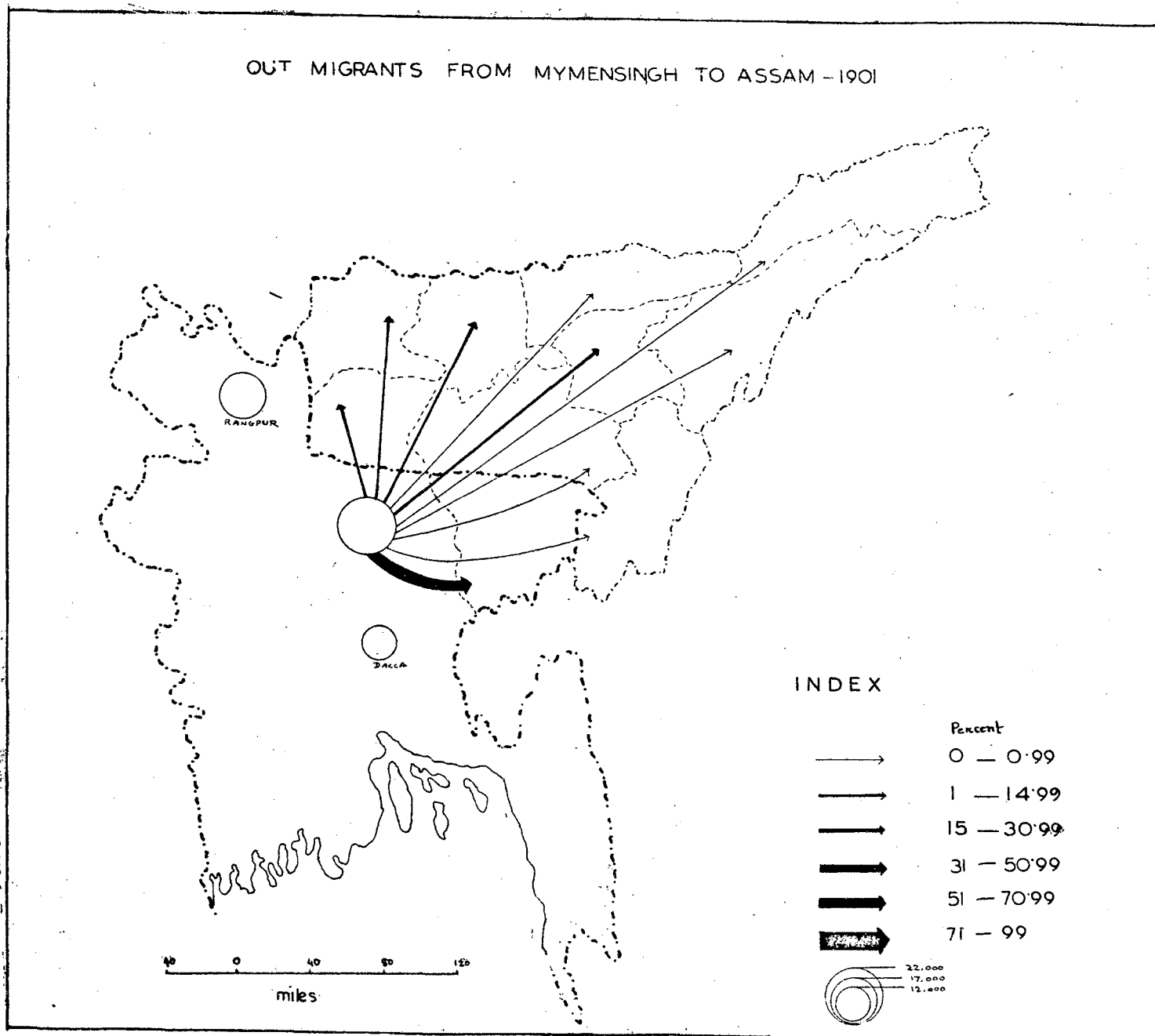


Fig-6

OUT MIGRANTS FROM DACCA TO ASSAM 1901

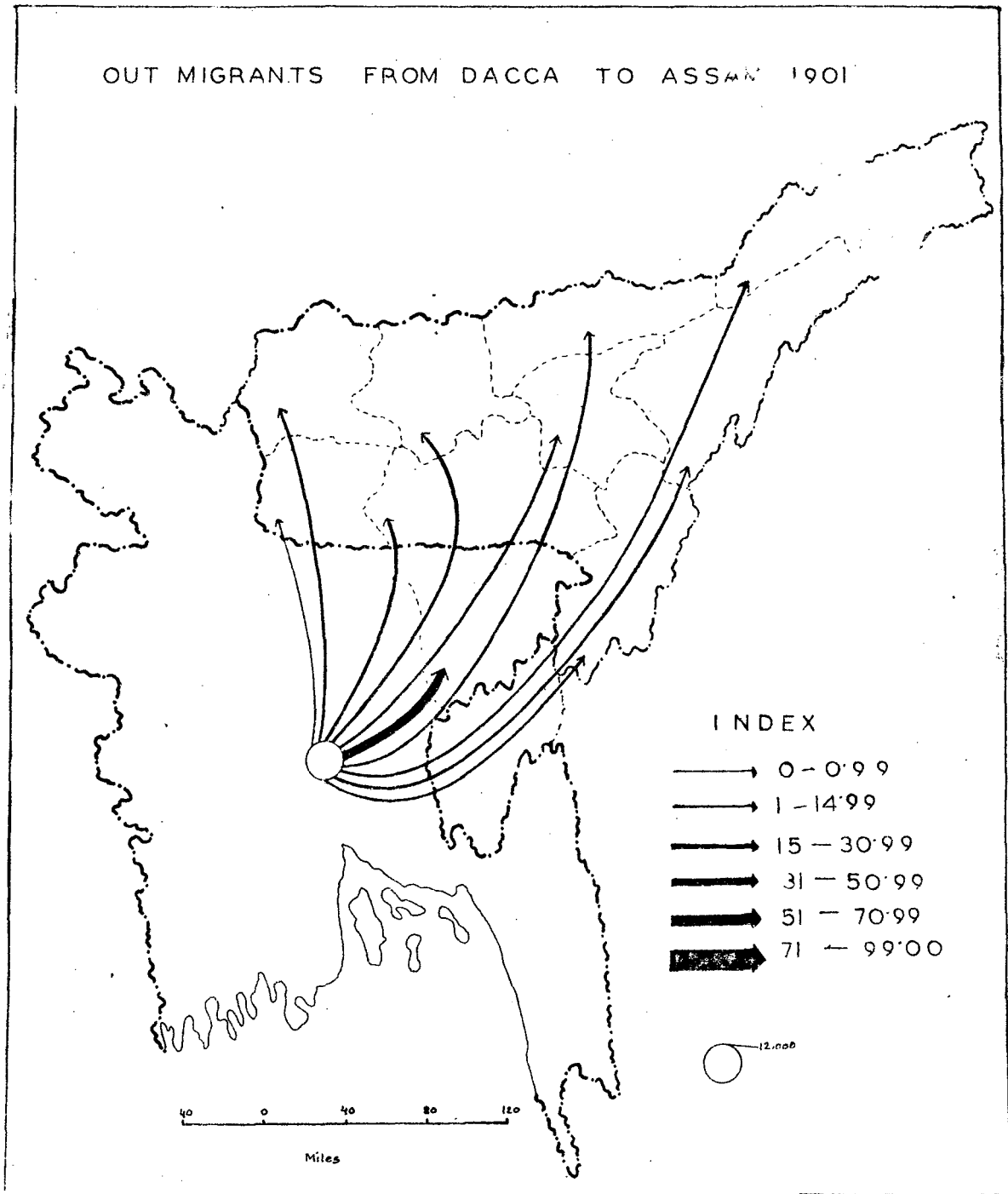


Fig- 7

OUT MIGRANTS FROM RANGPUR TO ASSAM— 1901

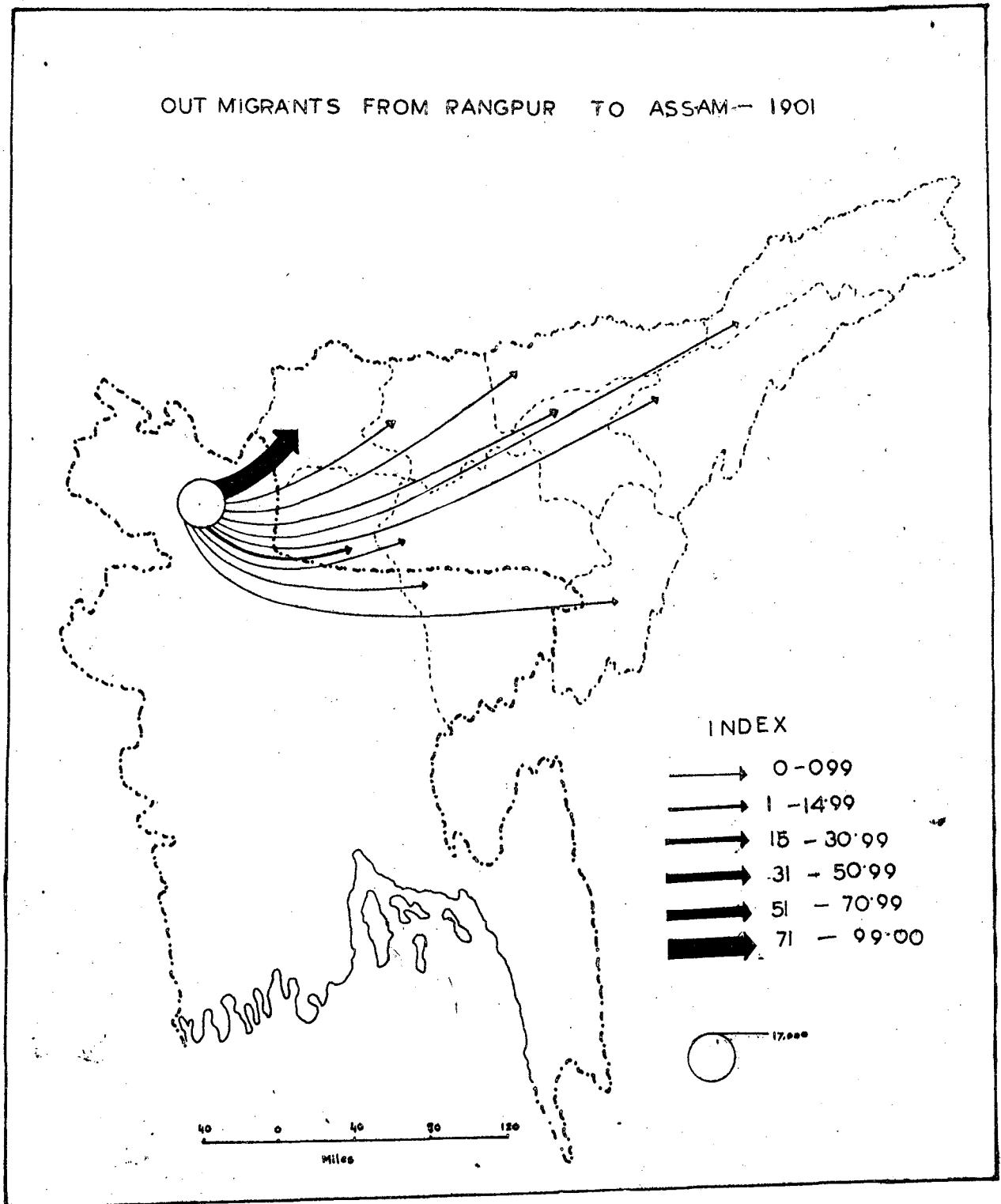


Fig- 8

Here we found that most of Mymensingh people are scattered in Sylhet, Goalpara, Garo Hills and Nowgong. 50 per cent of Dacca people are almost evenly distributed all over the province. The remaining 50 per cent settled in Sylhet. 90 per cent of the Rangpur people settled in Goalpara and rest 10 per cent scattered all over the province. 94 per cent of the Tippera people found in Sylhet and 6 per cent are scattered in all other districts.

Period 1901-1911:-

During this period the number of Emigrants from Mymensingh increased considerably. It was perhaps they suddenly felt the increase of pressure on the soil and the tendencies of migration turned so abruptly.

The development of Mymensingh had, however, proceeded very fast, and the fact that many families of agriculturists had not been rooted to the soil for generations. This explanation received some support from the large portion of females among the emigrants. It might have been expected that the effect^{of}/increased pressure of the **population** on the soil would have driven the males first to seek their livelihood elsewhere, but the emigration from Mymensingh largely, had been the emigration of the whole families and the bulk had been in the direction of Assam.

It appears from Table VI that Mymensingh had sent nearly 58,000 persons to different districts in Assam. Among the Assam districts, Goalpara received the largest share i.e. 34,000 persons. To the total population of Goalpara 8.23 per cent was represented by immigrants from Eastern Bengal.

T A B L E VIII
(A)
Immigrants from different Eastern
Bengal districts to Assam in 1911.

	<u>Tippera</u>	<u>Mymensingh</u>	<u>Rangpur</u>
Cachar	584	196	9
Sylhet	15,153	17,216	235
Goalpara	74	34171	15,304
Kamrup	82	784	350
Darrang	55	572	78
Nowgong	60	750	39
Sibsagar	55	166	32
Lakhimpur	83	172	58
K.J. Hills	56	78	7
Garro Hills	2	4,249	578

(B)
Percentage distribution to total
from Eastern Bengal in each Assam District

				<u>Total</u>
Cachar	74.02	24.84	1.14	100
Sylhet	46.48	52.80	.72	100
Goalpara	.15	68.96	30.89	100
Kamrup	6.74	64.23	28.78	100
Darrang	7.80	81.13	11.06	100
Nowgong	7.07	88.34	4.59	100
Sibsagar	21.74	65.61	12.65	100
Lakhimpur	26.52	54.95	18.53	100
K.J. Hills	39.72	55.32	4.96	100
Garro Hills	.04	87.99	11.97	100

(C)

Percentage of immigrants
to the total population
of the Districts

	<u>Tippera</u>	<u>Mymensingh</u>	<u>Rangpur</u>
Cachar	0.11	0.03	0.00
Sylhet	0.61	0.69	0.00
Goalpara	0.01	5.68	2.54
Kamrup	0.01	0.11	0.05
Darrang	0.01	0.15	0.02
Nowgong	0.01	0.24	0.01
Sibsagar	0.00	0.02	0.00
Lakhimpur	0.01	0.03	0.01
K.J. Hills	0.05	0.07	0.00
Garohills	0.00	0.67	0.36

Source: Census of India, 1911 Assam
Vol. III Tables.

There are two main features to be noted in Goalpara during this period. Firstly, the extension of the railway through the north of the district and, secondly, the tremendous increase of settlers to the char-lands from the Eastern Bengal district of Mymensingh, Rangpur, Pabna and Bogra. This is the period when the flow of migration started vigorously. These settlers had opened up vast tracts of land and the cultivation of jute was commercially introduced for the first time by the Eastern Bengal cultivators during this period.

For comparing the increase or decrease of 1901 and 1911 a problem has arisen. In 1901, figure for Dacca is not given separately, only the figures for contiguous districts are available and all other districts of Bengal with on heading "Other districts" are given together. So while comparing 1901 and 1911 data, Dacca was excluded.

Let us take the case of each Assam district separately.

Cachar:-

In Cachar the net increase of population during the decade 1901-1911 was 9.6% per cent. In 1911 Eastern Bengal constitutes only .14 per cent most of them were from Tippera. Nearly 600 people went from Tippera and 200 persons from Mymensingh. All of them settled in Cachar plain.

T A B L E II

		Tippera		Mymensingh		Rangpur		
		1901	1911	1901	1911	1901	1911	
Cachar	(	23.45	74.02	7.65	24.84	.74	1.14	Percentage to total immigrants
	(.10	.11	.03	.03	.00	.00		Percentage on total population.

Sylhet:-

The total district increase during the decade is 10.31 per cent. Tot the total population of 1911, immigrants from Eastern Bengal comprise 1.30 per cent of which .69 per cent from Mymensingh and .61 per cent from Tippera. All of them went as cultivators and occupied the plains.

T A B L E J

	Tippera		Mymensingh		Rangpur		
	1901	1911	1901	1911	1901	1911	
Sylhet	(35.99	46.48	47.07	52.80	.22	.72	) Percental on total immigrants
	(0.52	0.61	0.68	0.69	0.00	0.00		) Percentage on total population

Goalpara:-

The precentage increase of the immigrants to the total population of the district became almost double during the period 1901-1911. It was 4.18 per cent in 1901 and now it became 8.23 per cent. Another notable phenomena is that Rangpur contributed the major share in 1901 and now Mymensingh alone shared 5.68 per cent out of 8.23 per cent of district increase. The following table shows the percentage share of each Eastern Bengal district to Goalpara.

T A B L E K

	Tippera		Mymensingh		Rangpur		
	1901	1911	1901	1911	1901	1911	
Goalpara	(.20	.15	12.34	68.96	80.21	30.89	) Percentage on total immigrants
	(.00	.01	.51	5.68	3.37	2.54		) Percentage on total population

The table shows a large influx of immigrants from Mymensingh in 1911 whereas a slight decrease is noticed in case of Rangpur. It is due to the decrease in the number of immigrants from Pabna and Bogra to Rangpur. The upward trend is noticed upto 1911 and thereafter the downward trend. Emigration to and from Pabna and the neighbouring districts Mymensingh, Faridpur, and Nadia depends mainly on the action of two big rivers cutting one of the banks and building fertile land on the opposite side. The char population is used to move and shift as the river detects. Hence as the emigrants from other districts to Rangpur decreased the emigrants from Rangpur to Assam also decreased as a consequence.

Kamrup:-

During this decade the total increase in the population of Kamrup was 13.48 per cent. Eastern Bengal contributes only 0.03 per cent of increase out of 13.48 per cent. Total increase. A slight increase only from Mymensingh is observed. Actually Kamrup was not much a favourite place to the Eastern Bengal settlers, it may be due to the unsuitable level of the land, as we have mentioned earlier that the level of the land in Kamrup was completely destroyed by the earthquake of 1897. So the settlers perhaps did not prefer to go to Kamrup and settle there.

T A B L E K.

	Tippera		Mymensingh		Rangpur		
	1901	1911	1901	1911	1901	1911	
Kamrup {	3.40	6.74	23.34	64.27	14.35	28.78	) Percentage on total population
	0.00	0.01	.03	.11	.02	.05	

It is shown in the table that a slight increase is observed only

from Mymensingh. It indicates that the Mymensingh people have started going further up the valley during this period

Darrang:-

The increase in population during the decade 1901-1911 was 11.34 per cent. To the total population of 1911, immigrants comprises .18 per cent of which .15 per cent were from Mymensingh. In 1901, Mymensingh shared only .05 per cent. It seems that there is a notable increase from Mymensingh and the cultivators from Mymensingh started exploring other areas.

Nowgong:-

The total increase in Nongong during the decade 1901-1911 was 15.56 per cent. Tot the total population of 1911 Eastern Bengal contributed .26 per cent and Mymensingh shares almost the whole amount i.e. .24 per cent. As we have discussed earlier that the flow of migration in Nowgong is much more voluminous than any other districts except Goalpara. Excluding the adjacent districts of Cachar, Sylhet and Goalpara it is observed that Nowgong received the maximum number of immigrants.

T A B L E M

		Tippera		Mymensingh		Rangpur		
		1901	1911	1901	1911	1901	1911	
Nowgong	(	1.19	7.07	45.82	88.34	6.18	4.59	) Percentage to total immigrants
	(0.00	0.01	0.24	0.24	0.00	0.01		) Percentage on total population.

Sibsagar and Lakhimpur:-

Both Sibsaagar and Lakhimpur received a very negligible amount of immigrants from Eastern Bengal. In 1911 it was only .2 per cent and .05 per cent respectively. Less than 100 people from both Tippera and Rangpur went to Sibsaagar and Lakhimpur. The migrants from Mymensingh were more than 100 in both the districts.

Garro Hills:-

Mymensingh contributed 2.67 per cent to the total population of Garro Hills in 1911. Rangpur also sent nearly 600 people i.e. .36 per cent of the total population of the district. They were cultivators and they did not have any interest to settle down on Hills, so they occupied the plains of the district and continued there traditional occupation. The table M shows that persons from Rangpur have decreased by .15 per cent. Mymensingh shows an increase of .61 per cent. Garro Hills is contiguous to Mymensingh and Rangpur, and the people from these two districts found it more easier to cross the boundary and occupy the land. We have discussed earlier that as the immigrants from other Eastern Bengal districts to Rangpur decreased, emigration from Rangpur also decreased considerably.

T A B L E ' M

		Tippera		Mymensingh		Rangpur		
		1901	1911	1901	1911	1901	1911	
Garro Hills	(	.17	.04	69.36	87.99	29.21	11.97	) Percentage on total immigrants
	(.00	.00	2.06	2.67	0.87	0.36		) Percentage on total population

OUT MIGRANTS FROM MYMENSINGH TO ASSAM - 1911

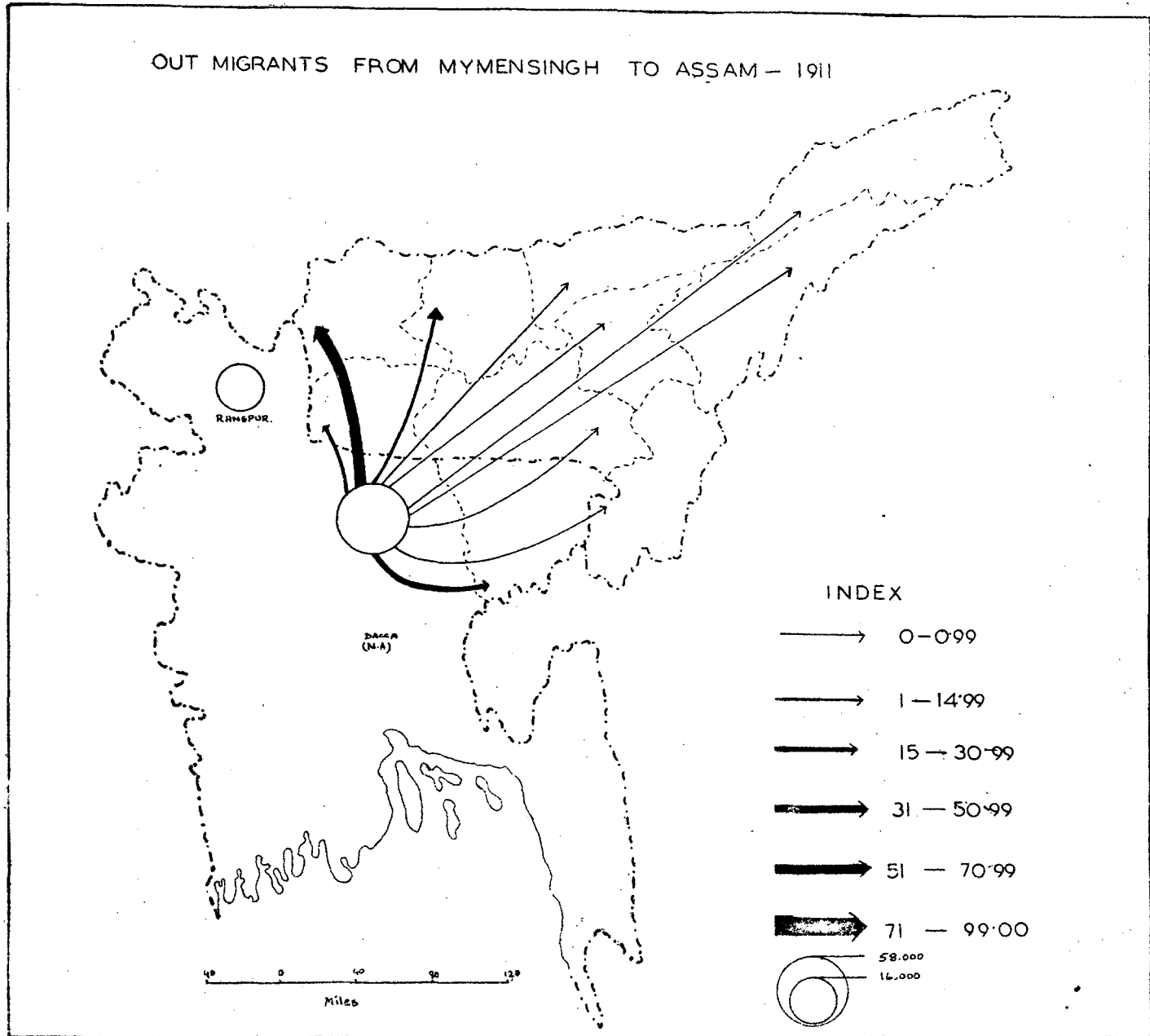


Fig - 9

OUT MIGRANTS FROM RANGPUR TO ASSAM 1911

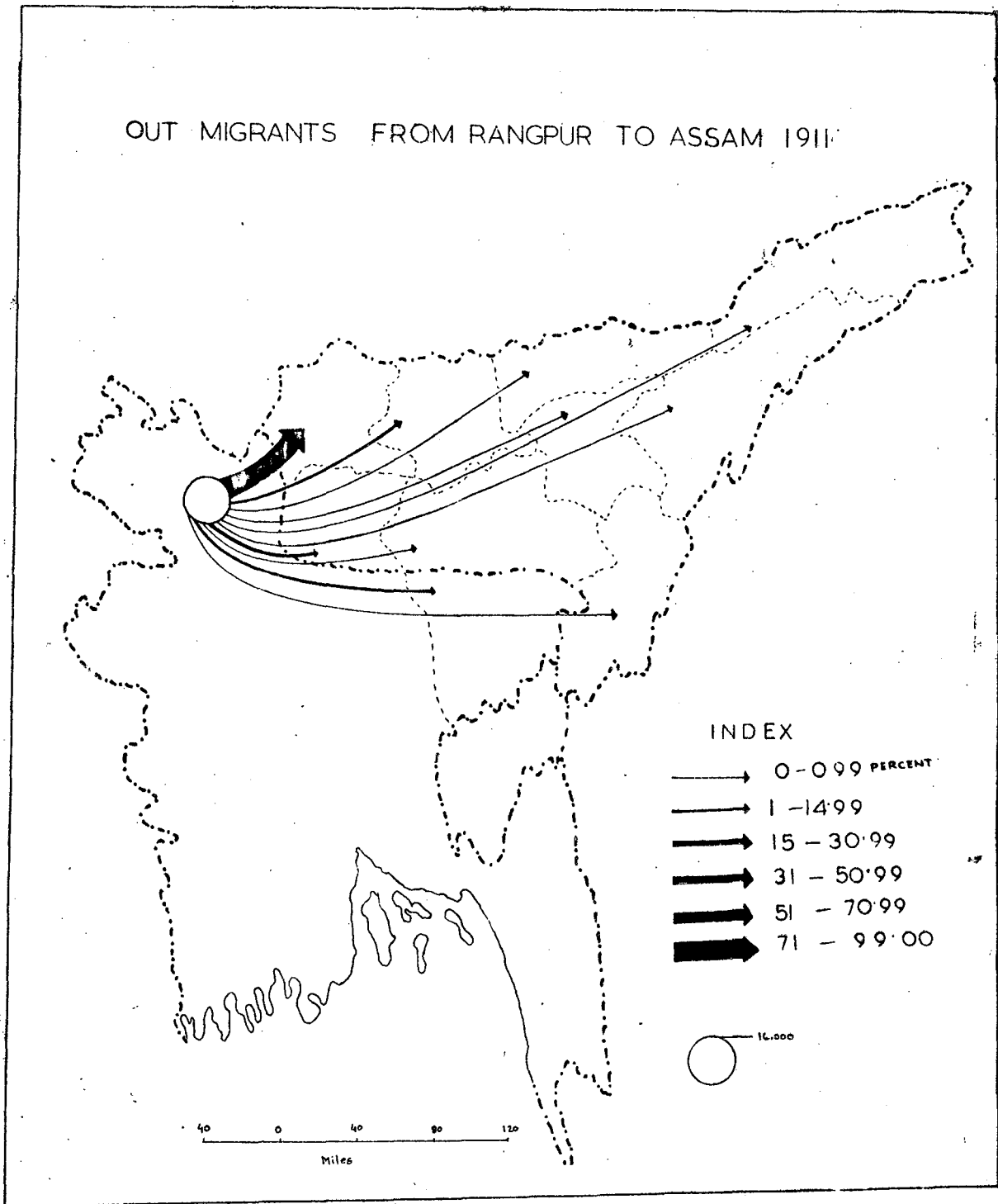


Fig-10

Period 1911-1921:

During this decade of the large increase in the population of the province of Assam, nearly half is due to immigration. Much of the increase, both in immigration and in natural population has occurred in the Brahmaputra valley. The immigration is partly due to the tea-gardens, partly for colonization of new lands by cultivators and partly for grazing or trading purposes.

As to the stream of Bengal cultivators settling in the Brahmaputra valley, it seems that we had only the advance guard in 1911 and that now the main body is just beginning to arrive. The news of the promised land has spread to other districts besides Mymensingh, colonists are filling up the riverine tracts of the four lower districts of the valley and spreading outwards from Brahmaputra. Their number has increased nearly fivefold since the last Census of 1911. The following extracts from the reports of the district officers show the effect which the immigration of Bengali settlers is having on the district concerned. From Nowgong, Rai Bahadur P.G. Mukherjee reports: "These increase in population is specially noticeable in Khathwal, Juria, Laokhowa, Dhening, Bokani and Lahorighat Mauzas where it is solely due to the large influx of immigrant settlers mainly from Mymensingh, they have opened up vast tracts of dense jungle along the south bank of Brahmaputra and have occupied nearly all the lands which are open for settlement in that tract".

In Kamrup there has been an enormous increase in the number of settlers, the Deputy Commissioner reports: "The immigration of Eastern Bengal Mohamadan settlers continued throughout the decade into Barpeta sub-division and parts of

the Sadar sub-division. The Chars and riverine tracts have now nearly been filled up and all available waste lands are gradually being occupied by them. The increase of 69 per cent in the population of Barpeta is solely due to Eastern Bengal immigrants".

In Darrang the increase in Bengali settlers has been most noticeable in the Mangaldai sub-division. The Deputy Commissioner reports:-

"Immigration both Hindu and Muslim cultivators from Eastern Bengal to take up waste lands in Mangaldai continued. There is little room for expansion of cultivation in the Tezpur sub-division as most of the Brahmaputra Char-lands are reserved for professional graziers".

If we compare the crop-statistics of 1911-1921, it will be found that in all the four lower districts of the Brahmaputra valley jute cultivation has fairly increased. The cultivation of jute was practically absent in those places before 1911.

Percentage of Gross cultivated area
under jute

	<u>1901</u>	<u>1911</u>	<u>1921</u>
Goalpara	.69	6.0	8.5
Kamrup	-	0.9	1.2
Darrang	-	0.3	1.9
Nogong	-	0.2	1.7

(Source: Census of India 1921)

Percent-variation in natural population-
immigration and emigration in Assam dist-
ricts in 1911 and 1921

T A B L E IX

	1911			1921		
	Popula- tion	Immigra- nts	Emigra- nts	Popula- tion	Immigra- nts	Emigra- nts
Goalpara	83.28	19.68	2.67	74.11	27.8	1.9
Kamrup	98.71	4.73	3.44	91.36	10.6	1.98
Darrang	69.02	32.15	1.17	60.39	40.49	0.89
Nowgong	92.14	12.92	5.05	76.54	25.71	2.26
Sibsagar	75.67	26.50	2.17	74.55	27.73	2.28
Lakhimpur	59.72	42.15	1.87	57.27	44.05	1.32
Cachar	79.84	22.21	2.05	85.42	17.18	2.59
Sylhet	96.72	6.61	3.33	96.45	6.85	3.29
Garo Hills	94.17	8.11	2.27	94.84	7.44	2.28

Source: Census of India 1931
Vol. III Part II Tables.

Though the figures for Garo Hills are not available for 1911, in 1921 it is found that area under jute is 4 per cent in the plains of Garo Hills.

It is evident from the above table that as the emigration from Eastern Bengal increased, the area under jute also increased in different districts of Assam. It is pertinent to mention here that Mymensingh is the largest jute producing district in Eastern Bengal, and till today it is maintaining its status as the greatest jute producing area of Bengal. So it is most logical to conclude that the cultivators from Mymensingh were maintaining their tradition of growing jute in the newly taken land ~~also~~ where jute was practically unknown.

If we consider the percentage variation in district population, immigration and emigration, it is found that increase in four lower districts of Brahmaputra valley is much more distinct than the other districts, in 1921, compared with the volume of 1911. It can be assumed that in the four lower districts of the valley the increase is mainly due to the influx of Eastern Bengal settlers.

Of the total immigrants to Lakhimpur and Sibsagar, most of them worked as garden coolies. But the table^{ix} shows a decline in the percentage of immigrants in two tea districts Lakhimpur and Sibsagar. This is due to the depressed condition in the tea industry during the year 1920. In this year dislocation of trade and closing of the Russian market caused a serious set back to the industry and mounting of stocks, and reduction in the number of labourers engaged in the industry.

In 1921, however, with an agreement by the tea association to restrict the output, a steady recovery in the tea market was noticed.

Altogether 1,52,000 persons from Mymensingh went to different districts in Assam as compared to 37,000 in 1911, showing an enormous increase in ten years time. About 58,000 persons went to Goalpara and over 7 per cent of the total population of Goalpara was made up by the emigrants from Mymensingh in 1921. It is noticed that since 1911 major portion of Eastern Bengal emigrants were coming from Mymensingh but the invasion was somewhat stopped upto Goalpara, and only a small number of people went farther in distance till 1911. Since 1921 a vast horde of people started going further up and stopped near the border of Sibsagar. It is shown that all the four lower districts of Brahmaputra was having a large percentage of immigrants to its total population. Perhaps till 1911 many people were not aware of the new opportunity. After Goalpara, Nowgong is the most favourite district to the new settlers. It appears that the physical condition of the district is very much similar to Eastern Bengal - the surface is for the most part low lying area and during the rains nearly the whole district laid ~~under~~ under water, except hills. Probably the cultivators from Eastern Bengal were attracted by these conditions and went to take up land in Nowgong. In 1921, there were 52,000 persons in Nowgong who went from Mymensingh and constitute about 13 per cent of the total population of Nowgong as compared to .35 per cent in 1911. This increase in Nowgong is very remarkable.

Kamrup comes next, having 30,000 people from Mymensingh in 1921 which contributed nearly 4 per cent of the total population of the district as compared to only .15 per cent in 1911. The increase was also observed in Darrang though it was not very prominent in comparison with other districts. It was .27 per cent of the total population of Darrang in 1911 and increased by 2.51 per cent in 1921.

Emigrants from different Eastern Bengal districts to Assam in 1921 and 1931.

T A B L E X

<u>1921</u>		
	<u>Mymensingh</u>	<u>Percentage to total population</u>
Goalpara	58,000	7.61
Kamrup	30,000	3.93
Darrang	12,000	2.51
Nowgong	52,000	13.07
Sibsagar	-	
Lakhimpur	-	

Figures less than one thousand is not included in 1921 Census.

<u>1931</u>							
	<u>(A)</u>			<u>(B)</u>			
	<u>Percentage on total population</u>			<u>Percentage to total emigrants from Eastern Bengal</u>			
	<u>Tippera</u>	<u>Mymensingh</u>	<u>Rangpur</u>	<u>Tippera</u>	<u>Mymensingh</u>	<u>Rangpur</u>	<u>Total</u>
Cachar	.19	.04	.00	80.06	19.57	.37	100
Sylhet	.82	.78	.00	51.37	48.58	.05	100
Goalpara	.04	9.04	2.02	.43	81.37	18.20	100
Kamrup	.04	9.29	.32	.51	96.13	3.36	100
Darrang	.03	5.17	.24	.63	94.87	4.51	100
Nowgong	.21	19.27	.01	1.12	98.82	.07	100
Sibsagar	.03	.02	.00	51.11	41.93	6.96	100
Lakhimpur	.13	.33	.00	29.01	69.70	1.29	100
K.J. Hills				42.04	54.99	2.97	100
Garo Hills				.26	89.23	10.51	100

Source: Census of India; 1921 Tables, 1931 Tables.

OUT MIGRANTS FROM MYMENSINGH TO ASSAM - 1931

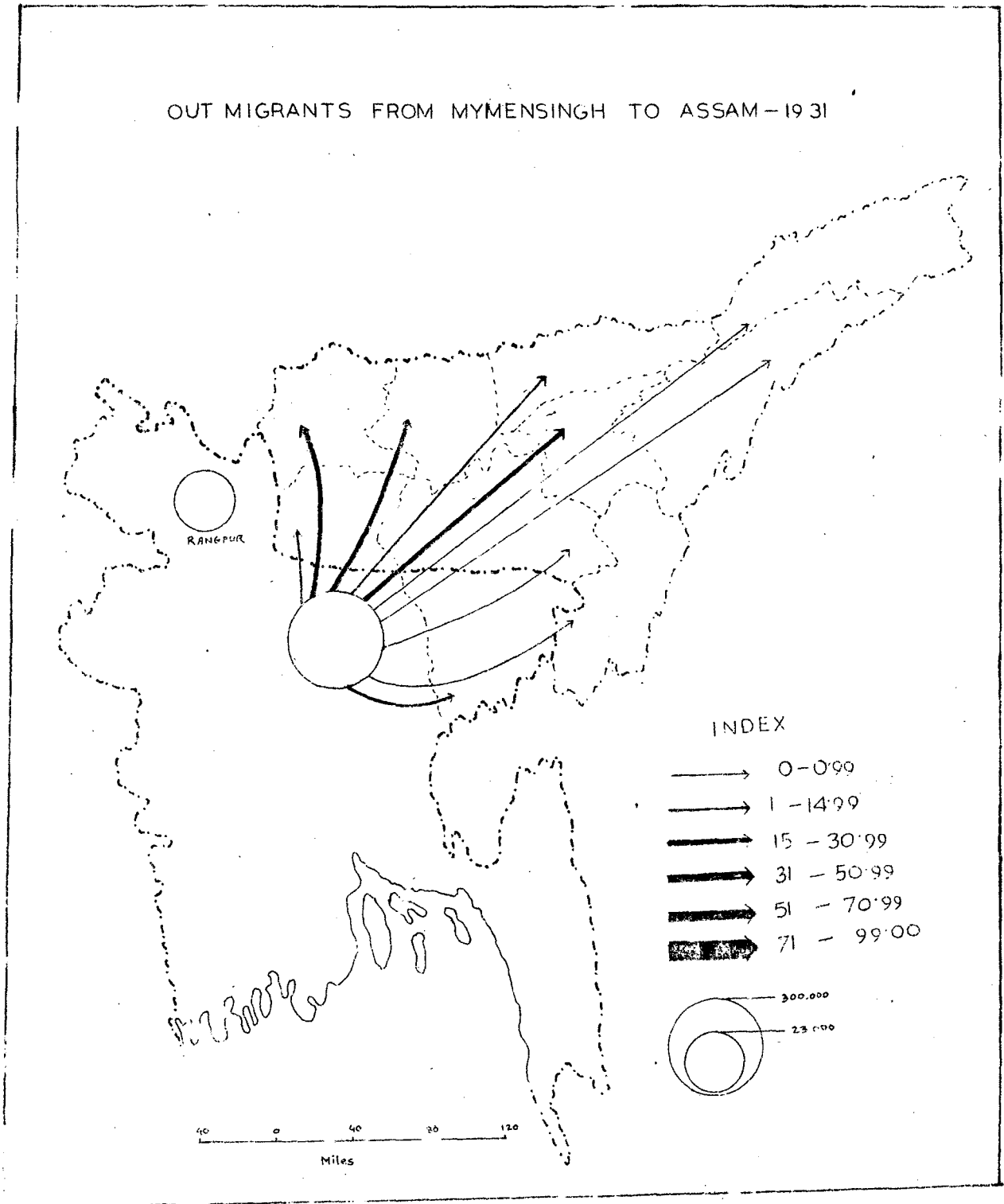


Fig- 11

OUT MIGRANTS FROM RANGPUR TO ASSAM 1931

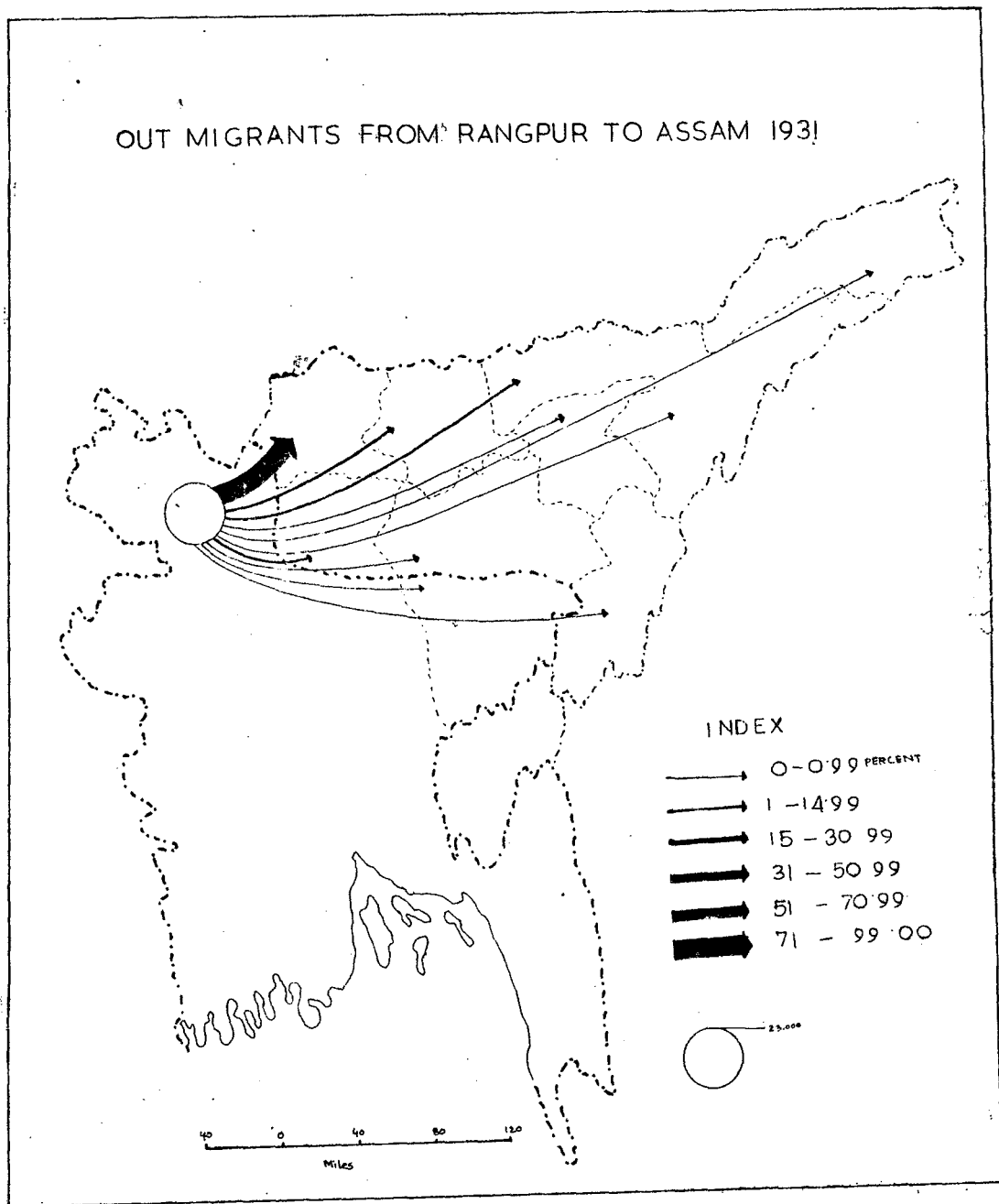


Fig-12

OUT MIGRANTS FROM TIPPERA TO ASSAM 1931

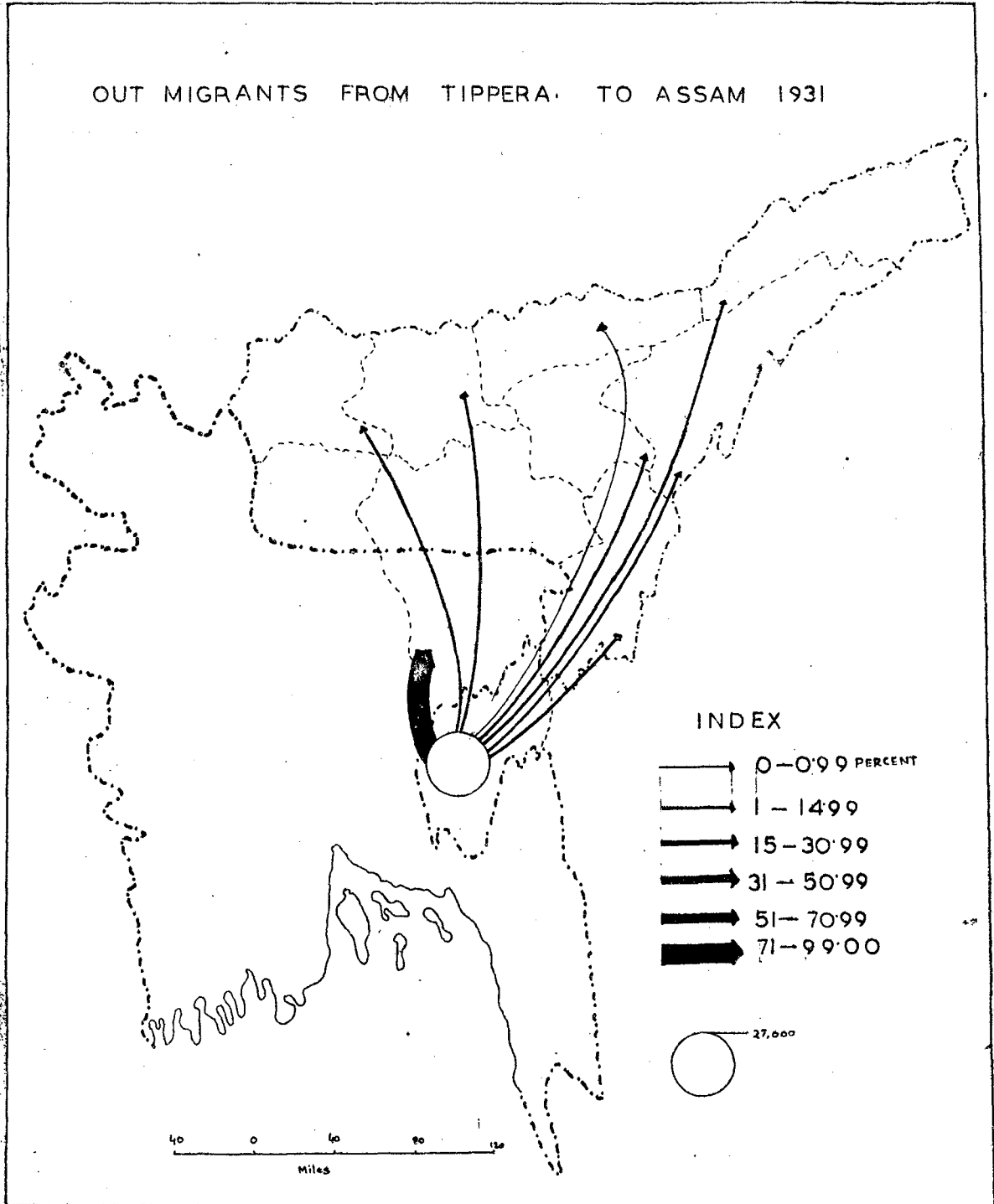


Fig-13

The percentage increase is very negligible both in Lakhimpur and Sibsagar. It was only .2 per cent in Sibsagar and .5 per cent in Lakhimpur in 1911 and in 1921 also the figures did not show much variation.

The emigration figures for the other districts of Eastern Bengal are not given separately in Census 1921. The influx from Mymensingh was quite significant for which the figures are given separately.

Period 1921-1931:-

During this period a huge influx is observed specially from Mymensingh and the highest number is found in Nowgong district. About 19 per cent of the total population of Nowgong was constituted by the emigrants from Mymensingh, and nearly .49 per cent from Rangpur and Tippera. Though Kamrup is nearer to Mymensingh but in every census it was found that the number of immigrants are lesser there than in Nowgong, so the distance decay rule does not apply here. There are few factors which can be attributed. Firstly the abundance of cultivable land in Kamrup is less than in Nowgong. Accordingly to the estimate of the Deputy Commissioner of Kamrup there is nearly twice as much as that which is under plough,⁽¹⁾ whereas in Nowgong only one-ninth of the total area is under cultivation and seventh-tenth of the waste land is capable of being brought under plough.

Secondly Kamrup has a vast forest area, nearly 4 per cent of the total is under forest and 37 per cent of the total is waste and uncultivable. So it appears that though there is no scarcity of cultivable land it is also not as abundant as in Nowgong. Might be all these factors induced people to go to Nowgong rather than to Kamrup. Table X shows that though in Goalpara the increase is by 9.04 per cent in 1931 as compared to 7.61 per cent in 1921 but Kamrup shows

(1) W.W. Hunter, Statistical Account of Assam Vol. 1

a three-times increase in 1931. In Goalpara the increase did not go much higher but in Kamrup the increase is very much remarkable.

The flow of immigrants was very intense till 1921 and spatially upto Goalpara only. Though other three lower districts were also touched by the cultivators from Eastern Bengal, the entire stream seems to have changed its direction and destination at the end of 1921. Now the settlers with a great volume invaded the new districts which were merely touched before. 1921 onwards perhaps the settlers were not intending to make Goalpara heavily crowded. Hence perhaps the direction was changed and Kamrup, Darrang, Nongong became important one.

Cachar and Sylhet were not preferred by them during this period. Hence there is hardly any increase since 1911. In Darrang, the increase has been more two-folds. It was 2.5 per cent in 1921 and in 1931 it increased to 5.17 per cent.

Emigrants from Rangpur have not been increased much since 1911, and moreover Goalpara is showing a decrease by .52 per cent since 1911. It was 2.54 per cent in 1911 and now it shows 2.02 per cent. In all other Assam districts the figures constituted less than .35 per cent of the total population which is quite insignificant.

It is found from the study of all the four decades, 1891, 1901, 1911, 1921, 1931 that the stream of migration in the first phase was concentrating only in the bordering plains with a feeble volume. In the second phase with the advent of time the volume was strengthening itself by picking up people from different districts of Eastern Bengal and concentrating in the adjacent areas. In the third phase, it is found that the stream started moving further up but the degree of concentration was higher in the adjacent land. The other three

lower districts were just touched by the stream with its very feable volume at this time. The picture of the last phase was somewhat different. In this phase the major portion of the volume of migrants was made by the single Eastern Bengal district i.e. Mymensingh and the concentration is not higher in adjacent area but in other districts in Assam except the tea-districts of Sibsagar and Lakhimpur.

Migration and adjacent creep

It is known that if any great pressure of any kind occurred at any place it tends to release some portion of its burden by way of adjacent creep and the intensity of flow diminishes as the distance increases.

We have discussed earlier that peasant class of Eastern Bengal were in a poor economic condition and the pressure of these people on agricultural land was very high. The per capitalland available for cultivation was very small, coupled with the exploitation of landlords and money lenders, the condition became worse. The dependency ratio per agricultural worker was also very high in most of the Eastern Bengal district and that was a clear indication of pressure on soil. All these conditions forced the peasants of Eastern Bengal specially from Mymensingh to migrate to the Assam valley.

C H A P T E R V

SOME ASPECTS OF THE IMPACT OF THE IMMIGRATION OF EASTERN BENGAL CULTIVATORS TO ASSAM

The immigration of Eastern Bengal cultivators to Assam to some extent influenced the present set up of the province mainly on agriculture. The over all administration of the province was also benefited by these immigration. Due to the increase in the total settled area of the province by the settlers the land revenue was also increased. It was found that the total settled area of the province has increased from 14,444 sq. miles in 1921 to 15,733 in 1931⁽¹⁾. By the settled area means all lands settled permanently - periodically or annually as well as lands settled under special rules and waste land grants for tea-cultivation. Such lands are almost entirely confined to the plains as in the hills house tax or poll tax, is generally paid instead of land revenue.

For the large increase of 1,289 sq. miles in the settled area, the Assam valley is almost entirely responsible, the increase in the settled area of the Surma valley amounting to only 30 sq. miles. The taking up waste lands by the Eastern Bengal immigrants contributed largely to this great increase in the settled area of the Assam valley. Extension of cultivation by the indigenous inhabitants and colonization by ex-tea garden coolies was, of course, also responsible for the expansion of the settled area.

Impact on agriculture:-

The immigrants from Eastern Bengal brought a new wave in the field of agriculture in Assam. In general, according to some observers they brought a over all prosperity to the district concerned. From Nowgong, Rai Bahadur P.G. Mukherjee

reports:-

".....These people have brought in their wake health, industry and general prosperity to the whole district. They have improved the health of the countryside by clearing the jungles and converting the wilderness into proper villages. Their industry as agriculturists has become almost proverbial and they extract from their fields the utmost that they can yield. Government revenue has increased. Trade and commerce have prospered".

They introduced new techniques of cultivation as well as some crops were also commercially introduced. For example, jute and oil seeds. Most of the Eastern Bengal farmers practice double-cropping system. It is shown that after their arrival in Assam the area under double-cropping system has increased. Index of more than once-cropped area steadily increased from 100 in 1884-85 to 130 in 1893-94, but thereafter began to decline heavily until it reached 90 in 1900-01. This was because of the effect of Kalazar epidemic and the earthquake of 1897. The technique of double-cropping increased, thereafter, as is shown by the following set of index number:-

<u>1900-01</u>	<u>1910-11</u>	<u>1920-21</u>	<u>1930-31</u>
Base year = 100	174	214	216

Source: Returns of agricultural statistics of British India Vol. I.

Percentage of cultivable area of double-cropped
in 1911 and 1921

	<u>1911</u>	<u>1921</u>
Goalpara	3	5
Kamrup	6	8
Darrang	1	2
Nowgong	1	2
Sibsagar	1	1
Lakhimpur	.4	1
Cachar	3	4
Sylhet	3	10
Garó Hills	.2	1.0

Source: Census of India - 1921
Assam Part I Report.

It is found from the above table that in every district there was an increase in double-cropped area. The highest percentage is observed in Sylhet. The increase in Sylhet is over three times. The reason for this may be due to the scarcity of cultivable land as well as the immigration of Eastern Bengal settlers. The Deputy Commissioner from Sylhet reports in 1931 that "There is little cultivable waste land available in the permanently settled areas. There are huge expansions of waste lands.....".

Increase in net cropped area:-

From the land utilization statistics it is evident that there was a high increase in the net cropped area in Assam proper.

Percentage of net cropped area

1900-01	13.33	) Percentage of net cropped area to the net reported area.
1910-11	15.86	
1920-21	19.08	
1930-31	22.39)

Source: Agricultural statistics of
British India Vol. II.

With the increase of net cropped area Government revenue was also increased.

Mergence of jute as a cash-crop:-

The mergence of jute as a productive channel of rural finance was a significant factor in the upliftment of the agrarian economy of Assam. Jute and the associated cultivation of paddy by the immigrant jute-growers, played an important role which followed the agrarian development in Assam. So long as jute was cultivated by the indigenous people on high grounds near the homestead, it did not respond to the market and remained a marginal crop for home use. The immigrants showed that the riverine wasteland (char) were most suitable for cultivation. This made all the changes which revolutionised the countryside

within decades, beginning with 1911.

Changes in the techniques of production:

The 1st important change was in the crops grown. Cotton and black pepper gradually disappeared. Such indigenous fibres like "reheea" and "mesta" also became insignificant against the emergence of jute. Particularly from 1901-11 onwards.

The second change was the rapid shrinkage of shifting cultivation which used to be formally practiced on large scale in the plains. This form of cultivation was on decline due to the influx of non-indigenous population particularly from 1901 onwards⁽¹⁾. During the year 1911-31 settled cultivation increased by 700⁽²⁾ per cent in the sub-division of Barpeta (in Kamrup alone).

Cultural Impact:

Besides agriculture another important phenomena took place with the immigration of Bengali cultivators to Assam. As they had gone from Eastern Bengal their mother tongue was obviously Bengali. It is shown that the number of Bengali speaking people has increased largely in some of the districts of Assam.

T A B L E

Percentage of Bengali speaking people in Assam in 1901, 1911, 1931.

	<u>1901</u>	<u>1911</u>	<u>1931</u>	
Goalpara	69.26	57.90	53.97	Source: Census of India 1901 Assam Vol. IV 2. Census of India 1911 Assam Reports 3. Census of India 1931 Assam Vol. III Tables.
Kamrup	1.15	1.26	17.44	
Darrang	18.62	15.41	16.26	
Nowgong	5.71	4.19	34.36	
Sibsagar	19.28	18.52	7.85	
Lakhimpur	21.48	16.29	10.69	
Cachar	61.49	57.85	59.37	
Sylhet	92.26	92.32	92.12	

(1) Guha, Amalendu: Socio-economic changes in agrarian Assam.

(2) Report of the Assam Banking enquiry committee 1926-31. Shillong.

The table shows that the increase is striking in Nowgong and Kamrup. In Nowgong only 5.71 per cent of people were returned Bengali as their mother tongue in 1901, whereas in 1931 it rose to 34.36 per cent. It can be attributed that the increase is to some extent natural with the increase in the actual population, but the larger part is due to the immigration of Bengali peasants from Eastern Bengal. In Kamrup, also the percentage is quite high. In 1901 only 1.5 per cent returned as Bengali which was increased by 17.44 per cent in 1931. There are some districts which show a decline in the Bengali speaking people. Both the tea-districts of Sibsagar and Lakhimpur have declined in this respect. Other districts are showing a uniformity in both the years, with a slight variation.

Finally it can be said that the immigrants from Eastern Bengal had brought an impact on the agricultural as well as cultural environment of Assam.

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EMIGRANTS FROM MYMENSINGH TO ASSAM
BY DISTANCE, 1891-1901

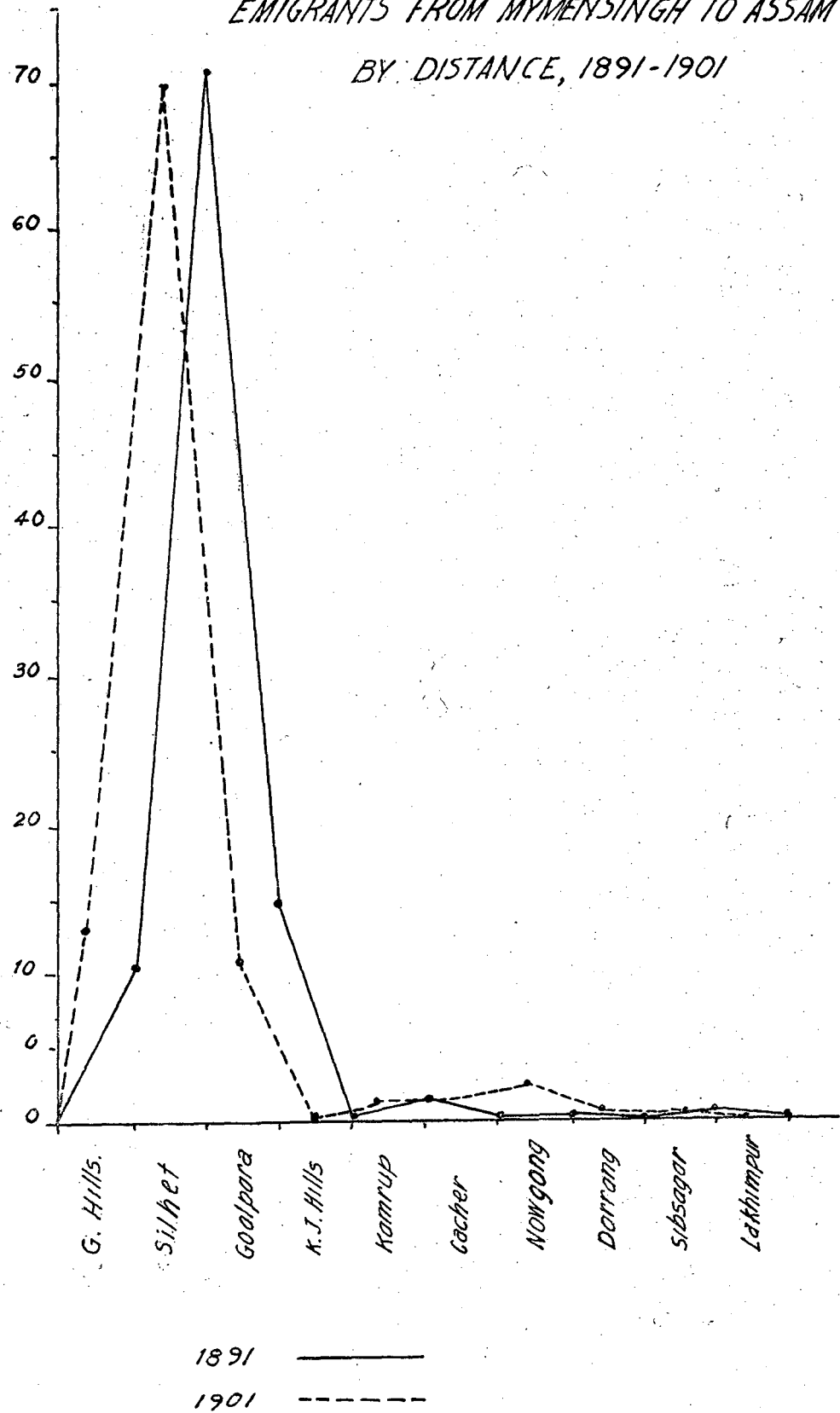


Fig- 14

*EMIGRANTS FROM MYMENSINGH TO ASSAM
BY DISTANCE, 1911-1931*

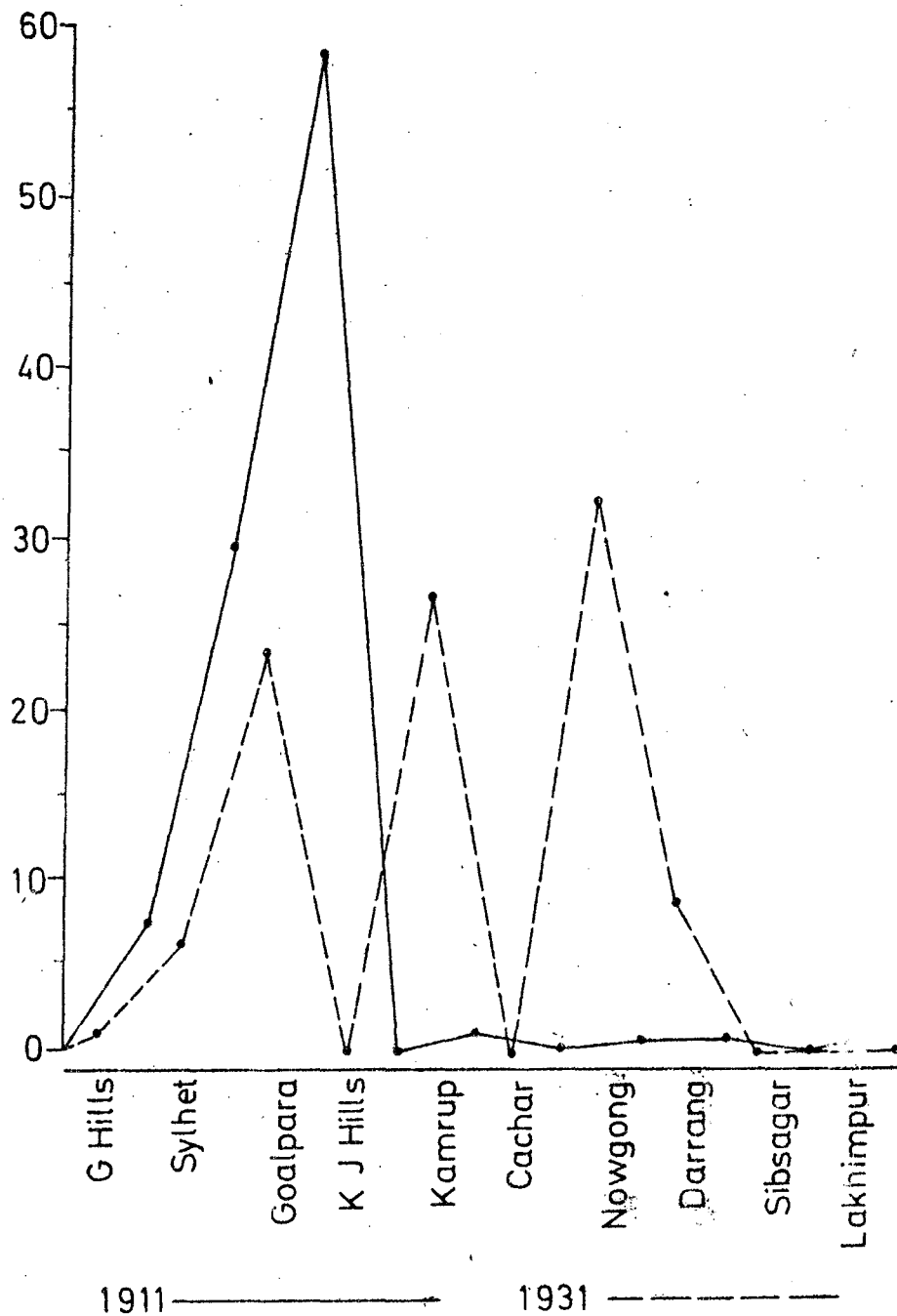


Fig-15

C O N C L U S I O N

Our study revealed that peasants of Eastern Bengal mostly concentrated in the adjacent districts of Sylhet, Goalpara, plains of Garo Hills and Cachar plain in the beginning of the immigration. This is due to the nearness of those places from the origin, and it is convenient to go to such places rather than a distant one. But there are some other factors also which operate as obstacles between the origin and destination, i.e. the absence of the desirable opportunity. Peasants of Eastern Bengal were mainly went to Assam to take up land for cultivation. Here the only desirable condition is the availability of sufficient fertile land for cultivation. In Sylhet, Garo Hills and Cachar plains the cultivable land is not plenty. So the concentration is not much in those areas. On the other hand Goalpara has relatively high number of immigrants due to the availability of cultivable land.

With the advent of time, it was found that people of Eastern Bengal were not satisfied with the conditions of Goalpara and found some new and vast tract of cultivable land in Kamrup, Darrang and Nowgong. So they started moving towards new areas.

If we take the case of Mymensingh it is found that after Garo Hills and Sylhet, Goalpara is the nearest district with a vast tract of cultivable land. Though in the beginning migration started with its concentration mainly in Sylhet but after a decade the highest accumulation is found in Goalpara. In the rest of the districts the stream diminished as distance increased. In the last phase of the migration i.e. in 1931 as the graph shows, a very interesting phenomena is observed. The wave of migration spread over the

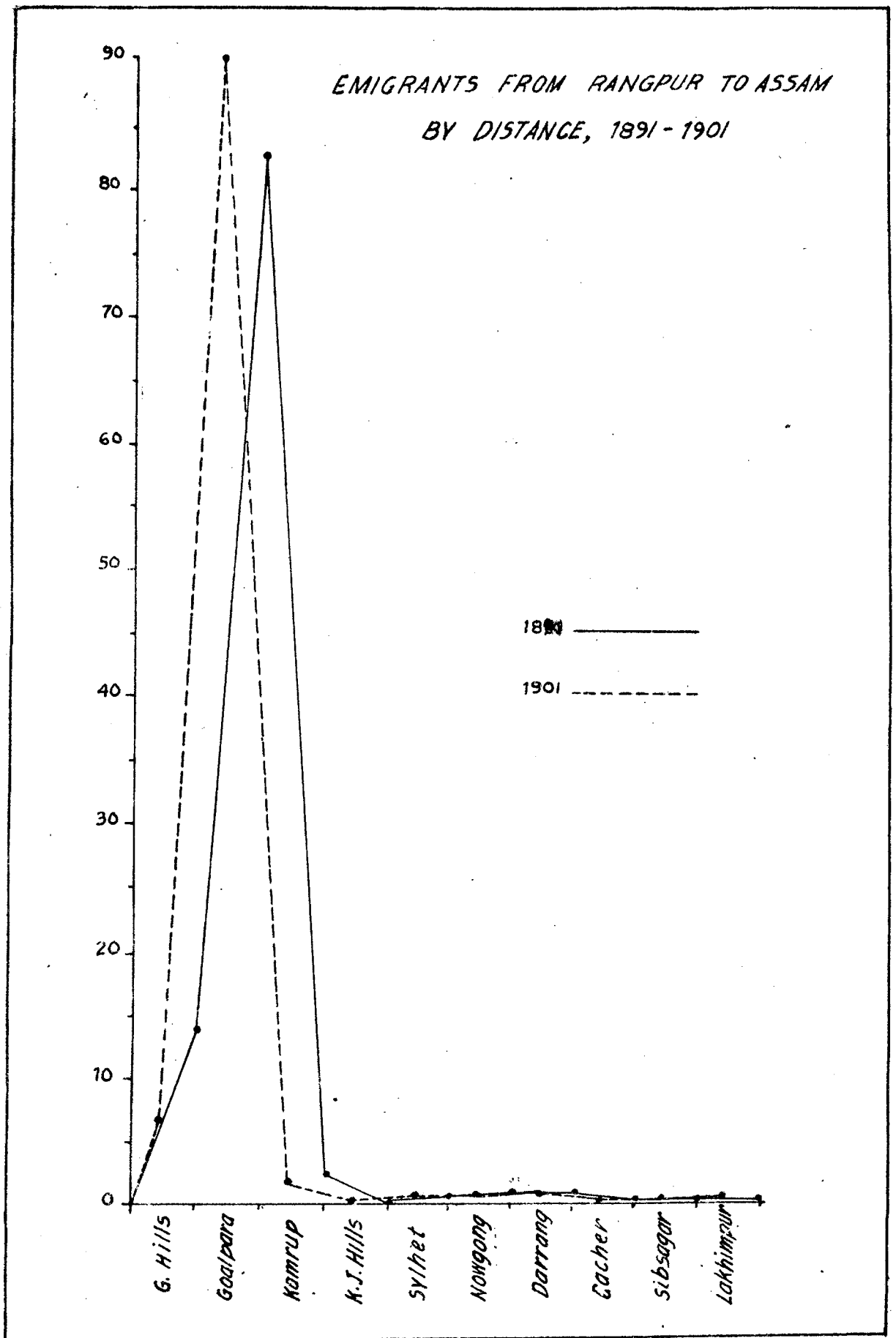


Fig-16

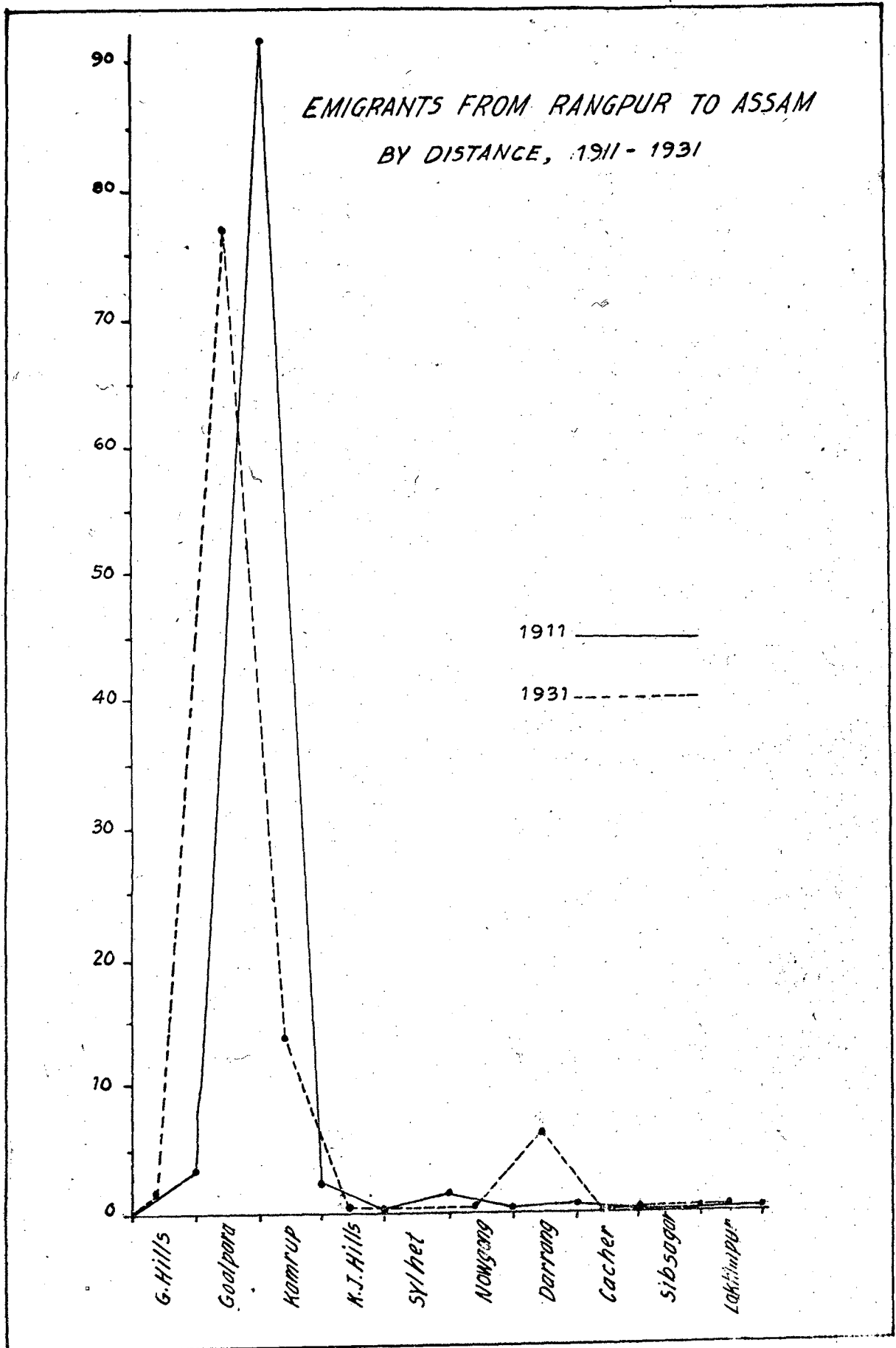


Fig-17

whole of the four lower districts upto the extreme end of Darrang and if we arrange all the Assam district from Mymensingh by distance it shows that starting from Garo Hills the volume was increasing further in Sylhet and Goalpara. Then a sudden fall is shown in the Khasi and Jaintia Hills than it rises up in Kamrup exceeding the percentage of Goalpara. Again an extreme decline found in Cachar and it reached its peak in Nowgong, having a gradual decline towards Darrang and diminished in Sibsagar. In this process of migration the areas of sudden fall acted as the obstacles between the origin and destination. (Appendix I).

In the case of Rangpur the first two decades are showing the same characteristics as in Mymensingh, but in the last decade the process extended spatially upto Kamrup and a sudden rise in Darrang is found.

From Tippera, the wave of migration extended upto Lakhimpur with a high concentration in the adjacent area till 1911 and diminished as distance increased. In the last decade with the intervening obstacles the percentage rises slightly in Kamrup, Nowgong and Lakhimpur besides the major concentration in the adjacent district of Sylhet.

Dacca shows that in both the decades 1891 and 1901 the bulk is released by the adjacent district of Sylhet and beyond that the flow was practically stopped in the districts of Garo Hills and K.J. Hills with their insuitable topography. There was a rise again from the Cachar plain continuing upto Goalpara and the percentage became lower from Kamrup and ended in Lakhimpur with almost a same amount of concentration in almost all other districts of Assam.

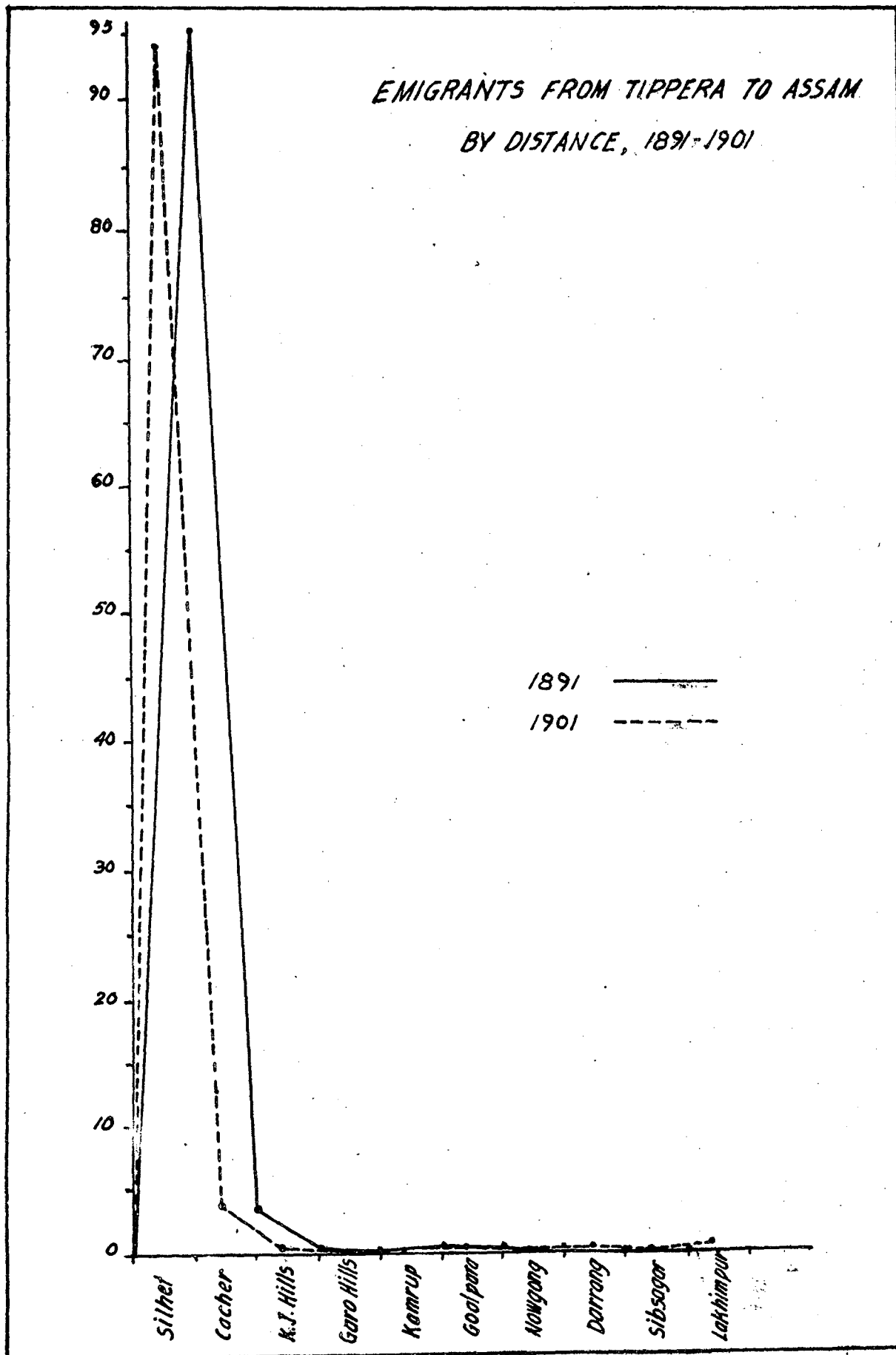


Fig- 18

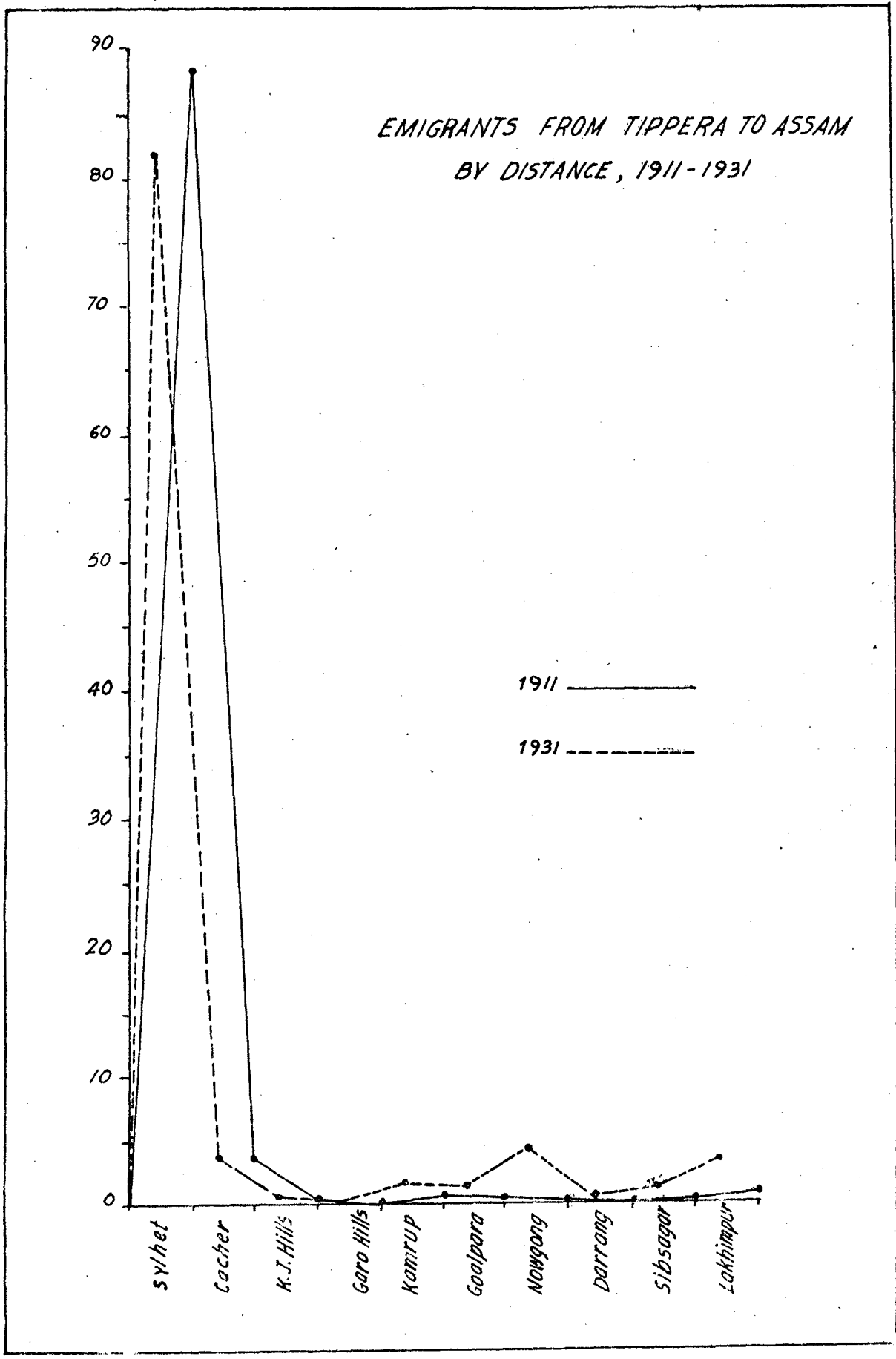
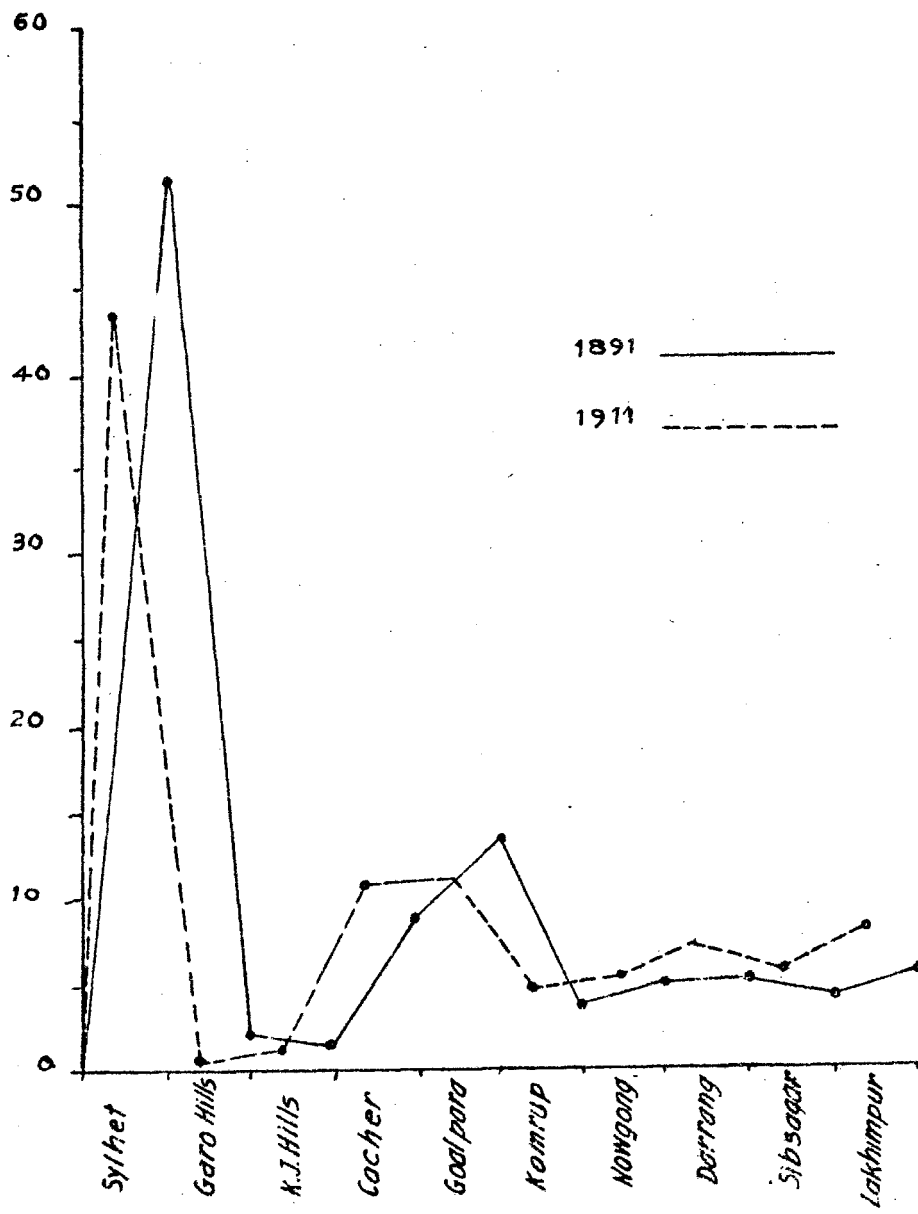


Fig-19

EMIGRANTS FROM DACCA TO ASSAM
BY DISTANCE, 1891-1911



The graphs clearly indicate that in most of the cases 90 per cent of the total volume is taken by the adjacent areas. with few exceptional areas absorbing 75 per cent of the total volume.

In brief it can be said that the present study substantiates the hypothesis of adjacent creep with the help of the stream of migration from Eastern Bengal especially from Mymensingh to Assam.

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APPENDIX I

- (1) Distance from Mymensingh, Rangpur, Tippera and Dacca to different districts of Assam.
- (2) Percentage to total migrants from Mymensingh, Rangpur, Tippera and Dacca to each Assam districts.

Scale: 40 Miles \approx 1 Inch.

Distance from Mymensingh

	Distance (in inch)	Percentage of Migrants				
		1891	1901	1911	1921	1931
Garo Hills	1.4	10.19	12.97	7.30		1.11
Sylhet	2.3	70.82	69.41	29.59		6.27
Goalpara	2.5	14.66	10.90	58.73	38.15	23.66
K&J Hills	2.8	.65	.34	.13		.07
Kamrup	3.3	1.65	1.02	1.34	19.73	26.89
Cachar	3.7	.65	.69	.33		.07
Newgong	4.5	.42	2.96	.97	34.21	32.13
Darrang	5.0	.28	.87	.98	7.89	8.96
S-ibsagar	6.8	.46	.52	.28		.07
Lakhimpur	8.3	.17	.28	.29		.72

Distance from Tippera

		<u>1891</u>	<u>1901</u>	<u>1911</u>	<u>1931</u>
Sylhet	2.1	95.26	94.26	93.51	91.86
Cachar	2.9	3.65	3.80	3.60	3.97
K.J. Hills	3.2	.28	.24	.34	.72
Garo Hills	3.4	.01	.05	.01	.04
Kamrup	4.1	.10	.26	.50	1.76
Goalpara	4.2	.34	.32	.45	1.54
Nowgong	4.9	.09	.13	.37	4.45
Darrang	5.4	.07	.24	.33	.73
Sibsagar	6.9	.04	.19	.33	1.18
Lakhimpur	8.4	.11	.46	.51	3.69

Distance from Dacca

Sylhet	3.1	51.13	43.65
Garo Hills	3.2	2.00	.43
K & J Hills	4.00	1.30	1.26
Cachar	4.2	8.71	11.02
Goalpara	4.3	13.22	11.33
Kamrup	4.8	3.72	4.58
Nowgong	5.8	5.00	5.35
Darrang	6.3	5.03	7.35
Sibsagar	7.9	4.40	6.96
Lakhimpur	9.5	5.45	8.02

Distance from Rangpur

	^{Dist} <u>1891</u>	<u>1891.</u>	<u>1901</u>	<u>1921</u>	<u>1931</u>
Garro Hills	1.5	13.99	6.95	3.47	1.91
Goalpara	2.2	82.43	90.22	91.88	77.28
Kamrup	3.9	2.01	.80	2.10	13.70
K & J Hills	4.0	.04	.06	.04	.06
Sylhet	4.3	.10	.42	1.41	.09
Nowgong	5.4	.59	.50	.23	.31
Darrang	5.6	.57	.62	.46	6.22
Cachar	5.7	.03	.08	.03	.02
Sibsagar	7.6	.14	.15	.09	.19
Lakhimpur	9.0	.06	.15	.23	.19

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