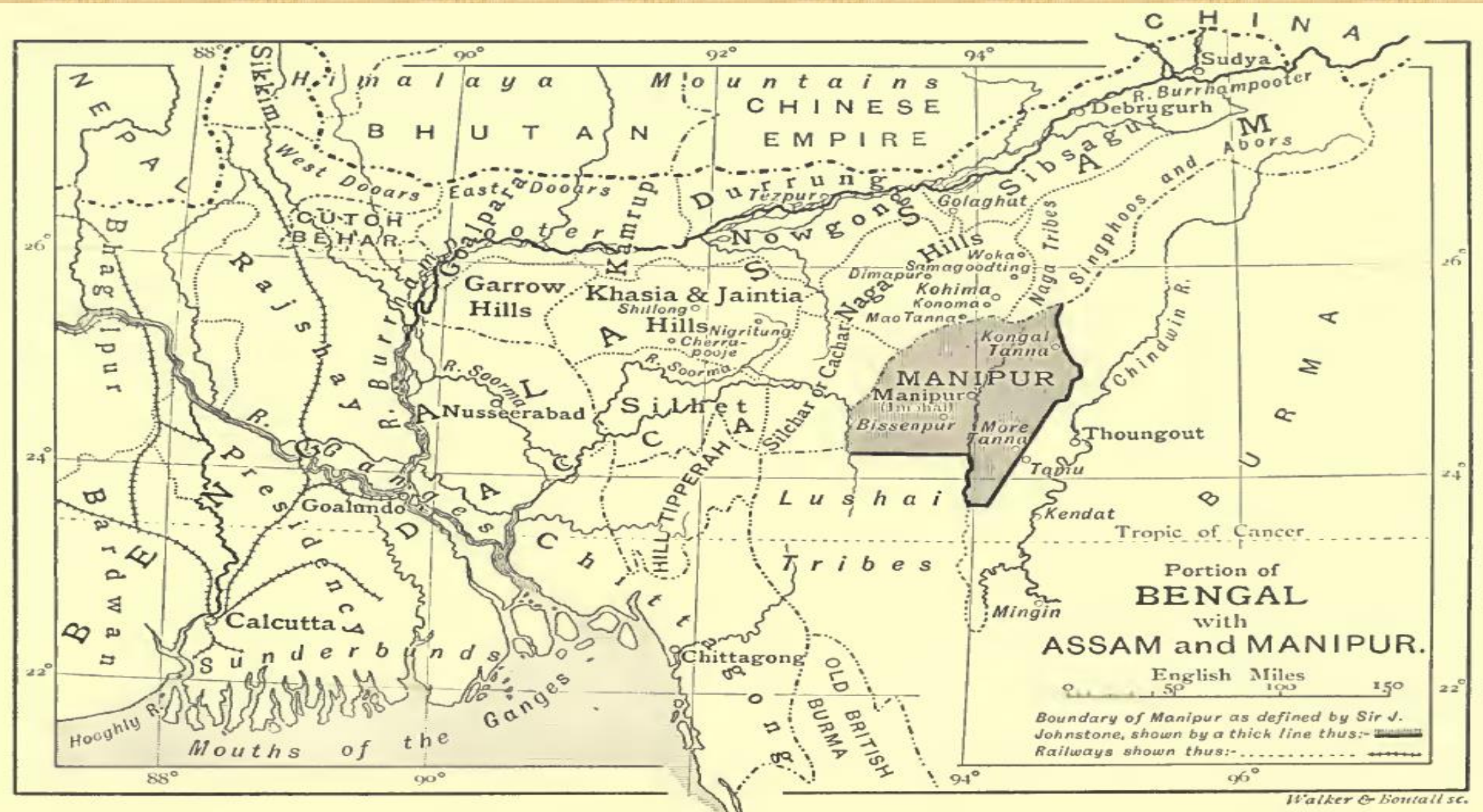




This poster examines how British colonial policies reshaped Manipuri women’s role in the market and gender relations, and how market women negotiated and resisted to the changes. It highlights women’s agency and the resilience of indigenous gendered economies.



Manipuri women cultivating rice



Map of Colonial Manipur

Economic Transformation - Manipuri Women

Questions:

- How did British colonial economic policies attempt to restructure women’s roles in the market?
- In what ways did Manipuri market women negotiate, resist, or adapt to these interventions?
- What do these encounters reveal about the limits of colonial authority and the resilience of indigenous gendered economies?

1. Pre-Colonial Economic Structure

Women’s Central Role

- Managed household production
- Harvested and processed rice
- Sole traders in internal rice markets
- Controlled local market exchange

Economic Character

- Localized trade networks
- Community-based distribution
- Embedded in socio-cultural norms

2. Colonial Economic Interventions

Policy Changes

- British free-trade policy
- Integration into export-oriented economy

Infrastructure Shift

- Bullock carts replaced with motor vehicles
- Rice exports accelerated

3. Structural Consequences

Market Transformation

- Foreign traders dominated rice exports
- Women’s control over trade

Women’s control over trade declined

- Inflation
- Increased hardship for local populations

4. Broader Implications

- Colonial reforms prioritized extraction over local welfare
- Ignored indigenous socio-economic systems
- Disregarded spatial and cultural realities



Second Nupi Lan (Women’s War)

Findings:

- Market women actively negotiated and resisted colonial policies.
- Precolonial economic authority enabled strategies of protest and adaptation.
- This is evident in the First (1904) and Second Nupi Lan (1939-40) which exposed the limits of colonial control.
- Colonial policies disrupted social economic, and gendered networks, but women’s collective power persisted.

Research Methodology:

- Archival Research of British Administrative reports
- Administrative Report of the State of Manipur treaties
- Manipur Gazette
- Oral History records

References:

- Administration Report of the State of Manipur - 1904-05
- Administration Report of the State of Manipur - 1939-40.
- Girmwood, Ethel St.Clair, 1892, *My Three Year In Manipur and escape from recent mutiny*, London, Richard Bentley and Sons (Digital Library of India)