

# **American Baptist Missionaries and the Construction of Tropics in Colonial Brahmaputra Valley**

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## **Abstract**

The conceptualisation of tropicality for colonies played a pivotal role in the colonial process and missionaries actively participated in shaping this notion. This study aims to assess the writings of American Baptist Missionaries, focusing on the systematic construction of the notion of tropicality specifically tailored for the Brahmaputra valley. The paper asserts that this tropicality was nurtured not only by writing on the people of the valley but by narrating on other elements, including the geographical location, climate, flora, fauna, modes of travel, thus furthering the notion of a dichotomous world. A crucial observation presented in this paper revolves around the entanglement of a biblical perspective and the trope of Christian morality with the construction of tropicality. The study explores how missionaries frequently utilised biblical morality both to tropicalise the valley and simultaneously rationalise and legitimise their presence. The paper substantiates these arguments by drawing on numerous anecdotes from missionary writings and accounts.

***Keywords:*** Tropicality, Othering, Representation, Christian Morality, Brahmaputra Valley, American Baptist Missionaries.