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Patterns of Internal Labour migrations in Colonial Madras Presidency (Andhra)-1858-1947

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Introduction

The present paper presents an analysis of the patterns of internal labour mobility in Colonial Andhra region in Madras Presidency, the internal migrations in Andhra which are basically rural to rural and rural to urban. Large groups of people began to move from one district to another district in search of seasonal employment or occupation which would enable them to earn their livelihood. These internal migrations were mostly to the contiguous districts of the same province and to other provinces as well. The main concern of colonial state was to maintain the supply and flow of labour, at low prices which the migration system made possible, even

¹ Author's Note: This Paper is based on my Ph.D. thesis, “The Patterns of Internal labour Migrations in Colonial Madras Presidency (Andhra), c.1858-1947”, yet to be submitted to The Department of History, University of Hyderabad. I am grateful to my supervisor Dr. Anindita Mukhopadhyaya who encouraged me to write this paper. The responsibility is mine if any errors left uncorrected.

when it was not directly and obviously visible to the migrants, it maintained the conditions of work and migration as much as it served to extract funds from agriculture. The Colonial Government was interested in agriculture and agroindustries, as it was the area from which the maximum revenue came from. The pattern of migrations in late 19th century to early 20 century colonial Andhra can be seen at different levels. Firstly, labour obtained for the construction of “Trunk Roads” was one of the major forms of temporary migration. Secondly, the Colonial Government in Andhra region undertook many Public Works, chiefly major irrigational works like Godavari anicut, Krishna anicut, for maximizing their revenues from this delta lands. These projects drew upon the rural masses to these delta areas to work on major irrigational works. The Third level of migrations was due to the construction of railways. The railway construction was heavily labour intensive as it depended on an adequate supply of labour. During the whole course of the period from 1850-1900, North Coastal Andhra (Ganjam, Vizagapatnam) And Ceded Districts of Andhra (Cuddapah, Karnool Bellary Ananthapuram) suffered drought and famine which resulted at the fourth level labour migrations towards relief work areas. Fifthly, the phenomenon of agricultural labour migration on seasonal basis from “backward areas” to more developed ones was on the increase from late nineteenth century which led to seasonal migration. And migrations from rural to urban areas, which can be seen in Vizagapatnam, Rajamundry, Bezawada, Cuddapah, Kurnool and Nellore which are chief urban centers during this period labour went in search of livelihood in the small scale industries, ports, rice mills etc in these cities.

The internal migration of Telugu labour to other parts of India to Assam tea plantation areas increased as the poor peasants and landless labourers were recruited to Assam tea plantations from Ganjam, Vizagapatanam and upland areas of Godavari, Kistnah. Secondly, emigration to Burma was from the northern coastal Andhra districts of Ganjam, Vizagapatanam, and south coastal Andhra districts of Godavari and Kistnah. In Burma the vast majority of the Telugu laborers were engaged in unskilled jobs. However, they worked mainly in the rice and saw mills, oil wells and refineries, harbors, shipping companies, and harvesting fields.

Labour Migrations on Public Works

Public works to a great extent were carried out in a rural setting. The construction of irrigational canals, roads, railways and other infrastructural works stimulated labour migration during the last hundred years of colonial rule and in fact made it necessary. Those who worked on these labour intensive projects were migrants huge armies of men, women and children- some times lodging for years in contemporary camps on the actual work sites.²

The history of Public Works Department in Madras Presidency divides itself naturally into two periods-Periods anterior to the formation of regular public works department in 1858 and later.³ Firstly, the practice of employing “convicts” on making-roads in detached gangs under public works department, abrogated under this presidency in accordance with orders from the Indian government. The returns for the year 1852 gave the entire number of convicts under sentence of labour through out the districts of the presidency, as 5,705. Out of this number 3,215 were employed on the public roads and streets.⁴ Secondly, “Compulsory Labour” and “Voluntary Labour” on making-road, The Lieutent Rundall, Civil Engineer, Waltaire, states that Vizainagaram to Bimlipatnam road, that though at first no more than 100 or 200 people daily could be obtained and that under compulsion, yet as soon as it became known that that the hire was regularly paid every evening, the people came in crowds, and within 10 days there were 2000 “voluntary labourers” every day.

The irrigation works administered by the government may be divided in to three main classes. In the first of these come what are technically known as ‘major works’, the outlay which usually met from Imperial funds. These include the great delta systems in the deltas of the Godavari, Kisthah, Penneru, and Cuavery, and other important undertakings such as the Kurnool-Cuddapah canal and Periar Project. The delta systems depend upon great masonry anicuts or dams, which have been thrown across the rivers at the head of the deltas, and consist of a network of channels to distribute the water so rendered available. The Second class of irrigation works is financed from provincial funds for ‘minor works’. It includes chiefly the systems dependent upon the dams across the rivers and few of ‘tanks’ and artificial reservoirs. The third class includes

² Jan Breman, “*Labour Migration and Rural Transformation in Colonial Asia*”, Free University Press, Amsterdam, 1990. P12.

³ Maclean, C.D, *Manual of The Administration of The Madras Presidency*, Delhi, 1987. previous to the year 1858, all public works were carried on under three distinct and independent departments; Viz. 1st. The Maramat Department of Board of Revenue, 2nd the Trunk Road Department, 3rd Military Board.

⁴ First Report of the Commission on Public Works, Printed at Saint Goerge Gezette Press, 1853. P291-292.

thousand of smaller channels and tanks throughout the presidency, for which no capital accounts are kept. The clearance of smaller channels and similar petty repairs are generally carried out by the cultivators themselves, by what is called *kudi-Maramat* or *Customary labour*.⁵ “Customary labour” is an ancient system of labour of minor irrigation works and repair of all masonry works and embankments and annual silt clearances required on channels that irrigate the lands of two villages or more, the villagers themselves undertake all the necessary repairs on the smaller channels.⁶ Secondly, “Compulsory labour” or “Forced labour and “Voluntary labour”, for construction of major irrigational works. Compulsory and voluntary labourers were obtained for construction of major irrigational works. The larger irrigational works during the mid nineteenth century in Andhra were Godavari anicut and Kistanah anicut. The project received the approval of the Government for construction of anicut on Godavari River from the court of directors, the works at first sanctioned was commenced early in 1847. At first few hundred people assembled, but by the arrangements of the sub collector, about 4000 labourers were collected in a short time, and after a few weeks they began to come in a considerable number of labourers, amounting to 10,000 before setting in of the monsoon called them away to cultivation. The numbers have since fallen to about 3000 employed at this place.⁷ The substitution of “Voluntary” for “Forced labour” had been introduced by major cotton towards the later end of 1852. Formerly coolies were always sent certain appointed number from each village, by the Amildar, under orders from the officer incharge, to what ever works they were required for, system commenced during the construction of the anicut, much against the will of Major Cotton, who felt him self compelled to resort to it to secure a sufficient number of work people. It was not till the close of 1852 that Major A.T.Cotton abandoned it, and ordered it to be discontinued throughout the works under the executive charge of the engineering department. The voluntary system once introduced, the people flocked in

⁵ Imperial Gazzetter of India Provecial Series, Madras Vol-I, Reprint, Usha , Delhi, 1985. PP50-51

⁶ A.T.Rundel, *Irrigation and Customary labour in Madras Presidency*, Madras, 1879.

⁷ George.T.Walch, “*The Engineering Works of Godavari Delta*”, Madras Govt. Press, 1896. P34; The origin of the Godavari project was so long ago as before the close of the last century, an Engineer (Mr. Topping) had observed the facility of with which the Godavari might be made to irrigate the district on its banks, and had brought to the notice of government how desirable it was to throw an anicut or dam across the river. The Civil Engineer Captain A.T.Cotton, First made a general report (12th August 1844) on the feasibility of the project and probable results; and having been directed to collect and submit more specific information, and he made second and more detailed report on the April 17, 1845 with the detailed estimates of the cost of an anicut across the Godavari River. And also see G.N.Rao, “Canal irrigation and agrarian change in colonial Andhra: a study of Godavari, c.1850-1890. *Indian Economic and Social Historical Review* No.25, 1, 1988. pp26-30

numbers to the works. In a few months the number of coolies employed amounted to 20,000. The system followed was simply to give advances to all who asked for work, and when necessary provide them with tools. The Voluntary labour system was indeed part of a complete and most beneficial change in the manner in which the works had, up to that time, been conducted, and to it owing, in great measure, that we were enabled to command the great amount of labour required for the extraordinary exertions made that year to secure crops endangered by the failure of the monsoon.⁸ The construction of Kistna anicut was proposed to prevent such another 1833 famine of Guntoor. The government having in March, 1852, determined upon proceeding with the construction of an anicut across the Kistnah River, for which the sanction of the court of directors had been given some time previously. The rates of wages had been fixed at two annas per deim for an able bodied daily men coolie.

Notwithstanding this liberal scale of remuneration compared with prices hitherto paid for labour in this part of the country, very few people of adjoining districts have come in.⁹ The great deficiency of labour, that on the total dispersion of the people by the breaking out of the cholera in April 1852, the four large head and under sluices and the bridge and lock at Bezawada, were so far advanced that their completion might be proceeded with throughout the following monsoon with such workmen as could again be brought together.¹⁰ For Kistnah anicut coercion is used for the supply of labourers, it is now full activity at the works of Kistnah. Tahsildars were ordered to supply labourers for Kistnah anicut, he sends out a number of peons to collect men and escort them to the spot. In due time they reach the work with a gang of men; if this is under direct European superintendence, it is probable that the hire will be regularly paid to the labourers; but even then such are annoyance within the power of the peons that they have little difficulty in securing a share of it to themselves.

Thus the amounts of hire diminish to the labourer; but this is not the only cause which makes such employment distasteful to them. Though they have not sufficient independence to resist coercion, they have enough to make them dislike it; and this feeling unites with the

⁸ Selections from the Records of Madras Government -Report on important Public Works for 1853.P53

⁹ George.T.Walch, "*The Engineering Works of Kistnah Delta*", Madras Govt Press, 1896 P59 .And also see G.N.Rao, "Transition from Subsistence to Commercialized Agriculture: A study of Kistnah District of Andhra,c1850-1900" *Economic and Political Weekly* Vol XX Nos 25 and 26 pp A60-A61.

¹⁰ Selections from the Records of Madras Government-Report on important Public Works for 1853.P61

aversion to being plundered, to make employment on the public works unpopular with those labouring classes under such circumstances. But these means, bad as they are the only means in the power of the Revenue authorities to supply labour, and it's not in the nature of things that they can be much amended; therefore those revenue officers ought to be entirely separated from the work. All that is wanted on the part of the engineer officers to give them the command of the labour market is that all shall be fairly treated and punctually paid.¹¹ For the Construction of Godavari and Kistna Anicuts labourers were procured from neighboring districts of Ganjam, Vizagapatnam, Rajamundry, Musulipatnam districts and also from Nagpore. During 1862 owing to the increase of cultivation in those districts consequent and the extension of public works labourers could not be obtained. But in Hyderabad 2000 labourers were available and could be procured Captain F.T. Haig, District Engineer, Upper Godavari, requested Major A.R. Thornhill, Acting Resident, Hyderabad, that you will be so good enough to use your influence to obtain labour from Hyderabad Government. Major A.R. Thornhill replied that owing to the large number of public works now in progress at

Hyderabad, I regret it is not in my power to enforce the export of labourers from His Highness The Nizam's dominions contrary to the wishes of the Minister, who is averse to workmen being sent out of the Hyderabad territory, owing to the scarcity of labourers in Hyderabad and its vicinity.¹²

In getting the railways of India built the British used the labour power of Indian men, women and children. Substantial number of Indians became involved in railway construction in particular localities. Firstly, men reserved themselves for jobs required more strength that is physical. Secondly excavators were usually men; laborers were often women and children. Thirdly, they were the part of that already established floating group in the countryside - servants-artisans and labours -who were mobile and without land.¹³ (1) For example, many of skilled Punjabi workmen traveled almost a 1000 miles eastward to work on the Krishna Bridge for the East cost state railway. Bridge building also created a substantial and continuing divided

¹¹ Second Report of the Madras Public works Commissioners, Madras, 1853 P73-76

¹² Government Order No. 822, 14-5-1862; G.O.No277,8-11-1862; Go.No.404,3-2-1863 Public Works Department Proceedings Madras Presidency.(Here after G.O)

¹³ Ian. J .Keer , "Building the Railways of Raj 1850-1900" Oxford University Press, New Delhi, 1995. P89

for masons who were soon recreated to work sites on inter- regional basis and from beyond.¹⁴ (2) The continued large demands for railway construction workers stimulated the growth of regional and interregional labour markets within which “circulatinglabour” increasingly met the needs of railway companies.¹⁵ Most of these workers particularly earth workers. Who played a prominent role in the construction of the railways whose occupation before the railways for contours or large had involved earthwork in such forms as the digging of tanks well and canals or in the making rails. The excavation mentioned most often in the records were a sub caste *odde* in telugu, their activities as that digging can be documented at least back to Vizayanagara times. The women carried the earths in baskets while the men wielded the pick and spend they are employed largely in public work dependent and with construction and maintenance railways. Oddes were a significant component of the groups who migrated over long distance to work who moved more effectively than any other group and who helped to free railway companies from labour obtained from village population whose pressure at work sites at certain times of the agriculturally year could not be counted on.¹⁶ Thirdly, additional labourers and excavators who could not be supplied from the wider pools of circulating labour continued to be sought among the village population near the right way of railway constructions also helped to enlarge the number of used labourers by detaching some from village attachments to the ranks of circulating labour.¹⁷ The climate dictated that much of railway construction in India was seasonal, therefore many migrant workers returned home in the off season. For example in 1887-88 in Kistnah district there was a rise in the wages owing to the progress of railway works, average wages of agricultural labourers in the rural tracts varied from Rs. 3-8-0 to Rs. 5/- a month.¹⁸ In 1890-91, there was an increase in the rates of wages of agricultural labour in the rural tracts of Vizagapatnam, owing to the commencement of work on the eastcoast railway. In Anantapur and one taluk of Cuddapah districts increase of agricultural labour was also to the commencement of

¹⁴ Idid, P117.

¹⁵ Ibid p91

¹⁶ Census of Madras Presidency 1871, Vol-1:Report (Madras, 1874),P.157.; Edgar Thurston, Castes and Tribes of South India,Vol-5,(Madras: Government Press,1909),PP422-36.; Chandrasekhar Bhat, *Ethnicity and Mobility: Emerging Ethnic Identity and Social Mobility Among The Waddars of South India*, Concept Publishing Company, New Delhi,1894.

¹⁷ Ian J Keer,opp.cit P92

¹⁸ Report on the administration of Madras presidency 1888-89 p67

works on the Vellumpurm - Gunthakal.¹⁹ In Nellore there was smaller demand for agricultural labour, owing to the completion of the railway works during 1899-1900.²⁰ In Vizagapatnam the collector reported in 1893, that although wage rates had on the whole been stable for last thirty years “there has been alteration put it has taken the form of a reduction in the quality and quantity of the work done for the same money” this was because partly the labourer work on the construction of the east-coast railway, so that the quality of the labourers remaining in the agriculture declined.²¹

Famine Labour Migration

Famines have been defined as a state of hunger suffered by the population of a region as a result of the failure of the accustomed food supply.²² Definitions of famine abound, most of them cantering on food scarcity leading to mass hunger and deaths.²³ Famines were no strange to the Madras Presidency 150th years of colonial rule. The period during this period, famines and scarcity followed each other in 1729-33, 1781-2, 1807, 1833-4, 1854, and 1866.²⁴ 1876 – 8 (Great famine) famine was usually widespread as well as exceptionally persistent. Of the 21 madras districts 14 were badly affected; it was officially estimated that at least 3.5 million people died in the famine of madras as immediate source of food and water disappeared, as employment vanished and local charity failed, peasants individually, in family groups, or in gangs, set out in search of work and subsistence elsewhere. For some this may have been no more than flight, a desperate bid to escape from destitution and starvation.²⁵ The four Daccan districts- Cuddapah, Kurnool, Bellary and Ananthapur- where the rainfall is light, and soil usually infertile and the large irrigational works are few, have suffered more consistently than any others, though Nellore

¹⁹ Report on the administration of Madras presidency 1890-91 p69

²⁰ Report of the administration of Madras presidency 1899-1900 p70

²¹ Dharma, *Land and Caste in South India*, Monahar, New Delhi, 1992. P

²² Southern “Famine” Encyclopaedia of Social sciences Vol-VI, p85 Kumar William A. Dando, *The Geography of Famine*, London, 1980, pp57-65

²³ William A. Dando, *The Geography of Famine*, London, 1980, pp57-65

²⁴ David Arnold, “Famine in Peasant Consciousness and peasant action Madras 1876-78” *Subaltern Studies- III*, (ed) Rangith Guha, Oxford University Press, Delhi, 1989. pp66-68

²⁵ David Arnold, opp.cit p 97

is not far behind them in this melancholy precedence.²⁶ The 1876 famine severely affected the Daccan districts of Andhra were Ballery, Cuddaph, Kurnool. The collectors of Deccan districts had ordered to induce the labourers of these districts to migrate to the East Coast Canal work in Nellore, these collectors were ordered to let it be known that men could earn easily 2 or 3 annas a day on that work, women 2 annas, and boys and girls one and half anna each, while a family of three members could earn 8 annas a day. From Karnool district people migrated to the neighbouring delta district of Kistnah.²⁷ There was a rural poor exodus from the interior Telugu country to the irrigated deltas of the kistnah and Godavari Deltas. In 1890-91 in Nellore district the southern parts of the district suffered as ever drought and 1891-92 in the more northerly taluks felt the famine, in 1897-98 the district was again was visited by famine the class most liable to suffer from famine is of course the labour classes, the causes to diminish their population ,there is no reason to suppose that the causes of decrease is any thing except migration.²⁸ In Vizagapatanam 1889, the year of Ganjam famine, the district escaped chiefly owing to the proximity of the Godavari district where there is always a large demand for labour in the in the hot weather. The district suffered twice from the scarcity during the last decade, once in 1891—92 and again in 1896-97.²⁹

Rural to Rural Migration of Labour

More significant phenomenon of migration on seasonal basis from “backward” areas to more “developed” ones was on the increase. There is a normal movement of population every year from the poorer districts to the highly irrigated tracts of the deltas. The construction of the Anicut across the Godavari is a great boon to this part of the country.³⁰ Since its construction, the district is intersected with canals, useful not only for the agriculture, but also for the navigation. The area of irrigated land in the delta has increased from less than 150,000 acres of precarious

²⁶ Imperial Gazetteer of India: Provincial Series, Madras Vol -I, Reprint, Usha, Delhi, 1985.P80.

²⁷ Rajashekhar.D, “Famines and Changing Peasant Mobility: Changing Agrarian Structure in Kurnool District of Andhra, 1870-1900”. *Indian Economic and Social Historical Review*, 28, 2 (1991).P137.

²⁸ Statistical Atlas of Madras Presidency, 1908 pp300-301

²⁹ Ibid p62

³⁰ Srinivas Raghavaiyagar, “Memorandum on the Progress of the Madras Presidency: During the Last Forty Years of British Administration”, Asian Educational Services new Delhi, 1988.

cultivation to (in 1893-94) 640,744 acres first crop and 80,966 second crop. The total Revenue raised in the District has in forty years increased from 24 lakhs to 88 lakhs.³¹ The thousands move every year from Vizagapatnam, uplands of Godavari, Kistnah and Gunture, Kurnool and Nellore districts to the lands watered by the Kistnah and Godavari. The temporary labourer flows annually into the delta for employment during the transplantation and harvest seasons. The lands in the Kolair lake were bought by well to do ryots or merchants living in the large villages some few miles distant, Ellore for example or Akividu. The purchase of such lands will cultivate them by hired laborers who will not reside on the spot, but will be brought to lands only at the seasons of transplantations and harvest, and will be temporarily housed at these stations established practice for the laborers of these dry tracts to drift into the delta at the theses seasons and return home when the transplantation or reaping is over. In some cases these people finding conditions favorable, settle down in the districts to which they have come.³² Several new hamlets have sprung up by the side of the Pedddalanka channel towards its extreme end. A community of native Christians planted in one of these hamlets has flourished. A disserted village called Amaravathi has been rebuilt by a community of Uppparas (Professional earth diggers) and a body of emigrants from Vizagapatnam District has settled in another hamlet, which they named Bobbiligudem, after the head quarters of Bobbilaraja. The two latter communities are doubtlessly drawn from the great class of imported labourers.³³ It was noted that the delta districts increasingly absorbed immigrant labour from contiguous districts: 1.43 lakhs in 1921 and 2.13 lakhs in 1931.³⁴

Rural -to- Urban Migrations of Labour

The growth and development of many modern towns in the Andhra region began by end of the 19th. The movement of rural population to the urban areas was largely due to higher wages and greater freedom from caste repression which the towns held out to the lower section of the

³¹ *The Engineering Works of Godavari Delta*, opp. cit. p

³² Royal Commission on Agriculture Madras Presidency, 1930 P, 313.

³³ Special Revenue Officer's Report on the Kistnah Reservoir Project, With the Proceedings of the Board of Revenue and the orders dated 8th, August 1911 in Kistna Reservoir Project-I, Madras, 1912. PP219, 240-242.

³⁴ Madras Census Reports, Part 1 of 1921 and 1931, P95.

population.³⁵ “After ruin, go to city”, thus ran a south Indian proverb.³⁶ Given the lack of employment opportunities in the countryside and population pressure many of the ruined peasants and artisans migrated to towns in search of work. Infact agroindustries to some extent provided employment to such immigrants.³⁷ The fact that there had been an increasing degree of “exodus” of rural labour to towns where industrial activities were being established .The jute mills in Vizagapatnam district, rice mills in the Godavari and Kistnah delta Districts, and cotton presses and groundnut decorating factories, in the Ceded districts certainly absorbed some of the rural proletariat. However this kind of employment was casual and seasonal.³⁸

Inter- Provincial Labour Migration

Emigration from Madras Presidency to other parts of India can be groped under three heads. The first is a social or trading trans-frontier movement which need not detain us. The second was to tea gardens in Assam and third to Burma³⁹. The origin of labour for industrial undertakings and for the plantations in British India is drawn from almost wholly from the agricultural labouring classes in India. The rural population of South India is rooted to the soil; so tenaciously conservative and so averse to movement of any kind. The rural poor leaving their homes because they were compelled by force of circumstances. Poverty, love of adventure and desire to escape from the arms of the law are the three obvious reasons which induce a man to leave his native place and go elsewhere.⁴⁰

Migration to Assam

³⁵ Ramakistna V, *Social Reform Movements in Andhra*, Vikas Publishing House, New Delhi, 1993.PP34-35.

³⁶ Baker,C.J., *The politics of South India,1920-1937*, Cambridge University Press,Delhi,1976.P184.

³⁷ Ramana Rao.AV, *Economic Development of Andhra Pradesh, 1766-1957*, Popular Book House, Bombay, 1958, P163.

³⁸ Satyanarayana.A, “*Andhra Peasants Under British Rule: Agrarian Relations and Rural Economy 1900-1940*” Monohar, New Delhi,1990, P,130.

³⁹ Census of India,1931,Vol-XIV,Madras,Part-II,Madras,1932.p82

⁴⁰ Written Evidence of Mr Rajaiah D.Paul,M.A, Deputy Collector on Special Duty as Forest Panchayt Officer Madras. G. O. No 727L, 28.2.1930, PWD Labour.

The tea industry, from the 1840s onwards the earliest commercial enterprise established by private British capital in the Assam Valley, had been major employer of wage labourer there during the colonial rule. The Assam Valley was sparsely populated when the Assam Company commenced its operations in the 1840s and, as a consequence, shortage of labour was a serious problem. The initial experiment of importing Chinese labour for planting turned out to be complete fiasco. Serious efforts were then made to procure labour both locally and from neighboring Bengal through *sirdars* and individual agents, mostly fortune-seeking English men.⁴¹ Faced with acute shortage of labour, the planters had to seek labour from sources some hundreds of miles away. They resorted to policy of organized recruitment of labour from tribal/semi-tribal, as well as non tribal low caste peasant, the communities inhabiting an extensive area spread over the Bengal Presidency, the eastern part of the United Provinces, certain areas of Central Province, and the districts of Ganjam and Visakapatanam in the Madras Presidency.⁴² Emigration of labourers to the Assam tea gardens was common from Ganjam and Vizagapatanam districts. The first cause for this emigration is pressure of population on land, in other words the existing quantity of land and the income there from is unable to support the number dependant upon it, in Vizagapatanam an acre of cultivated land has to support more than two persons. Second cause is attractiveness of higher wages and continuity of employment on the Assam tea plantations. Third cause is heavy pressure on land is further aggravated by recurring bad seasons; the average rain fall is low in both Ganjam and Vizagapatanam districts. Fourth cause is lower castes wants to be escape from the forms of servitude such as the *vetti*, the *goti* systems, is emigration. The system of *vetti* is a sort of debt bondage or debt slavery and bonded labour, was confined to the jeypore area in Ganjam district. Under *goti* system the land lord advanced loans on condition that the tribal labourer would compulsorily render labour. Apartthe from zamindar, the government also practiced *vetti*. They normally granted or permitted the tribal population to freely cultivate in unreserved forest areas for which they had to render labour when ever required. The tribal coolie

⁴¹ Rana.P.Behal and Marcel van der Linden (Ed), *India's Labouring Poor: Historical Stidies,c.1600-2000*, Foundation Books,Delhi,2007.PP143,157.; Rana.P.Behal and Prabhu P. Mohapatra, "Tea and Money versus Human Life': The Rise and Fall of the Indenture System in the Assam Tea Plantations", 1840-1908, *Journal of Peasant Studies*, Vol-19,number 314, April/July 1992.P146. Rana P.Behal "Forms of Labour Protest in Assam Valley Tea Plantaions, 1900-1930, *Economic and Political weekly* VolXX, no.4, January 26, 1985, PE19-26.

⁴² Ranjith Das Gupta, "Plantation Labour in Colonial India", *Journal of Peasant Studies*, Vol-19, number 314, April/July.

labourers were employed mainly in road construction and forest clearance. There was a competition for tribal labour between the tea garden agents of Assam tea plantations and local Zamindars.⁴³ There was a well attended public meeting at Jeypore under the auspicious of the Oriya Samaj with Sriman Hari Hara Misra Mahasayo, Pleader, Jeypore in the chair on 26-10-1929 to protest against the recruitment of labourers from Jeypore Agency. He said there was already the scarcity of labour which was felt not only by the agriculturalists whose needs, the government might not care for, but also the PWD felt the want of labourer severely. The main profession in Jeypore Agency was agriculture and it could not be carried on with out sufficient labour –of both men and women, children. He hoped the government which, at least at this late hour, would come to the help of the agriculturalists and prohibit labour recruitment under section 3 of Assam Tea Estates Labour Recruitment Act of 1901. Under this Act the local government has power to prohibit recruitment absolutely in any area and also to control recruitment in accordance with the provisions of the act. In 1902 the Agency tracts of Vizagapatnam including the Jeypore Agency were ordered to be closed for recruitment to Assam mainly on the ground that the backwardness and remoteness of the area made it difficult to control recruiting and keep it free from abuses. The question of the opening up of the tracts was pressed on this Government by the Assam Labour Enquiry Committee of 1906, by the Indian Tea Association and by the Government of India, but the local officers were more or less opposed to emigration except on certain safeguards. Subsequently in 1916 with the formation of the Assam of the Assam Labour Board and consequent improvement in the supervision of recruiting operations and the abolition of the contractors of recruitment the government permitted recruitment from certain specified castes namely Khonds, Dombs, and Gharis, Savaras and within certain specified areas including Jeypore. As the throwing open of certain areas only for recruitment gave rise to the complication and was found difficult to work in practice , the government sanctioned in 1920 the recruitment of Dombs only from the whole of the Vizagapatnam Agency including Jeypore after satisfying themselves that such measure would not depopulate the agency. The position in regard to recruitment for Assam in the year 1922 was as follows. (1) From whole of Ganjam Agency irrespective of tribe, (2) From Vizagapatnam in respect of Dombs only, (3) From the Plain districts of Ganjam, Vizagapatnam, Godavari, Kistnah, Gunture and Nellore. In 1923 after a

⁴³ Royal Commission on Labour in India, Vol-VII, Part 2, Oral Evidences, Madras and Coorg , PP 1-44.

prolonged correspondence with Mr. Milligan the chairman of the Assam labour Board and the government of Assam, the government decided to through open the whole presidency to the recruitment. In that connection now the argument is the danger of our labourers being inoculated with the unrest that has been prevalent in Assam Valley. Mr. Milligan has completely convinced that there is no danger of this. His main point is that it is unfair that our labourers should be free to go to Ceylon, Java ect., and be restricted with reference to Assam. The whole presidency including the agency was thrown open to recruitment from September 1923. The government considered that there was no longer any need to deny the inhabitants of the agency the opportunity for emigrants enjoyed by the people of other districts. In June 1923 a resolution passed at a public meeting of the citizens of Vizagapatnam requesting that the recruiting depots in the agency tracts might be abolished. In Connection with a request from the Maharaja of Jeypore in 1924 to prohibit emigration from Jeypore Agency, the government replied that while they were willing to give the Maharaja any assistance and protection which might be desirable they were not prepared to deny the inhabitants of any part of the presidency the right of emigrating to other parts of India for the purpose of bettering their condition which is enjoyed by the people of the rest of the presidency. A meeting held in December 1924 legislative council passed a resolution to the effect that in the interests of the landholders as well as the labourers emigration to Assam should be stopped. The government found themselves unable to give effect to it as in their opinion, it would be detrimental to the interests of the labouring classes thus to restrict their freedom to sell their labour in the best market. In the Vizagapatam Agency administration report for 1926-27 the agent to the government expressed a dislike for the recruitment of labour from an already under populated country; but at the sanction he appreciated the difficulty in interfering with persons freedom of action. At a meeting of the legislative council held in January 1928. Mr. G. Harisarvotham Rao asked whether in view of the above expressed dislike of the agent to the governor, the government were prepared to prohibit emigration from the agency. The following answer was given to the question, "The country is being opened up by making roads and the railways and the government do not think the drastic step suggested by the Honorable member could be justified". In December 1928 the government of India sent a draft bill containing their provincial views for passing a new measure in place of the Assam Labour and Emigration Act. Under clause 3 of this bill local governments were not given power to

suspend or prohibit recruitment altogether in any area which they now possess under section 3 of act 3. The Government of India explained the reason as follows, “The Government of India feel that the principle of complete prohibition in particular areas are no longer defensible though it is of course necessary that local governments should retain adequate control over recruitment inform”. The Government of Madras replied as follows on the above point, “ The Government of Madras considered that power should reserved to the local governments to suspend recruitment altogether in a specified area for a specified period in agency tracts of Ganjam and Vizagapatnam where such suspension would be necessary during period of unrest and safe guard the ignorant hill tribes”.⁴⁴

Migration to Burmah

Migration to Burma was basically a Telugu and Circars phenomenon. That is to say mainstream of emigration to Burma was from the Madras Presidency East Coastal districts (Andhra) of Ganjam, Vizagapatnam, Godavari and Kistnah.. Many factors account for the temporary, seasonal, and long distance migration of labour of coastal Andhra to Burma. The large body of Telugu labour in Rangoon were called as *Korangis*, because the bulk of them are Telugus from *Korangi* or *Koringa* nealy ten miles south of Cocanada.⁴⁵

The factors which caused for emigration to Burma were growing pressure on land, poverty, adverse seasonal conditions, natural calamities and proximity of prominent trading routs and ports all undoubtedly stimulated the emigration of labour from coastal Andhra to Burma.⁴⁶ The annual emigration and immigration report of the Madras Presidency 1899 stated as follows, “The increase is chiefly contributed by the Ganjam and Vizagapatnam, which is great demand for labour in Rangoon and to the liberal wages received by the coolies and also partly due to the unfavorable character of the season in the districts”.⁴⁷ Michael Adas, in his study of Burma states, “Although the movement of Indians between the subcontinent and the Burma was influenced by

⁴⁴ Go.O.No.881L, 17th March, 1930 Proceedings of Madras Presidency Public works Department Labour

⁴⁵ Madras District Gazetteers, East Godavari District, 1935 Vol-2.

⁴⁶ A.Satyanarayana, “ Birds of Passage”, (ed) A Styanarayana, “ Dalits and Upper Castes: Essyas in Social History, Kanishka Publishers, New Delhi,2005pp217-235

⁴⁷ Emigration Report for the year 1899, G.O.No.21june, 1899, 19.

a combination of *Push* and *Pull* factors, specific events in India were largely responsible for fluctuations in the volume of net migration. As early as 1865-66, and again in 1899, large –scale emigration from Vizagapatnam to Lower Burma averted the spread of famine from neighboring areas in to that district. In 1896-97 the number of emigrants from Ganjam to Burma doubled and those from Vizagapatnam tripled as a result of wide spread famine in these districts”.⁴⁸ The contract *maistry* system of recruitment of Telugu labour for Burma began in the last quarter of the nineteenth century, particularly in the context of the growing demand for Burmese rice and the establishment of steam mills. The failure of local government authorities to tap the indigenous labour from Upper Burma districts led to the persistent efforts from 1874 onwards to attract labour from other parts of India both as agriculturalist and labourers. In 1876 a labour Act was enacted for the appointment of Emigration agent and Medical Inspector at Coconada port, which was selected as the best port of embarkation in Madras Presidency. Shipping companies like the British Indian steam Navigation also recruited Telugu labourers through their commission agents. To increase their income and profits from commission they got for each labourer they booked and recruited, unscrupulous agents of the shipping companies stationed a large number of sub agents at port towns like Gopalpur, Buruva, Kalingapatnam, Cocanad, Bhimilipatanam, And Vizagapatnam, and sent them into interior localities to influence and lure as many people as possible to go Burma. Among all Telugu districts, Ganjam sent the largest number of labourers to any given year; in 1921 Ganjam accounted for immigrants in Burma than any other Indian district. Approximately 5 percent of the population of Ganjam, and 3 percent of the Vizagapatnam and Godavari districts were working in Burma, according to Burma Census Report. (1921). According to the Burma Census Report (1931), the total Indian resident population was 52,000, of whom Telugus were 13,200 (25 percent).⁴⁹ In Burma the vast majority of the Telugu labourers were engaged in unskilled jobs. However, they worked mainly in the rice and saw mills, oil wells and refineries, harbours, shipping companies, and harvesting. In some fields and sectors they were the dominant group. To name few: rickshaw pulling, sweeping and scavenging. In Rangoon in 1928 there were said to be 7,000 Telugu rickshaw pullers, and 8,00 hand cart pullers, who were

⁴⁸ Michael Adas, *The Burma Delta: Economic Development and Social Change on an Asian Rice Frontier, 1852-1941*, University of Wisconsin Press, Madison, 1974, p95.

⁴⁹ A.Satyanarayana, “ Birds of Passage”, *op.cit.* pp 217-235

mainly Telugus. A report in *The Rangoon Gazette* stated, “In Rangoon alone about 80,000 Indian labourers find employment in various industries. Of this numbers about 55,000 are Telugus. The sweepers and *mehters* are Telugus. These classes are absolutely necessary as under no conditions would the Burmese agree to carry out the work of the *dhobis*, sweepers and *mehters*.⁵⁰ Labourers migrated to Burma between the months of October and December, and returned again during the months of March through May. This cyclical character of the migration was due in part to monsoon conditions and demand for seasonal labour in agriculture and rice mill industry. During unfavorable seasons of origin- Telugu labour migrate to Burma mostly took place during the harvest period. The proportions of females among all migrants were very low among communities of coastal Andhra districts. The average number of females for every 1000 males in Burma during the period 1921-30 was 208. From the beginning, however, migration of Telugu labour to Burma was free and voluntary. A considerable number of the Telugu coolies may have been free agents in the sense that they emigrated to Burma with out the mediation of labour contractors, but shipping company recruiters may have induced most of them to come. After reaching their destination most of these free labourers fell under the control of the maistries as they incurred debits related to their job search and livelihood needs.⁵¹

Conclusion

This paper started with a description of different streams of migrations within East Coast North and Deccan districts of Madras Presidency (Andhra) from late nineteenth century and early twentieth century. The Colonial Government in Andhra region undertook many Public Works. Firstly, compulsory and voluntary labourers were procured for construction of district “Trunk Roads”. Secondly, major irrigational works like Godavari anicut, Krishna anicut were undertaken for maximizing their revenues from this delta lands.

These projects drew upon the rural masses to these delta areas to work on major irrigational works from the adjoining districts of Ganjam and Vizagapatnam districts. Thirdly,

⁵⁰ A.Nararana Rao, *Indian Labour in Burma*, Rangoon, 1933.pp61-62.; Arjun de Haan, “Migration in Eastern India: A segmented Labour Market”, *The Indian Economic and Social Historical Review*, 32, 1, 1995, P 59-60.

⁵¹ A.Satyanarayana, “ Birds of Passage”, opp. cit. pp 217-235

the continued large demands for railway construction workers of Andhra region stimulated the growth of regional and interregional labour markets within which “circulating-labour” increasingly met the needs of railway companies. The excavation mentioned most often in the records were a sub caste *odde* in Telugu. Odds were a significant component of the groups who migrated over long distance to work who moved more effectively than any other group and who helped to free railway companies. Famines were no strange to the Madras Presidency 150th years of colonial rule. 1876 – 8 (Great famine) famine was usually widespread as well as exceptionally persistent. Of the 21 madras districts 14 were badly affected. The 1876 famine severely affected the Daccan districts of Andhra were Ballery Cuddaph, Kurnool and from Andhra Nellor distret. The collectors of Deccan districts in 1876 had ordered to induce the labourers of these districts to migrate to the East Coast Canal work in Nellore.

In the second part of this paper I have looked at the transport connections improved labour mobility showed a marked increase in volume and in distance covered. The country side became more accessible to by road navigation and rail, modernization of the infrastructure facilitated the transport outwards of both commodities and people. More significant phenomenon of migration in Andhra region on seasonal basis form “backward” areas to more “developed” ones was on the increase. There is a normal movement of population every year from the poorer districts to the highly irrigated tracts of the deltas of Godavari and Kisthna. Secondly, the growth and development of many modern towns in the Andhra region began by end of the 19th. The movement of rural population to the urban areas was largely due to higher wages and greater freedom from caste repression which the towns held out to the lower section of the population.

The last part of this paper described emigration from Andhra region to other parts of India. The First is to emigration of labourers to the Assam tea gardens was common from Ganjam and Vizagapatnam districts as an indenture labourers. The main tribal labourers drawn for recruitment from Gangam and Vizagapatnam to Assam tea plantations were namely Khonds, Doms, and Gharis, Savaras. Secondly, migration to Burma was basically a Telugu and Circars phenomenon. That is to say mainstream of emigration to Burma was from the Madras Presidency East Coastal districts (Andhra) of Ganjam, Vizagapatnam, Godavari and Kistna. In Burma the vast majority of the Telugu labourers were engaged in unskilled jobs. However, they worked

mainly in the rice and saw mills, oil wells and refineries, harbors, shipping companies, and harvesting.