

## Demographic Transition of Tribal People in Forest Villages of Assam

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**ABSTRACT** The creation of forest villages in India was a part of forest management under the Colonial Government in the early part of the last century. The need for a regular supply of labourers in forest exploitation was met through the introduction of 'taungya' system where the labourers were given some amount of land to cultivate in lieu of their physical labour in forestry works. These settlements or colonies of labourers established by the Forest Department for maintenance of assured supply of labour required in forestry works done departmentally were known as forest villages. The terms and conditions laid down by the forest department while establishing forest villages were very exploitative in nature. There is a general perception that the forest villages have been inhabited predominantly by the tribal people over the period of time. But the present study reveals that the tribal populations living in forest villages in the state of Assam have been numerically outnumbered by the other communities. This situation is likely to create a strategic dilemma in implementing the new policy on tribal people and forest in the country.