

“Agrarian Change in the Brahmaputra Valley (1826-1947)”

Abstract

Change is a common phenomenon associated with socio-economic, political and structural aspects of time and space. The Brahmaputra valley is the largest fertile alluvial plains tract located under Assam in India extending about six hundred kilometres from Sadiya in the east to Dhubri in the west where the Brahmaputra flows towards the south along the western edge of the Garo Hills. The Brahmaputra valley having vast land with low density of population offered living space for national and foreign rulers. The driving force of agrarian change was attributed to profit maximization and accumulation of wealth of the British. The ‘treaty of Yandaboo’ of 1826, marked a turning point for the Brahmaputra valley that brought domination of imperial rule and institutional and structural change in the agrarian system. For the fulfilment of revenue prospects, the colonial authority took an active role in transforming existing agrarian structure by introducing several agrarian policies. With the agrarian policies ranging from colonizing schemes of ‘Wasteland Grant Rule’ and ‘Grow more food’ of Saadulla Ministry, large numbers of immigrants from adjacent provinces were invited for cultivation of cash crops that later changed the landscape of the Brahmaputra valley. The agrarian change resulted in surplus production of valuable cash crops that promoted commercialization of agriculture. The transition in the agrarian system had socio-economic impact. The study attempts to delve into the role of the colonial state that effected agrarian change in the Brahmaputra valley.

Keywords: Agrarian Policy, Agrarian Change, Land and Revenue, Commercialization, Impact,