

Khemraj Sharma

Sociology of Indian Tea Industry

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This is a pioneering research work. It deals with the broad framework of inter-ethnic relationship between workers and management on the one hand and workers and workers hailing from various migrant ethnic groups to tea industry of Arunachal Pradesh on the other. The work also deals with the issues on migration and social change, economic life and cultural integration in tea industry of the state of Arunachal Pradesh. Since this is the first sociological study on tea plantation workers of the enchanted frontier of Arunachal Pradesh, it will be of immense help and guidance to the scholars and general readers who are interested to enrich their knowledge about the sociology of Indian Tea Industry in the near future.

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**SOCIOLOGY
OF
INDIAN
TEA INDUSTRY**
— A Study of Inter-Ethnic Relationships

Khemraj Sharma



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CONTENTS

<i>Preface</i>	vii
<i>List of Tables</i>	xi
1. Introduction	1
The North-Eastern Enclaves	
Problem of the Study	
Operationalisation of the Concept of Study	
Methodology of the Study	
Methods of Data Collection	
2. The Anula Shagun T.E.—Background and Scope	17
The Labour: An Inherent Constraint	
Evolution of Work Force in Arunachal Pradesh	
Structure of Work Force	
Age Structure of the Workers	
Labour Migration in Arunachal Pradesh	
Place of Birth of the Workers	
Workers Connection with their Places of Origin	
Education of the Workers	
Demography	
3. Economic Life of the Workers	33
Organisational Structure of Anula Shagun T.E.	
Land Holding Pattern	
Style of Life of the Workers	
Working Hours of the Workers	
Benefits for the Workers	
Housing Conditions of the Workers	
Caste and Income of the Workers	
Caste and Borrowings	
Plantation Workers and Trade Union Movement	
Labour Commitment to Tea Industry	

4. Social Living of the Workers	49
The Anula Shagun T.E. : Land of Migrants	
Traditional Social Structure of Nepalis	
Family	
Changing Roles of Family Members	
Marriage	
The Commensal Relations	
The Religious Practices of the Workers	
Health Practices of the Workers	
5. The Inter-Ethnic Relations	69
The Borrowing: Thread of Inter-Ethnic Integration	
6. Summary and Conclusion	81
State Sponsored Industrialisation	
The Eastern Enchanted Frontiers	
The Universe of the Study	
The Hindu-Buddhist Contact Zone	
Caste Continuities in Anula Shagun T.E.	
Maintenance of Ethnic Boundaries	
Emergence of Integrated Plantation Society	
Stratification over Hierarchy	
The Exploitation Syndrome	
Low Level of Living of the Workers	
Labour Commitment to Tea Industry	
Future of Anula Shagun T.E.	
<i>Bibliography</i>	89
<i>Index</i>	93

INTRODUCTION

The emergence of tea industry in the state of Arunachal Pradesh of North East India is a saga of Arunachal Pradesh Government Process of industrialisation of the state in the late eighties of 19th century. For the first time in 1977, Arunachal Pradesh Forest Development Corporation Ltd. was established by the Government of Arunachal Pradesh to Streamline the process of industrialisation so as to regularise and systematise the then wood cutting process in the state forests. The idea behind that was to continue the then wood based industry of the state more and more scientifically (Bose: 1997). Exploring the plantation potentials of the territory (North-East Frontier Agency), the Arunachal Forest Development Corporation Ltd. could successfully ventured to open tea plantations in eastern districts (Das: 1995) of the state. It started two tea plantations one at Kanubari and another at Medo of Tirap and Lohit districts respectively in the state of Arunachal Pradesh in 1991. Similarly, during the period, two private tea estates emerged, viz., M/S Siang Tea and Industries (P) Ltd. and M/S Namshum Tea Company (P) Ltd. in Changlang and Lohit Districts respectively in the state of Arunachal Pradesh. It is observed that the altitude, climatic conditions and topography of the eastern districts of the state mainly East Siang, Dibang Valley, Lohit, Changlang and Tirap are very congenial for the introduction and development of tea industry. The introduction of tea industry in those districts of the state was strongly endorsed by various expert committees (Das: 1994) appointed earlier for the purpose. But due to non-acceptance of the proposal of the committees by the government of Arunachal Pradesh during the eighties of 19th century, tea industry could not be introduced successfully before 1991 in the state. This might be the obvious reason why tea plantations under the Arunachal Pradesh Forest Development Corporation Ltd. are presently running at

tremendous loss. Although private tea plantations of the state are flourishing day by day, there are number of inherent constraints for their expansion. The main constraint is that the land policy of the state government does not allow outside corporate houses on tea to enter or to make an easy access into this aspect of state sponsored industrialisation process. It is because of the fact that most of the land in Arunachal Pradesh is community based or community (*Ibid.*) owned land and these lands cannot be leased out to any outsider. Due to this reason, banks have also not shown much interest to remit loans to such community owned land owners of the state for want of mortgages.

It has become an established fact that the government of Arunachal Pradesh cannot really forces the community based land owners to lease out their land for tea cultivation. Secondly, there is an acute problem of labour shortage in the plantations due to the restriction imposed on the import of outside labourers as per the Inner Line Permit policy of government of India (*Ibid.*). The local tribal people donot prefer to work as tea plantation labours (unskilled, manual jobs) for they are the owners of rich (fertile) cultivable wet land (*Ibid.*) and other natural resources of the region. Due to that, many new projects on tea plantation had been shut up in the state during 2001-2002 A.D.

According to the reports of Consultative Committee of Plantation Associations, Calcutta, there were seventeen tea estates in Arunachal Pradesh in 1966 having 11,0559 hectares of land under tea area. About 325 thousand kilograms of tea had been produced by those seventeen tea estates in the state during the period. The average daily employment of labourers as per their Muster Roll was 1,329 and another 450 labourers were employed on casual basis during the peak plucking season. It has also been mentioned in the reports (CCPA) that though a small tea estate of twenty hectares was established in 1981, its real expansion could take place in the state only after 1987. There were sufficient amount of land available from Jhum areas of about 70,000 hectares as per the report of North-Eastern Council. The Consultative Committee of plantation Association, Calcutta (1996) has also categorically projected that by the year 2006 A.D., there will be an additional 6,325 hectares of land under the tea with 9,225 kilograms of tea having 1,459 kilograms yield per hectare. The Tea Board of India has also projected that there will be an additional 13,932 kilograms of tea with another 8,225 hectares of land under the tea bushes having 1,694 kilograms yield per hectare by the year, 2006 A.D.

After 1995, a large number of local tribal entrepreneurs entered into tea plantation industry as an alternative to wood based industry due to the prohibition for deforestation imposed by the government of Arunachal Pradesh. But unlike other manufacturing or processing units, the plantation sector requires a large number of stable labour force within the territory. In view of her sparse population (*Ibid.*) of tribal origins and their utter reluctance to join the private sector industries during the late nineties of 19th century, the Arunachal Pradesh government started widely to accommodate a huge labour force from outside required for the development (*Ibid.*) of tea plantations in the region. Because of this step being taken by the government, the number of tea estates has reached to more than twenty today with three thousand workers and another one thousand casuals in the plantations, of Arunachal Pradesh. Almost 42,000 workers are working in medium and small scale industries (Bose: 1997) of the state.

The North Eastern Enclaves

As stated above, the tea plantations of Arunachal Pradesh are located in her eastern most districts. It has been proved over the two decades that the eastern districts of the state appeared to have been increasingly the safety enclaves for the government on the ground that the location of tea plantations is either at the Myanmar (Burma) border or near the Chinese (McMohan Line) mainland. The introduction of tea industry here has a historical relevance (*Ibid.*). Excepting two tea plantations under the Arunachal Pradesh Forest Development Corporation Ltd., all the eighteen tea estates located in the eastern most districts are under the ownership of local tribal elites to support the tribal based development policy (Das: 1995) of the state government. For example, Mr. Chowkhamoon Gohain Ex-member of Parliament from Khamti tribe of Lohit district, Mrs. Yapang of East Siang, Mrs. W.A. Rajkumar, the speaker of Legislative Assembly of Arunachal Pradesh State from Khonsa (Changlang District), Mr. Gore Pertin, Member of State Legislative Assembly from Dibang Valley District, Mr. Aken Lege of Roing (Dibang Valley district) etc. have owned tea plantations in the eastern enclaves of the state of North East India. Thus, elites associated with politics and administration have entered accurately into tea plantations (Mishra: 1994) of the state.

Excepting two tea estates, one each in Dibang Valley and another in East Siang districts, all the eighteen tea estates are located in Lohit, Changlang and Tirap districts of the state. There

are certain pertinent historical antecedents as mentioned above for such enclave formation. These locations are either on the foothills of Arunachal Pradesh or at Myanmar border being fully encircled by the dense forests. Till 1995, all tea leaves plucked in the Arunachal plantations had to be sent to Assam factories for manufacturings. But due to the increasing sense of regionalism and communal terrorism in the Assamese plantations, separate factories had to start in Arunachal plantations only after 1995. In the venture, they got sufficient loans from Tea Board of India with handsome subsidy being given to the tribal owners of the tribal state of North East India. Take for instance, in 1996, Tea Board of India provided Rs. 292.90 lakhs as loans and Rs. 160.10 lakhs as subsidy to the tribal tea plantation owners in Arunachal Pradesh.

This development process helped the tribal planters to make respective areas as complete enclaves as the British planters used to convert plantations into Plantocracy (Devi: 1989) or Planters' Raj (Guha: 1977) or Sahib-Coolies Raj (Sharma: 2003) in Assam and West Bengal. The onslaught of Liberalisation, Privatisation and Globalisation policy of Indian government for Indian industries in general (Ratnam: 2001) and tea plantation industry in particular (Bhowmik: 1996) after 1991, has further encouraged the tribal tea planters (owners) to convert the plantations into their absolute sovereignty. For example, Mr. Chowkhamoon Gohain of Chowkham, the owner of Gunna Tea Industries (P) Ltd. has named the area as Gunnanagar after the name of his late son 'Gunna'. Secondly, such enclave formation process appears to have been officially approved by the government of Arunachal Pradesh due to two most primordial reasons, viz., to keep strong national strategical base or strategical safety of the eastern most enchanted frontiers of the state and to get good revenue for the government as the cost of production of tea is very low of Rs. 20 only per kilogram of made tea while the Arunachal tea fetches Rs. 70 to Rs. 80 per kilogram of made tea in the national and international markets due to its high quality of tea leaves plucked from the young tea bushes of hardly fifteen years old. Excepting the wage of Rs. 35 per day per worker, no other extra welfare benefits or incentives are given to the workers. This is possible for tribal planters as all the workers are either Nepalese from Nepal Himalayas or Adivasis from the Assamese plain tea plantations. The Adivasis had been migrated here in the Arunachal tea plantations as they were reported to have been covertly involved in anti-social activities or terrorism of course under the banner of United Liberation Force of Assam (ULFA) in the plantations. Though these Adivasis are

scheduled tribes in Assam and West Bengal tea plantations, here they are treated as non-tribals along with the Nepalese workers. Thus, tribal-Non-tribal polarisation of the society has been sensed quite sufficiently in the plantations of Arunachal Pradesh. The enclaves have been persisting safely as the local tribal planters have received solid support from their own tribes on the one hand and the state political elites of the government on the other. Such eventuality has been further enunciated by the fact that non-tribal tea plantation workers have weak social foundation as they were the recent migrants from Nepal, Assam and other parts of the country. Historically, they were brought there with temporary Inner Line Permits the period of which has in most cases already lapsed. Most of them do not go for renewal of their Inner Line Permits anticipating legal complications (Das: 1995). This fact is well known to all the tribal planters and local tribal population as well. As a result of this, their stay in the plantations is inherently considered to be totally illegal. Due to this reason, non-tribal tea plantation workers do not have courage enough to raise their voice against the exploitation of the tribal-planter-owners. Because of this weakness, they are easily succumbed to any threat or coercion (*Ibid.*). This is the actual reason why the local tribal people do not want to join tea plantation jobs especially in the unskilled category. Therefore, it is presumed that such enclaves would not have been emerged if the tribal people of the region would have joined the plantation jobs. It is also conjectured that among the Nepalese workers there is no upper caste Hindus such as Brahmins or priestly double borned castes in the Anula Shagun T.E. as an integral part of the unskilled working force. In Nepali society, Brahmins or Bahuns are very talented castes among others both in Nepal and Eastern Himalayas (Sharma: 2000). It is not that the skilled industrial workers migrated to tea plantations of Arunachal Pradesh because of low wages, the story supplements that unskilled non-tribal reserve army have migrated to the plantations in search of their livelihood.

The unskilled labour force are mostly illiterates or semi-literates and therefore they do not know the terms and conditions of work or services. This has further enabled the tea planters to convert the Arunachal frontiers into strong enclaves.

Problem of the Study

This is a Sociological study of Nepalese tea plantation workers in Arunachal Pradesh of North-East India. For the sake of analytical convenience, the Anula Shagun T.E. of Lohit District of Arunachal Pradesh has been selected for the study. There are 150 households

of Nepali community consisting of 300 workers. Besides, there are another 100 Adivasi workers in the plantation. Therefore, the study of Nepalese tea plantation workers in Arunachal Pradesh invites an interesting Sociological proposition. They are working under a tribal planter-owner from Khamti tribe. The Khamti owner was once a Member of Parliament from Namsai area of Lohit district of Arunachal Pradesh. So far, hardly any study has been conducted on tea plantation workers of Arunachal Pradesh. The tribal planter as the owner of Anula Shagun T.E. along with two other tea estates in Tirap and Changlang Districts belongs to the elite group of the state who does not allow any outsider to penetrate into his gardens. The migration of Nepalese tea plantation workers to Anula Shagun T.E. has portrayed the fact that industrialisation process has evolved in the eastern most enchanted frontiers of the state. The Anula Shagun T.E., is a garden of a Khamti family. The pull factors behind the migration of Nepalese as tea plantation workers were due to manifold reasons as delineated below.

Firstly, the Nepalese could have their permanent settlement in the plantation environment which is perfectly an agro-based industry. Unlike other industries, tea industry possesses both agriculture and industrial characters (Xaxa: 1997) in the real sense of the term.

Secondly, the agrarian environment of tea plantation enabled the agrarian Nepalese people of Nepal Himalayas having landless occupational category of the past, to adapt the industrial environment of Anula Shagun T.E. of Arunachal Pradesh quite easily (Sharma: 2000).

Thirdly, the Nepalese people are by tradition, not only cultivate land for crops but they are also the staunch practitioners of animal husbandry. The plantation industry provides them with ample opportunity for animal husbandry as well as agriculture.

Fourthly, inspite of having tribal-non-tribal differences in Arunachal Pradesh, the Nepalese, due to their perseverance to work, could help to pay good agrarian revenue to the Government of Arunachal Pradesh because the Jhum (Shifting) cultivation of tribals, as the major constraint for development process, could not at all provide such revenue to the government.

Fifthly, basically the Nepalese people have deep resemblances in respect of their physical appearance (Parmer: 1990) and way of living with rest of the Arunachal tribes. For instance, the Khamtis of Namsai sub-division of Arunachal Pradesh have same physical

appearance as of the Nepalese. This might be one of the apparent reasons why most of the Khamti agrarian elites of Chowkham block where the Anula Shagun T.E. is located, have given land on share cropping to the Nepalese people (Dubey: 1975). This has given prior stimulus for complete comprehension and integration for the Nepalese into the tribal way of life in the region.

However, inspite of above mentioned area of integration of the Nepalese with the Khamti tribes of the region, Nepalese have retained their distinct ethnic identity (Subba: 1992) in respect of language, marriage and culture by internalising some of the cultural traits of dominant Khamti tribe of the region. This has become possible for Nepalese people as traditionally they were mainly tribes or sub-tribes of Nepal Himalayas (Sharma: 2003). The most glaring instance of their cultural integration as encouraged by the government of Arunachal Pradesh or Government of India in Arunachal Pradesh (Das: 1995) is language. The wide spoken Assamese language of the region has been totally internalised in day to day life by the Nepalese people. Besides the Assamese language, the tribal language/dialects are also fluently spoken by the Nepalese people in Arunachal Pradesh in general and the garden universe in particular. This is the main reason why tribes prefer Nepalese than Hindustanis in the plantation. This has been proved over the centuries that though Nepalese have curse to be called migrant, their ingenuity and agrarian versality have been positively ascertained by the government of Arunachal Pradesh and people there of. The sincere endeavours of Nepalese people have been profusely applauded by the tribes of North-East India including Arunachal Pradesh. This calibre as cultivated by the Nepalese has contributed a lot to the state economy (Sarkar and Lama: 1986) of Arunachal Pradesh. The government efforts to convert Jhum cultivation into the settled ones have been amply supported by the culture of terrace cultivation as it used to be done extensively by the Nepalese in the Himalayas. Therefore, Nepalese proved themselves to be the protagonists of wet rice cultivation in Arunachal Pradesh also (Sharma: 2000). Even the rough terraces for tea cultivation appeared to have been made following the Nepali instances of agrarian terracings in the Himalayan or sub-Himalayan regions of Arunachal Pradesh. The Perseverance to work has called the Nepalese as 'Khati Khane Manchees/Jati' meaning thereby the community survives by hard work and hard work alone. The same thing happened in case of Anula Shagun T.E. also where Mr. Chowkhamoon Gohain, the Khamti owner of the plantation had

to accept the Nepalese as plantation workers for his own tribesmen did not accept the plantation jobs for the two simplest reasons viz., mostly they were the owners of wet rice land (Pather) and Jhum land at that time at Chowkham and secondly, Khamtis are basically commercial minded tribe among other tribes (*Ibid.*) of Arunachal Pradesh. They always endeavour to have some sort of trade and business in the region (Bose: 1997).

From the above discussion, it is transparent that though Nepalese have fully integrated into the plantation environment, they often feel unsafe of their living in the plantation due to the increasing communal terrorism in North-Eastern region of the country. This has enforced them to be in close touch or contact with Nepal or their places of origin as Khamtis may also one day ask them to evacuate their land in Chowkham.

Heterogeneity, low wages, coercion and isolation were characteristic features of the plantation system (Bhowmik: 1981). Historically, such heterogeneity was completely sustained by the isolated enclaves all over the plantation world. The same characteristic features have also been found in Anula Shagun T.E. today. Though there are Adivasi workers in the plantation, the Nepalese workers have been kept in separate labour line known as Nepali labour Dhura. This has generated a kind of interesting Sociological proposition in so far as their socio-economic relationship is concerned.

Most scholars, while defining 'Plantation' system, normally overlook the socio-economic conditions of the workers. They have either elucidated the production relations or described the production unit itself (Sharma: 1994).

The International Labour Organisation (1950) notes the term 'plantation' at first as a group of settlers or the political units formed by it under the British colonialism especially in North America and West Indies (ILO: 1950). Prof. Hla Myint (1973) has distinguished the plantation from peasant agriculture by its large scale enterprise which normally requires more labour per unit of land. Again, William O. Jones (1968) defines the plantation as an economic unit of land producing relatively large number of unskilled labourers whose activities are closely supervised. Therefore, defining plantation and conceptualising relationship as a whole, mere elucidation of the economic characters and economic benefits of the owners of the industry is not at all adequate. The social relationship at the interpersonal and inter-community levels are also to be taken into due consideration (Sharma: 2000) with thorough caution (Sharma: 1997).

From the above discussion, certain pertinent questions may be administered here as to whether there is really a point of difference between tribal and non-tribal groups in Anula Shagun T.E.? How the Nepalese have retained their distinct socio-economic cum cultural existence with the local Khamti tribes including the owner of the plantation? Responding to these questions, it is very much comprehended that Nepalese are not only the protagonists of terraced cultivation but also the exponents of industrial development (Sharma: 2003) suitable to the Arunachal ecology.

The Nepalese tea plantation workers of Anula Shagun T.E. have no high Hindu caste background. Most of them belong to Matwali group of Nepali society of Nepal. Historically, the Nepalese Matwalis were toiling mass of Nepal Himalayas (Pradhan: 1991). They were very much prone to the Tribalisation (Matwalisation) process both in Nepal and Eastern Himalayas (Sharma: 1997). Whether such proneness to the tribalisation or Matwalisation process has helped them to adapt the local tribal (Khamti) industrial environment of Anula Shagun T.E.? This is another aspect of the study. The interactions between the Hinayana Buddhist Khamti tribes and Hindu Nepalese castes in regard to their day today economic activities have shaped to the tune of industrial environment in a loose form of the term *having specified organisational hierarchy with specific goals of the organisation in the plantation*. The management hierarchy is completely dominated by the Khamti tribe as even ninety-nine per cent of supervisory and office staffs are Khamtis by ethnicity. It has been observed that except wages and house building materials for constructing labour huts no industrial facilities are given to the workers. This might be the obvious reason why the Nepalese workers always remain busy with non-plantation and animal husbandry jobs. This has been amply conceptualized by the fact that the Nepalese are very popular for cow milk supplying job not only in Assam but also in Arunachal Pradesh. The major towns of Assam like Guwahati, Tezpur, Lakhimpur, Tinsukia, Jorhat, Dibrugarh etc. and Teju, Itanagar, Bomdila, Namsai etc. of Arunachal Pradesh get cow milk from the Nepalese people. It is also overtly observed that off 300 Nepalese workers of Anula Shagun T.E., 280 have animal husbandry along with agriculture in neighbouring Khamti villages of Chowkham.

Although the Anula Shagun T.E. is an agro-based industry formed after the abandonment of Namshum Saw and Vaneer Mills (P) Ltd., the workers feel that they do not by and large bother about its future as they have deep confidence on Mr. Gohain, The owner of the

plantation as god father of the area who will definitely save them in bad days as he did the same in case of the closure of Namshum Saw and Vaneer Mills (P) Ltd. at Gunnanagar (Chowkham) in 1987.

In this way, they are unorganised workers as no labour legislation of the Government of India has been implemented in the garden so far of its fifteen years of establishment. The workers donot have earned any consciousness for the formation of trade unions in the plantation. It means whatever the owner of the plantation provides them, they have to accept it forcefully. This shows that the workers are in the colonial system of production relations. A kind of industrial autocracy has taken place between the workers and management hailing from the family of Mr. Gohain. In this way, the plantation workers of Anula Shagun T.E. have been hardly come across the concept of trade union movement and working class solidarity. The industrial relation between the workers and management is the relation of Master-Servant in nature (Bhowmik: 1996). The workers being migrants have been made scared of ousting from the plantation by the management inspite of their aboding in the plantation for more than fifteen years or so of its existence. This is the reason why they always remain silent of their exploitation by the management system which is autocratic in form as the Managing Director, Directors etc. of the plantation belong to the same Khamti family. Even most of the supervisory and office staffs of the plantation hail from the Khamti tribe of the region. In this way, management hierarchy of the plantation is ethnically organised.

Another reason for the complete sustenance of such technique of taming coolies in the colonial form is due to the fact that the state government is guided by a Khamti Member of Legislative Assembly of Arunachal Pradesh from the Namsai constituency.

It is therefore transparent from the above discussion that the tribal ownership of tea industry being fully patronised by the Government of Arunachal Pradesh is as good as a British colonial enclave in the state to encourage to flourish the community based industrial development (Das: 1995) process and locals participation in the process. All the contracts regarding the supply of necessary goods and articles for the plantation are given to the local Khamti youngsters. Thus, coercion of the workers as exercised by the management (Bhowmik: 1995) is widely supported by the Khamti population of the region. Historically, Khamtis were migrated from upper Burma to Sadiya of Assam and later on from Sadiya to Chowkham area of Arunachal foothills (Gogoi: 1971). Thus,

Chowkham is the den of Khamtis due to the existing dense forests and fertile arable wet land since the British days (Bose: 1997) to lease out their land for share cropping to the Nepalese of Nepal Himalayas.

Operationalisation of the Concept of Study

There is hardly any study ever done on the tea plantation workers of Arunachal Pradesh except a few stray reports that are available at the Directorate of Industries, Government of Arunachal Pradesh. Thus, there is an absolute dearth of published materials on tea industry of the state. Hence, Anula Shagun T.E. is also not an exception in this regard. The reports of the Directorate of Industries, Government of Arunachal Pradesh, reveal some ideas about production figure, target, marketing situation etc. Not a single report of the Directorate of Industries has stated anything about the socio-economic conditions of work force of tea plantations of the state. The reports available with Tea Board of India revealed information about the quantum of subsidy provided to the tribal tea plantation owners along with the total loans sanctioned for extension and expansion of tea industry in the state. This may be the accurate reason why Mr. Gohain of Anula Shagun T.E. had only thirty hectares of land under tea in the year, 2000 A.D. but during my survey period (2002-2003) the area expanded to the tune of 219 hectares under tea bushes with three lakh and fifty thousand kilograms of made tea per year. Being the sole landowner of most of the villages of Gunnanagar (Chowkham), it is known that he is going to expand the plantation land under tea bushes to the tune of 700 hectares by the year, 2006 A.D. While the tea plantations under the Arunachal Pradesh Forest Development Corporation Ltd. (two in number) are in very deplorable conditions due to the non-availability of land for expansion as the neighbouring tribal and forest lands cannot be brought under tea cultivation. Moreover, cost of production is very high of Rs. 70 per kilogram of made tea while it is as mentioned above even less than Rs. 20 per kilogram in private sector tea plantations because the workers are devoid of any industrial incentives except the wage and house building materials. Above all, age of tea bushes is very young of hardly fifteen years old and the labour productivity is very high of 250 kilogram of made tea per worker per year.

The theoretical approach adopted in the study is Social Anthropological ones as the society of Anula Shagun T.E. is neither purely a Hindu caste oriented nor perfectly a tribal in nature. In fact, it is a Hindu-Buddhist integrated zone of Arunachal Pradesh.

Historically, the area was directly under the Assamese influence since the days of Ahom Kings (Dutta Choudhury: 1978, Bose: 1997). The Assamese society is predominantly a Hindu one. The three major communities of Anula Shagun T.E., viz., Khamti, Nepali and Adivasi, have common industrial habitation with separate labour lines for the workers and independent land holdings for the Khamtis. A kind of social stratification has been emerged between tribals and non-tribals here. Former claimed themselves as 'Sons of the Soil' of Arunachal Pradesh while later is considered as 'Migrants' or unskilled enchanted Coolies from outside the Arunachal Pradesh.

Under the situation as stated above, it is wholly agreed by all Nepalese castes that industrialisation process of Anula Shagun T.E. is an extra stimulus for their living. For them, agriculture minus industry is not a mishnomer while industry minus agriculture is completely a myth (Sharma: 2003) for their living here. This is the inherent reason why they have been stuck to the industry with all commitments inspite of their complete exploitation by the management system.

The present study focuses on not only the socio-economic life of tea plantation workers but also on health dimension, nature of Hindu-Buddhist relationship, changing social structure of the Nepali society, Family, Marriage, Education, religious structure, caste-tribe diffusion and diffission processes etc. in various chapters of the study. In regard to the economic life of the workers, land holding, animal husbandry, occupational structure, migration pattern, place of birth of the workers, income, borrowings, etc. have been analysed thoroughly. The migration history of Khamtis has also been incorporated in the present study.

Methodology of the Study

For the first time, I visited the Anula Shagun T.E. in June, 2002 to acquaint myself with the workers, management and other important personnel of the plantation. Being a Nepali by ethnicity, I was thoroughly accepted by the Nepalese tea plantation workers of the plantation. At first, Mr. Chowkhamoon Gohain, the Managing Director of the Gunna Tea Industries (P) Ltd. was found to be little bit indifferent to me when I explained the objectives of my research project. But later on during my survey (Field Work) period (November, 2002 to October, 2003) he was convinced to such an extent that he not only supported me morally but also provided me with the literature that was available with him about the emergence and growth of tea industry in Arunachal Pradesh. Besides this, the Government Gaon Bura of Gunnanagar Gram Panchayat, a few old Khamti village chiefs and

other influential people were also interviewed thoroughly on the historicity of the plantation and recruitment of workers in the plantation.

The Anula Shagun T.E. represents the emergence of tea industry in Arunachal Pradesh as a whole on the logic that it is located in eastern most district of not only Arunachal Pradesh but also of the country adjoining Myanmar. In fact, Lohit district is a frontier district of Arunachal Pradesh. Secondly, the plantation has accommodated 300 Nepalese and 100 Adivasi workers. No other tea plantations of the state have employed such a large percentage of Nepalese as manual (Unskilled) workers. All 150 households of Nepali community with 300 workers were covered under the study. The present study does not exclusively rely on theoretical sophistications but on the empirical data collected from Anula Shagun T.E. of Arunachal Pradesh during 2002 to 2003.

Methods of Data Collection

Considering the problem of the study, following sample questionnaire had been prepared. First section deals with the household census.

1. Name of the Respondent.
2. Relation with the head of the Family.
3. Age structure of the Family members.
4. Sex structure of the Family members.
5. Places of birth of the Family members.
6. Educational standards of the Family members.
7. Religious structure of the Family.
8. Occupational structure of the Family.
9. Land holding pattern of the Family.
10. Cattlestocks of the Family.
11. Modern Equipments of the Family.
12. Wage structure of the workers.
13. Number of Working persons in the family.
14. The name of the festivals observed in the family.
15. The name of festivals/rituals attended in other households.
16. Name of languages known to the workers.

The above questionnaire were administered for the pilot study to frame the following semi-structured questionnaire for conducting field survey in Anula Shagun T.E. on socio-economic as well as the cultural aspects of the workers.

1. Why did you migrated to Anula Shagun T.E.?
2. Who brought you to the plantation?
3. Where did you work before joining Anula Shagun T.E.?
4. What did you do in your place of origin?
5. How much wage you get in the plantation?
6. What are the other incentives you get from the plantation?
7. How many hours you work in a day in the plantation?
8. What are the main duty during the twelve months of the year?
9. How your management recruits workers in the plantation?
10. What type of industrial relation is there in your plantation between the workers and management?
11. Is there any social organisation in the plantation?
12. Which community is most dominant in the plantation?
13. Whether Gram Panchayat has any role in the plantation?
14. What are the relationship between the Nepalese and Khamti tribes in the plantation?
15. What kind of marriages have taken place in your family?
16. Number of marriages within the castes and communities.
17. Number of marriages with other castes and communities.
18. Do you accept Puccka foods from other communities?
19. Do you accept Kuccha foods from other castes and communities?
20. Do your management personnel attend marriage and death rituals in your house if they are called for?
21. Do you sacrifice animals' blood in your household rituals?
22. What are the common festivals in your plantation?
23. Do you invite other communities in celebrating family festivals?
24. What are the major food items you use in celebrating festivals and rituals?
25. Do you offer wine and meat to a Brahmin?
26. Do you accept inter-community marriages?
27. Do you think that there is inter-ethnic conflicts between tribals and non-tribals in the plantation?
28. Do you celebrate communal festivals? If yes, why? If no, Why?
29. Do you invite Shahmen (Jhankris) in celebrating festivals or rituals?
30. Where do you go first, if any of your family member falls sick?

- Jhankri or to a Doctor? If to a Doctor, Why? If to a Jhankri, Why?
31. Does one community helps others in times of emergency? If yes, how? If no, Why?
 32. Do you think that there should be a trade union or workers organisation in the plantation?
 33. Is there any Bhatti (liquor furnace) in the plantation?
 34. Do tribal neighbours invite you in their festivals? If yes, how? If no, Why?
 35. Do you cast votes? If yes, since when? If no, Why?
 36. Whether you share crops with the tribal owner? If yes, how much per year?
 37. Do you pay land tax? If yes, to whom-landowners or government?
 38. Do you have to pay anything for keeping cattle stocks? If yes, to whom?
 39. Whether you visit your place of origin once in a year/two or so? If no, why? If yes, Why?
 40. Whether there was any communal riot here between tribes and non-tribes in the past years?
 41. Whether you face threats from terrorist organisations?
 42. How your government officers treat you?
 43. Whether you can avail forest resources as enjoyed by the tribals of the region?
 44. Do you left the plantation if your owner of the plantation asks you to leave any time? If yes, why? If no, Why?
 45. What are the division of roles among the family members?
 46. How many new babies were borned in your family during the last ten years?
 47. How many members died in your family during the last ten years?
 48. Do you heard anything about family planning? If yes, have any member of your family have undergone vasectomy or tubectomy operations?
 49. Do you believe on 'Small Family Norms'. If yes, why? If no, why?
 50. Whether the local Khamti tribes (Buddhists) try to convert Nepalese or other communities into the Buddhist religion?