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“Research is to see what everybody else has seen, and to think what nobody else has thought” (Albert SzentGyorgyi).

When about twenty seven years back I was appointed to teach Political Science to the under-graduate students in the college, I never in my imagination thought that being a good researcher was so integral in a meaningful academic career, the few of my colleagues during those days who were involved in research looked so weird and confused. Many a times in my life I was wrong in many points but never more wrong in my thought process then this, I had fallen victim to the fallacy that to be a good teacher one needs to only read and deliver in the class room. It was much later in my career that I decided to pursue towards a research degree driven by two major considerations, first it will lead to my career advancement and monetary incentives and secondly, I felt that the challenge of writing a good research thesis will revive my academic skill which had fallen into dormancy after decades of repetitive teaching in the class room situation. Finally, when I joined the research programme, I became so involved in it that the first objective for which I had joined never occurred to me during the entire period, I started relishing every moment of it and at the same time realizing that the frontier of knowledge is so wide and we know so little of it and there is so much to learn and know that one life time is so short for it, best described in the words of Issac Newton when he said that, “to myself I am only a child playing on the beach, while vast ocean of truth lie undiscovered before me”.

The idea of reviving “Spectrum”, as research journal for humanities, social sciences and management, was conceived in the month of March, 2013. The Research Cell of the college felt that there should be some medium to encourage the culture of research among the staff and students of the college, this culture of research is unfortunately lacking in under-graduate across the country in general and particularly in the north east India. We received encouraging response to the appeal we had made through the college web site and mail. Thus, we are able to present seventeen papers cutting across all disciplines of Social Sciences, Humanities, Commerce and Management. Since this is our first volume, it is inevitable there might be errors and discrepancies; we have much to learn for improvement from your feedback and suggestions. We look forward to your continued support and encouragement.

However, the first issue of the journal would not have come out without the active support and continued encouragement of Br. A. L. Dkhar, Principal, Fr. J. Joseph, Vice Principal and Fr. S. Stephen, Rector of St. Anthony’s College, Shillong. I thank all of them for their keen interest to see the publication of the journal. I also thank Prof. N. Majaw for helping us to prepare the front and back covers of the journal. Last but not the least, I thank all members of the Editorial Board for guiding us at different stages of the publication of the journal.

Rakhal Kumar Purkayastha

BIOSOCIAL CORRELATES OF FERTILITY AND MATERNAL MORBIDITY AMONG THE ASSAMESE MUSLIM WOMEN OF KAMRUP DISTRICT, ASSAM

D.K.Limbu^{*} and Anjali Haloi^{**}

ABSTRACT

The main purpose of this study is to correlate the biosocial factors with fertility and morbidity among the Assamese Muslim women of Dadara and Agyathuri villages of Kamrup district, Assam. Findings of the present study reveal that biosocial factors such as mother's education, household income, types of family, age of the mother, age at marriage, haemoglobin content and body mass index are significantly associated with fertility and maternal health status among the study population.

Keywords: Biosocial, Muslim, Fertility, Morbidity, Maternal health

INTRODUCTION

Human health is a state of complete physical, mental and social well-being, and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity (WHO 1971). Improvement in the health status of the population has been one of the major thrust areas of the social development programme of the country. Maternal health is a critical topic in global development. Maternal ill health and death impacts families, communities and societies and has far reaching effects across socio-economic strata. Maternal health refers to the health of women during pregnancy, childbirth and the postpartum period.

Fertility is defined as the actual reproductive performance of an individual, a couple, a group, or a population (Thompson 1953). Fertility and child mortality are the two most important demographic parameters. Fertility rates vary from one population to other population, from one culture to other culture. Henry (1961) has reported that the active reproductive period lies generally between 15 to 49 years of age and the peak point reaches in early 20's. But, the rate of fertility declines after 40 years of age. During this period, fertility a woman varies considerably due to various socio-economic factors. Fertility is measured as the frequency of births in a population. Improving maternal health is not only essential for overall health status of a population but also crucial to the attainment of a healthy nation.

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The study on fertility is of tremendous importance as it is one of the major positive forces in the balance of vital processes. Fertility is directly influenced by a set of social and biological factors. Among the factors responsible for fertility variation, maternal education, mother's age at marriage and use of contraceptives were found to play a significant role in fertility reduction (Dey 2009). Mortality, on the other hand, is the major negative force in the balance of vital processes as opposed to fertility (Bhasin and Shampa 2007). Mortality plays a major role in defining the health and fitness, survival and growth of a population. Various biological as well as socio-cultural factors are responsible for differential fertility and mortality among human populations (Reddy 2005).

From the biological and anthropological points of view, demographic variables (e.g., fertility, child mortality and reproductive wastage), antenatal care, delivery characteristics and adoption of family planning methods, anemia, maternal morbidity (self-reported illness), immunization of the mother, educational and health facility, knowledge of sexually transmitted diseases(STDs), nutritional anthropometry of mothers, physical growth of the mother may be considered as important indicators of fertility and maternal health. An attempt to understand the relationship of those indicators with various cultural, social and economic factors may be very helpful in understanding the fertility and maternal health of a population.

The objective of the present paper is to find out the association of biosocial factors to fertility and maternal health among the Assamese Muslim women of Kamrup district, Assam.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

Choice of Sample: The Muslim settlements in the district are scattered everywhere. A densely settled indigenous Muslim villages along the northern side of the river Brahmaputra named Dadara and Agyathuri were chosen as the sample out of the universe. It was operational convenience for which these villages were selected. The distance and accessibility factor also contributed to the choice.

Land: The village, Agyathuri is situated at the distance of 16 Km from Guwahati and Dadara is 18 Km. These two villages are comprised of 670 households. The village Agyathuri has purely indigenous Muslim population and in Dadara, the whole stretch is inhabited by 75 percent of the indigenous Assamese Muslims and the rest by Assamese Hindus. The Hindu settlement starts where the Muslim settlement ends. For the present purpose these Hindu inhabitants have been excluded from the study.

Fertility: The fertility schedule was completed by filling the information on age at marriage, intensity of marriage, number of live births, reproductive wastage (abortion and still births) etc., from all the married women. Sometimes information given by the mothers was cross checked from their respective husbands.

Morbidity of the mothers: Self-reported morbidity of pregnant and non-pregnant women was taken into consideration by preparing structured schedules. A symptom based study was followed in which the symptoms were grouped into five categories as suggested in many studies (Strickland and Ulijaszek 1993). These categories are:

- (1) Reproductive tract disorders, which include chronic pelvic pain, genital scarring and inflammation, painful urination, occasional bleeding, etc.
- (2) Intestinal disorders, which include diarrhoea, dysentery, worms, vomiting, vomiting + fever, bleeding from stool, stomach pain, heart pain;
- (3) Cold/respiratory disorders, which include cough + running nose + headache, cough + running nose + headache + fever, fever + cough, cough alone, swollen glands + cold, ear problem, breathing problem, chest pain, sore throat, tuberculosis;
- (4) Injuries, which include cut, burn, snake bite, etc.
- (5) Miscellaneous disorders, which include sores/ boils, fever alone, chicken pox, typhoid, scabies, jaundice, all body pain, headache, malnutrition and weakness.

Haemoglobin content: Data on haemoglobin content of 1034 women were collected using Sahli's haemocytometer by following standard techniques of World Health Organization (1980).

Anthropometry of the mothers: Anthropometric measurements were taken on 1034 women. These are as follows: Weight and Height. The methods and techniques of taking measurements as suggested by the International Biological Programme (IBP) given by Weiner and Lourie (1981) were followed.

Socio-economic variables: In the present study, certain variables were classified into different groups or categories with a view to understand their influence on the fertility and maternal health.

(a) Income Groups: Data on household income were collected directly from the heads of the households. The per capita monthly income of the household was classified as follows:

Below 50th percentile (\leq Rs.7500) =Low Income Group

50th to 75th percentile (Rs.7501-9000) =Middle Income Group

Above 75th percentile (\geq Rs. 9000) = High Income Group

(b) Educational Level: Data on educational attainment of individuals in the present study were classified as follows: The categories of illiterates include those individuals

who were unable to read and write. The individuals who had attended school up to Vth standard were grouped into Primary level of education. The individuals with educational level up to Xth standard is secondary and XIth – XIIth were grouped into higher secondary level of education. Graduates were grouped into another category.

(c) Family Type: The families were classified into two types, viz. nuclear and joint families.

Statistical analysis: All data were managed and analyzed using Excel, SPSS (PC Software, version 11.5) window software as well as manually. The data were presented in terms of percentage, mean, standard deviation and standard error. The differences between the two means were tested, using student's t-test, chi-square test and ANOVA test. The regression analysis, coefficient of logistic regression and coefficient of multiple regressions were also calculated to find out the association between different biosocial factors and fertility and maternal health status of the study population.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Table 1: Mean age at first marriage among the Muslim women of Kamrup district, Assam

Total number of women	Mean \pm SE (years)
1034	19.40 \pm 0.04

The mean age at first marriage among the Muslim women of Dadara and Agyathuri villages of Kamrup district Assam is 19.40 \pm 0.04 years (Table1).

Table 2: Regression of age at marriage on independent factors

Parameters	Coefficient of regression (B) and its Standard Error (SE)	t-value	p-level
	B \pm SE		
Age at marriage			
Maternal education	0.4365 \pm 0.06	7.30	Significant at 5%
Household income	0.0002 \pm 0.00	13.07	Significant at 5%
Type of Family	-0.2555 \pm 0.07	3.48	Significant at 5%
Constant	17.4235 \pm 0.17	100.30	Significant at 5%

Table 2 shows the regression analysis of the effects of socio-economic factors on age at marriage of the mothers in the study population. In this model, we have taken

into consideration the maternal education, household income and type of family as independent factors whereas age at marriage is as dependent factor. Above table reveals that age at marriage is dependent on maternal education, household income and type of family. The results of regression analysis indicate that age at marriage is negatively associated with type of family (-0.2555 ± 0.0734) i.e., the lower the family size, the higher is the mean age at marriage. The mean age at marriage is likely to increase with increase in maternal education and household income.

Table 3: Fertility by times of marriage

Times of marriage	No. of married women	Total pregnancies	Total no. of live births	Average no. of live birth
Once married	1022 (98.83%)	4571	3783	3.70
More than once married	12 (1.17%)	54	47	3.92
Total	1034	4625	3830	

Table 3 shows the fertility performance by times of marriages. 1022 (98.83%) women have married once and only 12 (1.17%) have married more than once. The average number of live births per mother is less among the mothers who married once (3.70) than those married more than once (3.92).

Table 4: Test of significance between total live births and intensity of marriage

Intensity of marriage	Number of mothers	Mean no. of live births per mother	t-value	Remarks
		Mean \pm SE		
Once married vs more than once married	1022	3.70 ± 0.07	-0.27	Insignificant
	12	3.92 ± 0.80		

Test of significance between total live births and intensity of marriage is shown in Table 4 which reveals that the mean number of live births per mother who married once is 3.70 ± 0.07 and more than once is 3.92 ± 0.80 . However, the mean number of live births among the mothers who married once does not differ significantly to those who married more than once (t-value is -0.27).

Table 5 shows that the age-specific fertility increases to the mothers, aged 15-19 years, to the mothers, aged 25-29 years. The age-specific fertility in this period increases from 0.4046 to 1.4703, and thereafter it steeply decreases from 1.3704 in the

age group 30 - 34years to 0.1515 in the age group 45+ years. However, the total fertility rate (T.F.R.) in this population is found to be 6.2398, which seems to be fairly high.

Table 5: Age-specific fertility rate

Age class No.	Age groups (in years)	No. of married women	No. of live births	Age-specific fertility
1	15-19	1505	609	0.4046
2	20-24	1404	1553	1.1061
3	25-29	1214	1785	1.4703
4	30-34	996	1365	1.3704
5	35-39	620	726	1.1709
6	40-44	159	90	0.566
7	45+	66	10	0.1515
Total fertility rate(TFR)				6.2398

Table 6: Live births by family income

Income groups	No. of mothers	Live births			Average no. of live births
		Living	Dead	Total	
Low income group(LIG)	697	2231 (84.64%)	450 (15.36%)	2636 (68.83%)	3.78
Middle income group(MIG)	275	916 (85.77%)	152 (14.23%)	1068 (27.89%)	3.88
High income group(HIG)	62	115 (91.27%)	11 (8.73%)	126 (3.29%)	2.03
Total	1034	3262 (85.17%)	568 (14.83%)	3830	3.70

Frequency distribution of fertility and child mortality by income is shown in Table 6. Majority of the mothers belong to the low income group (697) followed by middle income group (275). Least number of mothers (62) belongs to the high income

group. The above table also shows that the average number of live births is recorded highest in the middle income group (3.88) followed by the low income group (3.78) and lowest among the high income groups (2.03). But by and large the percentage frequency of live births among the low and the middle income groups is similar. The percentage frequency of surviving children increases and child mortality decreases as the income increases.

Table 7: Test of Significance between live births and family income

Income groups	Number of Mothers	Mean No. of live births	SD	t-value	Remarks
LIG Vs MIG	697 275	4.57 4.74	2.81 3.05	-0.8090	Insignificant
LIG Vs HIG	697 62	4.57 2.18	2.81 1.41	6.6458	Significant at 1%
MIG Vs HIG	275 62	4.74 2.18	3.05 1.41	6.4492	Significant at 1%

The test of significance between different income groups in respect of their mean number of live births is shown in Table 7 which reveals that in respect of the mean number of live births, the high income group shows significant difference with both the low and the middle income groups. However, no significant difference is observed between the low and middle income groups in respect of their mean number of live births in the present population.

Table 8: Live births by the educational level of mother

Educational level of mothers	No. of mothers	Live births			Average no. of live births
		Living	Dead	Total	
Illiterate	296	1588 (82.62%)	334 (17.38%)	1922	6.49
Primary	636	1499 (87.10%)	222 (12.90%)	1721	2.71
Secondary	78	134 (93.06%)	10 (6.94%)	144	1.85
Higher Secondary	24	41 (95.35%)	2 (4.65%)	43	1.79
Total	1034	3262 (85.17%)	568 (14.83%)	3830	3.70

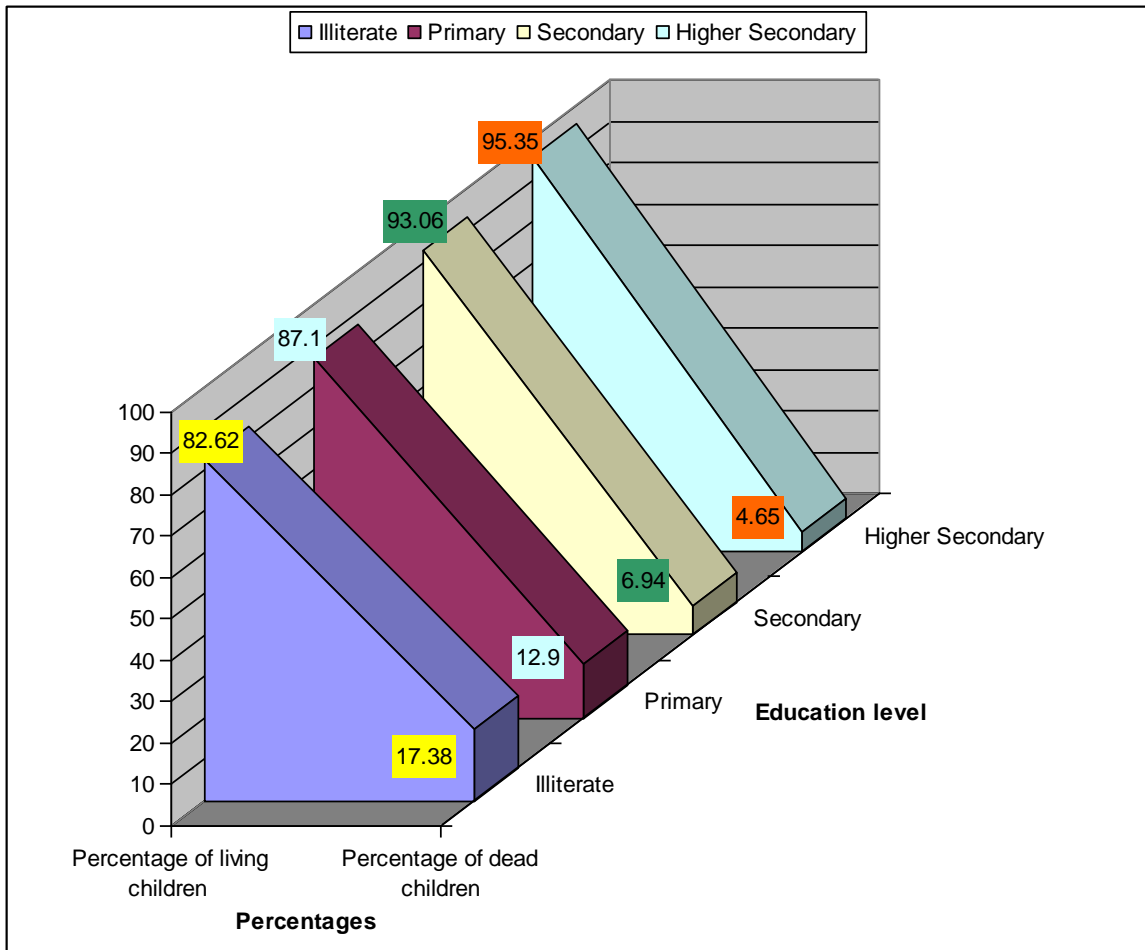


Fig. 1: Living and dead children according to the educational level of mother

Table 8 shows the fertility and child mortality by educational level of the mother. In the present population, the percentage of average number of live birth is highest among illiterate mothers (6.49%) followed by the primary (2.71%). Both the fertility and child mortality decreases as the educational level of mother increases. Fig.1 depicts the living and dead children according to the educational level of mothers.

Table 9 shows the test of significance between live birth and educational level of the mothers where the mean number of live birth per mother differs significantly in all the educational levels of mothers compared except between the Secondary vs. Higher Secondary. It seems that mothers' education is one of the important factors that determine the number of live births.

Table 9: Test of significance between live birth and educational level of mother

Educational level of mothers	No. of mothers	Mean no. of live births per mother		t-value	Remarks
		Mean	SD		
Illiterate vs Primary	296 636	7.27 3.03	1.62 1.73	35.55	Significant at 1%
Illiterate vs Secondary	296 78	7.27 1.87	1.62 1.12	27.74	Significant at 1%
Illiterate vs High Secondary	296 24	7.27 1.96	1.62 1.37	15.63	Significant at 5%
Primary vs Secondary	636 78	3.03 1.87	1.73 1.12	5.77	Significant at 5%
Primary vs Higher Secondary	636 24	3.03 1.87	1.73 1.37	3.00	Significant at 5%
Secondary vs Higher Secondary	78 24	1.87 1.96	1.12 1.37	0.31	Insignificant

Table 10: Live birth by types of family

Types of family	No. of mother	Live births			Average no. of live births
		Living	Dead	Total	
Nuclear	452	1024 (85.69%)	171 (14.31%)	1195	2.64
Joint	582	2238 (84.93%)	397 (15.07%)	2635	4.53
Total	1034	3262 (85.17%)	568 (14.83%)	3830	3.70

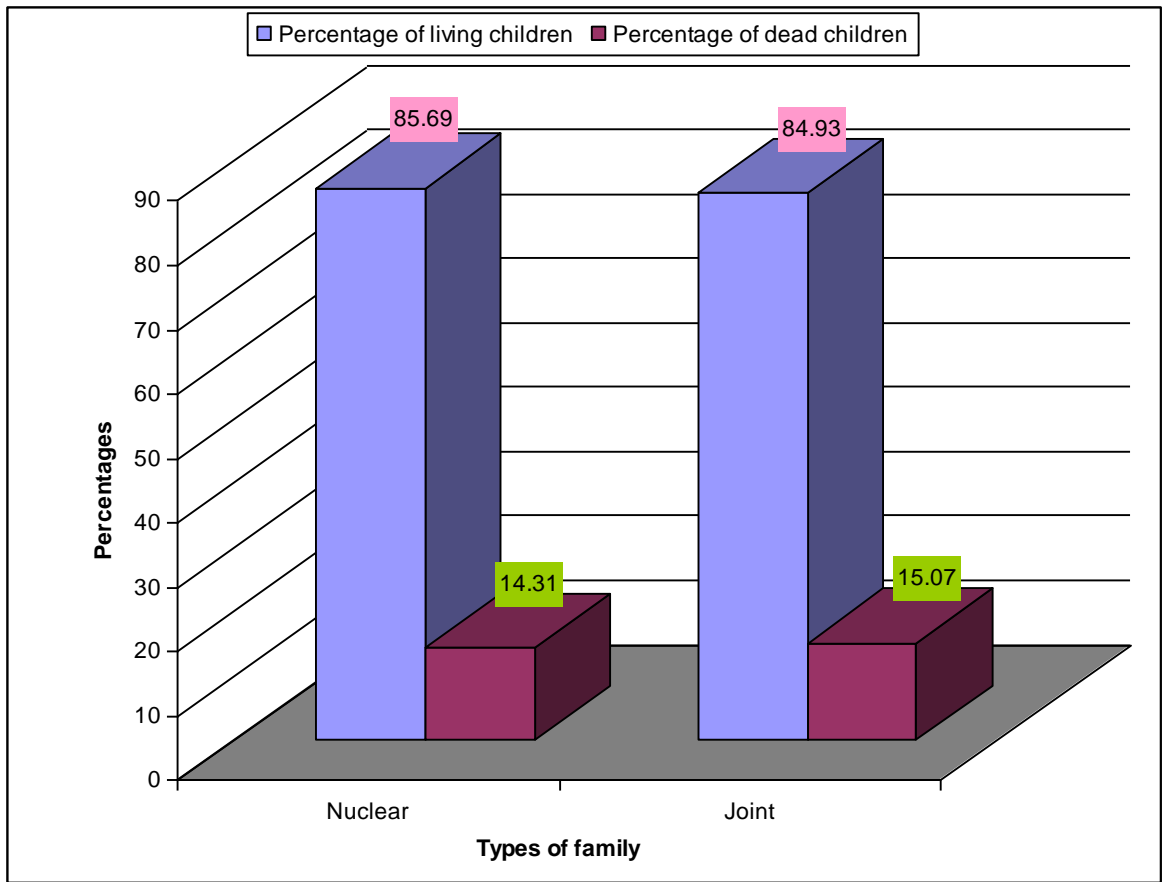


Fig. 2: Living and dead children by types of family

Table 10 shows the fertility and child mortality by types of family. It is observed from the above table that the average number of live birth and child mortality are 2.64 (14.31%) and 4.53 (15.07%) in the nuclear and joint families respectively. Average number of live births per mother observed to be low in the nuclear family than in joint family. However, the percentages of dead children found little higher in the joint family. Fig. 2 depicts the living and dead children per mother according to their family type.

Fertility and child mortality by consanguineous marriages is shown in Table 11. There are 235 (23.73%) women who had consanguineous marriages and 799 (77.27%) non-consanguineous marriages. The percentages of dead children are higher among the mothers who had consanguineous marriages i.e., 151 (15.79%) than the non-consanguineous marriages, 417 (14.51%). The average number of live births is also higher from the consanguineous marriages (4.07) than the non-consanguineous marriages (3.60).

Table 11: Fertility and child mortality by consanguineous marriages

Marriages	No. of women	Live births			Average no. of live births
		Surviving	Dead	Total	
consanguineous	235 (23.73%)	805 (84.21%)	151 (15.79%)	956	4.07
Non-consanguineous	799 (77.27%)	2457 (85.49%)	417 (14.51%)	2874	3.60
Total	1034	3262 (85.17%)	568 (14.83%)	3830	3.70

Table 12: Reproductive wastage by age of mothers

Age (in years)	No. of mothers	Total no. of pregnancies	Reproductive wastage			Total
			Abortion	Miscarriages	Still births	
≥23 (%)	270 (26.11%)	398 (8.61%)	0 (0.00)	6 (1.95%)	11 (3.11%)	17 (2.57%)
24-33 (%)	392 (37.91%)	1311 (28.35%)	91 (68.94%)	56 (18.18%)	84 (23.73%)	140 (21.15%)
34-43 (%)	176 (17.02%)	1205 (26.06%)	41 (31.06%)	110 (35.71%)	105 (29.66%)	215 (32.48%)
44+ (%)	196 (18.96%)	1710 (36.98%)	0 (0.00)	136 (44.16%)	154 (43.50%)	290 (43.81%)
Total	1034	4624	132 (2.85%)	308 (6.66%)	354 (7.66%)	662 (14.32%)

Reproductive wastage by age of mothers is shown in Table 12, where the percentages of pregnancies, reproductive wastage (miscarriages and still births) increase as the age group of the mothers increases. No abortion was recorded in the age group ≥ 23 years and 44+ years. However, the highest percentage of abortion (68.94%) was recorded among the mothers whose age group falls between 24 and 33 years. Highest percentage (44.16%) of miscarriages is observed among the mothers belong to the age group 44+ years, followed by 34-43 years and least is found in the ≥ 23 years. 11 (3.11%) still births are recorded among the mothers who are in the lowest age group i.e., ≥ 23 years and highest (43.50%) in the age group of 44+ years. The percentage frequency of still births increases with the increased age of the mothers. Minimum percentage of total reproductive wastage is recorded in ≥ 23 year's age group (2.57%) and highest being, 43.81% in the age group 44+ years.

Table 13: Coefficient of the multiple regression of reproductive wastage on independent factors

Parameters	Coefficient of regression(B) And its Standard Error(SE)	t-value	p-level
	B±SE		
Reproductive wastage			
Age at marriage	-0.0033±0.03	-0.1104	Insignificant
Maternal education	-0.4538±0.11	-4.3148	Significant at 5%
Paternal education	-0.1781±0.09	-1.9057	Insignificant
Type of family	-0.2069±0.07	-2.8845	Significant at 5%
Household income	0.0001±0.00	3.0765	Significant at 5%
Antenatal care	0.7703±0.11	6.9333	Significant at 5%
Constant	1.2168±0.54	2.2638	Significant at 5%

The summary of multiple regression analysis of socio-economic factors on reproductive wastage is given in Table 13, considering that reproductive wastage is an indicator of maternal health status in the study population by assuming that unhealthy mothers experience more reproductive wastages. The prevalence of reproductive wastage is negatively associated with the maternal education (t -4.3148), type of family (t -2.8845) and positively associated with the household income (t 3.0765) and antenatal care (t 6.9333). However, the present analysis shows no relation between reproductive wastage and some factors like age at marriage and paternal education . Thus, it may be concluded (Table13) that maternal education, type of family, household income and antenatal care are important factors in regulating the reproductive wastages of the present population.

Self reported health problem (morbidity of the mother) is based on the number of women who experienced at least one type of health problem during the last one month prior to the survey which is shown in Table 14. Out of a total of 1034 mothers, the highest numbers i.e., 70 are suffering from Cold and Respiratory disorders followed by 29 who are suffering from Intestinal disorders + Cold and Respiratory disorders. Least number of mothers has Reproductive Tract Disorders. In respect of the average number of live births per mother, highest percentage (4.86%) was recorded among the mothers suffering from Intestinal disorders + Cold/respiratory disorders + Miscellaneous disorders and lowest (3.21%) among the Cold/Respiratory Disorders. The total number of surviving children per mother is highest (90.83%) among the women who are suffering from Intestinal disorders+ Cold/Respiratory disorders and lowest (81.25%) among those women who are suffering from Reproductive Tract Disorders + Cold/Respiratory disorders. The percentage of child mortality was highest

(18.75%) among the women who were suffering from Reproductive Tract Disorders + Cold/Respiratory disorders and lowest (9.17%) among the Intestinal disorders+ Cold/Respiratory disorders. 902 women were reported of not having health problem during last one month where high average (3.72) live births were recorded. The child mortality was 15.02%, which seems to be high in the present population.

Table 14: Fertility and mortality by the general morbidity of the mothers

Sl. No.	Disease	No. of mothers	Live births			Average no. of live births
			Living	Dead	Total	
1	Reproductive Tract Disorders	6(.58%)	21 (87.50%)	3 (12.50%)	24	4.00
2	Cold/Respiratory Disorders	70(6.77%)	195 (86.67%)	30 (13.33%)	225	3.21
3	Reproductive tract Disorders+ Cold/Respiratory Disorders	13(1.26%)	39 (81.25%)	9 (18.75%)	48	3.69
4	Intestinal Disorders+ Cold/Respiratory Disorders	29(2.80%)	99 (90.83%)	10 (9.17%)	109	3.76
5	Intestinal Disorders+ Cold/Respiratory Disorders+ Miscellaneous Disorders	14(1.35%)	56 (82.35%)	12 (17.65%)	68	4.86
6	No Diseases	902(87.23 %)	2852 (84.98%)	504 (15.02%)	3356	3.72
Total		1034	3262 (85.17%)	568 (14.83%)	3830	3.70

The average number of live birth, percentage of surviving children and mortality rate of the children are by and large similar among the mothers who are suffering from at least one type of health problem during the last one month prior to survey. From Table 14, it is also observed that mothers' present health status does not have much effect on fertility and mortality.

Table15: Coefficient of the logistic regression of mother's morbidity on independent factors

Background Characteristics	Coefficient of regression B
Age at marriage	
< 19 years	1.000
> 19 Years	1.044
Maternal education	
Illiterate	1.000
Literate	2.148**
Paternal education	
Illiterate	1.000
Literate	0.435
Household income	
Poor (<8000)	1.000
Rich (>8000)	0.675**
Type of Family	
Joint	1.000
Nuclear	0.150
ANC visit	
<3 visit	1.000
>3 visit	0.025
Constant	0.165
** Significant at 1 percent level	

The coefficient of the logistic regression of mothers' general morbidity on independent factors are given in Table15, where self reported health problems, based on the number of women who experienced at least one type of health problem during the last one month prior to survey is considered as mothers' general morbidity. It is observed from the above table that the coefficient of regression (B) is independently associated with maternal education and household income. These two factors significantly correlate with mothers' general morbidity. It may be mentioned here that there is no relationship between mothers' general morbidity and other factors like, age at marriage, paternal education, types of family and antenatal care.

Table 16: Coefficient of the logistic regression of anemia on independent factor, Hb Level: (Anaemic<12, Not Anaemic>12)

Parameters	Coefficient of regression(B),And its Standard Error(SE)
	Model
	Exp(B)
Age at marriage	
Early (<19 years)	1.000
Late (>19 years)	1.234
BMI	
Normal	1.000
Over weight	3.056**
Maternal education	
Illiterate	1.000
Literate	9.340**
Paternal education	
Illiterate	1.000
Literate	1.150
Household income	
Poor (<8000)	1.000
Rich (>8000)	7.779**
Type of Family	
Joint	1.000
Nuclear	0.677
Constant	.001
-2log Likelihood	725.773
Nagelkerke 100 R Square	42.4

The coefficient of the logistic regression of anaemia on independent factors is shown in Table16 where below12 g/dl hemoglobin level of mothers is considered as anemic status. It is observed that the Body Mass Index of mothers, maternal income and household income are positively associated with mother's anaemic status. However, age at marriage, paternal education and types of family do not show their significant relationship with anemic status. It may be concluded that mothers who belong to the high socio-economic background possess better health status.

Table17: Fertility and Morbidity of the mothers, and Child mortality by BMI range

BMI Range	Number of mothers (N=1034)	Fertility	Morbidity of the mothers	Child mortality
Under weight	278	2010 (7.23%)	158(56.73%)	273 (56.83%)
Normal	588	2046 (3.48%)	82 (13.95%)	231 (39.29%)
Over weight	168	569 (3.39%)	21(12.50%)	64 (12.50%)

Table 17 shows fertility, mother's morbidity and child mortality by BMI (Body Mass Index). In respect of BMI, majority of the mothers are normal (588) followed by underweight (278) and least are overweight (168). Highest percentage of fertility, mother's morbidity and child mortality were observed among the underweight mothers, followed by the normal range.

Table 18: Mothers Morbidity vs. BMI

BMI	Number of Mothers	Mean morbidity of mothers		t-value	Remarks	F-ratio
		Mean	SD			
Underweight Vs Normal	278 300	0.98 0.5	0.75 0.60	8.59	Significant at 1%	1.56
Underweight Vs Overweight	278 168	0.98 0.38	0.75 0.59	8.89	Significant at 1%	1.62
Normal vs Overweight	300 168	0.5 0.38	0.60 0.59	2.08	Significant at 5%	1.04

The test of significance between BMI range and mothers general morbidity is shown in Table 18 The significant difference is observed in all the BMI groups in respect of mother's general morbidity. The t-value of underweight vs. normal, underweight vs. overweight and normal vs. overweight is 8.59, 8.89 and 2.08 respectively and the F-ratio being 1.56, 1.62 and 1.04 respectively . The finding shows that BMI influences on the mother's general morbidity.

Table 19: Religion wise distribution of Total Fertility Rate (TFR), Total number of living children per mother, Child mortality per mother and maternal anaemia

Different religious groups	Total Fertility Rate (TFR)	Total no. of living children per mother	Child mortality per mother	Maternal anaemia (gm/ dl ²)	References
Present population	6.2398%	85.17%	14.83%	14.57%	Present Study
Assamese Hindus	1.97%	72.0%	21.2%	71.6	NFHS-3 (2005-2006)
Assamese Christians	-	61.5%	-	89.7	NFHS-3 (2005-2006)
Scheduled Tribes of Assam	2.49%	70.5%	25.8%	74.1	NFHS-3 (2005-2006)
Total Assamese population	2.42%	69.0%	26.2%	69.5	NFHS-3 (2005-2006)

Table 19 shows the comparison of present population with other religious groups of Assam in respect of the Total Fertility Rate (TFR), total number of living children per mother, child mortality per mother and maternal anemia. It is observed that the TFR (6.2398) and total number of living children per mother (85.17%) are high but the child mortality per mother (14.83%) and the maternal anemia (14.57g/dl) are low in the present population then all other major religious groups of Assam (NFHS-3) compared.

CONCLUSION

The present study has highlighted the various factors that influence the fertility and maternal health status of a population. It may be concluded from the findings of the present study that socio-economic and biological factors such as household income, parents' education, types of family, age at marriage, haemoglobin level of mothers and BMI are significantly associated with high fertility which influences the maternal health among the Assamese Muslim women of Dadara and Agyathuri villages of Kamrup district, Assam, that supports the similar studies undertaken in this region.

The study also suggests the need for expansion of education and literacy the villagers and the women in particular to reduce their fertility, maternal morbidity and

child mortality. In addition, this study also highlights the need for the organization of awareness camps to provide information about the usefulness of mothers' immunization and family planning etc.

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A STUDY OF VARIOUS DIMENSIONS OF BREASTFEEDING PRACTICES

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ABSTRACT

Breastfeeding is considered very important for the health of the infants and also the mothers. Beneficial effects of breastfeeding on infant health and survival are very well known. Many past studies have shown that the socio-economic factors have strong effect on the initiation and duration of breastfeeding. The present paper, therefore, tries to see whether the various background variables affect the breastfeeding practices of married women in the way explained by the past studies or they show a different picture.

Keywords: Breastfeeding, colostrum, infant health, breast milk

INTRODUCTION

Breastfeeding is considered very important for the health of the infants and also the mothers. Beneficial effects of breastfeeding on infant health and survival are well known (Krishnamoorthy and Sheela 2004). Breastfeeding improves the nutritional status of young children and reduces morbidity and mortality. Breast milk not only provides the child with important nutrients but also protects the child against certain infections.

For the mother, as soon as the infant starts suckling at the breast, the hormone oxytocin is released, resulting in uterine contractions of the mother that reduce the risk of postpartum haemorrhage and facilitate the expulsion of the placenta. Therefore, it is medically recommended that the first breast milk should be given to the child rather than squeezed out from the breast because the first milk contains colostrum, which provides natural immunity to the child. Therefore, early initiation of breastfeeding without squeezing out the first milk is very important because it benefits both the mother and the infant (NFHS 1992-93).

Past studies (IIPS 1995; IIPS and ORC Macro 2000; Khan 1990; Krishnamoorthy 1970; Padmini and Krishnamoorthy 1988; and Krishnamoorthy and Sheela 2004) have shown that the socio-economic factors have strong effect on the initiation and duration of breastfeeding. The present study also, therefore, tries to see whether the various background variables affect the breastfeeding practices of married women in the way explained by the past studies or they show different picture.

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The sample design adopted for the study is that of a multistage simple random technique. This study is primarily based on the primary data collected from the Sonitpur district of Assam. Altogether 503 women were surveyed using a well-structured and pre-tested interview schedule. The married woman in the age group of 13-49 with at least one live birth was considered as the sampling unit for data collection. As far as data regarding breastfeeding practices are concerned, the women who gave live births during the 5 years period preceding the survey were only included and **altogether 427 women fell into that category**. The above data were collected during the period between April and July 2006.

PROFILE OF THE RESPONDENTS AND THE FAMILY

The background profiles of the women show a varied picture (**Table 1**). The current age of the women, on the basis of different stages of women's reproductive life, were divided into three categories, namely, 15-24, 25-34 and 35-49 for the present study. Majority of the respondents belonged to the age group 25-34. Around 53.0 percent of the women belonged to this group. The percentage of the women in the age group 15-24 was 18.7 percent. In the age group of 35-49, there were 24.8 percent of women.

As far as the legal age at marriage in India is concerned, it is fixed at 18 years for the girls and 21 years for the boys. However, the findings of the present study show many of the surveyed women got married before the attainment of the legal age at marriage. Around 36 percent of the women got married before the age 18 and the rest of the women, of course, married after the attainment of the legal age at marriage.

From the marital status point of view, 95.0 percent of the women were found to be currently married. The remaining percentages of the women were either separated/divorced or widowed. In the overall sample, 52.3 percent of the women were from the rural areas and the remaining 47.7 percent of the women resided in the urban areas. The data also portrayed that majority of the women live in the nuclear family. Nearly 70 percent of the women were found to be living in the nuclear family against the figure of around 30 percent of the women living in the joint family.

In the field of education, it was found that percentage of illiterate women stood at 24.9 percent, less than middle school educated at 39.6 percent, and middle school and above at 35.6 percent. However, as far as the education of the husbands is concerned, majority of them were middle school and above educated (42.1 percent), followed by 37.2 percent of the husbands with less than middle school education. The figure for illiterate husbands stood at 20.7 percent.

Table 1: Percent distribution of the women by selected background characteristics

Background characteristics	Percentage (Number of Women)
Current age of the women	
15-24	18.7 (94)
25-34	52.9 (266)
35-49	28.4 (143)
Age at marriage of the women	
Before 18 years	35.6 (179)
After 18 years	64.4 (324)
Marital status of the women	
Currently married	95.0 (478)
Separated/Divorced	1.2 (6)
Widowed	3.8 (19)
Current place of residence	
Rural	52.3 (263)
Urban	47.7 (240)
Type of the family	
Nuclear	69.8 (351)
Joint	30.2 (152)
Education of the women	
Illiterate	24.9 (125)
Less than middle school	39.6 (199)
Middle school and above	35.6 (179)
Husband's education	
Illiterate	20.7 (100)
Less than middle school	37.2 (180)
Middle school and above	42.1 (204)
Work status of the women	
Not working	90.3 (454)
Working	9.7 (32)
Occupation of the husband	
Agriculturists/farmers	11.6 (56)
Service holders	22.1 (107)
Businessmen	45.9 (222)
Others	20.4 (99)
Standard of living of the family	
Low	52.9 (266)
High	47.1 (237)
Total	100.0 (503)

Please Note: Figures in the parentheses represent absolute number

The total number of husbands stands at 484 as rest of the women were either widow or divorced.

Work status wise, vast majority of the women were found to be involved only in household activities (90.3 percent) and only 9.7 percent of the women were found out to be working outside their home. The distribution of the respondents' husbands according to their occupation showed that 45.9 percent of them were engaged in business activities, 22.1 percent in services and 11.6 percent in agriculture and farming activities. The rest of the husbands (20.4 percent) were engaged in other activities not specified above.

The standard of living of the family was divided in two categories, viz., low and high. The data showed that a slightly higher percentage of the women were found to be living in the families having low standard of living (52.9 percent) against the figure of 47.1 percent of women living in families with high standard of living.

BASIC BREASTFEEDING INFORMATION

As far as the overall breastfeeding is concerned (Table 2), among the 427 women who gave live births during the five years period preceding the survey, 97.7 percent of the women were found to have breastfed their newborn babies. Regarding the timing of breastfeeding, it has been found that 40.5 percent of the women breastfed their child within 2 hours of birth. The women who breastfed their child on the same day but after 2 hours of birth was found to be 30.4 percent. The rest of the women (26.7 percent) either breastfed their babies after one day or more or did not breastfeed at all.

Table 2: Basic breastfeeding information of the women who gave birth during the 5 years period preceding the survey

Breastfeeding Information	Percentage (%)
Percentage that breastfed	97.7 (417)
Timing of breastfeeding	
Within 2 hours of birth	40.5 (173)
After 2 hours of birth	30.4 (130)
Next day and afterwards or did not breastfeed	26.7 (114)
Percentage that breastfed after squeezing out the first milk	36.9 (154)

Source: Field data

Note: Figures in the parentheses represent absolute number

But out of the women who breastfed their newborn, 36.9 percent of them squeezed out the first milk from their breast before giving milk to the babies, though it is medically recommended that the first breast milk should be given to the child as it contains colostrum, which provides natural immunity to the child. It shows that still

there are married women who are ignorant about the medically desirable breastfeeding practices.

BREASTFEEDING BY BACKGROUND CHARACTERISTICS

The Table 3 analyses the information about the initiation of breastfeeding (with the squeezing out of the first milk) by selected background characteristics. The table, therefore, provides us adequate information about the categories of women who are still ignorant about the beneficial effects of providing the first milk to the newborn.

Higher percentage of the younger women in the age group of 15-24 is found to have squeezed out the first milk. For example, 38.3 percent of the women in the age group 15-24 squeezed out the first milk as compared to 30.1 percent of the women in the age group 25-34. The percentage of the women in the age group of 35-49, breastfeeding in the above way, stood at 26.6 percent.

From the religion point of view, higher percentage of Hindu women (40.0 percent) squeezed out the first milk than the Muslim women (33.8 percent). From the place of residence point of view, higher percentage of rural women follows the practice of squeezing out the first milk than the urban women. For instance, 33.1 percent of the rural women squeezed out the first milk as compared to 27.9 percent of the urban women. Likewise, the practice of squeezing out the first milk is observed to be slightly higher among the women living in the joint families (31.6 percent) than the women living in the nuclear families (30.2 percent).

Higher the level of education, lower is the observed practice of squeezing out the first milk. This is observed true for the education of both the women and their husbands. The percentage of the illiterate women squeezing out the first milk stands out at 42.4 percent. The percentage figures come down to 33.7 percent and 20.7 percent for the women who have schooling of more than middle school and less than middle school respectively.

Similar trend is observed when the women are considered by their husbands' education. 42.0 percent of the women, whose husbands' are illiterate, squeezed out the first milk compared to 33.3 percent of the women whose husbands' were less than middle school educated and 24.0 percent of the women whose husbands' had more than middle school level education.

Likewise, it has been seen that as the standard of living of the family goes up, the practice of squeezing out the first milk goes down. For instance, as the standard of living of the family goes up from low to high, the unhealthy practice of squeezing out the first milk goes down from 39.8 percent to 20.3 percent.

Table 3: Percentage distribution of the women according to the initiation of breastfeeding after squeezing out the first milk by selected background variables

Background variables	Women that breastfed after squeezing out the first milk
Age of the women	
15-24	38.3 (36)
25-34	30.1 (80)
35-49	26.6 (38)
Religion of the women	
Hindu	40.0 (84)
Muslim	33.8 (70)
Place of current residence	
Rural	33.1 (87)
Urban	27.9(67)
Type of the family	
Nuclear	30.2 (106)
Joint	31.6 (48)
Education of the women	
Illiterate	42.4 (53)
Less than middle school	33.7 (67)
More than middle school	20.7 (37)
Husband's education	
Illiterate	42.0 (42)
Less than middle school	33.3 (60)
More than middle school	24.0 (49)
Standard of living	
Low	39.8 (106)
High	20.3 (48)

Source: Field data

Note: Figures in the parentheses represent absolute number

DETERMINANTS OF BREASTFEEDING PRACTICE: RESULTS OF LOGISTIC REGRESSION ANALYSES

Table 4: Results of logistic regression analyses on breastfeeding practice with and without squeezing out the first milk

Variables	Before adjustment	After adjustment
	Exp (β)	Exp (β)
Religion (rc: Hindu)		
Muslim	0.8	0.4***
Current age (rc: 15 - 24 years)		
35-34	0.7	0.8
35-49	1.2	1.1
Place of Current Residence (rc: Rural)		
Urban	0.8	1.7**
Women's Education (rc: Illiterate)		
Less than middle school	0.6**	0.7
Middle school & above	0.3***	0.4**
Place of delivery (rc: Home)		
Institution	0.4***	0.5***
Standard of living (rc: Low)		
High	0.4***	0.5**
*** -Significant at 1 percent level ** -Significant at 5 percent level * -Significant at 10 percent level		

In the above logistic regression model, altogether six (6) independent variables were entered to see their effect on the dependent variable, namely the breastfeeding practice.

The results show that (Table 4) when the other background variables were not adjusted in the model, women's education, place of delivery and standard of living were found to affect the breastfeeding practice of the women significantly. In all these cases it was found that the women who were literates, whose child delivery took place in medical institutions and had high standard of living were less likely to squeeze out the first milk in comparison to their respective reference categories.

After the control of the background variables, religion and current place of residence also became significant exploratory variables affecting the breastfeeding practice of the women, along with the variables mentioned just above. Except the current place of residence, in case of all other independent variables, women were found less likely to squeeze out the first milk in comparison to their respective reference categories. In the case of current place of residence, the probability of urban women squeezing out the first milk was found to be 1.7 times higher than the rural women.

After the control of the background variables, religion and current place of residence also become significant exploratory variables affecting the breastfeeding practice of the women, along with the variables mentioned just above. Except the current place of residence, in case of all other independent variables, women are found less likely to squeeze out the first milk in comparison to their respective reference categories. In the case of current place of residence, the probability of urban women squeezing out the first milk is 1.7 times higher than the rural women.

CONCLUSION

Though breastfeeding practice is almost universal amongst the women, they are ignorant about the beneficial effects of the first milk of the mothers - both for the newborn and mothers. Only 63.1 percent of the women had breastfed their child without squeezing out the first milk. Also the percentage of women breastfeeding within 2 hours of births is low (40.5 percent). The background variables of the women are found to exert differential influence on their breastfeeding practices. Given the above scenario, generation of awareness amongst the women in this regard can benefit both the mothers and child immensely.

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AWARENESS ON HIV/AIDS AMONGST SLUM WOMEN OF SHILLONG CITY: A LOGISTIC REGRESSION APPROACH

Sanku Dey *

ABSTRACT

The paper examines the extent of awareness on HIV/AIDS among the married women of slum population of Shillong city, Meghalaya, India and the factors affecting their knowledge about the disease. The study revealed that (i) 63.4 percent of the respondents heard about HIV/AIDS, (ii) the level of education of the respondents was significantly associated with the awareness level of HIV/AIDS. The higher the level of education of the women, higher was their level of the awareness about HIV/AIDS, (iii) the major sources of information dissemination on HIV/AIDS, amongst women are Radio/TV (55.7%) followed by others (4.2%)(others include friends/relatives etc.), the health workers/Doctors(1.5%), newspapers/magazines (1.4%) and posters/hoardings (0.6%) respectively. (iv) 33.6 percent respondents knew that HIV/AIDS is curable while 36.5% do not know whether HIV/AIDS is curable or not (v) 38.4 percent knew that HIV/AIDS is preventable while 36.5% do not know whether HIV/AIDS is preventable or not. (vi) women belonging to income group (Rs. 2000-4000) have more knowledge about HIV/AIDS compared to women of other income groups.

Keywords: Slum Dwellers, HIV/AIDS, Logistic Regression Analysis, Awareness

INTRODUCTION

HIV/AIDS is one of the biggest public health challenges in the world today, even though the prevalence of HIV infection is showing declining trend in present times. Globally, estimated 33.2 Million individuals have been infected with HIV so far and a total number of 2.1 million deaths have been reported since the identification of first case of HIV/AIDS in the US in 1981. In Asia, an estimated 4 million people are living with HIV/AIDS, in 2007 (UNAIDS 2007) . Taking into account the number of people living with HIV/AIDS, India ranks second in the world and has estimated 22.7 lakh HIV infected persons.

Women are biologically more susceptible to HIV/AIDS than the men and lack of awareness on HIV/AIDS further aggravates the scenario. Early marriage also poses greater risk to young women. This is especially pertinent to India, where almost 50 percent girls are married off by 18 years of age (NACO 2012). Studies on knowledge, attitude, behaviour and practices (KABP) on HIV/AIDS, conducted in different parts of

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India (Negi, Khandpal, Kumar and Kukreti 2006; Singh et al. 2012; Unnikrishnan, Mithra, Rekha and Reshmi 2010; Kishore, Singh, Grewal, Singh and Roy 1999; Kishore, Sharma, Ranjan and Ingle 2006) revealed widespread ignorance and misconceptions about the disease among adolescents. No such assessment has ever been attempted among the slum women in Shillong city of the state of Meghalaya. In this study we tried to assess the level of awareness about HIV/AIDS, among married women of slums of Shillong city. The findings may provide a little insight to policy planners and HIV/AIDS programme managers in deciding strategic programmes for these vulnerable groups.

METHODOLOGY

The present cross-sectional study was conducted in the slums of Shillong City (Dey 2013). From a total of 17605 slum dwellers distributed in different proportions in sixteen wards in Shillong city, a representative sample of 1300 slum households was selected from 31 localities (fourteen wards), using an appropriate statistical formula. In order to reach the respondents, i.e. currently married women of reproductive age (MWRA), a two-stage random sampling procedure was followed. In the first step, stratification is done according to municipal wards. In the second step a random sample of proportionate size has been drawn from each of the wards.

Information of 1417 married women was analyzed to interpret the knowledge of HIV/AIDS of the slum women in relation to respondent's religion, education, occupation, family income, age at marriage etc. SPSS/PC software was used to analyze the data. Table 11 represents an overview of the predictors used in the model.

In the present study, logistic regression was used to identify the socio-economic and demographic factors responsible for awareness of HIV/AIDS among the women of reproductive ages of slum women in Shillong city. The Wald test-statistic was used to test the significance of the logistic regression coefficients. The reference group was taken as the last category of each predictor.

The logistic regression model is

$$\pi = P(Y=1 \mid X_1=x_1, X_2=x_2, \dots, X_p=x_p) \\ = \frac{e^{z(x)}}{1 + e^{z(x)}} ,$$

where $z(x) = \beta_0 + \beta_1 x_1 + \dots + \beta_p x_p$ is the logit transformation of the logistic regression model. The importance of this transformation is that $z(x)$ has many of the desirable properties of a linear regression model. The results are shown in Table.12 below.

In this study a predictive model on knowledge of HIV/AIDS of married women living in slums was developed by using binary logistic regression technique. To assess the degree of association between the risk factors and knowledge of HIV/AIDS, odds ratio were computed. The data on predictors are based on: respondent religion (X1), respondent educational level (X2), respondent husbands education(X3) respondent occupation (X4), respondent husbands occupation (X5), monthly family income (X6), respondent age at marriage (X7), type of house they reside (X8). The response variable (i.e., Heard of HIV/AIDS) is designed as a dichotomous variable, namely, 'Not heard' (Code=0) and Heard (Code= 1).

FINDINGS

Table1 shows the distribution of knowledge among slum women on HIV/AIDS. The study revealed that 63.4 percent of the respondents heard about HIV/AIDS.

Table 1: Distribution of women who have heard about HIV/AIDS

Responses	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	899	63.4
No	518	36.6
Total	1417	100.0

With regard to religion, 42.3 percent of Hindu women heard about HIV/AIDS followed by Christian (10.44 percent), Muslim (5.72 percent) and other communities (5.01 percent) (Table 2).

Table 2: Percent distribution of the respondents with the knowledge of HIV/AIDS (Religion wise)

Religion	Heard about HIV/AIDS		Total
	Yes	No	
Hindu	42.3	22.79	922
Muslim	5.72	3.67	133
Christian	10.44	6.92	246
Others	5.01	3.17	116
Total	63.44	36.56	1417

Data presented in Table 3 show that the level of education of the respondents was significantly associated with the awareness level of HIV/AIDS. The higher the level of education of the women, higher was their level of the awareness about HIV/AIDS.

Table 3: Percent distribution of the respondents about the knowledge of HIV/AIDS
(Education wise)

Respondent's Education	Heard about HIV/AIDS		Total
	Yes	No	
Primary	37.8	49.6	597
Middle School	26.6	17.0	327
High School	12.9	6.7	151
Higher Secondary	6.1	1.9	64
Degree & above	2.4	2.1	33
No education	12.2	22.6	245
Total	100.0	100.0	1417

With regard to the major sources of information on HIV/AIDS, data presented in Table 4 reveal that the vast majority of women got the information from Radio/TV (55.7 percent) followed by others (4.2 percent)(others include friends/relatives etc.), the health workers/Doctors (1.5 percent), newspapers/magazines (1.4 percent) and posters/hoardings (0.6 percent).

Table 4: Percent distribution of the respondents about the sources of the knowledge of HIV/AIDS

Sources	Heard about HIV/AIDS	
	Frequency	Percentage
Radio/TV	790	55.7
Newspaper/Magazines	20	1.4
Posters/Hoardings	8	0.6
Health workers/Doctors	22	1.5
Others	59	4.2
Not heard	518	36.6
Total	1417	100.0

Table 5: Percent distribution of the respondents with the impression about the curability of HIV/AIDS

Respondent's Knowledge	Is HIV/AIDS curable?	
	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	476	33.6
No	423	29.9
Do not Know	518	36.5
Total	1417	100.0

Out of 1417 respondent women, 33.6 percent knew that HIV/AIDS is curable while 36.5 percent does not know whether HIV/AIDS is curable or not (Table 5). Study results also show that 38.4 percent of respondent women know that HIV/AIDS is preventable while 36.5 percent does not know whether HIV/AIDS is preventable or not (Table 6).

Table 6: Percent distribution of the respondents with the impression about the preventability of HIV/AIDS

Respondent's Knowledge	Is HIV/AIDS preventable?	
	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	544	38.4
No	355	25.1
Do not Know	518	36.5
Total	1417	100.0

Table 7 shows that, out of 899 respondents who had knowledge of HIV/AIDS, 340 respondents have primary education, 239 have education up to middle school, 116 have high schooling, 54 have higher secondary schooling and only 22 have degree and above education. Further, 52.9 percent women having primary schooling, 58.2 percent middle schooling, 57.8 percent high schooling, 57.4 percent higher secondary schooling and 40.9 percent having degree and above education believe that HIV/AIDS is curable. Table 8 also shows that those with higher education are likely to have greater knowledge about HIV/AIDS being preventable compared to less educated women. Data shows that (Table 9) the women belonging to income group (Rs. 2000-4000) have more knowledge about HIV/AIDS compared to women of other income groups.

Table 7: Percent distribution of the respondents with the impression about the curability of HIV/AIDS (Education wise)

Respondent's Education	Is HIV/AIDS curable?		Total
	Yes	No	
Primary	52.9	147.1	340
Middle School	58.2	23.8	239
High School	57.8	11.7	116
Higher Secondary	57.4	5.5	54
Degree & above	40.9	59.1	22
No education	41.4	17.6	128
Total	479	420	899

Table 8: Percent distribution of the respondents with the impression about the preventability of HIV/AIDS (Education wise)

Respondent's Education	Is HIV/AIDS preventable?		Total
	Yes	No	
Primary	57.9	42.1	340
Middle School	64.4	35.6	239
High School	63.8	36.2	116
Higher Secondary	55.6	44.4	54
Degree & above	72.7	27.3	22
No education	57.8	42.2	128
Total	545	354	899

Table 9: Percent distribution of the respondents about the knowledge of HIV/AIDS (Monthly family income wise)

Monthly family income (in Rs.)	Heard about HIV/AIDS?		Total
	Yes	No	
Below 1000	9.8	19.1	187
2000-4000	70.3	68.7	993
4000-8000	10.9	6.6	132
8000 & above	9.0	4.6	105
Total	899	518	1417

Results from our Binary logistic regression (Tables 10 and 11) analysis show that as regards to religion, Christian women are more likely to have knowledge about HIV/AIDS (OR=1.294, p-value=0.318) as compared to the women of other religions. Odds ratio as regards to education level reveal that highly educated women (graduate and above) are more likely to know about HIV/AIDS (OR=1.038, p-value = 0.934) than other categories of educational status. The survey results of odds ratio against monthly family income show that economically poorer section is more likely to have knowledge about HIV/AIDS. The odds ratio also reflect that lower the mother's age at marriage, further the likelihood of the women having heard of HIV/AIDS.

Table 10: Demographic characteristics of slums and predictors used in logistic regression model

Variables Name	Frequency (%)	Type of variables
Respondent Religion (X1)		
[X1=1] Hindu	922 (65.0)	Nominal
[X1=2] Muslim	133 (9.4)	Categorical
[X1=3] Christian	246 (17.3)	
[X1=4] Others	116 (8.2)	
Respondent Education (X2)		
[X2=1] Primary	597 (42.1)	Ordinal
[X2=2] Middle School	327 (23.1)	Categorical
[X2=3] High School	151 (10.6)	
[X2=4] Higher Secondary	64 (4.5)	
[X2=5] Degree &above	33 (2.3)	
[X2=6] No Education	245 (17.3)	
Respondent Husbands Education (X3)		
[X3=1] Primary	644(45.4)	Ordinal
[X3=2] Middle School	349(24.6)	Categorical
[X3=3] High School	220(15.5)	
[X3=4] Higher Secondary	97 (6.8)	
[X3=5] Degree &above	86 (6.1)	
[X3=6] No Education	21 (1.5)	
Respondent Occupation (X4)		
[X4=1] Housewife	927 (65.4)	Ordinal
[X4=2] Service	40 (2.8)	Categorical
[X4=3] Wage Earner	199 (14.0)	
[X4=4] Business	52 (3.7)	
[X4=5] Others	199 (14.0)	
Respondent Husbands Occupation (X5)		
[X5=1] Service	191(13.5)	Categorical
[X5=2] Wage Earner	314 (22.1)	Ordinal
[X5=3] Business	181 (12.8)	
[X5=4] Others	731 (51.6)	
Monthly family income (X6)		
[X6=1] below 1,000	187 (13.2)	Ordinal
[X6=2] 2,000-4,000	993 (70.0)	Categorical
[X6=3] 4,000-8,000	132 (9.3)	
[X6=4] 8,000 and above	105 (7.4)	
Respondent's age at marriage (X7)		
[X7=1] below 18	602 (42.5)	Nominal
[X7=2] 18- Below 25	704 (49.6)	Categorical
[X7=3] 25 and above	111 (7.8)	
Type of House (X8)		
[X8=1] Pucca	362 (25.6)	Ordinal
[X8=2] Semi-pucca	322 (22.7)	Categorical
[X8=3] Kutchra	733 (51.7)	

Table 11: Logistic regression model parameters

Predictors	$\hat{\beta}$	$S.E.(\hat{\beta})$	Wald test	d.f.	P-value	Odds Ratio	95% C.I. for O.R.	
							Lower	Upper
Intercept	-0.541	.655	.681	1	.409	0.582	--	--
X1			6.717	3	0.081	-	-	-
[X1=1]	-0.412	0.224	0.540	1	0.462	0.848	0.546	1.316
[X1=2]	-0.006	0.288	0.000	1	0.983	0.994	0.565	1.746
[X1=3]	0.258	0.258	.997	1	0.318	1.294	0.780	2.147
X2			31.631	5	0.000	-	-	-
[X2=1]	-.109	0.161	0.457	1	0.499	0.897	0.654	1.230
[X2=2]	-.769	0.189	16.586	1	0.000	0.463	0.320	0.671
[X2=3]	-.742	0.251	8.716	1	0.003	0.476	0.291	0.779
[X2=4]	-1.104	0.389	8.071	1	0.004	0.332	0.155	0.710
[X2=5]	0.037	0.449	0.007	1	0.934	1.038	0.430	2.502
X3			7.764	5	0.170	-	-	-
[X3=1]	-.750	0.472	2.526	1	0.112	0.472	0.187	1.191
[X3=2]	-.769	0.481	2.556	1	0.110	0.463	0.180	1.190
[X3=3]	-.976	0.493	3.915	1	0.048	0.377	0.143	0.991
[X3=4]	-1.110	0.538	4.260	1	0.093	0.329	0.115	0.946
[X3=5]	-1.301	0.561	5.370	1	0.020	0.272	0.091	0.818
X4			3.024	4	0.554	-	-	-
[X4=1]	0.150	0.176	0.727	1	0.394	1.162	0.823	1.642
[X4=2]	-.341	0.426	0.641	1	0.423	0.711	0.308	1.639
[X4=3]	0.274	0.221	1.537	1	0.215	1.316	0.853	2.031
[X4=4]	0.040	0.363	0.012	1	0.912	1.041	0.511	2.120
X5			5.622	3	0.132	-	-	-
[X5=1]	0.263	0.205	1.648	1	0.199	1.301	0.871	1.942
[X5=2]	0.327	0.151	4.693	1	0.030	1.387	1.032	1.864
[X5=3]	0.096	0.193	0.247	1	0.619	1.100	0.754	1.605
X6			19.733	3	0.000	-	-	-
[X6=1]	1.051	0.303	12.050	1	0.001	2.861	1.580	5.179
[X6=2]	0.483	0.266	3.285	1	0.070	1.620	0.961	2.730
[X6=3]	0.068	0.318	0.045	1	0.831	1.070	0.574	1.995
X7			10.098	2	0.006	-	-	-
[X7=1]	0.649	0.247	6.890	1	0.009	1.913	1.179	3.106
[X7=2]	0.347	0.243	2.029	1	0.154	1.414	0.878	2.279
X8	-	-	0.049	2	0.976	-	--	-
[X8=1]	0.021	0.141	0.022	1	0.882	1.021	0.774	1.347
[X8=2]	-.016	0.148	0.012	1	0.913	0.984	-0.736	1.316

DISCUSSION

This is an important HIV/AIDS awareness study performed among the slum women in Shillong city of the state of Meghalaya. Study results suggest that a large number of women do not have knowledge about HIV/AIDS. Similar findings were reported in other parts of the country (Sharma, Sharma, Dave and Chauhan 1996; Chatterjee et al. 2001; Kotech and Patel 2008) which is in contrast to the study conducted in Pondicherry and by NACO (Sarkar, Danabalan and Kumar 2007; NACO 2003). National AIDS Control Programme was started in 1987, that is, one year after the first case of AIDS was reported. The main objective of the programme since then was on increasing awareness of the people about the risks of HIV/AIDS because prevention through mass awareness was the only option in the absence of an effective treatment method. Even after more than two and half decades, the awareness level about HIV/AIDS is still very poor in slum areas of Shillong city where 32.2 per cent of the total city population is residing. Present study also reveals that, the higher educational and socioeconomic status of slum women were associated with the increase in awareness towards HIV/AIDS which is similar to the findings of other studies carried out in different parts of India (Sharma and Sharma 1997; Saleh et al. 1999; Jacob et al. 1989; Porter 1993). The role of mass media is well recognized as an effective educational tool for providing information on HIV/AIDS to the slum population. It appears from the study that the mass media, especially television, has an important role in raising HIV/AIDS awareness among the slum women and the source of AIDS related knowledge for the majority of the respondents was television (55.7 percent). Several other studies also confirmed that culture-sensitive education through TV/Radio is a very effective method for enhancing the awareness-level on HIV/AIDS (Porter 1993; Balk and Lahiri 1997; Ramafedi 1988; Stevenson, Gay and Josar 1995). Taking into consideration the views and results of the studies from various parts of the country in different communities it can be concluded here that there is similarity in status of awareness about HIV/AIDS in slums of Shillong city.

CONCLUSION

The purpose of the study was to provide preliminary data on HIV/AIDS knowledge, among slum women of Shillong city. With the observations in the present study it is clear that the awareness of HIV/AIDS in slum areas of Shillong city among women is moderate. Since awareness is the only key to the prevention of HIV/AIDS, it is imperative to raise the awareness about HIV/ AIDS, not only by the Government agencies but also by the Non-Government Agencies (NGOs) by using mass media, education and other communication activities as the impact of the disease is very much upsetting in all aspects of human life specially among the low socio economic, illiterate people of the community.

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NINTH LOK SABHA ELECTIONS AND ITS IMPACT ON THE FUTURE OF INDIA'S ELECTORAL POLITICS

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ABSTRACT

The ninth Lok Sabha elections, 1989 and the formation of National Front government under the leadership of Shri V.P. Singh, marked a new beginning in the electoral politics of the country. This paper seeks to examine the various circumstances and the policies since then which were responsible for changing the process of electoral mobilization in the country that has led to growth in the strength of regional parties, birth of caste based parties in two of the most important states of India that sends together 120 members to the Lok Sabha, growing importance of religious polarization in electoral politics and end of single majority party hegemony leading to birth of minority and coalitional government.

Keywords: Ninth Lok Sabha, Mandal Commission, Polarization, Ayodhya, Coalition

The ninth Lok Sabha elections held in 1989 constitutes watersheds in Indian politics and affected it in several ways. First it ushered in an era of coalitional and minority government and ensured by its policies such trends to continue in future such as declaration of Mandal Commission report and its implementation. Secondly, it signalled the end of Congress hegemony, the party that ruled at the centre except for brief interlude of two years of Janata rule (1977-1979) and it heralded the phase of multi-party system in Indian politics with all parties assuming power at different levels of government at one time or the other, including the regional parties which cut across the barriers of regions and became partners in the government at the centre. Thirdly it brought about a new consciousness among the voters who became bold enough to vote for alternatives, and started assessing the performance of the government and punishing the non-performers successively by eliminating them from power through the ballot boxes. Fourthly, it has led to extreme polarization of voters on the grounds of religion as BJP had to take the road of religion to counter casteist divide and six feet of ground in Ayodhya proved to be the graveyard of Indian secularism and BJP's road to power in Delhi. Consequently, we can add that India is less secular than it was in 1950's or even up to mid 1980's. Fifthly, it brought about a new thinking in the federal relationship, the sharing of powers by the regional parties has brought about a moderation in extreme trends of centralization witnessed throughout the one party Congress rule and particularly during Mrs Indira Gandhi's tenure and now, the demand of state autonomy is no longer treated as an anathema in Indian political vocabulary, the government at the

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center is not only willing to hear and also consider seriously the grievances of the state than ever before. Sixthly, the continuation of economic reforms by every government that assumed power has meant the end of Fabian socialism which was initiated in early years of independence and continued till the mid 1980's and today there are no doubts that India is on the map of favourite destination for foreign investments, but at home it has widened the rich-poor chasm and brought about a situation in which economy no doubts is doing well but people are not. Finally in foreign policy pursued by successive governments from 1989 onwards has diluted the policy of non-alignment initiated during the Nehruvian period and the fact of disappearance of Soviet Union along with problems of global terrorism has brought India closer to Washington than to Moscow.

The resurgence of caste in Indian politics in the recent years can be attributed to the declaration of Mandal Commission report¹ and its implementation by V.P. Singh's National Front government in 1990 for reserving 27 percent of all central government employment for the backward classes in addition to 22.5 percent already reserved for Schedule Caste and Tribes. Singh justified the reservations on the grounds of social justice² but none can deny the fact that it was done more with an eye to expand the Janata Dal shrinking support base among the backward castes and rural India than on the high ideals of creating a just social order. This decision of the National Front government brought about widespread criticism from the media and strong opposition

Table 1: Percentage Distribution of Population of Castes

Groups	Percentage of Population
Upper Castes	16.1
Other Backward Classes	43.7
Schedule Castes	15.00
Schedule Tribes	07.5
Non Hindu Minorities	17.6

Sources: Government of India, Report of the Backward Classes Commission (Mandal Commission), First Part, Vol.1, New Delhi, 1980 p.56 (The figures were based on estimates, the last caste census that were taken in 1931)³

¹ In 1980, during the Prime Ministership of Charan Singh, Government of India appointed a Backward Classes Commission chaired by B.P. Mandal-a former Chief Minister of Bihar and himself a member of backward caste-it recommended 27 percent reservation for OBC in employment and identified 3743 castes and sub castes to be included in list of beneficiaries, the report was kept in the files for nearly a decade by the Congress government.

² V.P. Singh justified the reservation announced on August 7, 1990 in his independence day speech on August 15, 1990 by the need to give "a share to the poor in running of the government" for details see Surendra Mohan, Hari Dev Sharma, Vinod Prasad Singh and Sunilam (eds.): *Evolution of Socialist Policy in India*, Bapu Kaldate,m New Delhi, 1997, p. 136 and Alyssa Ayres, Philip Oldenburg (ed): *India Briefing – Quickening the Pace of Change*, M.E. Sharpe, Inc, New York, 2002, pp. 121-158.

³ The caste and percentages of population as shown in 1931 census were, Brahmins 6.4%, Kshatriyas 3.7%, Vaishyas 2.7%, Shudras/ Other backward classes 52%, Listed Untouchables 15%, unregistered religious minorities from castes and tribes 13.2%

from the higher castes in general and students in particular who felt that they had become victims of reverse discrimination, violent protests accompanied by self immolations were witnessed in several cities of north India raising a spectra of 'caste war' but none of the political parties could afford to oppose the decision given the substantial population that were included among the beneficiaries in the Report. The Backward Classes according to figure submitted by the Mandal Report constituted approximately 44 percent of the country's population. The statistics submitted by the Mandal Commission are presented in Table 1.

The implementation of the Mandal report caught all the parties between the devil and deep seas, the Congress (I) which assumed power in 1991 tried to pacify the opposition to the report by adding a 10 percent reservation for the poor from the higher castes, this decision was reversed later by the Supreme Court which held the validity of the reservation for the Other Backward Classes but struck down the additional 10 percent reservation as constitutionally impermissible⁴ (Rudolph Susanne H. and Rudolph Lloyd 2000). Caste reservation as such, was not something new, in the 1950, the constitution declared the practice of 'untouchability' was unlawful (Article 17) and to provide compensatory justice and open avenues of opportunity, a certain percentage of admission to educational institutions and places in government employment were 'reserved' for the so called Schedule Castes and Tribes (Article 335). Similarly, to ensure adequate political representation, Scheduled Castes and Tribes were allotted reserved seats in the Lok Sabha and in State Legislatures in proportion to their numbers (Article 330)⁵ (Basu, D. D. 1996). These reservations as given in the Constitution were to end in 1960 but were subsequently extended by various constitutional amendments. The various castes and tribes chosen for extension of the benefits of protective discrimination by the state were on basis of low level of education and social advancement as well as low ritual position and consequent stigma and disabilities associated with it⁶ (Sahaya Ram 1990). This reservation did not create controversy as much as witnessed when the Mandal reports were implemented to extend reservation to the other backward classes who were identified on basis of comparatively low level of educational and social advancement but never the less did not suffer discrimination on basis of their low ritual status as the Scheduled castes. The implementation of the report heralded the collapse of the old political order dominated by affluent English speaking, upper castes politicians trained in law and expert in public

⁴ Indira Sawhney vs Union of India, November 16, 1992; Susanne Hoeber Rudolph and Lloyd Rudolph, "Living with Differences in India" in David Marguand, Ronald L. Nettler (eds), *Religion and Democracy*, Oxford Blackwell Publishers, 2000, pp. 20-38.

⁵ D.D.Basu: An Introduction to the Constitution of India, Prentice Hall India Limited, New Delhi, 1996.

⁶ Dr. Ram Sahaya: "Social and Economic Status of Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes in India", in B.P. Chaurasia (ed.): *Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes in India*, Chugh publications, Allahabad, 1990 pp. 51-58.

speaking and debates⁷(Brass, Paul, 1990) and concerned with larger issues of corruption, black marketing, hoarding, unemployment, food shortages etc. It was estimated that about 20 per cent of population controlled nearly 95 percent of all jobs and a strong relationship also existed between low caste status and poverty⁸ (Despande Satish, 2002). The 1990's witnessed the emergence of a new kind of caste consciousness in politics, which had so far banished from public discourse and confined to civil society or in the society at large, it led to formation of caste based parties in northern India like Samajwadi Party, Bahujan Samaj Party, Rashtriya Janata Dal etc drawing its support from alliances of backward castes and minorities, new leaders from backward castes and rural background from these parties emerged at the national level capable of either making or breaking governments. The 'mandalisation' of politics has meant the exit of the Congress from two important state of the union, Uttar Pradesh and Bihar, which used to together sends 139 and now reduced to 120 with the creation of Jharkhand and Uttarakhand⁹ members to the Lok Sabha out of 543 to which elections are held. Moreover, the birth of caste-based parties has led to fragmentation of votes in other states of northern India, consequently contributing to the end of Congress domination in the multi-party system. In this new trend of plebeian style politics in the north and western India the lower castes are breaking their dependence on the higher castes and claiming their rightful place in governance based on their number in politics of democracy. This can be directly attributable to Mandal report, though earlier in the south India in the state of Tamil Nadu the Dravidian movement led by DMK has been drawing its support primarily from lower caste¹⁰ (Hardgrave Robert 1965) and thriving on anti-Brahmin and anti-aryan domination, it could come to power in the state in 1967, the success of the Communist in Kerala in 1957 can also be attributed to their support base among the lower castes.¹¹ In response to the political powers wielded by the backward castes a large number of states have extended the benefits of reservations in admission to educational institutions and governmental employment. The backward caste politics has come to stay in this country and names of leaders like Kanshi Ram, Mulayam Singh Yadav, Mayawati, Laloo Yadav – all of whom have risen from below and represent the ascendancy of backward castes and they will continue to make headlines in years to come.

⁷ For details see Paul Brass: *The Politics of India Since Independence*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1990

⁸ Satish Despande: *Contemporary India - A Sociological View*, Penguin India, New Delhi, 2002

⁹ Uttar Pradesh use to elect 85 members, Bihar elect 54 members and now with creation of two new states of uttarakhand and Jharkhand, the former sends 80 members and the latter 40 members to the Lok Sabha (Statistical Report on General Elections), 1998 to the Twelfth Lok Sabha (National and State Abstracts), Election Commission of India, New Delhi, 1998 and AStatistical Report on Generak Elections, 2009 to the fifteenth Lok Sabha (National and State Abstracts), Election Commission of India, New Delhi, 2009.

¹⁰ Robert Hardgrave: *The Dravidian Movement*, Popular Prakashan, Bombay, 1965.

¹¹ Tom Nossitter: *Communism in Kerala*, University of California, Berkeley, 1982.

Another impact of the post 1990 politics has been on India's credibility of Secularism that was accepted as an official principle and various safeguards provided in the constitution for protection of the rights of the minorities under Right to Freedom of Religion (Article 25-28) as well as under Cultural and Educational Rights (Article 29 & 30)¹² (Basu D. D. 1996). But Indian society today has been riven by communal mistrust and hatred with memories of partition on the grounds of religion still bitterly nurtured. The sudden efforts at polarization of the Hindus by the BJP are in response to widen its support among all Hindus otherwise divided by numerous castes and sub-castes and to counter act the efforts of the caste based parties.¹³ (Sugata Bose and Ayesha Jalal, 2004) The BJP that was confined to Hindi speaking states and among the higher caste till 1984 realized more vigorous pursuance of 'Hindutva' cause and issues like building of Ram Temple in Ayodhya, abolition of Article 370 from Kashmir or uniform civil code can bring them immediate political gains as witnessed in 1989 when they secured 85 seats in the ninth Lok Sabha, (Statistical Report on General Elections, 1989 to the Ninth Lok Sabha Volume I, National and State Abstracts & Detailed Results, ECI, New Delhi, p.85) - a dramatic increase from the earlier two seats held in the earlier house. The introduction of Muslim women (Protection of Rights on Divorce) in the Lok Sabha and passed subsequently by the House in 1986 (Indian Express, from Salma to Shah Bano, March 26, 2010) during the Prime Ministership of Rajiv Gandhi to undo the judgment of the Supreme Court in Shah Bano case¹⁴ spurred a heightened Hindu consciousness. The BJP along with the Sangh Parivar was able to capitalize on this to projected India's 83 per cent Hindu majority as threatened and portrayed India's secularism as nothing more than pretext for 'pampering' of religious minorities. (Subrahmaniam Vidhya, 1995)¹⁵ The BJP demanded replacement of western inspired pseudo-secularism of the Congress and the propagators of the 'Hindutva' claimed that Hinduism in India was not a sectarian religion but a 'way of life', a predominantly cultural force, which is shared by a majority of people living in India. Even a BJP M.P. commented in Lok Sabha that Hindu religion is not a religion at all; the domiciles of India are Hindu, though they belong to different religion.¹⁶ (Mishra Ram Nagina, 1998), The BJP has forwarded the concept of 'one nation, one people and one culture' theory. This new Hindu polarization has been further intensified in order to neutralize resurgence of caste factor in Indian politics. Along with this there has been breaking in the vote bank politics of the Congress. The Muslims who constitutes 12 per cent of

¹² D.D. Basu, *An Introduction to the Constitution of India*, op.cit.

¹³ Sugata Bose and Ayesha Jalal, *Modern South Asia: History, Culture and Economy*, Routledge, USA, 2004.

¹⁴ In 1985 the Supreme Court had ruled in favour of 73 years old woman, Shah Bano, divorced after 43 years of marriage by her husband in a traditional Muslim manner and awarded her a monthly maintainance from her husband, whereas Muslim law would have required none for details refer

¹⁵ For detail discussions refer to Harsh Sethi: "The Saffron Agenda", *The Hindustan Times*, op.cit, October 19, 1999 and Vidya Subrahmaniam, Why the BJP Cannot Have a Secular Face, *Times of India*, op. cit, April 18, 1995.

¹⁶ Shri Ram Nagina Mishra: *Lok Sabha Debates*, op.cit, August 23-C-306, 1993.

India's population¹⁷ and there are 95 Lok Sabha constituencies in the country in which there are more than 20 per cent Muslims electorates¹⁸ (Ahuja, M.L, 1998p.277), the Muslims though not in a position to win these seats but can tilt the balance in favour of any party, there has been always a mad rush among the political parties to enlist the community's support in any elections. The Congress was so far till 1990's able to project itself as a saviour of the Muslim community in view of the pronounced anti-Muslim tilt of the BJS and later BJP and its allies and absence of credible secular alternative that could replace the Congress at the Centre. The secular credentials of the Congress took a severe beating in the demolition of the Babri Mosque in Ayodhya by Hindu fanatics during the Congress rule in December 1992 and subsequent anti-Muslim riots in Mumbai in January 1993. The community felt betrayed and a late realization came that Congress had done nothing for the Muslim masses for improvement of their economic status or educational attainment except to confine their actions to either renaming of a street, university, protect personal law or promote Urdu language etc. The rise of the third front in politics along with caste-based parties provided the Muslim community an alternative to both the BJP and the Congress and recent elections has seen a shift of Muslim votes from the Congress to these parties. This shift in the votes has further eroded the support base of the Congress party in some of the electorally important states of north India. On the whole, at a larger level, political appeals on the basis of pan- Hindu identity facilitated by modern communications, have begun to forge an increasingly self conscious religious community capable of forging a greater Hindu identity by crossing the limitations imposed by its heterogeneity but it has also intensified Hindu-Muslim antipathies, India's so called Secularism is faced with challenge at every level of the society diminishing its capacity to provide social justice in multi-cultural society .At a practical level, as Yogendra Yadav says that with effective marginalisation of the Congress from the electoral competition in Uttar Pradesh and Bihar an apparently irreversible process of reconfiguration has set in and party system today is a case of multiple bipolarities.¹⁹ (Yadav Yogender, 1996). It implies that the hopes of the Congress (I) party to achieve dominant single party majority status in the Lok Sabha that it had enjoyed so far remains totally nullified.

One more trend witnessed since the 1989 elections is growing importance of regional parties and moderation in centralization trends, due to formation of coalitional government at the Centre. The regional parties have broken the limitation of territorial boundaries and today become partners of the ruling front. India decided at independence to opt for federalism as a way of handling its diversity. The constitutional

¹⁷ According to the 2001 Census of India, the Hindus constitutes 80.5%, the Muslims 13.4%, Christians 2.3%, Sikhs 1.9, Buddhist 0.8 a Jains 0.4%, Others 0.6%, Religion not stated 0.1% of the country's population.

¹⁸ M.L. Ahuja: *Electoral Politics and General Elections in India*, 1952-98, 1998, p.277

¹⁹ Yogendra Yadav, Elections 1996: Towards Post-Congress Polity, The Times of India, op. cit, March 30, 1996.

framers sought to create a federal system qualified with a strong central government in spite of the fact that for geographical and historical reasons India continued to be a multiethnic, multi-religious, multilingual nation. In a way the federal system reflected the fears of the framers of disintegration of the country as they had experienced painful partition. But nine years after independence, under tremendous pressure from linguistic groups the central government was forced to re-organize the states on linguistic basis²⁰ giving rise to decentralising tendencies with groups throwing up its own regional movements in quest for self identity and self fulfilment which, could not be always explained in terms of rational economic analysis.²¹ Regional parties with strong social and emotional bases in their communities and regions have been a part of Indian party system from its early days of independence. But what is new is that the trend towards regionalism in the past two decades is unmistakable. Earlier up to 1980, with exception like Tamil Nadu, Punjab and Jammu and Kashmir etc, in most of the states they could achieve the status of ruling party in the state, but starting with ascendancy of Telugu Desam Party of N.T. Rama Rao in 1983 in Andhra Pradesh as the ruling party, there has been no looking back for the regional parties. The Shiv Senas in Maharashtra, National Conference in Jammu and Kashmir, Asom Gana Parishad in Assam, Samajwadi Party, Bahujan Samaj Party in Uttar Pradesh, Jharkhand Mukti Morcha in Jharkhand, Rashtriya Janata Dal in Bihar, Akali Dal in Punjab, Haryana Vikas Party in Haryana, Biju Janata Dal in Orissa, Trinamol Congress in Bengal, Mizo National front in Mizoram, Sikkim Democratic Front in Sikkim and a host of other regional players came to the power in last 25 years or so. As the situation stands today, except in few states-Gujarat, Madhya Pradesh, Himachal Pradesh, Chattisgarh, Uttarakhand and Rajasthan where national parties competes with each other for political powers, in all other states the national parties are forced to play a secondary role to the regional parties. The national parties in many states accepting the importance of regional parties have gone for alliances with them as otherwise it is impossible to win the seats from these states given the fact that regional parties command the loyalty of significant proportion of the electorate and it will be next to impossible for national parties to win seats from these states by competing against them in an era of competitive politics. The success of the BJP in 1998 and 1999 and the Congress (I) in 2004 and 2009 elections were largely due to the factor of calculated alliances with a large number of regional parties in many states, in 1999 120 members belonging to the regional parties extended support to the NDA government led by BJP, similar case was with UPAI (2004) supported by left parties, BSP and Samajbadi Party from outside and regional parties like TRS, DMK, Sikkim Democratic Front, JMM, National Conference etc. from inside. The UPA II has been no different with exception of withdrawal of Left support on July 10, 2008.(Times of India, July 11, 2008).The growing strength of the regional parties is testified by the fact that between the 10th national elections in 1991 and the 13th national elections, the

²⁰ In 1956 the states were reorganized on linguistic basis.

²¹ It is important to note that most of the demands for autonomy has come from areas outside the Hindi belt and subsequently most of the regional parties have taken roots outside the Hindi belt.

votes and seats of national parties have declined by 10 percent whereas the share of the regional (state) parties has risen between 10 to 13 percent.²² This shift of 10 to 13 per cent is sufficient to change the very nature of Indian party system from one party dominant multi party system to true multi party system in which regional parties can play an important role in making and breaking of coalitional government as witnessed by the role of AIADMK in 1998 NDA government in which it played pivotal role in both in its making and its break. The rise of regional parties has undone the thrust of unitary trends initiated by the constitution and vigorously accelerated by the Congress government under Nehru and Mrs Indira Gandhi in power. One of the signs in moderation to this centralization trends is the cautious use of Article 356 (President's Rule) in the states by the central government, the coalitional government had also been talking about implementation of some of the recommendations of the Sarkaria Commission, greater role for states in developmental planning, allocation of resources, Central schemes etc²³. The continued electoral success of the regional parties in future to a great extent will depend on various concessions they are able to extract from the central government in favour of their regions. The growth of the regional parties clearly indicates to the fact that in this country it will not be possible to develop two parties system as prevalent in Great Britain or USA and our party system will continue to be of multi-party character in spite of presence of two large parties, that is, the Congress (I) and the BJP.

Moreover, it can be noticed that the implementations of reforms in economy initiated by Rajiv Gandhi in 1985 and accelerated by Narasimha Rao's (1991-96) and its continuation by whichever parties and formations that had achieved power since then has brought about the collapse of Nehruvian strategy of mixed economy for attainment of economic development. The new policy of development based on the ideals of liberalization, privatization and globalizations has led to steady decrease of the role of government in economy and allowing market mechanism to play a greater role in resource allocation. The government had withdrawn the requirements of licences, permits, quotas etc, direct foreign investments has been allowed in many areas, imports has been liberalised, subsidies withdrawn and massive disinvestments in public sectors undertaken etc. The policy has no doubts increased the economic growth of the country but seriously impeded its capacity to administer redistributive justice in the society that is marked by extreme poverty. The policy has helped the rich and the middle classes, today luxury items aided by soft loans from financial institutions has reached millions of homes of the middle classes which otherwise could not afford in the earlier period of mixed economy, and, they probably today in the urban areas constitutes the strongest supporters of the new policy and the parties which champions the cause of liberalization of the economy. But along with this redistribution of incomes in favour of rich and

²² Statistics compiled from the report of Election Commission of India, New Delhi.

²³ Declaration of Common Minimum Programme of the United Front government, 1996

middle classes there has been deterioration in the living standard of the masses, the poverty-stricken population is now barred from any share in the gains of the growth in economy at least in the short-term period. It has not led to any substantial increase in employment opportunities for non skilled workers, it has totally by passed agriculture that constitutes the mainstay of the majority of the population in rural India, and it has severely affected the small business and therefore brought about sharp rifts in the society. Today, we find the rural-urban divide in the voting pattern more pronounced than ever before and giving rise to hopes of reversal in the political fortunes of class based leftist parties in the country as poor and suffering population may find the only hope in the electoral successes of the leftist parties in the country. The Indian democracy since 1989 has shown signs of becoming more mature and deeper, it is deeper because those in the power are challenged and eliminated if they fail to perform through the ballot boxes and today, voters understands the meaning and implications of his vote. In the period between 1989 and 2014, there were seven elections held in 1989, 1991, 1996, 1998, 1999, 2004 and 2009 and government has changed hands five times- National Front, Congress (I), United Front and National Democratic Alliance and Congress(I) led United Progressive Alliance-such changes would not have taken place if common voters living in thousand of remote villages of India did not exercise their judgment on performance of government in power and now they can choose alternatives as the number of parties with capacity of governance has increased over the years. The fact of political participation has also demonstrated an increasing trend in the last decade with exception of 1996 elections, which recorded a low voter turn out of 57.9 per cent²⁴, it appears to have stabilized around 60 per cent, which is high by any international standards given the frequency of the elections. Moreover, the statistics clearly reveal that the social base of participation has shifted downwards, there is increasing participation of rural India and implied is the fact that higher lower castes voters are exercising their right to franchise then ever before, India has broken the myth of relationship between affluence and political participation in a democracy. Even the foreign policy of the various government that came to power is radically different from the foreign policies formulated during the Nehru's years and followed up to the crumbling of the old world order in late 1980's. The disintegration of Soviet Union, collapse of Communist regime in the east European nations and rise of global terrorism has compelled the government in power to reach beyond non alignment and as of now India is more closer to Washington then to Moscow, the two democracies despites differences are in a better position to understand each other and fight against menace of terrorism then in the past. At the same time good relationship with neighbouring countries has always been accorded top most priority by the new policy makers of the country.

²⁴Statistics compiled from the report of Election Commission of India, New Delhi.

Given the present scenario it becomes imperative for us to take a step further and assess the kind of political set up that is likely to arise in the next few decades or so. The present situation firstly, points out that the coalitional government is not a passing phase and has come to stay almost as a permanent feature of Indian politics the number of parties sharing powers has increased with every elections since 1996. India may not witness strong two party system as symbolized by the U.S.A or U.K. and as dreamt of at the time of framing of the constitution, for variety of reasons, future elections may alter numbers here and there but are unlikely to yield a clear one party rule and the survival and success of BJP and Congress (I) will to a great extent depend on acceptance of this fact.

Secondly, the regional players will continue to play an important role in formation of coalitional government. The regional parties despite their presence in one or at the best in handful of the states will remain critical element in any political arrangement at the center and command more influence than their numbers indicate. The presence of regional parties will force ideologically aligned parties to eschew extreme positions and force open the issue of the structure of Union-State(s) relations, this relationship is likely to undergo changes and bring about an end to process of extreme centralization. More federalized arrangements would follow from inability of the Congress to recover its previous position and that of the BJP to provide substitute. Coalition in future will probably converge on three factors - federalism inclusive of financial autonomy, the expansion of welfare state with a well - calibrated economic reforms and increase in the opportunities for the groups that has been for long marginalized in the society. The BJP and the Congress (I) is not likely to disappear from the political scenario, given the fact that they share between themselves half of the votes of the Indian electorates, but their chances of assuming power will depend on their capacity to tie up with regional players.

Thirdly, the stability of the coalitional government to a great extent will depend not only on its ability to bring out a common understanding in form of a common minimum programme by relinquishing extreme positions and accepting programmes acceptable to all parties in a coalition such as CMP of the United Front government in 1996 or National Agenda for Governance as of the NDA government in 1998 and 1999 or Common Minimum Programme of UPA I and UPA II, but also on its ability to provide minimal aspirations. The aspirations for food, clothing and shelter among one – third of the people who have no proper access to it is likely to become politically explosive issue in the future. The stability of the party in power will depend on its capacity to deliver development.

Fourthly, the churning process in politics is likely to continue in time to come. One can say that the electorates by successively voting for alternatives have proved their capacity to evaluate the performances of the government in power and eliminate

the non-performers. Parties cannot expect to last on the basis of commitments but their survival will depend on their capacity to implement commitments. Peaceful changes of government along with large participation of electorate will now become a permanent feature of elections in the country.

Finally, decline of the role of the government in economic affairs with the onset of market led reforms in 1990's is likely to come under severe strains, the issue of re-distributive justice is likely to become as important as the issue of growth of economy. The role of the Union government in balancing the disparities between the states is also likely to come under pressure and such pressures are likely to deepen as the disparities between states become wider and deeper due handful of states only attracting investments. The rising wage bills of the state is likely to compound, with most of the states not being in a position to meet their expenditure from limited resources at their disposal. The rising disparities unless the reform process is moderated may give rise to the movements of the poor demanding the state to provide welfare functions and good governance.

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AUTOBIOGRAPHY AND THE MISSING PERSONS: A CRITICAL STUDY WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO THE AUTOBIOGRAPHY OF AN UNKNOWN INDIAN

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ABSTRACT

Autobiography, the story of personal, invariably based on person or the narrator – speaker and perhaps natural as a result, it may be silent or rather not much concerned and cooperative on the various voices and discourses present around the first person narrator. On the other hand, with the advent of modernization and its associated literary movements, the growing demand or tendency of presenting private life and common people has taken a specific place in the genre of autobiography, which they think to be missing in many works. Nirad C. Chaudhuri's The Autobiography of an Unknown Indian, a masterpiece of literature in its own accord, has its professed claim to tell the story of civilization and at once it does not deny its egotistical observations. The present essay aims to explore this antithetical claims and attitudes and bias of the author as well as the reality of the missing of the missing persons in this work.

Keywords: Autobiography, Missing Person, Autobiography of an Unknown Indian

Autobiography is thought of a kind of single man's effort, concerned with a single man's life and time. Philippe Lejeune's highly praised definition of autobiography can be taken into account in this regard, "Retrospective prose narrative written by a real person concerning his own existence, where the focus is his individual life, in particular the story of his personality" (Lejeune, 1989:4-5). We cannot surely miss the prominent and emphasized tone on the individualization of this specific genre which almost simultaneously points out its resulted difficulty as a collaborative process to a certain extent. In fact, this is the genre which is least to be considering on others as the name also suggests this quite prominently. On the other hand, though it may be a single man's endeavor and efforts around a single's person's life, it cannot exclude the others from its periphery because essentially despite all, man is nothing but a social animal as Aristotle propounds and Bacon confirms again in his essay *Of Friendship* (1625). In this respect Paul John Eakin has rightly said that autobiography is an inherently social act, in that an individual's narrative is dependent on other individuals. This remark certainly focuses more on the social aspects regarding the person concerned, where the narrative basically deals with the delineation of subjective

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social relations between the individuals, who are not one and the single peripheral outlook is bound to be changed likewise, because in that case, no single perspective can be justified without a due recourse to the other prevailing opinions and judgments.

This antithetical perspective has given rise to the debate of stabilizing and placing the autobiography as a single narrative discourse and whether and how much others' point of views and perspectives can be or may be assimilated in the structure between the author-narrator and others, whose lives appeared in the course of the delineation of events throughout the work.

The form of autobiography allows its authors to convey the very impression that lives are lived and being lived in quite orderly way like the narration of events in systematic and gradual way. This idea of something achieved is very much true to the European psyche also which terms that the author had his progress of life without failing from his rational needs and desires. But giving due respect to the above mentioned antithetical testimonials and judgments of autobiography, the present essay's effort will be to point out the ingrained difficulties in dealing with the basic aspects of autobiography with its specific narrative pattern in these two specific and simultaneously antithetical judgments or opinions in reference to Nirad C. Chaudhuri's *The Autobiography of an Unknown Indian* (1951).

But there are the missing persons also. Those are the people who are conventionally supposed to be the silent ones who are deprived of either ecstatic fame or heinous notoriety and maybe even a general, decent place in the course of life like the concept of Greek chorus, used in the dramas of Sophocles, Aeschylus etc, so superbly. The original denomination of chorus which was thought to be the chosen group of elderly and influential people who will guide and at least advise the king on state matters is reduced to be only rustics, uncultured and humdrum general in Hardy's novels. But whatever may be the case, they remain unrepresented and unheard. Oedipus did not heed them in his dear adventure for the truth though he was advised by them not to pursue the truth which is a kind of to know is to err and Hardy's chorus rather becomes a kind of multiple spectators grouped together without much personalization and authority on the text and context, having only a dumb voice. If we take these as attempts to represent these general common missing persons in terms of literature, those are the real missing persons. In the field of autobiography, this concern is becoming more and more a prominent agenda for the auto-biographers and the critics concerning the genre. But the more real missing persons are those who in spite of the narrator's gaze are subjected to be sufficiently less projected in the sense of the term. On the other hand, the very refusal to identify childhood as a culminating factor in negotiating and establishing the elderly and mature life in the process of stabilization is one of the missing persons in delineation of autobiography as a genre. Freud suggests that the experiences of childhood, the significant experiences are "omitted rather than forgotten"

(Freud,1953:224) and by imaginative acts of substitution people repress and simultaneously replace whatever has been unacceptable. The information about sexual life is also deemed to be a alien field to be cultivated before the public gaze, also brings another missing person in the domain of autobiography and as a reality there are very few instances of these except perhaps Frank Harris's sexual autobiography *My Life and Loves* (1922), but it certainly lacks the title or tag of autobiography in the more general sense of the term.

At the advent of 20th century the German philosopher and sociologists like Max Weber and Georg Samuel have aptly commented on the process of rationalization and materialistic attitude that gradually replaced the process of standardization and cultivating in people's everyday life, which is very significant. In this present context of our discussion on the missing persons as Weber said that as intellectualism surpasses belief in magic, the world's processes become disenchanted, lose their magical significance and henceforth simply and just happen but no longer signify anything. As a consequence, there is a growing demand that the world and the total pattern of life be subject to an order that is significant and meaningful, hence the total pattern of life means that it includes rather than excludes.

In the light of above mentioned discussion we can have a glimpse of Nirad C. Chaudhuri's famed *The Autobiography of an Unknown Indian*. The title itself bears the characteristic taunt and tone of mockery of specific Chaudhuri style and at once points out to a basic question whether autobiography can be written on an 'unknown' person and which simultaneously focuses our attention for the debate of missing persons in the periphery of autobiography. If we just go through the preface we can see very well the debate mentioned above figures so prominently in the work. As Chaudhuri wrote in the preface:

“This book describes the conditions in which an Indian grew to manhood in the early decades of the century. His adventures in the world, where at the end of the narrative he is left more stranded than making his way, have to remain unrecorded for the present...The story I want to tell is the story of the struggle of a civilization with a hostile environment, in which the destiny of British rule in India became necessarily involved. My main attention is thus historical and since I have written the account with the utmost honesty and accuracy of which I am capable, the intention in my mind has become mingled with the aspiration that the book may be regarded as a contribution to contemporary history” (Chaudhuri, 1972:IX).

The problem with the book is that Chaudhuri claims the book to be a contribution to history and simultaneously could not deny the presence of a good deal of egoistic matter, which is perhaps an autobiography's positive and distinct identity. On the other hand, he wants to tell the “story of the struggle of a civilization” (Chaudhuri, 1972:IX), which really makes it more and more complex regarding the terms and

structure of autobiography. So, let us go to examine how much and how far his claims are materialized with the above mentioned discussion of the missing persons taken into account.

The *Autobiography of an Unknown Indian* (1951) is the first book of Chaudhuri and it is also undoubtedly his best. Chaudhuri is a fascinating recorder of the way of life that the Bengalis live in his period. The book is also significant in the point that it exhibits his own historical beliefs and opinions which may sound little untraditional but none the less shows his conviction which is according to him based on solid historical knowledge. What is noteworthy is that Chaudhuri's autobiography is distinct in Indian literary tradition as it has a curious mixture of personal and something beyond it and which crosses each other so often and in such a rapid and easy progression that almost bewilder the readers where to draw a line of demarcation in between. On the one hand, his autobiography is professed to tell the story of a civilization, therefore professed to be less concerned with his own life and the personality, but perhaps to do justice with all these two aspects at once is not possible at all from the objective point of view. Being dedicated to the "memory of the British Empire in India" (Chaudhuri, 1972:Dedication Page), Chaudhuri's autobiography is meant for its western readers because "all that was good made and shaped and quickened by the same British rule" (Chaudhuri, 1972:Dedication Page). The loose autobiographical structure deals with Chaudhuri's parental history, his early boyhood, his native village, life at Banagram and Kishorganj, departure for Kolkata, education etc., if we just go through the names of the chapters of his book we can see very well how desperately he has tried his best to bind the two fold professed purposes of the book that is to tell the individual history and also the history of civilization. so the chapters like 'England', 'Torch Race of the Indian Renaissance', 'Enter Nationalism', 'Citizen-Student', etc., are juxtaposed with the chapters like 'My Birthplace', 'My Ancestral Village', 'Experiences of Adolescence' etc., to fulfil the somewhat obstinate demand of the author but to crown all, and, perhaps thinking that the book has not been made sufficiently a history of civilization, he adds one chapter on the subject dear to his heart and on which he claims and really is an expert 'An Essay on the Course of Indian History' towards the close of the book. It is also significant that throughout the work he has tried to establish a kind of harmony and equilibrium over these two facets and though from the strict sense of autobiographical point of view it may be called a failure reasonably, but he has tried at least a new subgenre in his bid to transfer personal into somewhat belonging to a civilization, where his efforts are praiseworthy and perhaps it is not unnatural for a enlightened mind like him, living and prospering at least intellectually at one of the fateful hours of a nation to which he belongs to.

In discussion about the missing persons, the private life of the narrator or any of his associates are almost totally absent and perhaps it is not totally surprising keeping in mind the society and his restriction prevalent in that time. Though there are some

instances of depicting private life in Gandhi's famous autobiographical work *My Experiments with Truth* (1948) but Chaudhuri's solemn concern with knowledge perhaps prevents him doing any such kind of thing or progress further in that path. Further what is almost natural in the European culture and customs cannot be always same in the Indian tradition also. However, there are some instances how a middle class Bengali household looks over these matters. In the chapter 'Torch Race of the Indian Renaissance', for example he cautiously and somewhat amusingly describes one incident from his boyhood. It goes like this:

"Of the puritanical rigor of new Hinduism I can give an example from my own experience. In our adolescence we became adherents of the school of Hindu asceticism and were particularly painstaking in our pursuit of one virtue-chastity. Now, in one of the books of practical morality from which we sought guidance, we found instructions for maintaining a book off ailing in which some of the more serious youthful vices were to be set down in the form of a table, and the number of indulgences in these vices to be recorded every day, so that on the basis of these statistical data we could direct our moral energies in just proportions towards the various weak points in our character. Among other vices there were included in this task, 'sleeping in the day' (described as libidinous dissipation) and 'infatuation with female beauty'. I did not maintain this book. Somehow I felt that it was not quite the thing. But my younger brother, being more immature did. One day my mother chanced on the note-book, and going through it found it generously ticked under the head 'infatuation with female beauty'. My brother was about thirteen or fourteen, then just the age to embark on that infatuated quest. But my mother brought no objectivity of mind to bear on the psychological situation revealed, and tore up the book, warning my brother seriously against a repetition of such stupidity" (Chaudhuri, 1972:252-253). So, one cannot really expect a European kind of personal or confessional autobiography from this situation.

Secondly, the chapter like 'Enter Nationalism' has some illuminated notes on the hitherto unheard common general and made explicit and introspective observations on the Hindu-Muslim relationship and by the way describing some actual situation of his time. Chaudhuri comments:

"When I see the gigantic catastrophe of Hindu-Muslim discord of these days, I am not surprised, because we as children held the tiny mustard seed in our hands and sowed it very diligently. In fact, this conflict was implicit in the very unfolding of our history, and could hardly be avoided. Heaven preserve me from the dishonesty, so general among Indians, of attributing the conflict to British rule, however much the foreign rulers might have profited by it" (Chaudhuri, 1972:267) and by the way points out his school friends—Karim, Akhtar, etc., and their relation with him. The comments merit truly historical value in the point that Chaudhuri here impartially tries to judge the situation and the history, not simply generalize the focus of attention and the fact is that he is and he always was stubborn on this matter. Probably the whole merit of this book inherits its basic value from this point. However the people like Girindra,

Mahendrababu, Rasik Nandi etc., are almost all the representatives of genteel babus of middle class Bengali household with fewer exceptions, but generally the down-trodden subaltern are almost absent in this voluminous work which professes to tell the history of civilization.

To conclude, we can say that in his autobiography, Chaudhuri intends and emerges to be a British, both in mind and deeds, cynical to his own countrymen and this has somewhat biased his outlook and perception and of course the narration is ensued as a natural product of it. Though there are the missing persons, and they remain missing, but the glory of the book is perhaps in its superb delineation of personal and political into a single fold and thus despite having a faulty structure and being faulty as a autobiography as par the modern demands, it emerges as a valuable work of literature to be appraised by the readers to come in all ages and cultures.

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ECOTOURISM AS AN ALTERNATIVE APPROACH TO DEVELOPMENT AND CONSERVATION OF DZONGU IN SIKKIM

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ABSTRACT

Sikkim a relatively economically backward state of India and located in the strife torn North Eastern part, is of strategic importance to India. It has high potential for hydropower development as it is in the Himalayan region characterized by rugged terrain with swift flowing rivers ideal for generation of hydro-electricity. The state administration is at present encouraging the development of hydropower projects here by both the public and private sectors with the rationale that it will ultimately usher in the much-needed socio-economic development of the state. However much of the hydropower potential of the state is located in North Sikkim in the picturesque landscape of Dzongu the sacred land of the Lepchas close to the Kanchendzonga Bio-reserve. Most of the Lepchas are averted to the present hydropower development in their homeland as they believe that Dzongu their holy land, an integral part of their culture will be taken away from them in the name of development leading to cultural erosion of their unique identity and traditions. Against this background this paper basically addresses the present nature of hydro –power development of Sikkim in general and Dzongu in particular and how an alternative development approach can help in ushering in the much needed socio-economic development of the small indigenous communities like Lepchas without destroying their unique culture, landscape and identity.

Keywords: Dzongu, Lepchas, Hydropower Development, Aversion, Ecotourism

INTRODUCTION

The Lepchas are the earliest inhabitants of Sikkim (Gyatso 2002). At present the Lepchas are concentrated in North Sikkim where Dzongu their homeland is located. Sikkim, a tiny Himalayan Kingdom was a protectorate of India till 1975. It was merged with India in 1975 and became the 22nd state of the country (Ray 2005). The transition from Monarchy to Democracy has brought about demographic and vast socio-economic changes here. The Lepchas the original inhabitants of Sikkim and adjoining Darjeeling district of west Bengal, western part of Nepal and eastern Bhutan (Chowdhury 2007) are at present a minority constituting only about 7 percent (2001 Census) of the total population of the state and are often referred to as the vanishing tribe as they have been

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assimilated with the waves of migrant communities coming from Tibet in the north Bhutan in the east and Nepal in the west who have brought thousands of settlers to the land of the Lepchas. The changing land use system and culture brought about by the migrants has led to the assimilation of the Lepchas with the culture of the new settlers which they have adopted or they have been pushed away to the forested riparian tracks and valleys (the Dzongu) where they still preserve their unique tradition and identity. Thus they call themselves the Rong Pa (ravine people).

The merger of the protectorate of Sikkim with the Indian Union in 1975 has ushered in democratic values in an erstwhile monarchy. This has brought about vast changes in the socio-economic set up of the state. Demographically the State has gained in population, the density of population has increased from 30 persons/sq km (1971 census) to 86 persons/ sq km by 2011 provisional census (Purkayastha & Gautam 2012) The composition of the population has also changed. The literacy rate has increased from mere 17.44% (1971 census) to 82.2% by 2011 besides this, the state has also gained in infrastructural development.

Sikkim like any other Indian state in a developing economy is on its path to development and modernisation. As the present civilization is energy oriented, the importance of power and water in the economic progress of a country is unquestionable and Sikkim with its rugged terrain and swift flowing rivers has high potential for development of hydro power projects. This has led the state administration to invite both the public and private sectors to develop such projects. The present government policies envisage that hydropower development will eventually lead to overall infrastructure development paving the way for the socio-economic development of the population living here.

At present the state administration under the aegis of Sikkim Power and Development Corporation Limited, has sanctioned 27 Hydro electric projects out of which 8 projects are located in the Dzongu area. But Hydro electric projects drastically redefine the land use pattern that not only induces displacement of people from their ancestral habitats but also leads to demographic changes and cultural erosion which at times is resented by local communities as they fear that such development activities will not be inclusive and result to social transformation that may not be easily acceptable as they fear demographic changes, cultural erosion and loss of identity.

This is happening in Dzongu as the development of the Hydro power projects here are taking away the unique culture of the Lepchas which is intricately related to the ecological set up of Dzongu. The Lepchas fear cultural erosion in the name of development. Their holy river Teesta is disappearing along the tunnels constructed for the hydro-power projects, the forests which are their source of medicinal plants besides a source of fodder and fuel are disappearing, the mountains and other landforms which

are the sites of rituals and worship are being affected by landslides and construction activities in the name of development. The Lepchas along with some scholars and civil society fear that their very identity is threatened by such projects and a section of the Lepcha community is already opposing the development of hydro-power projects in their land. The Lepchas are getting polarized and unified under a forum called Active citizens of Teesta (ACT) which is protesting against such projects .

It is in this context that Ecotourism as a viable alternative to hydropower projects for the development of the Dzongu and its people is envisaged in this paper. Ecotourism development can be more proactive than the present development of hydro-power.

Ecotourism refers to travelling to relatively undisturbed and uncontaminated natural areas with the specific objective of studying, admiring and enjoying the scenic beauty, the flora and fauna as well as the existing cultural manifestation both past and present found in an area (Larcurian 1983). Thus with ecotourism the Lepchas can actively participate in the development process. Further such a development approach shall conserve the cultural and natural resources of the area as the tourists here will come to view and enjoy the pristine landscape and culture of the Lepchas, Thus such an approach to development may ultimately help in an inclusive socio-economic progress of the Lepchas without eroding their culture, landscape and identity intricately co-related to each other. Ecotourism may also usher in better infrastructure, income and employment opportunities that will help in enhancing the accessibility and affordability of the local population so that they can attain a better standard of living.

OBJECTIVE

The present paper highlights on the culture of the Lepchas and how the present development projects is having a detrimental impact on the economy, culture and environment of the Lepchas. It further focuses on the potential for the development of ecotourism in Dzongu.

DATA SOURCE AND METHODOLOGY

The data used for this paper is based on both primary and secondary sources. Primary data have been collected through field observation, focused group discussion with some of the Lepcha community Leaders, officials working in the hydro power projects, local residents and members of Active Citizen of Teesta (ACT).The Paper is theoretical in nature where mostly views of the local population has been represented along with scientific reports prepared by different experts on the viability of the hydro-power projects located in the Dzongu.

STUDY AREA

Dzongu is located in North Sikkim. The Dzongu covers approximately 78 sq km of geographical area and extends between 27°28' – 27°38' N latitude. and 88°23' – 88°38' E longitude, its altitude ranges from 700 m to 6000 m above m.s.l. and is spread on a hilly terrain having dense forests. Steep slopes, gorges and valleys along with snow-covered peaks revealing a picturesque landscape with numerous waterfalls and hot springs characterize the area. There are about 38 small hamlets (bustees) located here housing approximately 5000 population (Chowdhury 2006). The hamlets are of small size and the houses are spaced at great distance, separated by farm lands and intervening forests. This area is roughly triangular in shape, bounded on the south-east by the river Teesta, on the north-east by the Talung River and on the third side by the southern part of greater Himalayan ranges where Mt. Kanchenjunga (8,598 m, world's 3rd highest peak) is located. The geographical position of Dzongu has accentuated its isolation from the rest of Sikkim. Owing to dense forest cover, the area experiences showers almost throughout the year. The area represents three climatic zones viz. sub-tropical, temperate and alpine and is extremely rich in bio-diversity. It borders the Kanchenjunga Bio reserve and has some of the ancient Buddhist monasteries and temples.

ECONOMY AND CULTURE OF THE LEPCHAS

The Lepchas are of Mongoloid race and their language belong to the Tibeto Barman group of languages. Traditionally the Lepchas practiced hunting and food gathering with shifting cultivation but at present they are mostly into sedentary agriculture where terrace cultivation is practiced. They keep cattle and practice poultry and dairy farming. The main crops grown by the Lepchas are paddy, millets and maize as food crops, while ginger, cardamom and oranges are the main cash crops.

The Lepchas have a distinct language and written script which is being taught in some schools of Sikkim. The traditional cloths of the Lepchas are hand woven (woven by their womenfolk) with exquisite colour combination. They are skilled bamboo craftsmen and possess vast knowledge on the medicinal plants found in their vicinity. Their traditional implements are closely related to the resources found in their ecological set up.

The Lepchas are animists with some influence of Lamaism and Buddhism and their traditional religio-cultural practices are intricately related to the mountains, streams and vegetation found here. They perform elaborate rituals in the Dzongu. The Lepchas call themselves Rong Pa which means ravine folk and they believe that they were created by Mother Nature in the Dzongu. Their society is divided into clans named

Putso and each Lepcha Putso claims to have a mythical connection with a particular mountain peak which they worship as their deity (Bhasin 2011).

PRESENT DEVELOPMENT ACTIVITIES AND LEPCHA CULTURE

The state of Sikkim has a hydro power potential of about 8000 MW peak with a firm base of 3000 MW(Rao 2006). The Teesta and Rangit are the two main rivers of Sikkim where considerable hydropower potential is available. According to the Preliminary Reconnaissance Survey in 1974 by a team of experts of erstwhile Central water and Power Commission, river Teesta can be harnessed under a cascade development for hydropower generation in six stages i.e. Teesta Stage-I to Stage- VI (Lahiri 2012). Besides river Teesta the other tributaries of the river such as Rangit, Rangpo, Lachen etc. are also having high potential for the hydro power development. National Hydroelectric Power Corporation Limited (NHPC) and other private developers are entering in the hydropower sector in Sikkim as the state government encourages hydropower development, which is being considered as one of the main sources for enhancing socio-economic development of the state.

The Central Electricity Authority in 2001 while conducting their preliminary ranking study of the hydro electric potential of the river basins of India identified 21 large projects in Sikkim. At present the Sikkim Power Development Corporation Limited has granted permission for more than 24 different hydropower projects, which will generate at least 5494 MW. The NHPC alone has commissioned 510MW project- Teesta V in March 2008. This has given an impetus to hydro power development here by both the private and public sector in spite of the local resentment against such projects. The list of upcoming hydropower projects are shown in Table 1.

Out of the total hydro-power projects eight projects are directly or indirectly associated with the Dzongu area where 38 Lepcha villages are located. This area has been assessed to have a capacity of around 2500 MW of electricity. The Teesta stage III, IV, V projects located in Panam, Rangyong, Rukel, Ringpi and Lingzya are directly or indirectly going to affect Dzongu. Out of the 38 Lepcha villages located in the Dzongu reserved area the Dzongu village is the holiest place of all which is being directly affected by the Teesta V project as the tunneling of the river here is taking away the holy river and adjoining land from the Lepchas.

Table 1: Upcoming and completed hydropower projects in Sikkim (updated 2010)

S. N	Project Name	Capacity (MW)	Developer	Probable date of Commissioning	Present status
1	Teesta Stage-I	280	Himalayan Green Energy (P) Ltd	2012-13	Under investigation
2	Teesta Stage-II	330	Him Urja Infra (P) Ltd	2011-12	Under investigation
3	Teesta Stage-III	1200	Teesta Urja Ltd	2011-12	DPR Ready
4	Teesta Stage-IV	495	NHPC	2011-12	Under investigation
5	Teesta Stage-V	510	NHPC	2008-9	Commissioned
6	TeestaStage-VI	500	Lanco Energy (P) Ltd	2011-12	Under investigation
7	Lachen	210	NHPC		Under investigation
8	Panan	280	Himgiri Hydro Energy (P)Ltd	2011-12	DPR Ready
9	Rangyong	Approx 300	NHPC	2011-12	Stopped
10	Rukel			2005	Stopped
11	Ringpi			2005	Stopped
12	Lingzya			2005	Stopped
13	Rongnichu	96	Madhya Bharati Power Co.	2011-12	Under investigation
14	Chuzachen	71	Gati Infrastructure Ltd	2011-12	Under Construction
15	Sada-Mangder	99	Gati Infrastructure Ltd	2009-10	DPR Ready
16	Bhasmey	51	Gati Infrastructure Ltd	2011-12	DPR Ready
17	Rolep	36	Amalgamated Transpower India Ltd	2009-10	DPR Ready
18	Chakung Chu	50	Amalgamated Transpower India Ltd	2011-12	Under investigation
19	Ralong	40	Amalgamated Transpower India Ltd	2011-12	Under investigation
20	Rangit-II	60	Sikkim Ventures (P) Ltd	2011-12	DPR in final stage
21	Rangit- III	60	NHPC	1997-98	Commissioned
22	Rangit-IV	120	Jal Power Corporation Ltd	2011-12	DPR Ready
23	Dikchu H	96	Sneha Kinetic PP Ltd	2011-12	Under Construction
24	Jorethang Loop	96	DANS Energy (P) Ltd	2011-12	Under investigation
25	Thangchi	499	Lachung Power (P) Ltd	2011-12	Under investigation
26	Bimkyong	99	Teesta Power (P)LTD	2011-12	Under investigation
27	Bop	99	Chungthang Power (P) Ltd	2011-12	Under investigation
	Total (est.)	5494			

Source: Sikkim Power Corporation Ltd 2010

*Name in bold letter represents the projects related to the Dzongu area

As already mentioned the Lepchas are animists with some influence of Lamaism and Buddhism, their traditional religious practices are intricately related to the mountains, streams and vegetations found here. They perform elaborate rituals in the Dzongu village. Thus the proposed hydropower projects here are having a drastic effect on the socio-cultural and religious practices of Lepchas, not to mention on the fragile environment of Dzongu, the ancestral homeland of the Lepchas. The implementation of the Teesta hydro power project and the loss of Dzongu (the ancient Lepcha reserve) is resulting in ethnocide and the disappearance of their cultural heritage that is rooted to their ancestral connections and performance of rituals connected to the land, forests, mountains, lakes, and nature, in general. Some scholars (Kohli 2007) Pandit 2007 Lepcha and Vagiholikar 2011) are of the opinion that customs, traditions and the very character of the Lepchas are intricately related to their natural surroundings hence development of hydro- projects here is adversely affecting the local population resulting to cultural erosion and annihilation of their common property rights over the forests and water resources that the Lepchas have enjoyed in the past.

Chowdhury (2007) documents the intense local resentment against hydro power projects located in Dzongu as the Lepchas fear influx and settlement of the outsiders that may ultimately lead to the loss of their unique culture as they are small in number.

As the Lepchas are worshippers of spirits and local deities that are intricately related to their unique landscape, though many of them have embraced Buddhism, yet they retain and observe pre-Buddhist religious beliefs and practices (Negi 1998). The ancient religious practices of the Lepchas are routinely performed by the Mun and Bonthing (Lepcha priests and priestess). Hence Lepcha religio-cultural practices are existing in the Dzongu even with the intermingling of the Lepchas with migrants coming from different areas at different points of time in history.

Of late the unique culture of the Lepchas is being threatened in the name of development of hydro-electric power Projects. As a consequence, the Lepcha ancestral faith have been revitalized recently as an ecological and political tool to mobilize the local population (Torri 2011) by the educated section of Lepcha community in order to fight back the Hydro-power projects in the Dzongu as envisaged by the state administration. This has led to protests in an organized form by the Lepchas as they feel that in the name of development they are not only getting displaced, but their control over the natural resources and their religio-cultural practices are threatened. The Hydro power projects are taking away their sacred sites- Kagey Lha- Tso lake, the Drag Shingys caves and the Jhe-tsa-tsu and Kong Tsa-tsu hot springs (Panan Project) which are said to be endowed with healing properties.

The tunneling of the river Teesta here is a threat to the Lepcha community and culture as they identify themselves with the landscape. Moreover the tunneling of the

river here is associated with bio-diversity loss of the area. River Teesta is holy to the Lepchas and they perform rituals here. The Lepchas have an extraordinary understanding of nature and medicinal plants which is being threatened in the name of development.

The tunneling and blasting associated with the hydro power projects have already caused problems, complains of cracks in the houses, drying up of perennial streams, landslides etc have been reported from this area (Bhasin 2011). Due to tunneling of the river, large quantities of muck is being deposited in the river restricting its flow and increasing the threat to downstream area. Moreover, the Lepchas believe that the gas used in blasting has adversely affected the productivity of the Cardamom by about 50 percent. Dust pollution is also rampant affecting the flowering and productivity of fruits.

Thus the hydro-power projects though ushering in socio-economic changes may not be sustainable in the long run as it is leading to social conflict in a relatively Besides the hydro-electric projects involve huge construction activities which lead to land use changes, loss of bio-diversity and forest cover leading to soil erosion , landslides etc in the extremely fragile ecological set up of the Himalayas. This calls for an alternative development approach and it is in this context that ecotourism as a viable option towards development can be introduced here.

DEVELOPMENT OF ECOTOURISM

The educated section of the Lepcha community are already proposing an alternative development in the form of Ecotourism- Ecotourism refers to a form of tourism that involves travelling to tranquil and unpolluted natural areas. According to the definition and principles of ecotourism established by The International Ecotourism Society (TIES) in 1990, ecotourism is "Responsible travel to natural areas that conserves the environment and improves the well-being of local people." Martha Honey expands on the TIES definition by describing the seven characteristics of ecotourism, that are:

1. Involves travel to natural destinations.
2. Minimizes impacts on the natural environment.
3. Builds environmental awareness.
4. Provides direct financial benefits for conservation.
5. Provides financial benefits and empowerment for local people.
6. Respects local culture.
7. Supports human rights and democratic movements.

This definition contains in it the following highlights :

- a. Conservation of biological diversity and cultural diversity through ecosystem protection.
- b. Promotion of sustainable use of biodiversity by providing jobs to local populations.
- c. Sharing of socio-economic benefits with local communities and indigenous people by having their informed consent and participation in the management of ecotourism enterprises.
- d. Tourism to unspoiled natural resources with minimal impact on the environment being a primary concern.
- e. Minimization of tourism's impact on environment.
- f. Affordability and lack of luxury leading to minimal waste generation.
- g. Local culture, flora and fauna being the main attractions for the tourists.

The Dzongu fits into this scheme. Most of the Lepcha villages are pristine, located either on ridge tops or along the rivers. The villages here offer an extremely picturesque location, which can be exploited by the development of ecotourism sites.

The Lepchas perform various religious cultural ceremonies in a year which can be showcased to the tourists. The Dzongu is dotted with numerous hot springs, waterfalls and religious sites including ancient monasteries and temples that can be exploited by ecotourism activities. The numerous woods with presence of various medicinal plants that the Lepchas know about can also be exploited by developing forest tracking and identification of medicinal plants with establishment of modern research stations. The development of ecotourism in such sites will encourage generation of income for the Lepchas living here without disturbing the immaculate landforms rich in culture and biodiversity.

As the main objective of ecotourism is to maintain a fine balance between the requirement of tourism and ecology on one hand and the needs of the local communities for jobs, income generation and employment opportunities on the other, ecotourism as an economic activity is ideal for protecting and conserving biodiversity and culture of an area like the Dzongu. Here tourists can come to enjoy nature and the unique culture of the Lepchas in its pristine form, leading to conservation of not only bio-diversity, but also appreciation of the local customs and traditions. The tourists will come to view the unique religious and cultural functions which the Lepchas perform. At the same time the tourists may help in income generation for the local population inhabiting the Dzongu area encouraging socio-economic development.

As Tourism here involves responsible travel to natural sites it will not only help in conserving environment but also improving the well being of the local people that will ultimately generate an additional source of income for the Lepchas enhancing their financial capital and physical capital as ecotourism is directly dependent on respecting and protecting the natural habitat and unique culture of the Lepchas.

The location of the Dzongu, bordering the Kanchenjunga Biosphere Reserve which is already emerging as an important eco-tourism destination, supported by the Ecotourism and Conservation Society of Sikkim (ECOSS) may act as a catalyst in the alternative approach to development of the Dzongu.

The ECOSS is already encouraging the local educated youth residing in Dzongu to explore alternative opportunities in the generation of income through tourist related activities so that they can be self employed within the Dzongu without disturbing their landscape and culture. Mainly the educated section of the Lepcha community, are against the hydro power projects in their holy land but it must be remembered that there is also a group who are for the implementation of the hydro power Projects here. Hence the debate continues. But in the long run it is also important to remember that all developmental projects ideally should be socially acceptable and environmentally as well as economically viable so that it is sustainable and hydro –power projects here are neither socially acceptable nor environmentally sustainable as the Dzongu is located in the fragile Himalayas which discourage heavy construction activities as associated with hydro-power development. Sikkim is also located in an earthquake prone zone. Heavy construction activities here may lead to human induced disasters as experienced in Uttarakhand in 2013.

It is in this context that Ecotourism as an alternative approach to the socio-economic development of the Lepchas living in the Dzongu is proposed. However for the proper implementation of Ecotourism a resource inventory of tourist sites in and around the Dzongu needs to be developed indicating the strength, weaknesses, opportunities and threat perception of each site so that sustainable tourism management is possible, besides encouraging and training the local youths in tourism related activities is a must. Aggressive marketing of Dzongu as an ecotourism site needs to be encouraged in order to realize an alternative approach to development in the Dzongu area that is more sustainable, holistic and inclusive than the present development model.

As Dzongu already has the potential for development of ecotourism and its exploitation in a proper manner will ultimately lead to sustainable and holistic development where nature, culture and heritage are conserved and at the same time income for the local people are generated.

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ENVIRONMENTAL MANAGEMENT: TRANSITIONAL TRENDS IN RESOURCE - BASED DEPENDENCES IN NORTH EAST INDIA

Y. Satya* and B.K. Gupta**

ABSTRACT

The social spectrum in Northeast witness multiplicity in character and living system approvals is based on rigid nodes of ethnicity, environment and dependency norms persist in self-prescribed representations. The supportive and promotional environments leveraged wide differences as the impending changes are observed largely not due to internal turbulences but by the influences of external systems. These externalities have their intrigue into growth and survival factors of the Northeast (here onwards NE) at large are the dominant reasons for initiation, nurture and continuity of the so-called decision systems. These prospecting conditions have their impact over northeastern environment. The current research investigates the traditional values which are substantially becoming outdated and cannot be considered as promotional contributors. The consequences are forcing the natives to adopt future changes and the corresponding pace at which the combinations of resultant dependences are streamlining the usage as well as conservation norms of resources. Yet, one can understand the growing dependencies of resource-serve are a cause of concern consistently ignoring the long term effects. The practically non-feasibilities remained as partial adaptations, especially when the innovative contexts are reinforcing the role vitalities of environmental influence over change components. The impact of change deemed to be aiming mere gratification of needs rather than being developed. Very limited sources seemed to be satisfying the role of contribution towards the formation of perceptions, cause forms leading to transitions and the impact of change. The resource based dependences are understood in integrated forms, aiming variable positions which remained implicit in relevance to the combinations of vulnerability-performance and sustenance. The signifying framework of NE projects the corresponding assessment of resource utility models applicable in different intensities.

Keywords: Resource, Traditional Values, Impact of Change, Value systems

INTRODUCTION

Practicing resource forms insist on making definite efforts which constitute a multi-dimensional understanding of the social systems of ethnic order in their very own utility perceptions. Their concepts of dynamism, rapidity and sequential nature of socio-economic changes in their pace are defined as variable phenomenon. The

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incidental resource frame signifies the possibility of access, traditional approaches, value considerations and advocacies, influence of external factors and ethnic outlook of resource-dependences etc. These cause forms propose diversified change factors are potentially the “impact determinants” persistent with attributes. Each of the NE societies is assumed to be adopting feasible resource protective and producible measures as appropriate path of growth and development. The prevailing ethnic systems have been nurturing, adopting and practicing activities interact merely on the basis of their capacity prescriptions be it the relevance or the prerogative function despite being rigid in their beliefs and competences. The intended change may not necessarily be due to the aspirations aroused out of pragmatic dimensions are largely by external segments. Yet, the majority of these are aptly suitable in the ethnic result-oriented directions, apparently leading towards a range of yielding effects.

The mega social segments irrespective of their location, status claim to be adopting wider dimensions of “ethno-developmental character”. The popular concepts are socio-ethical, structural prescriptions in the areas of traditional knowledge, understanding current technology and skills, resource utilities, industrial uses, agricultural contributions or a combination of all. The resources in the current context represent “natural resources” comprise land, forests, water and mountains in their variable practicing forms. The adaptive modes and preferences attend and perceive the accessible localized possessions mostly acquired or inherited with deemed or beneficial ownership. The resource-based outlook of different ethnic segments of NE have been viewed, expressed with much possessed label of relationships over the ethno-cultural, service and utility or benefit forms, observe the extent of support in their protective, utilization or even exploitative measures are exclusively contributing over by established conventional viewpoints.

The northeast resource appraisal in assorted resource views has wider evaluations, measures to understand individual, clan/community forms of resource approval, allocation and permissible means imbibed by their living systems. The social views insist primarily on resource-base as a note over the other allocated dependences on the approved living preferences - air and assign the priorities intertwined with the resource structure. Understanding of human vs. resource adaptive status remained within stipulated limits could not be explored nor utilized to optimum levels. The co-existence of these associations remained on the criteria of self-prescribed impositions or liberties resulted in untapped opportunistic conditions. Further, these became competent gaps in different value systems suitable to their nature created demarcations on the ground of accommodations of dependency modes.

The societal virtues are equally valued in terms of intrigue aiming at resource protective systems (RPS) found to be succumbed before political, legal, traditional and other co-habitat social systems. Both the present and futuristic concern of the resource

definitions viewed in their limitedness allowed the external systems (including cross-cultural) promoted a more enthusiastic note to develop experiences and awareness made them rethink over the “deviated means” of growth and utility patterns. It is rather difficult to draw wholly supportive set of parameters as to how the localized and non-localized perceptions opine at the resource possession and value added approach due to their “integrated” social flexibilities. It is an essential part of their social system, a subtle, manipulative with a due hidden agenda and the core for their fundamental understanding of their living measures put to practice eventually became a part and parcel of their cultures.

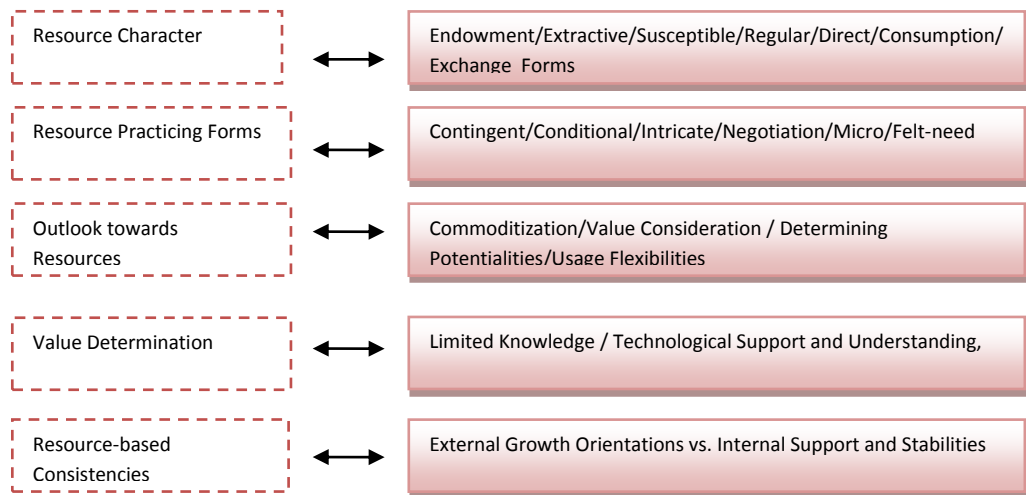
Modal-I: Ethnic Dependency Preferences (EDPs)

•Community Norms	• By means of enforcements, rigidity in practices, alternative opportunities and the proximity to the influencing factors viz., urban area, younger generation, market factors etc.
•Value Dimensions	• The ethnic value systems imbibed with self-needs, community needs and prescribed value systems claimed by external factors.
•Localized Conditions	• Influenced by resources/demographic effects the remoteness, limiting factors, insufficiencies and extreme compromise, etc., are most prone forms.
•Utility Alternatives	• The basic reliance over traditional knowledge has meager utility and the lack of appropriate technology, supporting factors, information and knowledge systems are hesitant to favor new situations.
•Operational Skills	• The majority of the operating skills is outdated and few lost their status due to negligence and lack of interest. Few skills meant for self-consumption has minimum commercial identity, but gaps are wider due to operational differences.
•Reasonability in Approach	• Concepts of self-consumption, community needs and co-existence, human vs. natural resource inter- dependencies, the transformational situations leading to commercial/materialistic views are situational.

The conventional reasons enabled to prefer valuations of tradition and long standing methodologies of time values giving away a need to revere over the ethnic views. Their intrigue - confirm the personalized views expressed with due spirits correspond but offering supportive benefits under socio-community brand. The systems at their individual levels remained meek and revealed totally un-skewed comparatives. A disproportionate character of “system imbalances” at functional and operational levels displayed reciprocal dependencies in outsized forms. The current

research enabled to continue the perceptual trends and the corresponding transitions are a continuous occurrence in the resource-based economies of the Northeast.

Modal -II: Resource Incidence and Criteria



Generic Approaches of Resource Means: To understand the logic of utilizing resources in a balanced protective and producible forms confirm the state of affairs under given conditions with ideologies of submission and usage.

- (i) Formation and Confinement of the Resource Value Systems: Based on resource worth the capacity bearing of resources are expressed in terms of cost of inputs and compensations towards expectation-in-return define survival character.
- (ii) Undefined Social Magnitudes: Be it contemporary or modern understanding the appropriateness of resources is in terms of their ascribed values based on individual/community or societal needs.
- (iii) External Environmental Imperfections (EEIs): Resource depletion imposed a social threat lead to a form of social damage of the associated livelihoods with limited benefit at the cost of massive intangible benefits arrived by “peripheral demand systems”.
- (iv) Social Cost Variations: The private vs. social costs insist on aggregate values to the segments at large of all resources consumed irrespective of values reflected in the market (domestic vs. external) systems viz., granite used for massive construction work in Assam creating imbalances in water source directions is a part of the social cost.
- (v) External Developmental Interventions: Value fetching market dependences lead to resource-exhaust and interventions from social/government are further complicating native resource decisions.
- (vi) Conflict over Resource Standards: The ethno-market imperfections and corresponding government/institutional behaviour confronting resource owners’ justifications to decide over futuristic circumstances and resultant effects.

Value Orientations: The production capacities based on socio-commercial value systems included formal value determinants, social understanding and leveraged benefit/usage ratios. The territorial resource frame viz., water, forest or mineral sources for fishing, growing bio-mass or even leasing etc., are admitted as environmental benefits. Similarly granite, citric fruits, spices, etc., need rationalities to arrive value components when turned into mineral water, ornamental orchids, tiles or herbal medicines, etc. Several communities owned resources form as substitutes or preserve natural resources as sacred forests, sanctuaries, faunal wealth etc., are prone for their dualistic perceptual view of conservation and production. The value determinants of the protected resources for the privilege of observing and to some extent deserve rational thinking while converting “privilege products as value products”.

What exactly drives the ethnic resource performance?

- What resource reference enables to create balanced and unbalanced implications?
- What defines the radius of opportunities in their value-stretch differentiations?
- What measures the criteria of tacit creativities to blend into functional expertise?
- To what extent the cluster character arrives competences in significant contribution?
- How do capacity assignments perceive the distinctive perceptions of ethnic understanding?

Research Parameters: To understand the (i) dependence over natural resources as a means of livelihood; (ii) effects of value considerations in direct or value added forms; (iii) transitional trends enabled the users to adopt alternative forms and (iv) corresponding effects on the level of dependences over natural resources.

The current research is empirical in nature and comprises both descriptive and analytical approaches. The study of the universe is confined to 48 villages from all eight States of Northeast. The term resources represent water, land, mineral, forest and allied range inclusive of minor forest produce, value added efforts with direct or indirect dependencies, etc. The selection criteria of respondents are the physical possession/access where the user is dependent or claim benefit by possession or generate revenue from resources. The sample size comprises of 2400 Individual and 320 Institutional respondents i.e., NGOs, Banks, Developmental, Social and Facilitating Organizations to support the impending tools set for study. The methodology associate selective situations in dual dimensional forms, i.e., Dimension –I comprise Preferences, Transitions and Impact of Change and Dimension –II detail the status of Vulnerabilities, Performance and sustainability. The research adoptions concentrate on multi-

dimensional participatory trends of both individual and institutional respondents which helped arriving meaningful outcomes.

Reference of Communities' Access to Resources and Collaborative Efforts:

1 (a) Considered resource availability with no effort / some effort/ big effort

(i) Land (ii) Forests; (iii) Water; (iv) Hills/mountains; (v) Landscape (vi) Mineral (vii) any other;

➤ The responses revealed that only 17% has the access to land, 23% of forest, 11% of open water access, 32% of hills and mountains and 6 respondents (0.25%) for mineral resources. The access conditions remained different and implied, i.e., (i) permanency or (ii) temporary/contract/leased or short term usage considerations to meet the means-ends and business needs. The tribal and cross cultural life systems dominated their socio-cultural and religious categories, followed by benefit/activity commonness in objectives. The facility relations initiated in the background of location, work-base dependencies are effective underlying factors. Only 27% claimed easy access and 22% with some difficulty in markets, 67% has transport access out of which 18% are complacent and rest referred to high cost, long distanced markets, irregular services and unreliable channel systems etc.

1(b) Patterns of resource distribution among individuals /communities, i.e., (i) land; (II) immovable property; (III) education; (iv) reputation; (v) political power.

➤ The land distribution is the most complicated and was found to be availed on lease or on contract even in tribal areas. The innate tribal land access patterns (varied from state to state) are duly supported by considerations with shared produce, deviated allocations, annual, seasonal and even crop wise considerations. The resource-based system engages a network of position-based benefit involvements at different capacities.

1(c) Contribution of Welfare Services:

➤ Community services still play dominates with 68%, 16% with government schemes and 34% with banking facility. 89% of respondents are religious and 38% sub-community networking on the criteria of social utility services.

2(a) The prime obstacles faced are (i) poor geographical conditions (ii) lack of investment (iii) lack of information (iv) cultural norms and ethnic tensions; (v) shortage of skilled labor (vi) poor technology.

➤ Being in harsh conditions the natives felt the need for improvement in services, but displayed a sense of tolerance and compromise. 41% revealed acute difficulty and 22% with moderate difficulty. 68% of the respondents revealed investments made in kind and 11% disclosed meager (money) investments. Information systems are primitive, but 63% of respondents are using mobile phones and 34% commented on ethnic conflicts (with in the communities) and 28% viewed the involvement of external systems as the root cause of conflicts. 78% of respondents involved in work patterns, 8% adopt the technology and the institutional training is the primary source of technology.

2(b) Arrived satisfaction over the facilities available

(i) Political support; (ii) community support (iii) resource access (iv) financial support (v) market condition (vi) water etc.

➤ 8% supported political power, 14% received community help and 61% revealed option open to access land resources at a price. 74% suggested by having external financial support from money lenders / petty hand loans, but only 9% have institutional support. The markets are private and are belonging to influential groups, clans, communities especially in hilly areas.

2(c) Practical problems being dependent on natural resources

➤ Conditional decision-making due to temporary ownership, lack of basic amenities to nurture more produce than the minimum possible under constrained conditions and issues associated with partnering of produce due to group involvement offering meager returns to temporary owner/s. The practicing trends are primitive and lack of potential sources to introduce modern techniques.

3(a) Facing competition and open conflict over natural resources

(i) Among community members; (ii) government officials (iii) large private investors (iv) influential groups etc.

➤ Invisible competition persist due to favoritism on “informal means” viz., location, caste, community, etc. Respondents have minimal interaction with government officials but were dependent on facilitators. Contact with “private investors and influential groups” never arose. In short, the reflected conflicts are “situational” status enabled need-based crisis dominating the resource decisions.

3(b) Positioning of natural resources:

(i) Weaving, customary/tenure systems (ii) reduction in water sources and pasture land (iii) prejudices due to internal/external involvement; (iv) proliferation of armed personnel involvement; (v) Weak natural resource management and development policies (vi) ethnic polarization and social divisions

➤ 16% of the respondents’ families are engaged in weaving practices for self-consumption and very insignificant volume reach market for commercial purposes. 27% are engaged in the customary / tenure system is adopted as a practice with disproportionate sharing, 54% have insufficient water resource; only 4% have pastor land practice. 68% responded over the prejudices are mostly due to internal systems rather than external (unfelt external pressures, limited understanding, lack of coherence, unwillingness, fear and reluctance were prominent) sourced minimum involvement. The natural resource management was found to be in its primitive stages with 78% basically to meet self-consumption or for exchange value to support personal considerations. Ethnic polarization is prominent on the criteria of region rather than respondent group and social division persisted on the decisive factors of religion, political/ethnic support (include support of militant groups) etc. A new criterion of opportunity and benefit-sharing is a picking up trend.

3(c) Issues of Conflict:

Level-I: Over micro forest products viz., plantations/watering points and tribal homelands:

➤ 62% of the respondents have grievances associated with access over micro forest products, 26% manipulations persisted over resource gain/ allocation (on mutuality-of-considerations), 54% lack of transparency of information, 33% lack of alternatives/need of constant involvement, interventions by/through local governance and 58% meager means-ends provisioning of the resource base.

Level-II: Farming areas, resource, infrastructure development and temporary private investments and partnering.

➤ 48% has farm land conflicts (internal), 58% infrastructural needs to be developed / improved and 66% revealed involvements with money lending and external money dependencies for several purposes have their bearing on their occupational status. 23% have investments made on “agro-allied” forms.

4(a) User Group Reference: farmers/fish-farmers, /livestock farmers. Pastor landowners, hunters, gatherers and party service providers,

➤ 29% are engaged in the fisheries, 32% in livestock, 0.5% of pastoral farms, 12% in hunting (eels, snails, birds, insects, etc.), 42% as gatherers (of firewood, fodder, minor forest products, i.e., broom, areca nut, wild berries, citric fruits, honey, medicinal herbs, orchids etc.) and 38% as service providers who adopt multiple at-convenience forms.

4(b) Engaged in (i) single (ii) multiple activities aiming (i) self-consumption (ii) commercial (iii) partially consumed and partly commercial

➤ 9% are engaged in multiple activities and the single reference is mostly due to household member involvement as well as engaged in full time farming activities, etc. 86% of the activities are meant for self-consumption (irrespective of the region), 16% partly self-consumption and partly for commercial purposes.

5(a) Social Impact and Knock-on Livelihoods:

Table-I

Social Impact and knock-on livelihoods	Response %*
▪ Social division and user group over natural resources	(37%)
▪ Dependency escalation and insecurity	(62%)
▪ Manifestation and opportunity, benefit	(34%)
▪ Local knowledge as a point of equitable development	(89%)

* Respondents’ opinion in Support of Issues

5(b) Evidences of Social Stress:

Table-II

Evidences of social stress:	Response in terms of %		
	Situation-I	Situation-II	Situation-III
▪ Purposeful and systematic violence	Often (24%)	Sometimes (21%)	Rare (16%)
▪ Assault, murder and destruction	Easy (12%)	Sometimes (18%)	Difficult (35%)
▪ Trampling , sabotage and retribution	Easy (24%)	Sometimes (21%)	Difficult (16%)
▪ Land degradation	Commanding (13%)	Submissive (16%)	No Position (67%)
▪ Adopting cultural values	Flexible (22%)	Rigid (45%)	Partial (19%)

5(c) Self-development Agenda of Natives:

Table-III

Self-development Agenda of Natives	Response in %	
	High	Low
▪ Alternative environmental –social stress;	(18%)	(21%)
▪ A relative reduction of per capita availability of land and water resources leading to increased use of land, i.e., more production	(26%)	(21%)
▪ Seasonally related producible stress insist on alternative non-farm activities	(48%)	(16%)
▪ Socio-environmental insecurity, crop concentration and livestock production in smaller areas	(56%)	(09%)

6(a) Resource-prone Developmental Plans (influenced by)

(i) Community- based Local Developmental Preferences

➤ Regulation/s of external market force/s are influenced by local trade, monitoring private transport to facilitate mobility, regulating external agency sources for price monitoring, production, market area allocation, administering conflict and organization of production distribution etc.

(ii) Illegal Activities Addressed through Capacity building of Native Governance/Authority Regime

➤ Problems arose due to overlapping of facilities, rigidity in objective fulfillment, exploitation by means of development activities, expectations and unlawful activities, bureaucratic lapses, paucity in fund allocations and irregular service systems etc.

(iii) Favoritism in Community Infrastructure Allocation/s

➤ Highly prevalent as per respondents' information. The gaps in information systems, lack of information to natives, deviation of funds, lack of initiation/ partial initiation, non-productive investments, lack of transparency and developmental neglect etc.

(iv) Building Technical Capacities based on Traditional Knowledge Systems

➤ Amateur technical support to improve traditional systems is made, but the execution is based on localized standards. The majority of the efforts were mere modified versions of the traditional practices and access to innovative new technologies remained as a distant cry for local needs to be modified.

6(b) Sustainable resource practices demonstrated by local groups:

Table-IV

Demonstrating Native, Sustainable Resource Practices by Local Groups	Response in %	
	High	Low
▪ Cyclical sharing of local stress	(12%)	(67%)
▪ Resource management practices underpinned by conventional norms	(79%)	(03%)
▪ Different user groups systems due to increased gang activities	(36%)	(23%)
▪ Formal participation and the virtual guarantee increased illegal activity and militarism	(47%)	(26%)

* Column for no opinion is not provisioned in the Table.

6(c) Multi-layered Participation Trends are highly insignificant due to lack of information, knowledge, technology access, community cooperation, socio-cultural and economic constraints etc. The Social inclusion and empowerment adopted micro achievements and shallow developments. The overall growth orientations are meager and randomized growth consequences with inadequate output range is observant. The Community needs and assessment growth substantiations are often on the social costs and without any real measure of contribution viz., neglect of community needs. Incentive inputs by formalized participation: The community sharing concept among selective systems viz., weaving aimed need gratification but ignored clause of sustenance.

7(a) Growth Opportunities need Social Capital Initiatives resulting in expanded social stock of capital:

Table-V

Growth Opportunities Need Social Capital Initiatives	Response in %	
	High	Low
▪ Investments in human/physical/technology capital	(06%)	(47%)
▪ Institutional arrangements and organizational designs enhance efficiency, exchange of information and cooperation	(03%)	(77%)
▪ Higher density of voluntary associations vs. low density associations	(04%)	(57%)
▪ Network and norms have economic consequences	(02%)	(56%)

* No opinion column is presented in the table.

7(b) Role of Local Institutions:

Table-VI

Role of local institutions	Response in terms of %		
	S-I	S-II	S-III
▪ Local overloads may find it easier to capture local institutions	(52%)	(13%)	(09%)
▪ Developmental interventions ignoring the importance of local institutions	(44%)	(19%)	(17%)
▪ The majority has little or no revenue raising capacity	(78%)	(16%)	(03%)
▪ Decisions of circumstantial decisions are often on inadequate and ill-informed conditions	(24%)	(46%)	(18%)

* S-I: Agree; S-II: Neither Agree nor Disagree; S-III: Disagree

8(a) Social Structures and Resource Conduct:

Impact on production systems has a direct resource dependency ignoring the ownership issues and is adopting convenience partnerships. Competency of traditional environmental technologies still encourages familiar practices suitable in dominant forms despite new affordable producible systems. Usage of new infrastructure services, process, systems and business models have corresponding livelihood utilities, but are based on the response of social layering adopting means-ends alternatives. Changes in lifestyle, consumption and production systems turn as a criteria of slow/rapid adaptations, leading to system gaps and shifting priorities.

8(b) The purpose of “fulfillment factors”:

Table-VII

Factors of Fulfillment	Most Needed	Optional	Not a Priority
▪ Education	26%	28%	43%
▪ Health	69%	16%	13%
▪ Safety	24%	24%	23%
▪ Freedom from Violence	22%	27%	34%
▪ Environmental Quality	21%	29%	33%
▪ Embedded Social Systems	12%	23%	45%
▪ Leisure	56%	23%	13%
▪ Equity	25%	36%	24%

8(c) Overuse of Natural Resources:

Table-VIII

Respondent Perception Over use of Natural Resources	Yes	No	No Opinion
▪ Fossil energy carriers	08%	12%	34%
▪ Biomass	24%	21%	37%
▪ Nonmetallic Minerals	11%	26%	44%
▪ Water and land Surface	58%	22%	16%

9(a) Globalizing the traditional model of economic growth depends on the rapid increase of extraction of limited natural resources leading to ecological disruption

➤ 78% agrees to the fact of usage of resources and disagree to continue with traditional methods or patterns of usage.

(i) Loss of shaping the future of humanity

➤ 43% agree for future concern yet admit lack of suitable alternatives. The arguments observe that the sacrifice of one segment is not identified by another and the fear of losing an asset for another community is totally intolerable.

(ii) Technology cannot replace the life-sustaining services of nature

➤ 76% admitted that the statement is true and yet the access of technology in what form and cost needs comparatives. The system as per respondents needed an overall component of change rather than a piecemeal proposition.

(iii) Eco-innovation support end user satisfaction with less strain on nature

- 31% of the respondents were positive about the value addition can be supported by using resources and rational use can be to some extent implemented but not a total dependency on alternatives. The practical imbalances are too difficult to be implemented in realistic situations.
- 9(b) Dimension for a Transition to a more Sustainable Economy:
 - (i) Suitability of Traditional Policies in Modern day Contexts: (focus on nature-based ethics viz. Water pollution, banned goods into markets, recycling certain products etc.).
 - The traditional systems continuity, keeping their value concerns in modern day proves to be partially successful. Admitted by 36% respondents that the traditional system adaptations cannot be yielding satisfactory results due to their outdated character.
 - (ii) Policies to take into account the inherent limitations and the value of cost-free sustainable services of nature.
 - General public unaware of the majority of the policies and the ones which gained public awareness are limited to selective segments. 13% admitted of knowing the framework and insignificant number availed partial benefits.
 - (iii) No incentives or policies critically exist in a sufficiently resource efficient economy.
 - 46% admitted of resource dependency for which they need to take permissions from different sources to gain the access of resources but admitted autonomy in usage practices.
 - (iv) Shifting the Consumption on the Criteria of Cultural Norms
 - The traditional methods enabled to associate culture in production systems, but the change in perceptions resulted in modified usage patterns based on value generation and utility-compensations meeting the cost-benefit estimations.
- 9(c) Resource consumption and sustainable developmental path: The consumption of natural resources now reduces the amount of resources available for future consumption
 - 64% agreed; 18%-partially agreed and 11% disagreed.
- (i) Distribution of benefits is used only for Consumption
 - 76% agreed; 15% partially agreed and 9%-disagreed.
- (ii) Explicit the gains and losses from existing levels and patterns of consumption
 - 46% agreed; 32%- partially agreed and 7% disagreed
- (iii) Operational formal linkages perceived as an issue of resource allocation or scarcity.
 - 24% agreed; 7%-partially agreed and 24% disagreed
- 10(a) Natural Resources and Efficacy Pricing:
 - (i) The dependent /market/consumption society concept of natural resource consumption for inputs, value determinants, willingness to pay for resource

- based services, relative resources and the quantity of resources consumed
- 16% agreed; 21% partially agreed and 13% disagreed.
- (ii) The issue of fairness over non-sustainable consumption implies equitable distribution of the gains from using the natural environment.
- 8% agreed; 56%-partially agreed and 16% disagreed.
- (iii) Efficient allocation of resources meets the needs of all groups within a society.
- 72% agreed; 6%-partially agree and 13%-disagree
- (iv) The level of consumption needs to be measured in monetary terms
- 16% agreed; 37%-partially agreed and 29% disagreed
- 10(b) Changing the Consumption Patterns:
- (i) Distribution of services within a community
- 32% agreed; 36%-partially agreed; 19% disagreed
- (ii) Need of political and financial and social commitments
- 33% agreed; 24%-partially agreed and 46% disagreed
- (iii) Encourage the use of natural resource and discourage the ability of people to fulfill their needs.
- 67% agreed; 4%-partially agreed and 23% disagreed
- (iv) Adaptation of a framework to evaluate and adopt technology that meets specific environmental, social and economic criteria.
- 43% agreed; 5%-partially agreed and 46% disagreed
- (v) Usage systems emphasize the consistency with chosen sustainable developmental path.
- 34% agreed; 7%-partially agreed and 17%-disagreed
- 10(c) Environmental Governance: Institutional incentive frame work of governance over natural resources.
- 12% agreed; 57%-partially agreed and 23%-disagreed
- (i) To bring all stake holders provide access in setting expectations of responsible leadership
- 3% agreed; 65%-partially agreed and 7%-disagreed

Table-IX: Traditional Democracy and Integrated Multiple Interventions.

Exclusive Limitations Prevailed	High Response	Low Response
▪ Over or under utilization or resources	37%	31%
▪ Direction of risks / problems	39%	22%
▪ Managerial (w.r.t., leadership)	10%	59%
▪ Socio-cultural factors	26%	38%
▪ Market base factors	63%	18%
▪ Technological factors	09%	69%
▪ Information and communication	11%	58%
▪ Environmental (including location)	48%	07%
▪ Regulatory/statutory (incl. political)	06%	23%

* variation in % arise due to “non-response” ** Any other Category stands Nil

- (ii) Environmental governance includes empowering and building the capacity of local, regional and national gain to access and control resources.
 - 8% agreed; 54%- partially agreed and 2%-disagreed
- (iii) Traditional democracy and integrated multiple interventions.
 - 14% agreed; 58%-partially agreed and 7%-disagreed

Table-IX revealed the market based issues (63%) stand high followed by environmental issues (48%). The technological factors (69%) and Managerial issues (59%) are low categories from respondent perception.

Table X. Contributing Factors enabling Maximum Benefit

Consideration of Contributing Factors	Most Opted	Least Opted
▪ Prospective occupation outside the State	27%	43%
▪ Government support in terms of grants/subsidies	62%	00%
▪ Developing Infrastructure	58%	09%
▪ Social Status due to resource-ownership	53%	08%
▪ Preferring a neighborhood source of livelihood.	46%	04%

* Variation in % aroused due to “non-response”

The analysis concentrated on the situation-relevant issues viz., the details of resource based understanding of the respondents in terms of classification of resources, distribution, contribution etc. The study focused on the associated areas i.e., investment, information, ethnicity, technology etc., keeping in view the conflicts, status of resource reference, associative trends in terms of livelihoods, social stress, localized preferences and developmental plans etc. The research enabled to make a multi-layered effort keeping in view the ethno- cultural diversities, resource based conduct enabled to reveal the value systems and preferences of respondents.

Modal-III: Resource vs. Social Inter-relationships



DI: represent Dimension –I and DII: represent Dimension –II

- DI(a):Perceptions: Focus on the personal/community indications of capacity directions, source usage forms, contribution, commitment and value-based pervasive outlook and the parity between resource vs. social codes, enforcement mechanisms and resource strategies put-to-use etc.
- DI(b):Transitions based on perceptual provisioning i.e., as opportunity, dependence, consumption, application including negotiation and livelihood measures which substantiate the synchronized, knowledge, service, exchange, consideration or any Collaborative Indigenous Reference.
- DI(c) Change as a key force determinant in the attitudes of traditional belief systems embodied significance and restrained usage systems leading to resource conversion, reinforcements of eco-understanding and benefit interpretations with due focus of facilitation enabling value chains etc.

Resource Vulnerability Index: Suggestive Tools:

- (i) 40 Interactive Conditions: 7 Categories; 5 Effects;7 Estimated Consequences
- (ii) Categories: (a) Human Impact (HI); (b) Resource Permissiveness-(RP); (c) Cultural Dilution-(CD); (d) Value Determinants-(VD); (e) Usage Competences-(UC); (f) System Stabilities-(SS); (g) Traditional Governance-(TG);
- (iii) Effects: (a) Heightened; (b) Severe (c) High (d) Moderate (e) Low

Combination of Determinants & Estimated Consequences

HI+RP+VD	DR: Depletion of Resources	HI+VD+TG	CS: Compelling Situations
RP+VD+SS	LO: Limited Opportunities	RP+UC+TG	ER: Elements of Risk
RP+CD+UC	IC: Inadequate Contributions	HI+RP+VD	LC: Loss of Commitment
CD+UC+SS	CC: Change of Context		

Dimension-II (a): Resource-Prone Vulnerabilities

Effects	Code	Indicators	Code	Indicators	Consequences
HI: Human Impact	R1.1	Jhuming and other practices	R1.4	Extended Family System	DR: Depletion of Resources
	R1.2	Refuge for Terrorism	R1.5	Rat hole mining	
	R1.3	Primitive skills viz., Hunting	R1.6	Wide spread corruption channels	
RP: Resource Permissiveness	R2.1	Deforestation	R2.4	Degradation	LO: Limited Opportunities
	R2.2	Conservative	R2.5	Farming	
	R2.3	Depletion	R2.6	Intensified Resource Scarcity	
CD: Cultural Dilution	R3.1	Migrations	R3.4	Indigenous Framework	IC: Inadequate Contributions
	R3.2	Cultural Erosion	R3.5	Cross-culture	
	R3.3	Loss of Traditional Knowledge	R3.6	Weak downward Accountability	
VD: Value Determinants	R4.1	Capacity Gaps	R4.4	Inadequacy	ER: Elements of Risk
	R4.2	Imbalances	R4.5	Fragmentation	
	R4.3	Lowlands	R4.6	Marginalized Production	
UC: Usage Competences	R5.1	Displacement	R5.3	Pesticides	LC: Loss of Commitment
	R5.2	Land Transfer	R5.4	Community Market Systems	
SS: System Stabilities	R6.1	Terrain Constraints	R6.5	Porous International Borders	CC: Change in Context
	R6.2	Wet Lands	R6.6	Traditional Governing Bodies	
	R6.3	Sacred Forests	R6.7	Corruption	
	R6.4	Borders	-	-	
TG: Traditional Governance	R7.1	Isolation	R7.4	Growing Population	
	R7.2	Political Instability	R7.5	Weak State Institutions	
	R7.3	Territorial Rigidities	-	-	

Dimension-II (b): Resource Performance Indicators*: Resource Protection, Ecosystem Vitality, and Resource Criteria Coverage Objectives, Policy Categories and Indicators

Objective	Resource Protection			
Policy Categories	Sustainability	Value Orientation	Resource Linkage	Indigenous Systems
Indicators	1. Effective Local Governance	3. Land alienation	5. Indiscriminate Plunder of natural resources	7. Responsive Democratic Institutions
	2. Low cost Modern Technologies	4. Niche (Natural Suitability)	6. Infrastructural facilities	8. Resource Conflict Resolution
Objective	Ecosystem Vitality			
Policy Categories	Infrastructural Effects	Commercial Incidence	Community Constructs	Community Empowerment
Indicators	9. Network supporting Local Campaigning	11. Informed Decision-making	13. Market Focus	15. Accommodating Risk Intensities
	10. Optimum Adaptability	12. Facilitating Growth Potential	14. Accessible Legal Services	16. Effective Conservation
Objective	Resource Criteria Coverage			
Policy Categories	Capacity Building	Resource Literacy Measures	Interpreting Resource Coordination	Securing Resource Experience
Indicators	17. Local Resource Defense Councils	19. Local Coping Capacities (LCC)	21. Resource Management Practices	23. Standardized Voluntary Initiatives
	18. Social Accountability	20. Applied Value Projections	22. Dimensions of Resource Response	24. Resource-based Key Operational Linkages
Policy Categories	Livelihood Status			
Indicators	25. Navigating Social Transitions			
	26. Long Term Vision and Future Climate			

Dimension-II (c): Resource-Prone Vulnerabilities
Modal: Resource Sustainability (RS)

Core Indices	Nature of Character	Functional Outcome	
Resource Structure	Community and Ethnicity	R11.1:Limited to Selective Events	R11.2:Shallow Adaptations
	Open Access and Permissiveness	R12.1:Arrive Utility Extensions	R12.2:Outcome System Compatibilities
	Rigidity with Limited Knowledge	R13.1:Practical Non-exposure	R13.2:Micro Benefits from Macro Systems
	Supportive Systems	R14.1:Difficulty in Percolation	R14.2:Objective Centric
Transition	Potential Opportunity	R21.1:Participatory Trends	R21.2:Improvement from Micro Extensions
	Contribution	R22.1:Team work	R22.2:Community Image Representations (Reactions)
	Replacement Systems	R23.1:Knowledge to replace resource usage	R23.2:Attitude towards Developmental Approaches
	External Intervention	R24.1:External and Coping Linkages	R24.2:Strengthening Localized Capacities
Vulnerability	Perception limited to personalized benefits	R31.1:Informal Leaders	R31.2:Lack of Accountability and Transparency
	Magnitudes of Consumption	R32.1:Multiple Dependency	R32.2:Larger group usage
	Resource Dependency and Overload	R33.1:Exchange Value Creation	R33.2:Low status vs. high status resource outlook
	Anticipating marginal returns	R34.1:Sensitive to influence social reactions	R34.2:Slow change process
Opportunity	Value Determinants	R41.1:Institutional support	R41.2:Ethnic Pressures and conflicts
	Target Specific	R42.1:Benefit Segments	R42.1:Vulnerable Sections
	Means of Involvement	R43.1:Social role expectation and positioning	R43.2:Concept of Accepting Challenging assignments
	Assessment of Efforts	R44.1:Action-oriented tasks	R44.2:Appraising the alternative choice
Administration	Diversification	R54.1:Leading Priorities	R54.2:Ethnic Socio-Cultural Diversities
	Effectiveness	R52.1:Affective Commitment	R52.1:Acceptable Norms and Rigidities
	Regulatory Norms	R53.1:Congruent Intention, Behavior & Outcome approach	R53.2:Situational Leadership
	Radius of Extended Channels	R54.1:Perception-Performance Relationship	R54.2:Competency and Conformity

Perception-based Transitional Effects: Based on resource characterization with captured returns and preferential means enabled resource as an integral part of natives. The socio-cultural stances in their wider context are deemed to be dependent on the ethno-societal formulations and understanding the merits in their consumption, exchange and marketable forms. Besides this the resource is considered as a barometer of internal competences expressed in external outlook, as a synchronized input strategy, knowledge domain, service experience, market opportunity, a value determinant, an exchange strategy and as a negotiation etc. The resource-based performance substantiated the resource framework as a claim of ethnic orientation. The associated perceptions are materialistic considerations for self-consumption, as a utility based commercial supplement and is a combination emphasizing the internal competencies. It was also understood as a positional enforcement and also as an operational framework of community perception is being shaped as Autonomous Social Perception (ASP).

Overall Impact of Dimensions: The Chart-I am depicting the impact of Perceptions, Transitions and Impact of change over the northeastern states. One can notice that

(i) Tripura has high level perceptions followed by Sikkim and Assam, yet, the corresponding transitions are subdued in all three states. The low perceptions of Meghalaya and Mizoram depicted reasonable impact in the context of transitions.

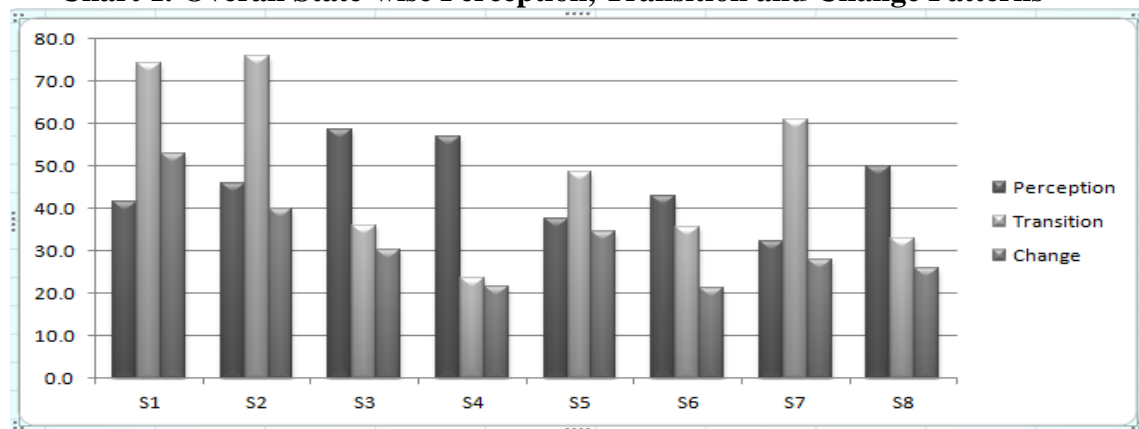
(ii) The transitional levels are low in Tripura and Sikkim but the corresponding change remain in parity with other states but these effects continued to be high in Manipur, Mizoram and Nagaland states.

(iii) The alignment of perception-transition and change indicated least effect but the northeastern comparisons depicted perfection in Assam. However, the corresponding changes are prominent with due flexibilities in almost all other states. The χ^2 representations in the (a) perception displayed high significance for Manipur (χ^2 -58.4) and Meghalaya (χ^2 -57.0) and low significance for Tripura (χ^2 -32.2) and Mizoram (χ^2 -37.6). The transitional trends are significantly high in Assam (χ^2 -76.1), Arunachal (χ^2 -74.2) followed by Tripura (χ^2 -60.9) and the substantially meek in Meghalaya (χ^2 -23.6) followed by Sikkim (χ^2 -33.0). The impact of change is high in Arunachal (χ^2 -52.9) followed by Assam (χ^2 -40) and comparatively less in Nagaland (χ^2 -21.2) and Meghalaya (χ^2 -21.6).

Highlights of Respondents' Overall Reactions: The respondents' overall reactions towards given resource based context summarizes the high response represented in persistence dissatisfaction due to lack of opportunities (89%); resource as economic benefit (96%); resource-based association (67%); social systems need to be dependent on resources (89%); ethnic perception over resources as source of dependency (88%); productive use of resource for self consumption (87%); concept of resource as livelihood for total dependency (72%), infrastructural deficiency (82%); willingness over conservation by government (42%) community participatory trends (53%) etc. But the issues of conditional sustainability; ethnic cultural representation, resource crisis,

local participatory leadership, value based approach, composite change and win-win situation etc., remained as issues of least concern.

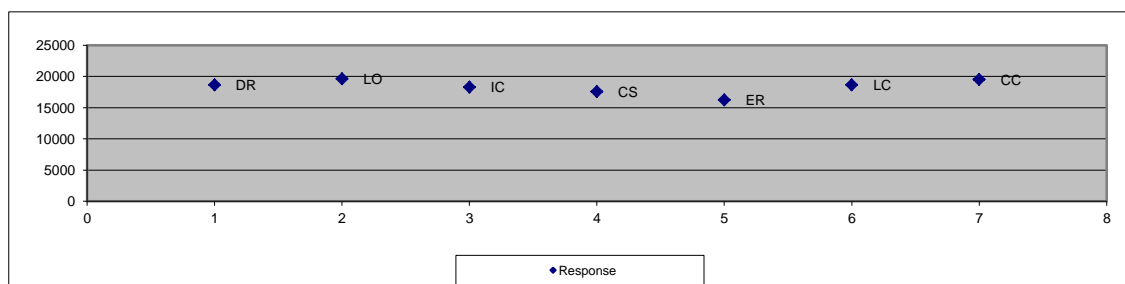
Chart-I: Overall State-wise Perception, Transition and Change Patterns



* S1: Arunachal Pradesh; S2: Assam; S3: Manipur; S4: Meghalaya; S5: Mizoram; S6: Nagaland; S7: Sikkim; and S8: Tripura.

The Chart -II revealed the dimension of vulnerability as expressed in all by northeastern states is depicted below:

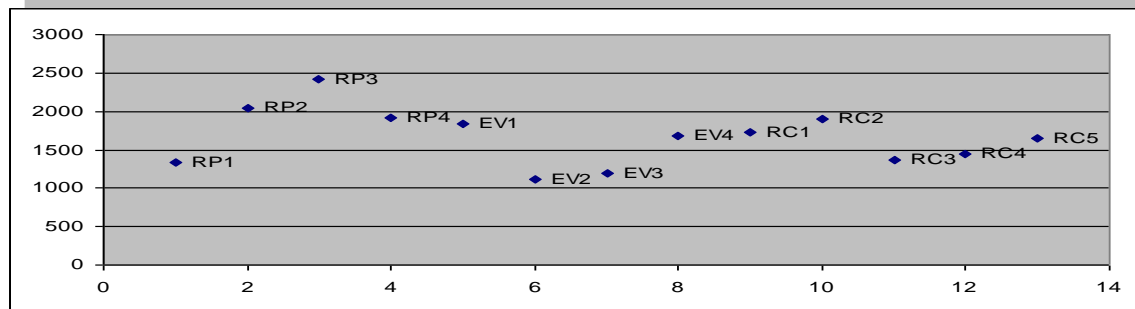
Chart-II: Overall Resource Prone Consequential Vulnerability



Response: Response of Respondents: DR: Depletion of Resources; LO: Limited Opportunities; IC: Inadequate Contributions; CS: Compelling Situations; ER: Elements of Risk; LC: Loss of Commitment; CC: Change in Context

The Dimension –II of Performance indicators in Chart III reveal the representation of performance criteria and relative response of the northeastern states is depicted as follows:

Chart-III: Overall Representation of Resource Performance

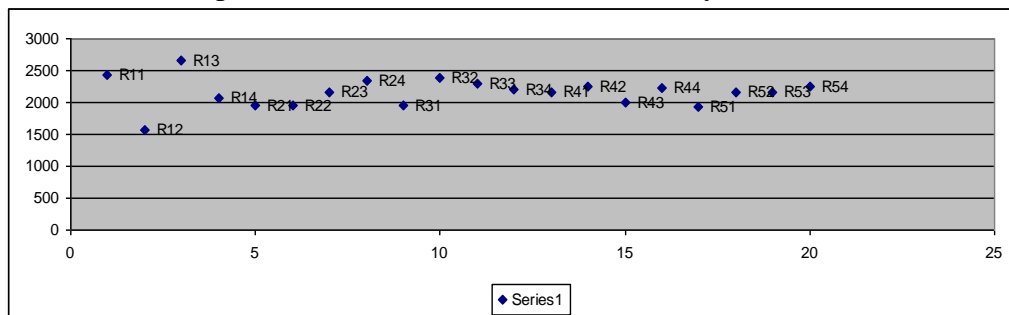


* RP: Resource Protection; EV: Eco-system Vitalities; RC: Resource Criteria coverage

Sustainability {DII(c)} is represented in the dualistic form to express the functional outcome of the indicators adopting the following characters.

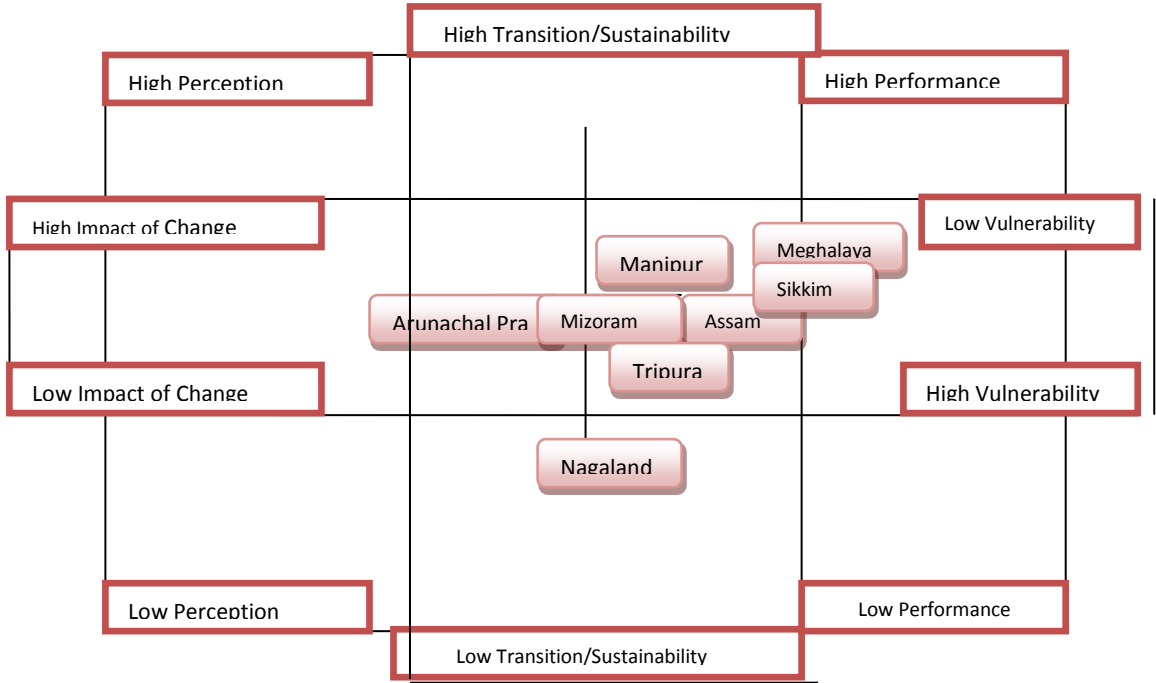
The Chart IV exhibit the “functional Outcomes” where the rigidity with limited knowledge comprising (i) practical non-exposure; (ii) micro-benefits from macro-systems and the community vs. ethnicity emphasized by (a) limited to selective events and (b) shallow adaptations were highly responded. The general trend of indicators represented moderate homogeneity at the zonal level with underlying variations at localized levels.

Chart-IV: Overall Representation of Resource Sustainability



* Functional Outcomes of Resource Sustainability

Over all State-wise Trends: The overall trends of integrated effects of vulnerability, transition and sustainability of the northeastern states revealed by the developmental representations presented minor differences with low indicator status. The captured information is purely based on the responses over the status of selected indicators. The vulnerability remained high with minimal performance and the levels of sustainability depicted high variances among the States. The Modal IV revealed the positional framework taking into concern the overall representations of Dimension-I and II indicators. The positive trends viz., transitions, change and status of vulnerability etc., have their impact but at slower pace.



The positional representations enabled the current developing context and keeping wider margins with the concepts of development. There exists a wider response variation between the two phases. The pace of social development remained out of the context of the developmental efforts. The indicator gaps announced lack of interaction and mutualities among the respondents. One can notice that the Arunachal Pradesh is in more balanced position (with high transitional and change impact). Except Nagaland the rest of the States which indicated “high” revealed high imbalances in status structures and adaptations both at inter and intra dimensional forms.

State	Perception	Transition	Impact of Change
▪ Arunachal Pradesh	Low	High	High
▪ Assam	Low	High	Low
▪ Manipur	High	Low	Low
▪ Meghalaya	High	Low	Low
▪ Mizoram	Low	High	Low
▪ Nagaland	Low	Low	Low
▪ Tripura	Low	High	Low
▪ Sikkim	High	Low	Low

The indicators for “Vulnerability, Performance and Sustainability” remained high insignificant.

The complex ethno-social order needed direction oriented transitional trends leading to change views are internally supportive rather than being dependent over external outlook for all desirable sustenance/progressive changes. This makes it obvious that the internal ethno-environmental perspectives especially the ethnic rigidities have their impact on any concern related to bring in the needed changes.

Multiple Benefit Systems Accessible to Inverted Pyramids: Large majority of the ethnic public are deprived of information, communication and inter-connectivity is due to their language, capacity and distance barriers.

Modified Ethnic Norms to Traditional Governance: Participatory norms which combine the Core Communities with Traditional Governance Systems (TGS) in short-term successions insisted on new localized planning and policy changes.

Self-initiatives of Employable Propositions: Keeping in view the pros and cons of ethnic systems the multi-dimensional developmental approaches are reasoned out to be non-contributing and insignificant. The resultant reflections had composite effects as strategic forms by creating autonomous self-decision propositions holding the responsibilities of individual and group developmental efforts.

Purpose-based Integrated Institutional Participation: The resource-based growth systems were grossly attempted at convenient levels especially perceived through technology, processing and production, modification and implementation, systematization and adaptation etc., are still under progress.

Transparency in Institutional, resource and ethno-social connectivity's: The system gaps are often found to be wider and the facilitators are gained by “inter-system rigidities”. Lack of flexibility, mutual co-ordination and rationalities resulting in individual system incompetence and remaining deficient in the very objective-fulfillment for which these systems persist.

It is desirable to promote vernacular awareness programs, ethnic acceptable and ethnic familiar innovative strategies, to boost systematic planning and execution systems, involvement of professional agencies and counsel, skills development, inter and intra system cohesion and Encouraging homogeneous identity with least differentiations facilitate to bring in meaningful transitional approaches most participating and contributing.

CONCLUSION

To conclude, the current research in its modest understanding enabled to identify a wider division of resource based generic approaches focusing the identification of resource-based dependences. The resources at best are relentlessly forced their way

leading to depletion is a factual consequence witnessed despite numerous efforts to propel a positive social sustainable growth adaptations aiming and encouraging developmental means. The growing ethno-social structures have been the “learning systems” in the wake of dynamism where each of the segments have been attempting to cope up with new context of “resource access and resource non-access” conditions. In short, both constantly and continually changing resource context of northeast is progressing slowly in the path of alternatives towards new usage systems reiterating and amending the routes of appropriate opportunities.

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C. Nunthara*

ABSTRACT

In spite of the tall claim of development in India during the last six and half decades, substantial section of population has remained socio-economically deprived and, in some sections, the deprivation has rather increased, particularly in North East India. In order to empower the people at the grass root level through their active participation in socio-economic planning and its execution so that development benefits reach them, the government introduced the concept of decentralization. The government, therefore, has tried to be a partner, medium and facilitator of development instead of being a direct provider of development. However, the various constitutional and statutory provisions meant for the administration of the tribal states of North East India is creating problems in the implementation and execution of decentralized planning. This paper, therefore, tries to examine the various issues and concern that have been raised by the stakeholders of decentralized planning in the state of Mizoram.

Keywords: Local Governance, Decentralization, Mizoram, Autonomous Council

DEVELOPMENT PARDIGM AND DECENTRALIZATION

In the understanding of classical tradition, development is equated with growth, and that a quantum increase in the production of goods and services would bring development. It was in this fashion that development grants, assistances and loans were promoted from the so-called advanced countries such as USA and European countries to the newly independent countries in Asia, Africa, and Latin America in the beginning. In the meantime, the world had witnessed increasing centralization and concentration of power and authority during the period between the First World War and 1950s in both developed and underdeveloped countries. In spite of development achieved, the process did not yield the desired result to humanity in the developing countries. Substantial section of the population remained socio-economically deprived or deprivation rather increased.

There has thus been a perspective shift in the conceptualization of development. **Human Development Report 1990** states that, “people must be at the centre of all development. The purpose of development is to offer people more options. One of their

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options is access to income not as an end in itself but as a means of acquiring human well-being. But there are other options as well, including long life, knowledge, political freedom, personal security, community participation and guaranteed human rights. People cannot be reduced to a single dimension as an economic creature. What makes them and the study of development process fascinating is the entire spectrum through which human capacities are expanded and utilized” (UNDP 1990). Governments around the world started to realize that centralized government has failed to deliver even the basic public services, and in order to boost delivery system and efficiency and to extend service coverage by giving more responsibility to local government units, *decentralization* of power, authority, and resources has been recommended during the decades 1960s and 1970s. During 1970s and 1980s, the governments of developing countries recognized the limitations and restrictions of central economic planning and trickle-down theories of economic growth toward meeting basic human needs and growth-with-equity objectives. Therefore, in the background of declining access of a large section of the population to the means of livelihood security, education, healthcare facilities, housing and other basic needs, the philosophy of **social justice** was integrated in the development discourse since 1970s. There was, thus, a paradigm shift in development strategies for the disadvantaged section of the society.

The **World Development Report, 1997** re-emphasized the need for effective new roles of the state for social and economic development. The world is changing and with it the idea about the state’s role in economic and social development. The state is observed to be central in the process, but not as direct provider of development but as *partner, medium and facilitator*. As the concept of decentralization evolved over the past half century, Cheema and Rondinelli (2007) observe, “*The first wave of post-World War II thinking on decentralization in the 1970s and 1980s, focused on de-concentrating hierarchical government structures and bureaucracies. The second wave of decentralization, beginning in the 1980s broadened the concept to include political power sharing, democratization, and market liberalization, expanding the scope of private sector decision-making. During 1990s decentralization was seen as a way of opening governance to wider public participation through organization of civil society*”. By 1980s, government pursued three forms of decentralization namely, *de-concentration, devolution and delegation*. Devolution aimed to strengthen local governments by granting them the authority, responsibility, and resources to provide services and infrastructure, protect public health and safety and formulate and implement local policies. Devolution tried to address the issues related to three Fs- Funds, Functions and Functionaries. The fall of authoritarian regimes in Latin America in the 1980s and in Central and Eastern Europe in the 1990s and the spread of democratic principles in East Asia also brought renewed interest in decentralization. The International Monetary Fund, the World Bank and other international development agencies also prescribed decentralization as the structure needed to strengthen democracy and promote good governance. Governments in developing countries were

pressurized to decentralize by ethnic and cultural minority groups, and economically peripheral groups. Growing discontent with the question mark over the ability of the central government bureaucracies to deliver effectively almost any kind of service to local areas fastened and strengthened the decentralization movement world over. Problems such as attitudinal problems of the civil servants, lack of accountability, low level of awareness to the rights and duties of citizens, ineffective implementation of law and rules, and lack of political will in the field of implementation and execution of decentralized planning are actually plaguing the system's efficacies.

DECENTRALISATION AND NORTHEAST INDIA

In the non-mandatory Directive Principles of the State Policy, it is stated, '*the state shall take steps to organize village panchayats and endow them with such powers and authority as may be necessary to enable them function as units of self-government*'. The rural development issues were sought to be tackled through the Community Development Programme in 1952 and National Extension Service in 1953. But both more or less failed due to the absence of effective instrument for people's participation in the development process. Therefore, to boost people's participation, the need for strong local governments was in fact realized early. As a result, Balwantrai Mehta Committee was appointed in 1957 to look into the problem of democratic decentralization in India, followed by the appointment of Ashok Mehta Committee in 1977, GVK Rao Committee in 1985 and Singhvi Committee in 1986 - all of which recommended that Panchayati Raj Institutions should be constitutionally recognized and protected. Then Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi, in his speech in January, 1985, driven by the vision that people must determine their own destinies, stated, '*to the people of India, let us ensure maximum democracy and maximum devolution. Let us give power to the people*'. Soon the government introduced the 64th Amendment Bill on Local Government on 15th May 1989 in the Parliament, but it was not passed. But in September, 1991, a fresh bill was introduced and it was passed in 1992 as the 73rd Amendment Act, 1992 and came into force with minor modifications on 24th April, 1993.

As far as local governance in Tribal Areas is concerned, Article 244 of the Constitution of India envisions three categories of Tribal Areas, such as: (1) Areas notified as 'Scheduled Areas in the specified States in the Fifth Schedule; (2) Areas listed as 'Tribal Areas' in the Sixth Schedule in North Eastern Region and (3) Areas not covered in the above two categories. The Sixth Schedule provisions concern 'administration of tribal areas', and Fifth Schedule relates to 'administration and control of Scheduled areas and Scheduled Tribes', but there is no special schedule for the third typology. North East India may fall under the following administrative frames as far as local government is concerned:

- (1) Sixth Schedule Frame in Meghalaya, parts of Assam, parts of Mizoram and parts of Tripura.
- (2) State Legislature Frame in Nagaland, and Non-Council areas in Mizoram
- (3) National Frame in Arunachal Pradesh, Sikkim, Manipur excluding Hill Areas, Non-Council Areas in Assam and Tripura.

This entails that different constitutional measures are necessary for implementing reform measures in the specified areas. The state of Mizoram falls under the first and second categories, Meghalaya under the first category, Nagaland under the second category, Arunachal Pradesh under the third category. Article 243M of the 73rd Amendment states that the Act in its present form will not apply to the states of Nagaland, Meghalaya and Mizoram and the hill areas in the state of Manipur for which District Councils exist. Accordingly, the provisions of the Act are not operative in these areas. In spite of global awakening in local governance and devolution of funds, functions and functionaries in the wake of decentralization, the problem remains largely unsolved in many parts of Northeast India.

DECENTRALISATION AND MIZORAM

Historically, right from the initiation of Assam in 1874, some parts of it were administered under the Scheduled District Act 1874. There were *backward tracts*. There were complete statutory bar to the legislative authority of the legislature within the backward areas. In course of time the term 'Backwards' were replaced by what was known as 'Excluded Areas'.

After Independence, the Constituent Assembly formed an Advisory Committee on Fundamental Rights and Minorities. To suggest plan for the administration of these areas, the Advisory Committee set up three Sub-Committees for the purpose of recommending the future status of tribal areas. When the Constitution of India was finally framed and adopted, Mizoram along with Meghalaya and others fell under the Sixth Schedule provisions of Indian Constitution.

In pursuance of Paragraph 11 of the Sixth Schedule to the Constitution, the Lushai District (Village Council) Act, 1953 was passed by Mizo District Council which received the assent of the Governor of Assam on November 19, 1953. Section 23 of the Act has given power the Village Council to make rules. Section 23(2) stipulates that such rules may prescribe:

- (1) Control, preservation and use of timbers and other forest products except the reserved forests, ordinarily utilized for building purposes such as canes, sun grass, siallu, laisawral etc.
- (2) Maintenance, preservation and improvement of good water supply

- (3) Control of stray animals within its jurisdiction and at night within the village land
- (4) Ngawidawh (Fish Trap)
- (5) Extraction of khamkhuai (Species of Bees)

In addition to these powers, the Administration of Justice Rules, 1953 had given certain judicial functions to the village councils. Section 6 of the Rules conferred the establishment of village court, and section 14 of the Rules stated that the village court shall try specified suits and cases within its jurisdiction. When Mizoram became Union Territory (UT) in 1972, the Mizo District Council was abolished and the power to look after the affairs of village councils was transferred to the Local Administration Department. It was stated in 1972 and again in 1987 when Mizoram became full state that until such time that a new act is enacted to replace the existing one, the Village Council Act, 1953 shall continue to govern the affairs of village councils. However, no new Act so far has been enacted so far and, as a result, the village councils have been marginalized and demeaned to the extent that they have almost become state agents in terms of their modus operandi. This has given them generous ground for manipulation of the people's share in terms of fund and power, and the so-called fraud and deception in government functioning.

The major functional roles of the village councils, even after certain amendments, basically remain confined to the followings: (1) The Village Court (VC) (2) Sanitation (3) Education (4) Animal Control (5) Forest (6) Allotment of Jhum Land and (7) Items under Centrally Sponsored Schemes (CSS).

(1) Village Court: In many villages, there is no suit or case brought forward to the Village Court simply because the people have no confidence in the ascendancy of the Village Council. There are few village councils where cases are brought forward and decision made and fine imposed. It was reported that in some villages the fines have not been honoured by the offenders as the village council has no authority to utilize police force in such eventualities.

(2) Sanitation: Every village under the leadership of village council members has a Village Health & Sanitation Committee with the Health Worker as Secretary. It conducts regular cleaning drive within the village jurisdiction. But due to the lack of funds, the committee fails to undertake major panning and meaningful work.

(3) Education: Every village seems to have Village Education Committee. The functional role of this committee in most villages is to appoint cook(s) for the mid-day meal scheme. Apart from this, it does not involve itself in the day to day activities of the educational institutions within the village jurisdiction. There is no fund allotted for this committee too.

(4) Forest: Before 1972, the village council had authority over the control and preservation of forests within the village jurisdiction. However, after Mizoram became

UT in 1972 and state in 1987 the State Government has taken over the control of forests and forest products from the village councils.

(5)Animal Control: This has been done exceptionally well in most villages and, however, animal tax collected is very meagre as the population of animals declines tremendously.

(6)Allotment of Jhum Land: The number of households depending on jhum cultivation is declining gradually during the past decades. Still there are a sizeable number of families in Mizoram that depend on jhumming for their livelihood. Occupational adjustment, mobility and transformation is so enormous that, now a days, in many villages nobody comes forward for jhum allotment. This is partly because of the fact that many families now have their own private land as a result of 'Jhum Control' scheme initiated by Mizo National Front (MNF)Chief, Laldenga, and the introduction of the New Land Use Policy (NLUP) by the Congress Government subsequently. The role of village council in upholding village land is now subsidiary.

(7) Items under CSS:There are two types of grants that come to Mizoram. They are - (1)Basic grants received through the Thirteenth Finance Commission (TFC) and (2) grants received under the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme (MGNREGS).

TFC grant is assigned category-wise based on the size of the village. It is supervised and monitored almost entirely by the village councils according to the guidelines prepared by the State Government. Selection of work items is controlled by State Government. The MGNREGS is now replacing many other centrally sponsored schemes. The scheme is operated by the District Rural Development Agency (DRDA) through the Office of the Block Development Officer (BDO). The style of functioning of the scheme is that wage component (100 days employment) encompasses 60 per cent of the budget, and 40 per cent is reserved for material component which is supposed to work out 50-50 between village councils and the departments concerned. But there are village councils which have received nothing at all in the past two years. Others received some amount, but far less than their share of 50 per cent. VCs have no control over monitoring of the work. Moreover, the State Government, on November 5, 2012 ordered the establishment of Village Employment Council (VEC) under the MGNREGS under the direction of Central Government. The VEC has been taking over matters relating to MGNREGS and VCs have been side-lined and marginalized. Section 4 of National Rural Employment Guarantee Act, 2005 guidelines states '*...local councils/authorities as mandated by the State concerned will be invested with corresponding responsibilities*'. However, dejecting village council as local authority, the State government ordered for the creation of Village Employment Council. Thus, democratically elected rural leaders are now sidelined thereby the present system ignores the basic emphasis on decentralization and devolution of functions and functionaries. The VEC is now looking after the schemes under material component. This has created displeasure and restlessness throughout Mizoram.

The magnitude of own source of fund is very limited for the village councils. The local bodies have not been assigned their proper stance in matters relating to collection of taxes, fees and other possible source of local fund except animal tax which amounts to Rs.400 to Rs.1,500per annum depending on the size of the village. The state government has not assigned any fund for the administration of village councils except nominal remuneration given to the council members. The bulk of fund comes from centrally sponsored schemes (CSS) and basic grants received through the Central Finance Commission (CFC) which too largely controlled by state government officials.

The State Government in its present form has failed to make proper service delivery to the people and the village councils have remained more or less ineffective operator in the system. The VCs are continuing to act as the agent of the State Government. There is no single legislative act during the 41 years of Mizoram Legislature to safeguard and transfer meaningful functional roles and activities to the village councils and transfer and devolution of funds to the village councils. The earlier autonomy enjoyed by the village councils has been encroached upon and the state government is interfering in the affairs of the local government, rendering village councils in a marginal position.

The Mizoram Finance Commission, created in 2011, is expected to tackle these crucial problems - the problem of decentralization, the problem of devolution of fund, functions and functionaries, the problem of accountability and the problem of creating government at the local level. The Second Administrative Reforms Commission suggested the extension of Panchayat (Extension to Scheduled Areas (PESA) Law in Northeast which, if put into reality, may perhaps solve the present crisis in governance at the local level. The village councils in their present form lack statutory support. It is a single tier rural administrative institution having no status of rural self-governing entities. It has been denied devolution of financial resources, administrative responsibilities, political power, development roles, planning and decision-making power. The present village council system, therefore, fails to encourage local initiative and democratic participation to bring about the needed change. The local people respect the persons occupying the office of village councils, but simply do not pay high regard to the office they occupy. Therefore, a revamp and total smarten up is of immediate necessity. Therefore, the Government of Mizoram should go for the implementation of the **Seventy Third Constitutional Amendment**, or evolve an archetype of the 73rd Amendment in Mizoram or else extend the PESA law in Mizoram so that the state has village council entity in which provisions for devolution of funds, functions and functionaries are incorporated in letter and spirit.

The following table provides data on opinion of the village council (VC) members on issues related to the functioning of the village councils in Mizoram. The

information is collected through a survey conducted among 150 village council members selected from different parts of Mizoram in 2012-13.

Table: Opinion of the VC members on issues related to the functioning of the VCs

Questions	Responses	Percentage of 150
Have the VCs ever been consulted in matters of rural development?	Yes: 30 No: 120	20.00 per cent 80.00 per cent
How do you perceive the functional authority vested in VC in rural development programmes/schemes?	Adequate: 14 Inadequate: 136	9.34 per cent 90.66 per cent
Would you favour the introduction of 73 rd Constitutional Amendment (Panchayati Raj Institutions)?	Yes: 139 No: 11	92.66 per cent 7.34 per cent
Would you like transfer of 29 subjects enumerated in Eleven the Schedule to village council?	Yes: 142 No: 8	94.66 per cent 5.34 per cent
Would you like reservation for women?	Yes: 40 No: 110	26.66 per cent 73.34 per cent
Who has the final authority in the selection of NLUP beneficiaries?	VC (VLIC): 61 Pol. Parties: 89	40.66 per cent 59.34 per cent

Source: Field questionnaire, 2012-2013

The aspirations of the people are clear. But implementing decentralized planning in Mizoram, in true sense of the term, is going to be an uphill task. Empirical evidences show that we have factors such lack of political will, lack of orientation of officials and bureaucrats, lack of adequate acts, rules and procedures, and most of all, lack of public awareness including lack of democratic rights which are impeding the system of local governance in the state of Mizoram.

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CHRISTIAN VIEWS ON ALCOHOL WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO THE KHASI JAINTIA PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

Banwan Shaphrang Lyngdoh *

ABSTRACT

Christian views on alcohol are varied. One view was that alcohol can be consumed in moderate amount. Another view held that though the Bible does not strictly forbid drinking, it is prudent to abstain from consumption of alcoholic beverages. The third view holds that indulgence in alcohol is a sin and therefore consumption of alcoholic beverages should be prohibited. This article seeks to examine the view held by the Presbyterian Church in Meghalaya on alcohol. Apart from looking at the Church official literature, the activities of the Church are also studied. The conclusion arrived at is that the Church leans the most to the Abstentionist view.

Keywords: Christian Views, Alcohol, Presbyterian, Church, Abstentionist

Christian views on alcohol are varied. In the initial stages of church history, alcohol was not considered a taboo. In fact, in the first two millennia of the history of Christianity, the drinking of alcoholic beverages was a common part of the everyday life of most Christians and wine was a component in rituals like the Last Supper (Anon, The Family Devotional Study Bible 1987). Christians of that age held that both the Bible and Christian tradition taught that alcohol is a gift from God that makes life more joyous, but that over-indulgence leading to drunkenness is sinful or at least a vice (Picraed 1984).

Gradually however, different views on alcohol developed within Christianity. One view was that alcohol can be consumed in moderate amount. Another view held that though the Bible does not strictly forbid drinking, it is prudent to abstain from consumption of alcoholic beverages. The third view holds that indulgence in alcohol is a sin and therefore consumption of alcoholic beverages should be prohibited. The view that alcohol can be consumed in moderate amount is known as Moderationism. As per this view, alcohol is a good gift of God. It may be used wisely and moderately and if had in moderation, it can make the heart merry. John Calvin writes, "By wine the hearts of men are gladdened, their strength recruited, and the whole man strengthened, so by the blood of our Lord the same benefits are received by our souls." (John 1545). Echoing a similar opinion, Martin Luther said that wine and women bring many a man to misery and make a fool of him but it does not mean that all women should be killed and all the wine should be poured out (Martin 1522).

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The view that alcohol is not sinful but abstaining from it is prudent is called Abstentionism. The proponents of this view hold that drinking of alcohol may affect a person's judgment and cause him to err in his spiritual life. In their opinion, "Alcohol can be a mind-altering drug, and it can be addictive; it does not help one in doing the will of God and can genuinely be a hindrance."⁵(Akin Daniel L, 2006) They are not in agreement with the Moderationist view as is clear from this statement attributed to a supporter of Abstentionism, Adrian Rogers: "Moderation is not the cure for the liquor problem. Moderation is the cause of the liquor problem. Becoming an alcoholic does not begin with the last drink, it always begins with the first."⁶(Akin Daniel L, 2006)

The view that drinking of alcohol should be prohibited as it amounts to a sin is called Prohibitionism. According to this view, the Bible, the sacred book of the Christians, forbids the partaking of alcohol altogether. The proponents of this view point out that the four related words—wine in English, vinum in Latin, oinos in Greek and yayin in Hebrew—have been used historically to refer to the juice of the grape, whether fermented or unfermented. Thus the wine positively referred to in the Bible, including the one used at the first Communion Service, instituted by Jesus, was unfermented wine. They also maintain that fermented wine, which intoxicates the drinker, is condemned in different verses of the Bible because they distort the perception of reality; they impair the capacity to make responsible decisions; they weaken moral sensitivities and inhibitions; they cause physical sickness; and they disqualify for both civil and religious service.⁷(Bacchiocchi Samuele, 2007)

We may now attempt to take a look at the view on alcohol held by the Presbyterian Church in the Khasi-Jaintia Hills as reflected in literature produced by the Church as well as in the Church's activities. The Presbyterian denomination of Christianity emerged during the 16th century Reformation Movement and struck roots in different parts of Europe. The Presbyterian Church in the Khasi hills, and in fact, North East India, had its beginning in 1841 when Rev. Thomas Jones, the first missionary from Wales, arrived at Cherrapunji (Sohra) after a long and hazardous journey of two hundred and ten days.⁸(Anon, Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in North East India, Golden Jubilee Souvenir, 1976). By 1929, there were 397 churches, 302 preaching stations and the total number of adherents had gone up to 47,564.⁹ (Morris John Hughes, 1990 p.59)) By the time the Welsh missionaries left these hills, the number of faithfuls had crossed 1 lakh.¹⁰ (Jones, Angell G, 1966 p.315) Today the Presbyterian Church is one of the dominant churches in the Khasi-Jaintia hills.

Though the roots of the Presbyterian Church trace back to John Calvin,¹¹(Fairchild Mary, undated) the denomination in the Khasi-Jaintia Hills does not adhere to his Moderationist view. The Constitution of the Presbyterian Church of India (PCI) states that Church members are expected to refrain from producing, owning, distributing and consuming intoxicants.¹²(constitution of the Presbyterian Church) The Khasi Jaintia Presbyterian

Assembly is a constituent of the PCI and therefore follows this Constitution. The stance of the Church is thus that of not approving of intoxicants, alcohol included. The Church's view here cannot be said to be Moderationist, which allows consumption of alcohol in moderation. At the same time, we cannot, based on information derived from the Constitution, arrive at a conclusion that the Church's view is either Abstentionist or Prohibitionist. In the case of its American counterpart, both the Abstentionist and Moderationist views find place in the Church's stance. A statement on the issue of alcohol made in 1986 by the General Assembly of Presbyterian Church (USA) contains among others, the following two points:

“Abstention in all situations should be supported and encouraged. Moderate drinking in low-risk situations should not be opposed.”¹³(Minutes of the 198th General Assembly of the church, 1986)

The attitude of the Presbyterian Church in the Khasi Hills towards alcohol is a carryover from the Welsh Missionary days. Wales in Great Britain is one place which was confronted with the problem of alcohol abuse. This problem persists even today. A recent report on alcohol use in Wales reveals that 88 per cent of adults in Wales say they drink alcohol. 52 per cent of men and 38 per cent of women admit to drinking more than the recommended amount.¹⁴ (Alcohol Concern, November, 2010) In the 19th century, the Church in Wales campaigned against alcohol and sought legislations to regulate alcohol sale and use. As a result of the campaign, the forces of temperance enjoyed a huge influence in the late 19th century.¹⁵(Industrialization and Temperance, undated) The Welsh missionaries established their Mission in the Khasi-Jaintia hills in the 19th century and brought with them the influence of the temperance.

Reports on the activities of the Welsh missionaries dwell mainly on the expansion of the Church. Statistics of mission achievements during different periods focused on the number of churches and preaching stations established, the number of converts won, the number of faithfuls attending service, the establishment of educational institutions and medical missions etc. Hardly any reference can be found on the missionaries taking on the alcohol menace. In the case of the American Baptist Mission, we have reference to opium eating being a problem for the churches in the north east. The Church even took disciplinary action against members indulging in the opium habit.¹⁶ (Downs Fredrick S, 1982 p.147) We do not have reference to action of a similar nature being taken by the Welsh Mission in the Khasi hills.

Thus it can be said that the Welsh missionaries in the Khasi-Jaintia hills adopted no coercive measure against use of intoxicants by the Christian faithfuls. From some references available, they resorted to persuasion. A case in point is Mawdem, a village in the Khasi state of Nongkhlaw, which now falls under West Khasi hills district. In the mid-19th century, “intoxicating drink was the great curse of Mawdem – men, women and even children being addicted to it. Their poverty was appalling. A few filthy rags

barely covered their yet filthier bodies. The poverty and depravity of Mawdem had become a by-word even among the Khasis.¹⁷(Morris, John Hughes, 1990 p.35) In 1868, a Church was established at Mawdem and by that time almost the entire village had converted to Christianity. A change that was noticed by the missionary Rev. Griffith Hughes was that the villagers had given up alcohol. The initiative was purely local. Liar Syrdar, the village head, prohibited the manufacture, sale and consumption of alcoholic beverages in his village. Another village leader and Christian convert, u Dorsan prepared a sweet non-alcoholic drink from rice to help wean the villagers away from the alcoholic habit.¹⁸(Jones Angell G, 1966 p.53) There is also the case of Jowai. In 1854, Ma Luh, a teacher and Christian preacher reported that Jowai was in the grip of alcoholism and other social evils. Ma Luh managed to spread the teachings of Christianity among the masses. In 1856, Larsing replaced Ma Luh as teacher and preacher and won many converts. Among them was u Hat, a slave to alcohol, who gave up the habit after Larsing worked on him for 6 months.¹⁹ (Jones Angell G, 1966 p.41)

Christian converts who were in the habit of drinking prior to their conversion usually give up the habit after conversion. "...forswearing alcohol was as much a condition of church membership in Khasia as it was in Wales."²⁰ (Nigel Jenkins, 1995 p.132) the nineteenth century evangelists, the Welsh missionaries included, placed emphasis upon Christianity as a way of life, a new lifestyle. Abstinence from the use of the traditional country liquors, especially the rice beer commonly used by the people of the hills was an important component of the new lifestyle adopted by the Christian convert. This abstinence became one of the primary tests of the sincerity of the potential convert and of the faithfulness of the church member. The drinking of rice beer was closely associated with traditional religious festival and lifestyle. Giving it up was, therefore seen as a sign of this new faith commitment.²¹(Downs, Frederick, 1982 p. 149)

It however needs to be understood that in spite of the increasing conversions, alcohol consumption was not eradicated. The drinking of alcohol, both the traditional brew and the distilled type, continued and is still continuing. The post-Colonial and post-Missionary Presbyterian Church has often been confronted with the problem of alcohol abuse. One measure that the Church has adopted is that it strictly follows the clause in the Presbyterian Church of India Constitution exhorting church members to refrain from producing, owning, distributing and consuming intoxicants. While alcohol consumption by Church members is something over which the Church has little control, active Presbyterian Christians as a rule, do refrain from producing and selling intoxicating liquor. There are many cases of people involved in the illegal distillation and sale of alcohol giving up the practice on becoming Christians.

Campaigns against alcohol consumption are also made through special prayer cells in different churches and also through the Temperance Movement. The Temperance Movement is a movement dedicated to promoting moderation and, more

often, complete abstinence in the use of intoxicating liquor. Although an abstinence pledge had been introduced by churches as early as 1800, the earliest temperance organizations seem to have been those founded at Saratoga, New York, in 1808 and in Massachusetts in 1813. The movement spread rapidly under the influence of the churches.²² (Anon, Encyclopedia Britannica)

In the Khasi hills, the temperance movement was started by the women's wing of the Church in 1921 during the Assembly service held at the Laitkynsew Presbyterian Church in 1921. The movement was started by Miss Ellen Hughes along with Miss T. Shullai, Mrs. Lariam Khongwir, Miss Hilda Bhajur and Miss K. Kharsati.²³ (Giri, O, 1999, p.34)

As part of the Temperance Movement, the Church women's wing members resorted to mass awareness campaigns on the menace of alcohol abuse in different parts of the Khasi Jaintia hills. The campaigns were in the form of lectures, showing of pictures, showing of slides through projectors, showing of films, staging of plays, distribution of pamphlets etc. to create awareness about the harmful effects of alcohol and other intoxicants. The women Church members also paid visits to the houses of alcohol addicts and counselled them. Counselling training programmes were also conducted for women and the youth to enable them to deal with addicts. Temperance Conferences at the district, presbytery and Synod levels were organised from time to time with the aim of spreading awareness among the people, particularly the young men on the evil of alcohol. To further strengthen the Temperance Movement, two counselling centres, one in Shillong and the other in Jowai were established in 1995.²⁴ (Giri, O pp. 34-35)

The one in Shillong now functions as a de-addiction centre under the name of New Hope Centre. It has 15 beds and is giving free treatment to drug addicts and alcoholics who come and register themselves for counselling, awareness and rehabilitation.²⁵ (Annual Report of the Organization KJPA-SELDA for three years 2009-2011) The New Hope Centre is also involved in activities it terms as "Preventive" which consist mainly of awareness programmes held in different educational institutions.²⁶ (Annual reports of the New Hope Centre, 2007-2012)

The activities of the Church does not include passing of resolutions, presenting memoranda or putting forth any demand before the government to ban the sale of alcohol, in other words, to impose total prohibition in the areas where the faith has a good following. Therefore the Church is not prohibitionist in its attitude. The various programmes of action undertaken by the Church on the question of alcohol indicate that the Church at the same time does not believe in encouraging drinking of alcohol, in moderate amount or otherwise. Hence the Moderationist view can also not be attributed to it. Right from its inception in the Khasi Jaintia Hills, the Church has been involved in weaning its converts away from alcohol consumption. Its activities against alcohol have been in the form of special prayer cells organized against drinking of alcohol, holding of awareness campaigns against the disastrous effects of alcohol abuse and counselling those who have fallen into the drinking habit. All this is indicative of an attitude that

exhorts abstention from alcohol without condemning the consumer of alcohol. It may therefore be concluded that the Khasi Jaintia Presbyterian Church leans the most towards the Abstentionist view on alcohol.

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JUXTAPOSING NATION AND FAMILY IN THE NOVELS OF AMITABH GHOSH

Jenniefer Dkhar*

ABSTRACT

He [Amitav Ghosh] excels above other writers like Rushdie and Seth as he interweaves the public tumults with the uproar in the lives of his characters and the turmoil within them. The hubbubs at national and international levels are reflected in the turmoil at the personal level. Ghosh's tone [is] very urgent, poignant and appealing.

-Ulka Joshi

Narratives of the nation tread on the same plane with narratives of the family in the novels of Amitav Ghosh. In narrating events of history Ghosh's fiction patents a parallel history of the nation and the family. Within the parallel narrations of nation and family are embedded Ghosh's interweaving of public and private turmoil. He presents the debilitating plight of a family when it is hit by an event in history. A discourse in history often leans towards the family rather than the nation, thus privileging private history over the public one. The central concern of the textual narration is the character's mood swings when they confront a historical event that shatters their lives. At times they experience a loss that may even amount to death and disaster. Such a narrative concern invariably makes ordinary peoples' presence in Ghosh's texts more exuberant than their historical counterparts. This is also the reason behind the preference for the depiction of familial pain, pathos and anxiety over the happenings in a nation. Private history thus stands taller than the public history of the nation. Thus by juxtaposing history with nation and family Amitav Ghosh perceives history in its totality giving a complete rendition of the two.

Keywords: Nation, Family, Public History, Private History, Juxtapose

Nation and family carve a palpable connect with each other as both define a sense of identity: an individual is known and recognised by the family he comes from and the nation he belongs to. One cannot do without the other as nation and family co-exist in the life of a person. While nation may be regarded as a macro organisation representing people from all walks of life irrespective of their caste, creed, community or religion, status and position in society, family is a micro organisation that represents a group of individuals with blood ties belonging to the same caste, creed and community. As such, in an individual's life both nation & family define his/her specific identity as both have a great role to play.

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Both the nation and the family have direct repercussions in the midst of any kind of intervention of an event in history. This may be seen viable in the literary works of Indian writers in English who have projected various events of history as having a significant impact on the nation and the people. Nation that has been referred to as a public domain controlled by state authority and power or as a “consolidation of state authority” (H. Seton-Watson. 5) has been presented in the works of Indian writers in English like Raja Rao as an entity that could incite a feeling of oneness bringing in a united sense of nationhood, national identity and pride amongst fellow countrymen. Raja Rao’s *Kanthapura* is an example of such a representation of the nation used by writers to bring in solidarity and camaraderie among the people as they join hands to fight against colonial rule and subjugation. On the other hand, the works of contemporary Indian writers in English like Salman Rushdie, Allan Sealy, Mukul Keshavan and Amitav Ghosh no longer present nation only as a symbol of “unified and singular national consciousness” (Sati 51). Contrarily they project nation as a conglomerate of diverse communities. It is in fact an entity that embodies royalty and the commoners as well. Therefore as “nation is not an imagined community” (Aldama) contemporary writers project nation that comprises people from all walks of life. The attempt of these writers is to exhibit stories of marginalised people of the country who have their version of history yet history has never found their stories worthy of documentation. These writers attempt to restore the numerous unheard histories of the marginalized section of the nation that have been subjected to an array of happenings in the nation. Thus nation is also perceived as “a creation of an ideology liable to re-invention” (Moral 139). It is in seeking for a reinvention of events of history that makes it plausible to deduce that the ideology of a nation should be to restore and bring to life the submerged and unheard histories of people as well.

It is these unheard histories of people that brings to the fore the effects of historical events not only on the nation but the family alike. After all if nation is public domain then family is private domain comprising of a family forming a society. Family is “. . . a social group characterized by common residence, economic cooperation and reproduction” (Haralambos and Heald 325). In the novels of these contemporary writers in English, family is given a pivotal role and a function central to their characters. Family is the bond that knits yarns of love and togetherness in the lives of people. Interestingly these Indian writers in English display familial ties so strong and binding that at times it assumes a place above the love and allegiance that they have for their nation.

Akin to his contemporary writers, Amitav Ghosh parallels nation and family in the context of its historical past as they manifest a concurrence of history with nation and family. In his novels, narratives of the nation tread on the same plane with narratives of the family. In narrating events of history Ghosh’s fiction patents a parallel history of the nation and the family. For example, in the novel, *The Glass Palace*, an

event in history that triggers feuds in a nation has great impact on King Thebaw and his family. The narrative on the nation's / nations' history focuses on the historic invasion of British colonialism of Burma in 1885 while the narrative on the family in relation to national history relates to the reduction of the Burmese Royal Family to exiles and then to prisoners in India. Ghosh retells the Burmese history from the point of view of the personal lives of the Royal Family rather than from a public historical point of view, thereby resulting in the toppling of hierarchies between the private and the public histories. The deportment of the Royal Family to Ratnagiri, India undoubtedly wipes out monarchy from Burma. But it also has a more important aspect to it that Ghosh deliberately focuses upon; the lives of the last king and queen of Burma and their children on exile. Traditional history may fail to record the way of life of the Royal Family but Ghosh does not. His focus is more on the life pattern of Royalty as they are reduced to the status of royal prisoners living as slaves in their prison in Outram House.

A quarter of the novel is dedicated to the little stories of the family of the last king and queen of Burma. Ghosh carves depressing images of the lives of the family of kings and queens as they are huddled together in a foreign land. Here they have no subjects to preside upon. They are rather put in an even sorer state as they are deprived of all the luxuries and entitlements due to kings and queens. The pain with which the Royalty is made to live in, the anger of Queen Supayalat who is not willing to be restricted in Ratnagiri without any hope of a return to her country, the somber and slowly degenerating King Thebaw, who finally breathed his last as a prisoner and also the ultimate mingling of the princesses with ordinary people till it finally leads to the marriage of the first princess with their gatekeeper - are stories that Ghosh explores. These are undocumented histories of a Royal Family that loses its divine right to rule over its land and people. History no longer cares to trace and document their decrepit lives. Burma lost its age-old heritage of monarchy but the Royal Family stayed closely bonded to one another in the foreign land far away from their country. National history is there for all to read from various chronicles of history but the private lives of the last king and queen of Burma are what Ghosh is keen to tell his readers.

In the same novel, the sounds of British cannons marching towards Burma was identified and recognised by no one except the eleven year old migrant boy, Rajkumar Raha. While narrating the British invasion of Burma in 1885 Ghosh also unravels the history of Rajkumar where he traces Rajkumar's decision to stay on in Burma and take utmost advantage of his flourishing business under British colonialism in Burma. On the one hand the narrative divulges on the historic exile of the king of Burma, King Thebaw, his queen, Queen Supayalat and the princesses and on the other hand the narrative turns towards the story of success and achievement of Rajkumar as he builds his empire on the ashes of the Burmese monarchy.

Alongside the nation's narrative of British colonialism is found present a narrative on the family in Rajkumar's 'rags to riches - back to rags' story. Interestingly

Ghosh represents teak as a motivating force that makes the family saga and unmakes the nation's history. The British invasion of Burma is done entirely out of a yearning for the lucrative return from teak. "If the British were willing to go to war over a stand of trees, it could only be because they knew of some hidden wealth secreted within the forest" (Palace 58). Similarly teak is the wealth that lures Rajkumar to stay on in Burma and establish himself into a rich Indian timber businessman. In narrating a parallel history of nation and family, as discussed above, Ghosh is able to make a simultaneous presentation of the fate of the nation and the fate of the family. While colonialism has horrifying effects on the nation of Burma that very event in the history of Burma proves lucrative to the hero of the novel. Burma's colonisation, a catastrophe to the country and its population is a boon to ordinary people like Rajkumar.

Within the parallel narrations of nation and family are embedded Ghosh's interweaving of public and private turmoils. "He [Amitav Ghosh] excels above other writers like Rushdie and Seth as he interweaves the public tumults with the uproar in the lives of his characters and the turmoil within them. The hubbubs at national and international level are reflected in the turmoil at the personal level. . . . Ghosh's tone is very urgent, poignant and appealing" (Joshi 70). Ghosh draws attention to a reading of the past as one that merges with stories of the nation and stories of the common people and their families. Undeniably there is a close association that the private occurrences have with the public at a particular period, time and situation in the lives of his characters. They go through a great amount of loss and pain as they are directly hit by historical events. The Second World War snatches all that Rajkumar has cultivated and accomplished at the time of the British invasion of Burma in 1885. In 1941 his materialistic gain is lost to him. Just as when he has consolidated a stronghold on the timber resource, Burma was attacked by the Japanese. In the text Ghosh paints a vivid picture presenting a blend of effects of the War on the nation and its inhabitants. Just as

[T]he central areas of the city were eerily empty, yet many major thoroughfares were impassable and they had to circle round and round to find their way out of the city. Buses lay abandoned at intersections; trams jumped off their tracks, rickshaws lay sideways across the road, electric cables and tramlines lay knotted across the footpaths (Palace 467).

in the same way Rajkumar joins his fellow counterparts in the Long March:

Everyone was heading in the same direction: towards the northern, landward passage to India – a distance of more than a thousand miles. They had their possessions bundled on their heads; they were carrying children on their back; wheeling elderly people in carts and barrows (Palace 467).

Rajkumar returns with his family that includes his wife, Dolly, daughter-in-law, Manju and granddaughter, Jaya after the loss of his son, Neel who was buried underneath the timber as the elephants went berserk due to the deafening noise of the bombs. Sadly

even before they reached their native country, the family loses another of its member. Manju who was no longer in a good frame of mind after the death of her husband, Neel gives up her life by plunging into the river: “It was no effort at all to slip, from the raft into the river. The river was fast, dark and numbingly cold” (Palace 474). The way the streets of Burma are in a state of chaos and disorder in the same way the prosperous Raha family now wears the look of loss, dejection and despondency.

Above all, Rajkumar’s home coming is no celebration but a burning down to ashes of his long built business empire in Burma. All that he could take back to his country are Dolly and Jaya. What the public tumult did to Rajkumar was even more telling and sad as back home in India he is a destitute reduced to the stature of a beggar begging for a place to shelter his family. The war that proves disastrous to nations also proves devastating to many individual families like the much longed for family of Rajkumar. Thus the Second World War that hits Burma mirrors the tragedy that befalls the family of common people like Rajkumar Raha thereby, displaying the truth that there is a close alliance between the public and the private histories. The depiction above, most appropriately validates the observation by Novy Kapadia that “Amitav Ghosh, with his subtle humour and awareness of contemporary politics, ensures that private turmoil and crises are mirrored and intermeshed in public turmoil and crises” (122).

Public and private histories that interweave in the novels of Ghosh enhances the creative impulse of Ghosh as he presents the debilitating plight of a family when it is hit by an event in history. Ghosh appears to be taking a stronger stand here, which is a conspicuous and prominent discourse that bends itself more towards the family rather than the nation. His novels contain narratives that are more inclined towards an enhanced claim that private history has over public history of a nation.

When Ghosh narrates the two narratives of the history of Burma and the family of Rajkumar he does so with the intention of enhancing the relevance of his imaginary narrative rather than giving an account of the national history of Burma. The historical repercussions that people are made to suffer are enhanced in his texts with Ghosh’s fervent inclination towards the grievances and plight of ordinary families of a nation.

Amitav Ghosh’s deliberate focus on the juxtaposed history of the nation and the family reveals the triumph of the writer in doing what conventional history failed. The fact that he privileges the private over the public establishes Ghosh’s priority, which is family. He is able to construct family and not the nation as the “central imaginative unit” (Frederick Luis Aldama) in his novels. Private history of familial ties and bonds stand taller than the public history of the nation. Family is the pivot that holds members of a family together. What matters is familial bond. In Palace, Ghosh presents the public narrative and private narrative simultaneously with the intention of enhancing the

relevance of his imaginary narrative rather than giving an account of the national history of Burma. Ghosh is more inclined towards the grievances and plight of ordinary families of a nation. He is more focused on the new life that the Royal Family is living as banished people. In the same novel, Ghosh creates the character of Rajkumar as an accomplished man who has made a name for himself on his own terms and principles. But material wealth does not substitute for family. Rajkumar's yearning for family is significant as it is a revelation of the value and worth that a family has for man. "Beyond the ties of blood, friendship and immediate reciprocity, Rajkumar recognized no loyalties, no obligations and no limits on the compass of his right to provide for himself." (Palace. 47) It is the ties of blood that Rajkumar longs for - he looks for love, affection and a family to call his own. Romance prevails because it is this romance that gives birth to a strong bond of love and happiness in the conjugal life of Rajkumar and his wife, Dolly Sein. He tells her

Miss Dolly, I have no family, no parents, no brothers, no sisters, no fabric of small memories from which to cut a large cloth I have no option but to choose my own attachment . . . it is a freedom . . . thus not without value (Palace 147-8).

Thus Amitav Ghosh's novels centre on family because family is truly the central imaginative unit that binds his characters together.

The central concern of the textual narration is the focus that he gives to the major characters and their mood swings at the time when they confront a historical event that shatters their lives. At times they experience a loss that may even amount to death and disaster. In this context, Ghosh may even place his central characters in situations that are at times emotional and at other times distressing. Such a narrative concern variably makes ordinary peoples' presence in his texts more exuberant than their historical counterparts. This is also the reason behind his preference for the depiction of familial pain, pathos and anxiety over the happenings in a nation. The example that follows will help establish the truth about whether Ghosh privileges the private over the public.

The statement above may hold true as national events are given secondary importance in Ghosh's novels. They make their appearances in the texts as mere passing comments in the course of the familial narratives. In *The Shadow Lines* the Khulna Riot of 1964 has been referred to only as an event in history that would elevate the tragic death that befalls on the Datta Chaudhary family. The main concern of the novel *Lines* is with narrations of personal lives and family relations of the Datta Chaudhary family. The major part of the novel concentrates on the narration of Tridib's family, with most of his relatives experiencing pain and anxiety largely over the death of the central figure, Tridib. While Amitav Ghosh gives in a lot of fictional space to the story to define its real worth and message only a brief narrative time and space is given to the historical background of the Khulna riot of 1964 in Dhaka that is concerned with

Tridib's death. Even a retelling of this piece of history offers no facts or explanation for the death of Tridib. The question that emerges is how else could Ghosh illustrate the pain and pathos of Tridib's family members if he ends the novel without an elaborate account of what Tridib's death caused his family members.

If Ghosh denies his readers the pain of the family members then his narrative would not be different from any historical record. Ghosh chooses otherwise. The riot finds its place in records of history but the loss of peoples' lives and property is however not accounted for. Documented history only gives a one sided reading of a historical event. Therefore though history of the nation that encroaches into the lives of the Datta Chaudhary family is the crux of *Lines*, in reality such a depiction of historical events only enhances the reverence and irreverence of events in history. Here the historical event is important only because it allows Ghosh to relate what this event means to unhistorical figures. Ghosh is more responsive towards the numerous unheard stories of the common man/woman who fall prey to the nation's political and historical occurrences. Thus the narration of the tragic and horrifying experiences that Ghosh's characters are made to go through become the culmination point for the author's exploration into history.

The authorial purpose behind the privileging of the family history over national history is to underline the need to hear the voices of helpless individuals. A reading of Ghosh's texts gives room to analyse the above. A question appears to be gnawing Ghosh's mind over the incomplete depiction of historical events by documented history. His texts present numerous episodes that largely lend a voice to the unheard voices. These are examples that seem to be claiming some space in history for the disregarded lot of the nation. If left unrecorded is it enough for the world and generations to come to know and remember that history only speaks of the riot that did take place in 1964? This would only imply that there is an absence of a humane worldview in that small piece of news about the death of fourteen people in the Dhaka riot is what is missing in the documented history of the event. Why should stories of common people attached to the riot be left unrecorded? Perhaps Ghosh has a different answer to this for the narrator in the novel *Lines* is not willing to leave his familial story untold. He is appalled that his friends have not heard of the Khulna riot. The relevance of this news to the narrator and his family become miniscule representations in comparison to its presentation as national news if his friends are unaware of the existence of such a riot that his family is trapped in. He tries hard to make them remember that there was a riot that broke out in 1964 and they could not have missed it. After all it was an unforgettable riot for his family.

‘This was a terrible riot,’ I said. ‘All riots are terrible,’ Malik said.
‘But it must have been a local thing. . . . it’s hardly comparable to a war.’ I was determined now that I would not let my past vanish

without trace: I was determined to persuade them of its importance (Lines 221).

Therefore on no account is Ghosh prepared to overlook the situations of the unrecorded figures of history. He wants history to give some space to people like Tridib whose murder has shattered and disoriented the lives of his family members and loved ones. Ghosh himself writes in his essay “The Greatest Sorrow” that the Indo-Chinese war of 1962,

. . . was a war that was fought in a remote patch of terrain, far removed from major population centres, and it had few repercussions outside the immediate area. The riots of 1964 on the other hand, had affected many major cities and had caused extensive civilian casualties. Yet there was not a single book devoted to this event: a cursory glance at a library’s bookshelves was enough to establish that in historical memory a small war counts for much more than a major outbreak of civil violence. . . . Why was it that we can look back upon these events in sorrow and outrage and yet be incapable of divining any lasting solutions or any portents for the future (Indian 316).

The history of a family may give a mere myopic view of the past. It may also be only an appendage of history; nonetheless it certainly is a part of history. Only when the history of the nation is placed alongside the history of the family can history be viewed in its entirety. Therefore through his works Ghosh listens to the voice of the voiceless and their determination to speak out to the outside world their brush with history. In privileging family over nation to underline familial experiences he not only gives them a voice but also unravels what lie beneath the public incident that his characters are nettled in.

What lie beneath the history of a nation are numerous histories of diverse ordinary families that have never been chronicled because “. . . the riots had faded away from the newspapers, disappeared from the collective imagination of ‘responsible opinion’, vanished, without leaving a trace in the histories and bookshelves. They had dropped out of memory into the crater of a volcano of silence” (Lines 231). An individual’s precious life is lost in the tide of events in a nation yet that nation’s history has no regard for the loss. The loss may be one that is beyond description to a family yet the nation does not account for familial loss. An individual life of an ordinary person remains submerged into the deluge of national misfortune. While the nation grips in fear and chaos due to an untoward communal clash, family members of the Datta Chaudhary in Lines experience the doubled pain, loss and tragedy in their visit to Dhaka in order to take their uncle along with them back to India, their new home. Little do they fathom that in the long run they would actually be trapped in the catastrophic riots that results in the loss of their two family members, Tridib and Jethamoshai who have been brutally murdered before their own eyes: “The car was stopped. By a mob But your

grandmother's uncle was following behind us. When I got there [t]hey were all dead. The old man's head had been hacked. And they'd cut Tridib's throat, from ear to ear" (Lines 250-51).

These unrecorded private histories of ordinary people have been completely brushed aside for "riots must thus have no 'meaning' in the lexicon of modernity, except in accounts of their suppression" (Suvir Kaul 284). These are the submerged and suppressed accounts in the history of a nation that Ghosh does not wish to be left untouched, untold and unheard.

A reading of the forgotten, hidden and subjugated stories of Amitav Ghosh's novels leave many questions unanswered: What is the nation's history? Is nation's history its political history only? Can national history sideline citizen's history? Can history of a nation simply be literally a biography of kings and queens documenting their lives? Can history of a nation be one that fails to capture the pain of a family that loses its livelihood and loved ones as they are entangled in an event in history? Sadly these are loopholes that any historical document with a traditional orientation has failed to address. But literary works of writers like Ghosh seal the lacunae by giving a place of importance to stories that the history of the nation disregards.

In *Tide*, the authorial choice of beginning the novel with an alternative history creates awareness of the binary and hierarchical oppositions between the two types of history. The unaccounted selfless fight and sacrifice of Kusum in the novel is more important than political history (Morichjhapi event of 1978-79) for Ghosh. He begins where history ends. Helpless people like Kusum have been subjected to miserable conditions for no fault of theirs. The question that emerges here is what the sacrifice of Kusum means to her nation. She fights against all odds for her peoples' welfare but her sacrifice means nothing to her nation. Fighting selflessly for the rehabilitation of her people Kusum leaves behind her family, her only son, Fokir. She deprives Fokir of her love and care for the sake of the collective good of her people. The entire loss is of the young Fokir who lives his life without the warm comfort of his mother, the only family that he has. In spite of all that the small family of this mother and son has no place in the history of the nation.

The telling rhetoric in the story of Kusum centres on the query whether the nation's history has anything at all to offer to the numerous Kusums, who die a selfless death for the sake of the people of the land. The truth is perhaps painful because though Kusum gives up her family and son for the people of her country, history has not been sensitive enough towards a contribution by unhistorical people. Nirmal may have written down in his notebook every detail of the event along with Kusum's participation and sacrifice leaving it behind for his nephew, Kanai with the hope that Kanai will spread the word. But sadly even this last ray of hope to bring to the world the other side of the history of the event of Morichjhapi is lost forever when Kanai loses the notebook:

“I was bringing it back here, carefully wrapped in plastic. But I slipped in the water, and it was swept out off my hands” (Tide 386). The optimism with which Nirmal leaves behind the notebook for his nephew crumbles to the ground. Could this be a conscious deliberation of Ghosh in presenting the obvious pessimism that surrounds traditional historiography through the act of the notebook being swept into the waters? Can historical record give a place of worth to the private history of a family? Can there be a familial history that will be placed above or even alongside the public history of a nation? Perhaps these are mere whims of the author that may take a long time or may not even be incorporated in the documented history of a nation. Therefore Amitav Ghosh, as a literary writer, unfolds what otherwise traditional history hesitates to even mention. His reading of family history succeeds in bridging in gaps between the public and the private histories. Voiceless histories of families like that of Kusum’s are therefore juxtaposed to the voiced history of a nation in the novels of Amitav Ghosh.

Ghosh showcases vociferous impact and a more drastic effect that history has on ordinary citizens of a country. The catastrophe that it can cause to the private lives of ordinary people is not only obvious but more pathetically tragic. An expansion of horizons between the two histories of the public and the private can be seen in Ghosh’s approach to the history of Partition. Even after sixty six years of Indian Independence, the issue of Partition is addressed by Ghosh in a manner that expresses a contemporary concern on the subject. Partition of India is not a mere partition of the geography of the country. It was a step not only debilitating but also one that is accompanied with a lot of violence and bloodshed. While India is severed into two, families and bonds are also cut and mutilated at times even beyond recognition. The discord between the Hindus and the Muslims is experienced by the Datta Chaudhary family in 1964. This innocent family becomes a victim of a communal riot that is not their making. In the novel it is the repercussion of this one historical event that leads to pain and loss of this family. This one event in history creates a void in the hearts of the family members that Ghosh successfully displays in this text.

Amitav Ghosh also illustrates a clash between the geographical public space that politics and history of nations determine and the private space that families enfold within themselves. The clash persists because the demands and requirements of the nation may be at odds with the lives of private individuals. This is exactly what Thamma in *Lines* goes through after the Partition of the country. Her home is now at odds with her nationality.

Home ought to be the place where one was born and brought up, sealed by an emotional bond, where one can claim one’s right without any hesitation. And if there was a basic confusion on this score – about the very roots of one’s origin – an individual’s identity would be in question (Pabby 78).

The conflict between the public and the private becomes even more intense when public history intervenes and interferes into Thamma's life in the face of a communal riot in the land of her birth. This time Thamma knows that her nation has let her down. "Her native city of Dhaka, which she visits for the first time after Partition, is now the "other" of home, a place of danger, threat and instability" (Sharmani Patricia Gabriel 49). Her nation has turned against her. Her family members are sacrificed at the altar of communal hatred and antagonism. The nation that is so close to her heart becomes a dead bed of two important members of her family; Tridib and Jethamoshai. The little hope left to plant her identity in her country, her home in Dhaka is guillotined at the threshold of a riot and violence that is meted out to her and her family. Betrayed by the nation that had always been hers Thamma makes her choice. She places her family before that of her nation. She now thinks only of her kindred and is not ready to bear the loss of another member of her family. She even gives away her prized possession, a gold chain to the war in 1965 [India Pakistan War April 1965 – September 1965] telling her grandson that "I had to, don't you see? For your sake; for your freedom. We have to kill them before they kill us; we have to wipe them out" (Lines 237).

Thamma is not the only character who goes through this dilemma of Partition. Ghosh here speaks for the many Thammass that are made to bow down before the politics and history of the nation. At the same time Ghosh is also lending a voice to the clash and conflict that politics play with precious lives of people. On the one hand she is confronted with the love and loyalties of her family and on the other hand Thamma is aware of the allegiance that she owes to the nation she was born in. As the cold hands of death devours the lives of Tridib and Jethamoshai, Thamma only thinks of preserving her own. The only clear choice that Thamma makes is her family before anything else. No more sacrifices of her family are to be made at the altar of public history. Family is the binding force that has to be guarded at all cost. What comes before Thamma is the love that she has for her family members. She begins to perceive her nation in the context of the relevance that the nation has on members of her family. What matters is familial bond than nation. In this juxtaposition of history, geographical public space and the private space of families achieve their respective objectives: the irrelevance of lines drawn out of conflict in a nation and the relevance of family that surpasses any riots and violence. Even here, for ordinary people it is family that is more meaningful and important in their lives. The choice of family over nation is the hallmark well made.

A conflict of thought and ideology endures when Ghosh subverts grand narratives of history for concealed histories of the suppressed. He drifts away from traditional historiography of placing the history of the nation in the hierarchy of reading the past. Amitav Ghosh shifts the focus from history of the nation to history of the little people; this time speaking out for the subaltern group. In Calcutta Chromosome, when Ghosh talks of the history of the malaria vector he is also making way for the meaning

of this historical event to the nation and to a subaltern group. The Nobel Prize that was awarded to Ronald Ross in 1906 was and will continue to be a historic moment in the history of medical science in the world. The discovery is an achievement of national stature and pride to the nation and the people of Great Britain. But Amitav Ghosh does not rest here. He sees beyond the discovery to arrive at an alternative view of the research. Acknowledging Ronald Ross's achievement Ghosh prepares his readers with an even greater display of historical perception that is important to be highlighted. Thus he juxtaposes the history of the malaria research with the history of the nation and the subversive history of the subaltern agency or the voice of the voiceless. The bond that the subaltern group shares with one another as a family is higher above anything else before Ghosh. Expressions from the text such as "... they've planted Lutchman exactly where they want him. . ." (65) "... Lutchman succeeds in planting a crucially important idea in his [Ross] head: that the malaria vector might be one particular species of mosquito." (65). "'Eureka' he [Ross] says to his diary, 'the problem is solved.'" (66) and "'Whew!'" says Lutchman, skimming the sweat off his face. "Thought he'd never get it.'" (66) are lines that Ghosh places his credibility on the voice of the voiceless people. Ghosh makes an attempt to showcase the effort of these people. Their contributions cannot be ignored or sidelined. Ghosh's sincere effort here is to allow the subaltern family to share the same space of honour and the pride of the nation as is showered on the English scientist, Ronald Ross.

The subaltern subjects in the characters of Mangala and Laakhan and even Murugan himself are placed under one roof by Ghosh. He displaces traditional history only to create a place of respect and appreciation for the subaltern family. In doing so he makes way for the subaltern subject to be heard. He does not deter to even subvert the grand narrative of an international stature substituting it with ordinary narratives of common people. He spells out his purpose clearly which is to lend a voice to the so far subjugated voiceless subaltern people. The forgotten and overshadowed people emerge as contenders well received of a regard worthy of appreciation in the texts of Ghosh. It is even more passionately drawn when Ghosh puts these people in one umbrella giving them the status of a family. They represent each other and also live closely knit with one another.

Thus it may not be wrong to state that in the ambit of history there does exist a close tie of the private with the public. Amitav Ghosh's novels display in great detail the way in which private histories of an individual and a family are at times directly or indirectly influenced by the public history of the nation they belong to. His effort to give evidence to the turns in the lives of his characters as they fall prey to situations and circumstances of the happenings in their nation and country is well achieved. Ghosh is aware that contemporary politics surrounding political events like Partition of the country has a deep seated impact on numerous families of undivided India. Private turmoil and crisis are a reflection of the turmoil in the nation yet the private have always

been suppressed. How can it be right for a creative writer like him to decline these families their due? Therefore what history denies Ghosh concurs in his novels.

Amitav Ghosh depicts many challenges that his characters are made to confront as a family enhancing individual private history to that of public history. He does this by subverting grand narratives of history and supplants them with histories of subaltern people. In the minds and hearts of these people are embedded pains galore that have not yet found an outlet. People who have never spoken out loud about the repercussions of events in history in their lives are given a chance to open their hearts and unburden their souls. When Amitav Ghosh talks of history he is actually placing on the same plane what history has done to the nation and what history can do to a family. In presenting the two together it is as if Ghosh is holding a mirror that reflects the position of a nation as well as a family thrown in the mesh of political cataclysm and debacle. Evidently, public discourse of a national stature and private discourse of a personal standing are placed alongside one another. He unravels the private histories that lives in the hearts of those gravely hit by historical events. He lends his voice to the voiceless. He does not deter to even push public history to the background in order to bring private history of families to the fore.

The narration of the history of the nation and the history of a family are seen to be trotting hand in hand alongside each other. What is of greater worth and value to Ghosh is the history of the family and the lives of unhistorical people. Ghosh's motive is achieved when private histories of an individual and a family appear larger than public history of a nation. What has failed to find place in historical records finds space in fictional creative writings. Thus holding true what Someshwar Sati's comments: "It seems as if Ghosh is making a telling point – the story of the individual is swallowed by history of the nation and in an age of agnostic individualism this tendency to erase the individual should be not only carefully guarded against but also fearlessly exposed and severely censored" (54).

In summation, Ghosh is able to achieve the following: he exhibits a parallel history of the nation along with the history of the family, he interweaves public tumults with private turmoil; he privileges the private history of family over the public history of the nation; he maps the unmapped marginalised history of the family; he creates awareness of the binary and hierarchical oppositions between the two types of history; he topples history to significantly expand the horizon of history beyond its narrow confines and also subverts grand narratives for the subaltern voice. Thus Amitav Ghosh perceives history in its totality, giving a complete rendition of history.

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List of Abbreviations Used:

Lines	for	The Shadow Lines
Chromosome	for	The Calcutta Chromosome
Palace	for	The Glass Palace
Tide	for	The Hungry Tide
Indian	for	The Imam and the Indian

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ABSTRACT

The significance of traditional economies in indigenous communities goes beyond the economic realm—they are more than just livelihoods providing subsistence and sustenance to individuals or communities. Traditional wisdom with its importance in developing a high potential environment and sustainable management has gained significant attention world over. As far as subsistence agriculture is concerned, it develops a balance between meeting our present needs, conserving natural resources, and protecting the environment for the benefit of future generations. Traditional agricultural approaches are not practical for mass food production, but accounts for substantial amount of local food production in the developing world. The present paper basically tries to analyze the importance of subsistence farming in the transitional societies of the developing world with the relative role of gender in its sustenance.

Keywords: Feminization of Agriculture, Subsistence Farming, Gender

INTRODUCTION

The dynamics of status and position of the Khasi women with the development of the society involves a number of social, economic, political, cultural, psychological and attitudinal factors. The Khasis, a matrilineal tribe in Meghalaya follow a unique system of matrilineity. With the change that has taken place over a period of time it is relevant to enquire about the direction to which the position and status of women are moving with the development of the society.

The Khasi society of Meghalaya is such a society, commonly known as matrilineal in which the parental lineage authority, title, inheritance, residence after marriage and succession are traced through women. In Khasi society women take part in trade which elsewhere is in the hands of men. In Meghalaya the Khasi woman enjoys a comparative freedom (than their counterparts in the rest of the country) albeit in different degrees. On the whole the society is unique. women have active role in natural resource management and environment protection. From the above one can conclude that women's emancipation is evident in all its glory in Meghalaya's unique women centric society (Das and Bezbaruah 2011). Contradictorily, Das and Bezbaruah in the later part of their writing reveals that more than two third of the families are run by

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males and only around 1/3rd are headed by females. In spite of the version of better status in several parts of the region, there is the harsh reality of strong discrimination against Khasi women in various spheres, particularly in the light of tradition and customary practices and questions of empowerment. The general assumption that matrilineal descent gives women a dominant position collapses under the weight of the reality of their actual condition—the multiple burden they bear and their actual existence under male-centered authority.

Traditional food grain production in almost all parts of Meghalaya is still at the subsistence level. The intensity of the use of chemical fertilizers and pesticides is in the increase where commercial production of rice and vegetables are practiced. Terraced fields for wet rice cultivation are found in pockets such as the Sung Valley of the Jaintia Hills, the plain strips of Ri-Bhoi Districts and in larger parts of Garo hills. The regular assurance of water for the rice fields makes the input cost high. Thus, with the high cost of rice-farming inputs, the degradation of farms brought about by chemical farming and the failure of monocropping, it is relevant now to look at small-scale production practices which have been tested through time.

ROLE OF WOMEN IN AGRICULTURE

Narrowing our scope to agriculture and taking an overall view, “Women play a significant role in agriculture, the world over. About 70 percent of the agricultural workers, 80 percent of food producers, and 10 percent of those who process basic foodstuffs are women and they also undertake 60 to 90 percent of the rural marketing; thus making up more than two-third of the workforce in agricultural production (FAO 1985). In West Africa, up to 80 percent of the labour force in all trade is female. Yet, the role of women in these activities, so important economically, has remained obscure for long because women seldom played any major role in political activities or decision making processes. Despite the fact that women produce much of the food in the developing world, they also remain more malnourished than most men are. In many rural societies, women eat less food than men do, especially when the food is scarce, such as just before the harvest, or when the workload increases without a corresponding increase in the food intake” (Roodkowsky 1979).

As stated earlier, there is the harsh reality of strong discrimination against Khasi women in various spheres, with regard to tradition and customary practices and particularly with questions of empowerment. “In reality it is the mother who works and stints and saves, and garners all her resources to ensure the sustenance of her children. But when it comes to the administration of the family and the management of its resources, control lies in the hands of men” (Das and Bezbaruah 2011). According to Carswell (2003), within the nuclear family, women’s work is often hidden behind the expectations of family relations, and is not considered exploitative.

Feminisation of agriculture refers to women's increasing participation in the agricultural labor force, whether as independent producers, as unremunerated family workers, or as agricultural wage workers. Specifically, feminisation of agriculture entails:

1. An increase in women's participation rates in the agricultural sector, either as self-employed or as agricultural wage workers; in other words, an increase in the percentage of women who are economically active in rural areas.
2. An increase in the percentage of women in the agricultural labor force relative to men, either because more women are working and/or because fewer men are working in agriculture. [Feminization of Agriculture: Trends and Driving Forces]

According to the FAO, while the proportion of the labor force working in agriculture declined over the 1990s, the proportion of women working in agriculture increased, and particularly in developing countries. In some regions such as Africa and Asia, almost half of the labor force is women. This trend has been called the feminisation of agriculture. This feminisation of agriculture is caused by increased "casualization" of work, unprofitable crop production and distress migration of men "for higher casual work in agriculture and non-agriculture sectors", leaving women to take up low paid casual work in agriculture.[AGNET/UNIFEM]

WOMEN AND SUBSISTENCE AGRICULTURE

The significance of traditional economies in indigenous communities goes beyond the economic realm—they are more than just livelihoods providing subsistence and sustenance to individuals or communities (Kuokkanen 2011). Traditional wisdom with its importance in developing a high potential environment and sustainable management has gained significant attention world over (Jeeva et.al. 2005). Indigenous knowledge linked with the manipulation and use of natural resources in various ways, form the basis for their link with nature, and the varied levels refinement depend on the level at which the society finds itself in the social evolutionary basis (NBBI 1998; Sarkar and Maitra 2001; Ramakrishan et. al. 2000). In line with the above discussion, traditional agriculture practice (subsistence agriculture) develops a balance between meeting our present needs, conserving natural resources, and protecting the environment for the benefit of future generations. Traditional agricultural approaches are not practical for mass food production, but accounts for substantial amount of local food production in the developing world (NBBI 1998). However, today one can detect a certain degree of cynicism when discussing traditional indigenous economies. The continued significance of subsistence economies is either downplayed or dismissed (Kuokkanen 2011).

Some of the facts revealed by FAO indicate that of the percentage of economically active women in least developed countries, more than 70 percent work in agriculture through 2010. In developing countries, most women's work is devoted to agriculture. Women are involved in every stage of food production. In the rural areas, where most of the world's hungry people live, women produce most of the food consumed locally. Their contribution could be much greater if they had equal access to essential resources and services, such as land, credit and training. Again, on average, rural women and girls spend almost an hour each day gathering fuel and carrying water, needed to prepare meals. In some communities, these activities may take up to four hours a day (Women and Agriculture). The above discussions highlight the significant role of women in subsistence production. In different stages of production women play the effective role which is equivalent to the role that men play. (http://www.wikigender.org/index.php/Women_and_Agriculture)

Beyond politics, the broad domains involving women of various classes are agriculture, urban workplace, the law and education. Women contribute tremendously to agricultural output but unfortunately they hardly, until recently, benefited from agricultural incentives and innovation because of economic suppression and social and traditional practices which undermine the constitutional provisions on the equality of men and women. Gender discrimination, rather than ignorance, is the reason for the lack of women participation in agricultural programmes and projects (Ogunlela and Mukhtar 2009).

Sandra Lin Marburg (1984) draws our attention to the new era of research emerging from a strong woman's movement and a new critical approach to the history of science. The ensuing feminist critiques were eventually to treat scientific ideas of women and their work as part of Western intellectual history. Several scholars have suggested, for instance, that the "man the hunter" or "man the hunter and provider" image of subsistence culture overemphasizes the male role in supplying animal foods, while ignoring the more substantial or predictable female role in providing vegetable foods in gatherer/hunter cultures (Etienne and Leacock 1980). Ignoring of women's work in hoe, shifting, and intensive agricultural societies by male biased statistical categories has also been criticized, (Sipila 1979) but other activities, usually associated with women, also have been consistently under-valued in scientific analyses. Feminist analysis shows that much of women's labor in the "housewife" capacity is not regarded as "work" because it is unpaid and is therefore typically ignored. Even women's productive work that creates surplus value in subsistence agriculture and family enterprise is often unrecognized in economic statistics and analysis because occupational categories are biased toward a male head of family. Studies have shown that resources controlled by women are more likely to be used to improve family food consumption and welfare, reduce child malnutrition, and increase overall well-being of the family (see, for example, Kabeer 2003). Food security and family well-being are

thus important reasons for protecting or enhancing women's access to and control over land and other productive resources. As FAO reports, "this finding is even more significant given that data for the economically active population in agriculture tends to exclude the unpaid work by rural women in farm and family economies. If unpaid work were included, the figures for female employment in agriculture would be even higher." (FAO 2003).

In subsistence agriculture, particularly in Africa, food production is mainly done by women, with little from men (Boserup, A. 1970) That assertion was supported by the observation from the Heluo community in Kenya many years later, where Pala (1976) found that the percentage of work done by women farmers far outweighs that of men. Similarly, in Ghana, for instance, smallholdings kept by women provide about 80 percent of the total food production in the country. In Tanzania, however, 87 percent of the women who live in rural areas play similar roles; while Zambian women contribute up to 80 percent of their labour for household crops (Abdullahi, undated).

According to Sherry Ortner (1974) there is a universal idea of the sex/gender relation which associates men with culture and women with nature. Such a hypothesis is disputed by other scholars who argue this analogy is a limited Western model of the sexes that has resulted in inaccurate portrayals of women's work in not only Western but also in non-Western societies. Thus, a new tradition in feminist scholarship is beginning to raise questions about women's work in subsistence economies as part of a larger investigation of male centrism in social and environmental science. The division of labor between the sexes is a central issue in this debate (Marburg 1984). But a case of interdependency between men and women and a greater role played by women in subsistence economy is clearly given by George Alexander Cooke in his "Universal Geography", (circa 1800): "The men make their hunting and fishing implements, and prepare the wood-work of their boats, and the women cover them with skins. The men hunt and fish; but when they have towed their booty to land, they trouble themselves no further about it. .. The women are the butchers and cooks, and also the curriers to dress the pelts, and make clothes, shoes, and boots out of them; so that they are likewise both shoemakers and tailors. The women also build and repair the houses and tents, so far as relates to the masonry, the men doing only the carpenter's work." (as quoted by Marburg 1984)

With the penetration of market economy and economic globalization, subsistence agriculture to meet family's daily needs has been oppressed. Under the expansion of cash crop production, there still exists subsistence production such as kitchen gardens or homestead gardens maintained by women. Their knowledge and skills on managing subsistence production have been underestimated, but these days, they have come to be re-evaluated as the fragility of namely modern mono-culture production systems concerning the environmental and ecological healthiness become

obvious (Shiva and Vandana 1993). By showing case studies of kitchen gardens in Bangladesh and Japan under ecologically and economically different conditions, Yoshino Keiko examines the role and prospect of subsistence agriculture maintained by women.

CONCLUSION

The roles that rural women play in food production and their contributions to development in rural areas cannot be ignored when making policy to address hunger and poverty among the world's poorest inhabitants. The challenges they face in accessing agricultural resources directly perpetuate poverty and hunger cycles in rural families, by divesting rural women of needed support in their provisional roles.

Under the banner of comparative advantage and economies of scale, most agricultural policies imposed on gearing towards high-impact programs like plantation-scale monocropping for export. The globalization drive to have borderless trading, including in food, is weakening the societies, especially those of non-industrialized states like the Meghalaya. With economic and ecological problems now cropping up in all parts of the globe because of the destructive agricultural development programs that have been foisted on agricultural societies, and trade globalization, communities now have to take steps to ensure food security.

The importance of subsistence production has been neglected by most policy makers. Literatures have shown that if farmers have "ownership" over their production processes and inputs, especially land, they can be productive. This means that support in terms of research and development, recognition of land rights (whether as farmers or as indigenous peoples), programs for irrigation, organizing and education, and others must be given by the government.

Thus we can conclude that, although subsistence agriculture may at first sight appear to be an impediment for economic growth, it often is the only way for rural people to survive under extremely difficult conditions, such as inefficient input, output, credit and labour markets, risks and uncertainties. Under such conditions subsistence agriculture should not only be considered as a passive adaptation, it can even play an important role in stabilizing fragile economies. Policies need to take these aspects into account and, instead of neglecting or even fighting subsistence agriculture, they need to address the underlying reasons for the drift into subsistence and open viable ways for farmers to increasingly join the market economy (Brüntrup and Franz Heidhues 2002).

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FACTORS THAT AFFECT JOB SATISFACTION IN AN ORGANISATION

Albert S. Kharbuli*

ABSTRACT

There is a convergence of interest, of late, on the efforts by organizations to examine factors that foster greater employee's satisfaction with job. Job satisfaction is one's feeling about one's job, measured on the basis of satisfaction derived from different job related factors. The purpose of this paper is basically to investigate these various factors that affect employees' job satisfaction at different levels. Suggestions are being made at the end to help the organizations to have a holistic approach to enhance the employees' job satisfaction at different levels.

Keywords: Job Satisfaction, Team Work, Organisation, Employee, Attitude

INTRODUCTION

Attitude is the feeling and belief that largely determines how employees perceive their environment and commit themselves to intended actions. Every organization is interested in the nature of attitude of the employees towards their job, career and the organization itself. These various attitudes which people hold towards their job are referred to as job satisfaction.

Locke (1976) states job satisfaction as a pleasurable or positive emotional that resulting from the appraisal of one's job or job experience. So, it is a result of employee's perception of how well their job provides those things that are viewed as important. Overall, it can be observed that organization ensures the well-being of employees and to look for ways to improve the level of job satisfaction of their employees because a highly satisfied employee can contribute for the growth of the organization more positively as compared to a less satisfied or dissatisfied employee. Thus, job satisfaction can be viewed as one's feeling about one's job, measured on the basis of satisfaction derived from different job related factors such as work, salary, supervision, working conditions, promotion policy and relationship between supervisors and subordinates.

PURPOSE OF THE PAPER

This paper basically contemplates to analyze the factors that are responsible for satisfaction or dissatisfaction of employees. To find out these factors, an extensive

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review of the existing literature has been done and conclusion has been drawn on the basis of the findings that have emanated from the studies conducted in the related fields.

FACTORS THAT AFFECT JOB SATISFACTION

Job satisfaction has been identified as one of the important attributes in order to study the attitude of an employee in an organization. It has been studied extensively as a function of several important variables especially the characteristics of the job itself (Hackman and Oldham 1975). The content of the work itself is a major factor of job satisfaction. Hackman and Lawler (1971) found that those employees that perform tasks that have high skill variety, autonomy, feedback and job significance experience greater levels of job satisfaction than their counterparts who perform tasks that are low on those attributes.

Wages and salaries are recognized to be another important factor for measuring job satisfaction of an employee in an organization (Carragher and Buckley 1996). From the employees' point of view, wages and salaries became a reflection of how management views their contribution to the organization. Hamermesh (2001) indicates that changes in the wage have an impact on job satisfaction. Lee and Martin (1991) also found that the employees evaluate the salary justice by comparing their wages to another groups and outside their own company and certain inequalities in wages are bound to cause dissatisfaction among the employees. If employees are allowed some flexibility in choosing the type of benefits they prefer within a total package, there can be a significant increase in job satisfaction (Barber, Dunham, and Formisano 1992).

Promotion is one of the variables which has a marked effect on job satisfaction. This is because promotions take a number of different forms and have a variety of accompanying rewards. For example, employees who are promoted on the basis of seniority often experience job satisfaction but not as much as those who are promoted on the basis of performance. Vroom (1964) predicts that receiving a desired promotion would result in a greater increment on job satisfaction on the part of employees who did not expect than those who did expect it; and failure to receive a desired promotion would result in greater decrement in the job satisfaction of those expecting it than those not expecting it.

Supervision is another important variable for studying job satisfaction of an employee in an organization. The support and consideration of supervisor is a strong determinant of job satisfaction in a wide variety of work settings (Yukl 2005). However, Buckingham and Coffman (1999) found that there is considerable empirical evidence that one of the major reasons employees quit a company is that their supervisor does not care about them. Thus, supervisors play an important role in structuring the work environment, providing information and feedback to employees.

The nature of the work group or team work has an effect on job satisfaction. Team work is typically involved groups of interdependent employees who work co-operatively to achieve group outcomes. Effective team work enhances the motivational properties of work and increase job satisfaction (Parker and Wall 1998). Griffin, Patterson and West (2001) also found that the implementation of team work has benefits for the employees in manufacturing companies and hence introducing team work can result in a significant change to the role of supervisors within organizations and subsequently enhancing job satisfaction.

Working condition is another factor that has effect on employees' job satisfaction. If working conditions are good, the employees find it easier to carry out their job. But, if the working conditions are poor, employees will find it more difficult to get things done (Luthans 2005). Various organizational environment factors such as communication, participation in decision making and stress have also been examined as their relationship to job satisfaction and found to be significant predictors. Two ways communication (Bateman 1977) and participation in making job related decisions (White and Ruh 1973) have a positive effect on job satisfaction while stress has a negative relationship with job satisfaction (Bhagat 1982).

The relationship between job satisfaction and gender has also been examined frequently. But the results of many of the studies have been contradictory. Clark (1997) and Hodson (1989) found that women are more satisfied with their work as compared to men, whereas men are more satisfied as compare to women while attaining job satisfaction (Forgionne and Peeters 1982). But, Witt and Nye (1992) reported that there are no significant differences between the sexes in relation to job satisfaction. Thus, gender-based difference emerged in the relative strengths of the mediating paths, indicating that the perceived means to job satisfaction differ for women and men employees.

Leadership and job satisfaction are recognized as fundamental components influencing the overall effectiveness of an organization (Kennerly 1989). They are positively correlated with each other, thereby leading to overall job satisfaction (Valenzi and Dressler 1978). In another study by Chen, Beek and Amos (2005) on job satisfaction level of nursing faculty in Taiwan, it was found that the nursing faculties were more satisfied with Deans or Directors who practiced the leadership style of contingent reward and individualized consideration. On the other hand, a leadership style of passive management-by-exception showed a negative effect on job satisfaction amongst them.

The length of service in a job is another factor affecting job satisfaction of employees in an organization. Ronen (1978) reported that the change in job satisfaction

with length of service resembles a “U”- shape curve. Thus, the length of service is related with job satisfaction and job dissatisfaction.

The level of education is also another factor affecting job satisfaction of an employee in an organization. Clark and Oswald (1996) found that there is a negative relationship between education level and job satisfaction i.e., employees with higher level of education tend to be less satisfied with their job. This is especially true for younger employees assigned to routine task (Carrell and Elbert 1974).

Another factor that can affect the job satisfaction of an employee is his or her commitment. Saks (1994) revealed that many factors, including detailed information provided to employees, can have an effect on their commitment which, in turn, can affect the job satisfaction. Dunham, Grubeand Cartaneda (1994) reported that employees with commitment may choose to stay in an organization because they believe in the organization and its mission.

CONCLUSION

Job satisfaction is strongly linked to the performance of an employee in an organization. Organ and Ryan (1995) reported that there is a correlation between job satisfaction and job performance. Vroom (1964) also stated that job satisfaction was positively associated with job performance.

From the literature review we have found out that certain factors such as work itself, wages and salary, promotion, supervision, length of service etc., have profound effect on job satisfaction. If these factors are adequately met by an employer, they can enhance the job satisfaction level of the employees. The employer should always give careful consideration to these factors to provide a higher level of job satisfaction to the employees in the organization. This, in turn, can increase the commitment of the employees towards their work leading to overall development of the organization. However, enhancement of employees’ job satisfaction calls for a holistic approach which, first of all, can allow the employer to identify the root causes of dissatisfaction. Continuous conduct of benchmark studies of best practices, monitoring progress on a regular basis, view employees as the prime source of success, show concern for well-being of employees, effective communication process, better pay package and incentive system, and good working environment can help an organization to raise the level of job satisfaction of its employees.

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TRIBAL DIASPORA AND THE MEDIA: A STUDY OF THE CULTURAL CONFLICTS OF THE KHASIS IN KOLKATA

Cherry K. Kharshiing*

ABSTRACT

Folklore as envisioned by William John Thoms in 1846 is a term that includes the verbal, spiritual, and material aspects of any culture that are transmitted orally, by observation, or by imitation. However, the scholars of folklore studies distinguish between true folk tradition and popular tradition but, for many, the two intermingle. Popular tradition, also popularly known as popular culture, refers to the entire body of texts that are carried on by the Mass media and to a large range of non mediated activities, interests and behavior –though these behaviours maybe indirectly connected to the media. In the Khasi Film Meshuwa and Melody, for the first time, an attempt has been made to capture the internal diaspora of the Khasis living in the Bengali dominated Kolkata- the capital city of West Bengal. Directed by Pradeep Kurbah, Meshuwa and Melody is an unconventional love story about two Khasi people separated by geography – Meshuwa who is proud of his ‘made in Shillong’ identity and Melody who proudly identify herself to ‘Kolkata.’ Melody, brought up in Kolkata by her parents, has decided to visit Shillong for a day on a self imposed mission to meet the man with whom her mother has arranged her marriage. On her arrival in Shillong she met Meshuwa whom she asked for a direction to Sngi thiang Villa - the house where the groom lives. For the next one and a half hours the film takes the audience into Melody’s cultural conflicts and identity of who she really is- a Bengali- Khasi girl or a Khasi Bengali girl or simply a Khasi girl living in Kolkata. This paper, therefore, attempts to study and see through Melody’s eyes the Khasi Diaspora living in Kolkata, West Bengal.

Keywords: Folklore, Diaspora, Media, Cultural Conflicts, Cultural Identity, Khasi

INTRODUCTION

Folklore, as envisioned by William John Thoms in 1846, is a term that includes the verbal, spiritual, and material aspects of any culture that are transmitted orally, by observation, or by imitation. People sharing a culture may have in common an occupation, language, ethnicity, age, or geographical location. This body of traditional material is preserved and passed on from generation to generation, with constant variations shaped by memory, immediate need or purpose, and degree of individual

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talent. However, of late, folklore scholars distinguish between true folk tradition and popular tradition. There is a thin line that differentiates between folklore and popular lore. Popular culture constantly draws on genuine folk form for inspiration and when they are well circulated, folk culture adapts it to their own oral form.

According to Asa Berger, popular culture refers “to the entire body of texts that are carried on by the Mass media and to a large range of non-mediated activities, interests and behaviour –though these behaviours maybe indirectly connected to the media (Berger 1995: 177). In other words, we can say that popular culture incorporates the values, beliefs, lifestyles that come from medium like advertising, films, television, radio and of late the social media. These values and beliefs are not to be confused with those values which are propagated and disseminated by traditional, educational and even the religious institutions.

Popular culture and its content have a massive role to play in shaping public opinion. In other words, the attitude, the perspective, the preferences and the reaction of the population to a particular political, social and even cultural event is largely brought about, shaped and moulded by what people see in the Mass media which are the stage where the popular culture is being displayed. Thus what we see in films can influence our thoughts about what goes on in society. What is more important and relevant to this study is that what we see in a film is shaped by what goes on in society. To quote Aristotle, “art imitates life” and film is indeed an artistic medium.

TRIBAL DIASPORA AND CULTURAL IDENTITY

The term Diaspora (from Greek meaning dispersion) originally refers to the Jews living outside of Israel. During the 20th century the word Diaspora also came to be applied to many groups dispersed outside their homelands. Thus, we now speak of the African Diaspora, Armenian Diaspora, Indian or South Asian Diaspora, and Irish Diaspora, among others. With the passage of time, diaspora studies became an academic discipline. As an academic discipline, diaspora studies refer to researches which make an attempt to discover the cultural identities, symbolic representations, the extent of the cultural corruption by the host culture on the homeland culture and many other along the same lines. From this understanding, tribal diaspora can be understood as the allegiance shown by the tribal living in a diasporic condition to their original culture and homeland. Stuart Hall, a prominent Caribbean diaspora theorist, confirms that there are two different ways of thinking about cultural identity. The first position defines cultural identity in terms of one shared culture a sort of collective ‘one true self’ hiding inside the many other more superficial or artificially imposed ‘selves’ which people with a shared history and ancestry hold in common.”(Hall 1990:223)

In the light of this first position of cultural identity, it becomes mandatory for those who make an attempt to discover tribal diaspora to find out whether cultural

identities reflect the common historical experiences and cultural codes and provides the tribal living across and through the diaspora with a sense of 'one people and one tribe' underneath the artificial identity. This will secure their sense of themselves. Further on, the second position, in the cultural identity thinking of Stuart Hall stated that:

The second position recognizes that as well as the many points of similarity, there are also critical points of deep and significant difference which constitute 'what we really are' or rather since history has intervened – 'what we have become'... cultural identity in this second sense is a matter of becoming as well as of being. It belongs to the future as much as to the past' (Hill 1990:225).

The second position of the cultural identity as identified by Stuart Hall reminds us that along with the search for that oneness identity it is also required to expand our horizon to that which has changed. When one has lived within the domain of someone else culture and by virtue of constantly rubbing shoulders with the 'other person' this transformation is naturally bound to happen. This second position reminds us that research in tribal diaspora does not necessarily have to be fixed with the recovery of the past but to also discover how much of the homeland culture has been transformed.

If we have to deal with a medium like films which are capable of turning cultural content into the filmic content, this medium must explore both these cultural identities of the tribal diaspora through its cinematic expression. It must incorporate narratives concerning the collective memory of the homeland like how much of the past is wanted to be retained and at the same time balance that out with cultural transformations. Only then will we be able to gather a sense of the ways in which the tribal people and the tribal experiences are being positioned and subjected to in a new land. The cinematic representation must try not to stray away from this in trying to express and capture the tribal diaspora.

THE KHASI DIASPORA IN KOLKATA

Khasi Diaspora refers to the dispersion of the Khasis outside of Meghalaya. In terms of research and investigations there is very insignificant amount of work done in this field. Currently the people of the Khasi hills are dispersed all over the globe. According to an article which appeared in the Shillong Times on June 27th 2012:

The Khasi, Jaintia and Garo people of Meghalaya are known to be widely spread out. Of the three tribes, however, the Khasis are the most adventurous having ventured out literally to the ends of the earth. You are likely to find a Khasi in Norway, Rwanda and Burundi, in the sunny climes of the Mediterranean, in Australia, the UK and USA. There are several Khasi-Jaintia and Garo families in Bangladesh who are trying to connect with their families and friends across the border. Social networking sites have made it easier for the younger generation to be in touch. Perhaps the biggest Khasi diaspora is well settled in the US. They

have their little meets in the same way that the Assamese in the US have during their big Bihu meets in different cities every year.

There could be several reasons as to why the Khasis chose to leave their homeland. For some it could be the promise of a better life offered by the economic opportunities in the foreign land, for the others it is the ‘pull’ of the new place. It could also be a growing frustration with the social and political situation of Meghalaya. Another common reason is that some left their homeland because of marriage to people from outside. Whatever be the reasons, the fact remains that over the years more and more Khasis have left their home lands and settled outside.

With a distance of just 1117 km between Shillong, the capital of Meghalaya, and Kolkata, the first batch of the Khasis who have settled in this place can be traced back to forty years ago. According to Josephine Marbaniang, who have settled there for 15 yrs, it is safe to conclude that currently there are about 25,000 Khasis spread all over Kolkata and the main reason for the Khasi settlement here could be the promise of economic stability.

Having established that there is a Khasi Diaspora in Kolkata, the questions that often arise are thus:

- How does the Khasis relate to themselves in the diaspora?
- Do they hold on to their cultural identity and proud to be a Khasi?
- If their identity is still intact, then can we search for transformations or cultural mixes?
- What happens when they meet other Khasis from their homeland?

A humble attempt to answer such questions can be in the form of analysing the Khasi film Meshuwa and Melody . As reported in the Shillong Times on Dec 19, 2012:

Meshuwa and Melody is a movie falling in the genre of Romantic comedy with clever dialogues keeping the audience captured throughout the length of the film. A well crafted script with an intriguing narrative. The story revolves around two central characters who get to know each other in a unique setting which in itself is the basis of the story. The pace of the film is remarkable and leaves audience wanting for more with most staying back till the last set of credits had rolled on against.

There are many ways of reading a film like this one but the current study will focus itself only in the search for pointers which will give us an idea into the current cultural state of the Khasis in the diaspora.

MESHUWA & MELODY: REFLECTOR OF KHASI DIASPORA IN KOLKATA

Over forty years after the first batch of the Khasis left for Kolkata, their representation on the silver screen demands applause and critical attention. Their representations in the film Meshuwa and Melody pose particular question with regard to their existence in the midst of the dominant Bengali culture. It should make them think about whom they are and what they have become. How familiar and unfamiliar are they about their homeland and how should they explain themselves to other Khasis whom have never left this place.

Pradip Kurbah's Meshuwa and Melody is a film that prominently features a girl who was raised in Kolkata and came back to Shillong for the first time to meet the man whom her mother has chosen for her to marry. Even if it is only for a day, Melody's journey to Shillong captures, in spirit that sense of her cultural encounter with her identity of being a Khasi, her cultural conflicts between who she is and who she supposedly is, her frustrations and joy in her homeland, her interactions with Meshuwa, who is mad with his love for Shillong, whom she meets on the streets and was stuck with him till the end of the film. The film follows a very unoriginal but interesting treatment wherein for almost two hours the audience are shown only the conversations of these two characters in various settings and moods. Few minor characters are introduced to us but they are clearly left in the background of the film. However we do not mind seeing these two characters who are dressed in one set of costume simply because the dialogues between them are witty, insightful and sometimes funny enough to sustain us till the last frame of the film.

The film opens with car shots from different angles to indicate to the audience that a physical journey is taking place. This is quite interesting because figuratively this film is about the travelling of the mind from one cultural set up to another. On a different level it is about Melody's journey back to Shillong for a day. Though Melody's intention was to come and meet face to face with the man who has accepted her mother's marriage proposal to her, yet Melody encountered much more than the man who is willing to marry her on the basis of simply seeing her photograph. When she got down from the car she saw a group of boys who were playing Cricket, she spoke to one of them and immediately asked for direction to a particular house. That boy was Meshuwa.

By using Stuart Hall's position of cultural identity, we discover that Melody is a girl who was brought up in Kolkata and can speak fluent Bengali. This tell us that to a certain extend she is quite comfortable with her adopted culture and for someone as such, it is but natural to initially uses the Kolkata yardstick to measure Shillong and its people. Therefore she accuses Meshuwa in a very condescending tone, with comments like "Phi ki nong Shillong phi im ha kawei pat ka pyrthei" (you people of Shillong lives in a different world altogether). At this point one would think that there is no more

“Khasiness” inside her, for this is a girl who is clearly having problems with whatever that is related to Shillong. Apparently she is all out to rebel against her own cultural identity. That is why when Meshuwa couldn’t read the words of the address of the house which she was searching and complained about it. Her defence was that it was not because of her poor handwriting but the complexity of the names this side. She simply couldn’t relate to the name Sngi Thiang Villa.

Further on, we also found out that this is a girl who is used to the consumerism side of Kolkata city. After declaring Kolkata as “her city” she mockingly asked Meshuwa, “what’s new in Shillong?” For a girl who has come for the first time, it is quite a paradoxical question to be looking for the new when she has not even seen the old. When she asked Meshuwa “is there a coffee shop in Shillong?” we immediately understood her question for by ‘new’ here she meant the ‘new’ in Kolkata. It was also revealed to us that Melody is very careful with money matters, a trait perhaps she has picked up while growing up in the midst of the Bengali culture. While in a coffee shop which is clearly not in a Coffee café day or Barista café of the big cities, Meshuwa ordered chicken chow and sandwich and two coffees. When the food arrived she refused to eat the chow which has become a strong symbol of the urban Shillong and decided to sip only the coffee and nibbled on the ginger cookies that she carried with her. This is again her condescending attitude to whatever is Shillong. At the time of payment she logically refused to pay for all the food that she didn’t take and asked the waiter for the cost of one cup of coffee for that is all that she is going to pay. Meshuwa was in a fix for he had no money with him. When he sheepishly explained his plight, she then decided to pay for all the food provided he pay her back later but not before he had to pawn his expensive looking watch. It is also quite interesting to notice in the film that this Khasi girl who was brought up in Kolkata is not idealistic but very practical about life. She was not shy at all about modern issues like homosexuality which is still under wraps in a place like Shillong. When Meshuwa was talking and shaking his body in a peculiar manner as he talks, she boldly asked him “are you gay?” This question stunned Meshuwa for a while for he clearly did not expect it from a girl. The idea of this point is not in trying to say that Melody’s take on sexuality is because of her upbringing in a city like Kolkata but just so we get to know her better.

In the film, Meshuwa’s mission is to make Melody mad as he is about Shillong and perhaps if he succeeded to make Melody fall in love with Shillong then she can naturally fall in love with her people or better still for him, with her men. Therefore in his interaction with her Meshuwa made all kinds of attempt to make Melody see the Shillong that he is in love with. He entices her with Shillong’s pineapples, takes her in his car to all the picturesque locations, he tempts her with the organic possibilities of Smit, the capital of Hima Khyrim. This attempt of Meshuwa finally showed results for the rebellious city girl in Melody was subdued and slowly she began to show interest in her homeland which is Shillong.

From a different perspective we can say that her one true self which is unconsciously hiding behind the “artificially imposed self” started to emerge. It all began when she asked Meshuwa about the Sacred Grove, a strong symbol of the Khasi way of life. Of course this filmic transformation did not come with a bang for instead of asking “where is the ‘law kyntang’ she said “where is the ‘law lyntang’. A justified mistake keeping in view that she had to struggle with the language but what is admirable is that she can still speak it even after living in a foreign land for long. This shows that unconsciously she longs to cling on and know more about her culture and like she confessed to Meshuwa, her mother had told her stories about the sacred groves and now she want to see it. This is further confirmed, in the film, that when she saw the grove for the first time, her reaction was that of total joy and happiness of a child. She was in awe of what she saw before her. Her face literally lit up and all her initial disapproval, frustrations and ‘city-ness’ nature seem to have melted down by the mere sight of the sacredness of the grove. This is enough to tell us that deep inside her, her longing to be part of her homeland culture is strong and perhaps this explains the fact that though she grew up in a culture which practice arrange marriage her mind completely disagree with the idea for among the Khasi, love marriage is part of the culture. This is what drove her to travel all the way to meet this man whom her mother had fixed up with her before she decided to marry him.

When her mind had started with the journey of self discovery and the unconscious has become the conscious there is no turning back. Therefore we are no longer surprise that from the grove her next conscious desire was to visit the iewduh, one of the biggest local market in Shillong which is also a powerful cultural symbol landmark. Here Meshuwa bought traditional Khasi food of Jadoh, Doh thad and tungrymbai (rice meat, dried meat and fermented beans chutney) where he took her to another beautiful open space to enjoy the picnic. It is very interesting to note that after her body consumed the Khasi food her mind also started to consume the idea of her Khasi identity. She no longer resent Meshuwa’s presence and started to communicate to him and even embrace his friendship towards her to the extent that she keenly listen to Meshuwa when he told her about his former girlfriend, a village girl who died in an accident and whose name was Smoi. Earlier a more common Khasi name of Sngi thiang is a huge problem with her but an unusual and meaningless name like Smoi is alright. Yes, she laughed at the sound of the name but she didn’t hate it.

Later as the film progresses we were shown this constant battle between Melody’s “one true self” and “artificially imposed self”. For example on the question of faith she confidently told Meshuwa and without any sense of shame that she believe in her own self yet when she saw a church she kneeled down and prayed with full conviction of the existence of a supreme being. In this struggle her one true self succeeded and manifest itself by her marriage to Meshuwa a full fledged Khasi who in his own words claimed that he is ‘made in Shillong’.

CONCLUSION

This film is a cultural compass in its own right for it invites and provides thoughts, reflections and directions for future research. For example

- What new non tribal experience will affect the second and third generation of those who live in the Khasi Diaspora in West Bengal or any part of the world?
- Where do we find instances of Khasi marrying outside their ethnic community in west Bengal?
- How are these marriages viewed by both the Khasis and the Bengalis?
- What are the identity challenges their mixed-race children faces?
- What are the gender issues and challenges that a woman in the Khasi Diaspora faces and has to overcome?

The cinematic depiction of this profound cultural discovery as imagined by the film maker in Meshuwa and Melody is worth appreciating for it subtly recreates that never ending desire of returning to the original home. Yet this return to the homeland can never be fully fulfilled nor requited. It is always elusive and that is why it has to come to pass, through the symbolic, the re-presentations, the re- creations, the myths, the legends and so on and so forth. All these are thus the raw materials on which the narratives of films depend on. Through a cinematic representation like this one, the intention was not to hold up cinema as a mirror to reflect which exists but to allow the imagination to speak out for the real.

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Dan Seng Lawn*

ABSTRACT

History has shown us that it is a natural tendency that whenever a new power emerges it shakes the order of settled world order. The rise of Germany challenged the hegemony of Great Britain and the result was the two world wars. The colossal destruction of lives had been effable. If statesmen of both sides would have known the tragic consequences of their decisions to go for wars they would have sought lesser coercive ways of solving their differences. That was our recent past. Today China is rising in a marvelous speed. Economically, it is just a hand's reach to become the economic superpower in terms of GDP; militarily, it becomes more assertive; politically, it is demanding its historical status as a sole hegemony in Asia and given time world's super power¹. Nevertheless, China will have to play a tough game. There are other smart fellows around the bloc: Japan, Russia, South Korea and Taiwan in the east and north; ASEAN and India in the South East and South Asia. After all it would be a balance of power game. Yet, none of these potential players to bridle China's rise are equal to China in terms of size and demography except India. Why India? Because this country has a sense of historical or civilisational competitiveness to China empowered with its demographic strength and control over Indian Ocean. In this backdrop, I would explore how Burma will come to the pivot for the inevitable rivalry between the two Asian heavy weights.

Keywords: Peace, Stability, Communism, Factionalism, Kachin, Thein Sein

HISTORICAL ASPECTS

This world is not tranquil, and a storm — the wind and rain — are coming. And at the approach of the rain and wind the swallows are busy.

Mao Tse Tung (p423, On China by Henry Kissinger)

*What is this India, apart from her physical and geographical aspects? What did she represent in the past? What gave strength to her then?.....Does she represent anything vital now, apart from being the home of a vast number of human beings? How does she fit into the modern world? **Jawaharlal Nehru (p49, The Discovery of India)***

Juxtaposing China and India's roles on Burma through history shows us that China was more active in imposing its will on Burma than India. Pyu kingdom was

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destroyed by Nanchao of North Western China in the first part quarter of 9th century AD. Pagan dynasty was destroyed by Ku Blai Khan in 1287 AD. On the other hand India was not political, more of religious and cultural. Nevertheless, Burma could serve well as a buffer state between the two partly due to its geographical barriers. Yet, time has changed now. Modern communication system has made them closer in a remarkable intimacy. In other words, the two Civilisations have met directly to each other after the decline of British colonial rule. What was the result? Tibet has been subdued by the Red China in 1959. India responded it by granting political asylum to the Tibetan leader Dalai Lama. Consequently, in 1962 Sino-Indo war broke out. Mao preferred to call it 'two and a half war'. India's foreign policy has turned to the opposite direction. Now India perceived China as its potential threat for its own existence. Nehru's Indo-Chini bhai bhai era was over now once and for all.

During this period while giving warm welcome to premier Zhou En Lai Burma condemned Chinese aggression in UNO. It maintained its neutral role. Yet, during the Cultural Revolution period there broke out anti-Chinese riot in Burma and Sino-Burma relation gradually deteriorated. General Ne Win's government did not take any action while the mob attacked Chinese public schools, temples, shops and any Chinese they saw on the road. China responded by sending its Communist cadres to attack Burmese army. Yet, during Deng's era saw no more exportation of revolution abroad. Its principal aim became economic growth, not ideology, to increase Chinese influence. China started interested in Burma's rich natural resources for its economic growth. Thus, it was in Chinese national interest to normalize and improve relation with Ne Win's socialist government. Consequently, Deng allowed the Burmese Communist Party to disintegrate into small fractions based on ethnic identities. Thus, a normal Sino-Burma relation resumed. The year 1988 saw the greatest student uprising since Independence in Burma. It shook the very foundation of Ne Win's revolutionary council government. The Military Government thus responded by brutalizing the peaceful protesters. The international communities, especially western countries and India, condemned this act of gross domestic human rights violation. China responded it in an opposite attitude and took the advantage for its economic gain. China gave diplomatic protection and economic aids to the infamous military government and thus, strengthened its tie with the country. On the other hand, India and the west whole heartedly supported the opposition leader Daw Aung San Su Kyi.

The year 1991 saw the collapse of Berlin Wall and so was the collapse of Soviet bloc and its ideology. Thus, a new order came into being in the international system. Now, USA became the super power. With the disintegration of its member states Soviet Union was no longer a worthy rival for USA. Though Russia succeeded erstwhile Soviet Union's place it is no match for USA in global game. China sees it as its golden opportunity to gain its historical status as a world super power. Thus, economic growth is its indispensable precondition for the dream. Another reason is that China has to

remedy the huge income gap between coastal china and hinterland china. Thus, it has to have a sea outlet in the south to export its goods and import energy from Middle East and African countries. Too much reliance on the pacific sea lane is dangerous on the long run. Thus, Burma becomes a linchpin for its energy security and super power dream. China is in desperate need to have a sea outlet in Indian Ocean. Thus, this ambition makes its neighbours uneasy, especially India. That would possibly mean Burma fall totally under China's influence. India interprets it as China's ambition to encircle her. Thus, it is not in the interest of India to let it happen. India prefers Burma to be a buffer state between her and China whereas China occasionally broke it. These events are pointing that there is coming an inexorable rivalry between India and China over the dominance of Indian Ocean based on their national interests, security, trade and strategic advantage.

BURMA'S ASPECT

How does Burma access to it? How does Burma approach to it? Ever since its inception Burma has been a great admirer of world peace and stability of South East Asia. Thus, during the cold war era it maintained its neutrality. The question, then, here is can Burma still play its neutral role? Aung San Su Kyi expressively stressed that she wants Burma to be a zone of corporation between its neighbours in her interview with Charlie Rose in 2012. Before it we still need to look some important domestic factors which are in need of greater attention in deciding whether Burma would be able to pursue an independent foreign policy.

BURMESE POLITICAL CULTURE: A HINDARANCE FOR DEMOCRATIC TRANSACTION

No doubt Burma is today on the road to democratization. Thus, it is important to look into whether Burmese political culture will be congruent with democratic values. According to a famous scholar Dr. Maung Maung Gyi, in his famous book —Burmese Political Values: The Socio-Political Roots of Authoritarianism— mentions distinctive politico-socio values of Burma as follow:

1. Apolitical culture
2. Radical Trend
3. Normative nature
4. Weak Trust
5. Personal worshipping or Hero worshipping

Generally, the Burmese people are not interested in Politics and thus, usually, do not participate in political affairs. If they are to participate again they know only the radical method. The culture of compromised negotiation is almost lacking. The general thinking of the public is also normative in nature. Buddhism means pure Buddhism;

Communism means pure communism; socialism means pure socialism and democracy means pure democracy for them. Nothing less than the touchstone is acceptable. In addition to that, trust among individuals, groups, ethnic nationalities and rulers and subjects, is evanescent. In political matter, the culture of self-initiative is very poor. Usually, people look up to their leaders and follow them blindly. In short, participant political culture is lacking. That paved the way for strong leaders to emerge and which further led to the emergence of factionalism.

FACTIONALISM BASED ON ETHNIC LINE

Apart from party factionalism, factionalism based on ethnic line is the worst of all and the most dangerous of all. The result is a protracted civil war since 3 months after Independence. This is the most challenging political problem to be solved by any successive governments. How does the government come into term with different ethnic nationalities? This is the most serious problem. If not properly address this can be the single most force which can lead Burma into back sliding from the path of democratization. Since 2011 a civil war resumes in Kachin states and some degree of armed clashes are rampant in Shan state. Round and round of negotiations have been done between President Thein Sein's representatives and KIO² representatives. On government side cease-fire agreement precedes over ethnic nationalities rights and on the side of KIO ethnic nationalities' rights precede cease-fire agreement. Thus, no tangible solution can be reached. At present the United Nationalities' Federal Council has officially declared, after the ethnic nationalities conference³ conducted from July 29 to 1st August, as follow:

1. To form the present Union of Burma/Myanmar into a federal Union
2. To practice federal democracy in this federal Union
3. To form federal union defense forces that will defend the federal Union from external enemies
4. The current 2008 constitution practiced by U Thein Sein's Government is not accepted, as it is devoid of democratic essence and not in accordance with principles of federalism. A new constitution based on genuine principles of federalism will be drafted and promoted for practice.

The essence of this declaration can be interpolated as a warning from the ethnic nationalities that democratization process must be based on equality and self-determination, i.e, federalism; if not they will shun from participation and thereby cast a serious doubt on the legitimacy of Thein Sein's government. This is the dynamic of Burmese politics.

Many a quality time has been passed. Many more times seem to be passing. Since Independence era, Burma committed two repetitive political mistakes, i.e, dogmatism and factionalism based on charismatic leaders, party, ethnicity and religion.

Will Burma be able to overcome these difficulties? It will depend on the sincerity of statesmen and their in-depth understanding of the problems. Crowning above all the factors, overall Burmese political culture is in need of change. The current politico-socio values are not congruent with democratic values and do not encourage democracy to grow.

Right now Burma has not even gained genuine electoral democracy since some parts of the country could not conduct election. To reach to the status of liberal democracy Burma has a long way to travel and face many challenges. The most serious of all the challenges will likely to be internal ones. Whether, thus, Burma will be able to assert an independent foreign policy will depend on its ability to solve its internal stability problems, especially of ethnic nationalities that hold arms. Solving these problems by using military-might will not be a sustainable solution since most of the rebel groups have their strongholds on Sino-Burmese borders. In addition to that, while China is arming the government army with medium and some degree of high-tech arms, the rebel groups are armed by China small and medium arms. Thus, the settlement should be reached on the basic of negotiations and constitutional methods.

EPILOGUE

There is no blinking at the fact that Burma can be and should be a fulcrum of Indo-Sino strategic calculation. However, Burma has its own internal problems which cast a serious doubt to its potential to fulfill this role. Burma has to play a neutral role to sustain regional peace and stability. If statesmen of Burma cannot solve its serious internal problems there is a high chance that instead of becoming a zone of corporation it can become a zone of regional rivalry. If it will become so it will be in no one's interest for the long run. Thus, Burma's external political goal is closely interwoven with its internal political solutions. Democratic, stable and prosperous Burma will be the best contribution for maintaining peace and stability in South East and South Asia in the event of two rising Asian Giants.

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Endnotes

¹ Kachin Independence Organisation is a founding member of United Nationalities Federal Council which aims to form Union of Burma into a Federal Union

²This conference was attended by representatives from 4 political parties of ethnic nationalities, civil organizations and 18 armed groups.

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MEDIA AND GENDER CONSTRUCTION: A CONTENT ANALYSIS ON REPRESENTATION OF FEMALE IMAGES IN THE ANIMATED CARTOON SHOW “CHHOTA BHEEM”

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ABSTRACT

The process of socialization begins as soon as the child is born. As parents start to nurture the child and weave their expectations, hopes towards the child, they also start forming and rather practicing the popular trends of highlighting the biological differences initially through physical attributes in terms of clothing, choice of colours, toys etc. As the child matures the popular notion of gender is fed in to the child thus determining what toys to play with, how to dress and more importantly how to behave, also at times undermining and discarding ,what otherwise should qualify as a natural behaviour out of curiosity as “unusual and not to be done any more”. This trend undoubtedly forms the building block of gender classification and gender divide in years to follow. While the liberalization policy and the entry of FDI have created more work avenues and career prospects, it has also resulted in more nuclear families and it is not unusual to find families with both parents working. In such scenarios media be it TV, DVD players or Video games takes place of the baby sitter entertaining the kids and engaging them. The arrays of cartoon shows on TV catering to the young minds still holds close to the stereotypical notions of gender classification and gender difference and a careful analysis of it will be first step towards gender sensitization.

Keywords: Socialization, Gender Classification, Women Status, Social Roles

INTRODUCTION

“One is not born a woman, but becomes one” Simone de Beauvoir

One of the notable changes in our social environment in the 20th and 21st centuries has been the saturation of our culture and daily lives by the mass media. In this new environment radio, television, movies, videos, video games, cell phones, and computer networks have become one of the main agents of socialization. Bandura (1969, cited in Slater and Bremner 2011: 61) suggests that children learn how to behave by imitating the actions of others, and that they are more likely to copy the behaviour of

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individuals who are of the same sex because they reaffirm what behaviour is appropriate for that particular gender (Courtney and Whipple 1983, cited in Smith 1993: 324). According to Simone de Beauvoir in her feminist classic “The Second Sex” states that “distinction between men and women are more social than natural”. Psychologist Lawrence Kohlberg (1969) perceives gender identity to be constructed within the early stages of childhood. It is through mass media messages that showcase masculine and feminine roles as the “norm” for society. Children at a very young age have a strong desire to fit in and feel accepted amongst their peers. Media images and mass messages in advertisements and other children programmes aid children in constructing identity by presenting gender roles as the “norm”. Therefore, it is important to examine whether gender stereotypes are portrayed in the media as it could potentially impact the way children behave and develop (Maher and Childs 2003: 71).

BACKGROUND: CHILDREN’S TELEVISION IN INDIA

According to Ernst & Young’s newsletter Newsreel published in 2012, the cartoons and animation genre is the most popular and accounted for 85 per cent of TV viewership ratings (TVR) in the genre in 2011. Children’s programming comprised 12 per cent of the market and feature films 2 per cent of the total TVR in 2011. The children’s entertainment genre has evolved rapidly in the last few years. Once Cartoon Network was the only channel for children in India, but the number of channels dedicated to them has been increasing in the past few years with the launch of new channels such as Nick, Hungama, Pogo, Spacetoon and Khushi TV by domestic and foreign players. CBeebies, launched by BBC in 2010, focuses exclusively on children below the age of six years. The year 2011 also saw the entrance of new channels such as Sonic, catering to the age group of 10–17 years, as well as the growth of content in regional languages.

As 76 per cent of content in the children’s genre was in English in 2011, of late, the demand for content in Hindi and regional languages has increased significantly. The key trends emerging on Children TV in India are increased interactivity through mobile phones, websites and social media, seasonality of viewership and growth of merchandising. As the viewership for children’s TV is rising, there are also challenges like restrictions on content, high cost of content, viewership ad revenue gap and short attention span.

A random analysis of top three children’s TV channel in India, reveal interesting facts about the gender equation. Cartoon Network India, Disney India and Pogo Channel are all 24 hours channel broadcasting different kinds of programmes such as live action series, original animated series, acquired animated series, short series and films for children of different age groups.

It is generally observed that irrespective of the fact whether it is a live action series, original or acquired animated series, short series or films, in all the top three Indian children's TV channels, male emerges as the main character who leads the plot. It cannot be doubted that children's television provides kids with stories, with materials for their fantasy and offers images about the world. In this process television also gives them an idea of what it means to be a girl or boy, a woman and a man. Though the daily experiences in their immediate social environment which influence their world view, the media and particularly the leading medium television, offer provide them important additional images and perspectives. Children deeply incorporate these images into their inner pictures, especially where the representation of gender is concerned (Götzet et al. 2005). Given the influence that children's TV channels has in the minds of children, this paper basically tries to analyse the popular Hindi animated cartoon programme Chhota Bheem from the points of view of its portrayal of various male and female characters in it.

AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

- To study the portrayal of male and female characters in the animated cartoon programme Chhota Bheem.
- To analyse the role of its male and female characters.
- To study the gender stereotype, if any, in the programme.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

A number of researches have been conducted to study the role of males and females in TV contents meant for children and whether there are gender stereotypes in children's programmes.

In the world's largest quantitative media analysis of children's TV, the main characters of fictional programmes in 24 countries were coded. The results show a clear under- representation and stereotyped depiction of female characters worldwide. There are more than twice as many male characters than female characters. In clearly constructed programmes (cartoons, shows with animals) the proportion of females is lower. (Götz, Hofmann, Brosius, C. Carter, K. Chan, et al. 21/2008/E: 4)

In another series of study conducted by the Geena Davis Institute on Gender in Media on gender representation in children's films and television reveal that female characters are significantly outnumbered by male characters, and when female characters do appear on screen, they are often presented in gender stereotypical ways (Smith and Cook 2008).

Children's television is even more male-dominated than prime-time American television, which has been found to have a distribution of 40 percent female and 60 percent male characters (Signorielli 1997).

Previous research, has found that children's television advertisements portray gender differences in behavioral patterns (Smith 1993:323). Therefore, it is important to examine whether gender stereotypes still exist in the animated programmes meant for children on Indian TV. Through the use of content analysis, this research aims to study the portrayal of male and female characters, find out the role of male and female in the plot and whether there is any gender stereotype in the animated cartoon programs meant for kids on Indian TV.

METHODOLOGY

In order to try and provide answers to these proposed questions, a content analysis was carried out on the most popular children's animated programme on Indian TV. Content analysis is a quantitative research method (Neuendorf 2002: 1). Positivists favor quantitative research methods because they collect numerical data that is useful for hypothesis testing (Christensen, Johnson and Turner, 2011, p.29).

Coding procedures were put into place for the content analysis to enhance reliability. They consisted of clear coding rules and procedures. It is important to write explicit rules for content analysis as it reduces any subjective judgments in the recording process (Krippendorff, 2004, p.126). But, researcher bias cannot be completely excluded because the researcher's knowledge always affects their judgments (Clark-Carter, 2010, p.102).

Following the coding procedures also makes it easier to quantify the data because it keeps the recordings consistent (Clark-Carter, 2010, p.9). This will help to make the findings more replicable because it increases the chance of researchers getting the same results at different points in time (Krippendorff, 2004, p.18).

SAMPLE

The sample chosen for this study is "Chhota Bheem" aired on POGO TV since 2008. The researcher has chosen "Chhota Bheem" as the sample for study because of its high TRP ratings. "Chhota Bheem" is indeed the most popular animated children's show in 2011-2012 and 2012- 2013. According to NASSCOM, afaqs.com and India times, in week 18 of 2013 (April 28-May 4), Pogo registered 183 GRPs (4-14, all C&S homes), the highest ratings for a kids' channel since 2006. According to the Ormax popularity report for 2011 and 2012, Chhota Bheem has proved to be the most popular kids' character in India. Today, the show is aired in Indonesia, Sri Lanka, Malaysia,

Singapore and Mauritius too. Because of its rising popularity in the subcontinent, on 1st Feb 2014 Chhota Bheem and the Throne of Bali premiered first time on US Television. Pogo airs Chhota Bheem for an average of eight hours per day. And being the most popular show “Chhota Bheem” finds itself in the kids’ prime time i.e. 2pm- 6pm.

Due to the limitation of the study, the researcher has picked up randomly one hour broadcast time of “Chhota Bheem” each day telecasted during the prime time i.e. between 2pm- 5pm spread over a week’s time i.e. from 19th January – 25th January 2014 for the study. A total of 26 episodes of time duration ranging from 11-45 minutes are part of the study. The researcher has viewed a total of 455 Minutes i.e. a total of 26 episodes of “Chhota Bheem” spread over a week’s time.

Keeping in mind the aims and the objectives of the study, the researcher among the various aspects of the content has taken the following items for detail analysis and interpretation.

1. Physical appearance of the main characters and all other important characters appearing in the scene
2. Personality, attributes and identity assigned to the main characters
3. Setting: is there any kind of distinction in determining the setting of the male and the female characters appearing in various scenes
4. Issues/ problems: what kind of issues or problems are the main characters challenged with, are they male/ female centric or are general social issues
5. Who initiate the problems- male /female i.e. who plays the role of antagonist?
6. Solution: who brings the solution- male/ female, and what role each one plays in solving the plot problem/ issue
7. How many times the female characters appears in the scene vis –a vis male
8. How much is the distribution of dialogue to the male and female characters in the scene

CHHOTA BHEEM- A BRIEF PROFILE:

Chhota Bheem is an Indian children's 2D animation series, focusing on the adventures of a 9 year old boy named Bheem in the fictional city of Dholakpur. The series was launched in 2009. As of 2012 it has aired over 120 episodes.

The protagonist of the series, the extremely strong Bheem lives in a fictional town called Dholakpur set in rural India. The series revolves around Bheem, a nine-year-old boy, who is brave, strong and intelligent. Bheem's rival is Kalia Pahelwan, a jealous eleven -year-old bully, who is envious of Bheem's popularity. Kalia, along with his sidekicks Dholu and Bholu, always plots to embarrass and defeat Bheem but never succeeds. The story revolves around Bheem and his friends and their rivalry with Kalia

and his friends. All the children of Dholakpur look up to Bheem, as he solves everyone's problems. He also defeated some enemies in and around Dholakpur like the evil demon Kirmada, Kichak & Mangal Singh. Bheem earns the trust of Dholakpur and Raja Indravarma and is believed to marry Princess Indumati in the future. The stories of Bheem project him as a hero and future heir to Dholakpur's throne. He saves Dholakpur and the world by having a laddoo with a cocktail of courage and gravity defying stunts.

MAIN CHARACTERS IN CHHOTA BHEEM

Bheem is an adventurous and fun-loving nine-year-old who is gifted with extraordinary strength. This power is a boon for Dholakpur, Bheem's village, which is constantly under threat. This little kid has a BIG heart and he always uses his strength to help those who are wronged or needy. Bheem loves food and has a special weakness for laddoos, which in fact, give him a surge of energy and make him even stronger than he is.

Chutki is a seven-year-old girl, who is simple, graceful and intelligent. She is Bheem's closest friend, and she matches Bheem's "brawn" with her "brain". This makes her Bheem's ever-present assistant on all their fabulous adventures. Chutki's no ordinary girl-for while she's responsible about her household chores and gentle towards all creatures of the forest, she is ruff 'n' tough too. She simply loves playing with the boys! She has a soft spot for Bheem and is always making his favourite food items for him! She even helps him steal laddoos from her mother's sweet shop.

Kalia or Kalia Pehalwan, is an eleven year old bully. He is bulky, and strong. He is jealous of Bheem's popularity and strength and always tries to make Bheem look bad and tries to land him in trouble. He picks on children younger and weaker than him to prove he is strong. All the children fear him and Kalia is very proud of that! Kalia has two silly followers, twins - Dholu and Bholu, who sometimes help him in his plans and at other times completely, abandon him!

Raju is a cute and courageous four-year-old, who totally hero worships Bheem. Raju's size belies his courage, which he gets from his father, the Senapati of the king's army. When his rivals, the bumbling Dholu and Bholu, pick on him, Raju can hold his ground; and that's not all! His loyalty to Bheem also makes him take on the big, burly Kalia Pehalwan. Raju loves playing war games, especially one where Bheem is the 'Raja' and he is the 'Senapati' and dreams of becoming the commander of the King's army someday.

Jaggu's specialty is that he is a talking monkey. He is Bheem's adoring pet and close friend. Jaggu has his own special way of solving problems, using tricks and his amazing sense of humor! Jaggu and Bheem always have fun together, be it exploring

forests or helping people with their chores. From him, Bheem learns crazy but useful activities like swinging from trees. Whenever they are really hungry, it's Jaggu who assists Bheem in stealing laddoos. He also loves playing tricks on Dholu, Bholu and Kalia. All the children adore Jaggu because he always entertains them and makes them laugh.

Dholu and Bholu are the cowardly followers of Kalia Pahelwan. They are identical twins who dress and behave alike. Though they are not strong themselves, they bask in Kalia's strength and are arrogant with the other kids. They pick on younger children like Raju, but fear Bheem very much. Even though they are lazy and like to avoid chores, Kalia orders them to do his share of work. Dholu and Bholu are extremely dumb and keep getting into awfully silly situations. Occasionally, they allow themselves to be bribed by Bheem and Chutki and are therefore not always loyal to Kalia.

Pehelwan Kichak is a wrestler from Pehelwanpur. He is later introduced in the series. He is jealous of Bheem, since Bheem is more popular than he is. But, he is defeated in all the occasions when he challenged Bheem for a bull race, cricket match, in a contest for champions, in a hockey match, in a football match and in many other situations. He has a couple of friends & sidekicks like Chipru, Manna, Motu & Birju etc. who aids him but also gets the punishment with him. He then was noticed helping and advising a participant in the episode "Girls versus Girls", but later escaped. Unsurprisingly, he was seen helping Bheem in the movie Bheem vs Aliens."

Rajkumari Indumati is the princess of Dholakpur. She is shown to be nice and caring. She also won the trophy along with Chutki in the episode "Girls VS Girls".

Raja Indravarma is the King of Dholakpur. He is the father of Indumati. Though himself a valiant warrior, he mostly relies on Bheem for any crisis in the kingdom. He is also shown to be thoughtful on every occasion. He is a Hockey player and also played an important role in Hockey match by making Bheem win. His enemy was Raja Chandravarma. He is 35 years old, according to the movie 'Chhota Bheem: The Rise of Kirmada'.

Mangal Singh is a daku (dacoit) (parody of Gabbar Singh from Sholay) who used to terrorize Dholakpur when he was free. But he was caught by Bheem when he went to take some plants to cure Indumati (as she was ill) and nabbed him. Soon, he escaped with the help of his followers & kidnapped the princess, but again he was caught by Bheem. In the episode "Old Enemies", he returned and robbed the Treasury but was later caught by Bheem. He then became a small thief in the episode of "Greed".

Tun-Tun Mausi is the mother of Chutki. She owns a laddu shop where she sells laddoos. She stays mostly angry with Bheem as he steals laddoos from her shop. She usually gets angry with Kalia also and hit him with belan.

Behen Shivani is Bheem’s foster sister. She lives in Pehelwanpur and runs a dhaba there named "Shivani ka Dhaba". Her father is imprisoned, and to free him she needs 500 coins. But the pehalwan Dabbu tries to take over the Dhaba. Bheem comes to her rescue and even frees her father from jail.

FINDINGS AND ANALYSIS

Personality Attributes of Male and Female Characters in Chhota Bheem:

From the brief character description provided on the official website of Pogo.tv about the main characters of “Chhota Bheem” and from the study, the following physical appearance, personality attributes and traits are consistently linked with the male and the female characters:

Male	Female
Adventurous	Beautiful
Fun Loving	Fun loving
Strong, and extraordinary strength	Caring
Bully	Graceful
Jealous	Intelligent
Proud, arrogant	Kind and gentle
Lazy	Responsible
Courageous	Helpful
Solves problem	
Thoughtful	

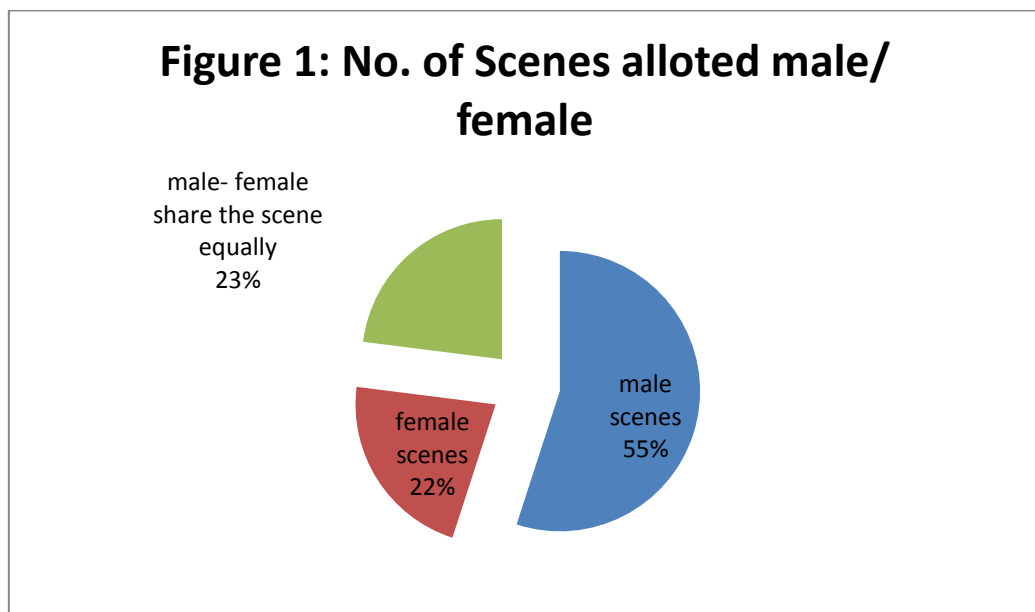
Physical Features of the Characters in Chhota Bheem

While all the main male characters in the series viz. Chhota Bheem, Raju, Kalia, Kichak are top less and dressed either in under wears and dhoti without any piece cloth on top , irrespective of time or place, the female characters Chutki and Indumati are shown well clad top to bottom all the time. Most of the time this physical aspect often goes unnoticed as though male do have license to not to wear, or it’s not a big deal, however its equally unimaginable to perceive the female characters topless like their male counterparts. It’s conscious on part of the show creators to carve a defined personality and identity based on one’s clothing. Both Chutki and Indumati have long hair and their face, make up and especially the flower on Indumati’s hair reminds one of the characters played by Bollywood actors Asha Parekh and Mumtaz in 1970s movies-rosy-cheeked, giggly girls who sole purpose was to support the hero. Chutki is always cheering Bheem from the sidelines, not ever contributing in any significant way to his victory except sighing and twiddling her thumbs, worrying for him, or giving him

her mother's home-made laddus, to complete the old Hindi movie similarity. In all the 26 episodes taken under the study, Chutki has consistently shown her caring nature towards all her friends and especially for Bheem; she would always caution Bheem to be aware before he takes on any antagonist emerging in the plot. Though many a times she gives advices to Bheem and also finds solution to the problems in the plot but she often goes missing from the climax scene, thus diverting all the attention of the viewers to only one character "Chhota Bheem". However Chutki has also exhibited some extraordinary skills that sets her apart from the other girls in the series, though she is gentle and caring but she is rough and tough and loves to play with boys. She loves to take challenges and does not like to limit herself.

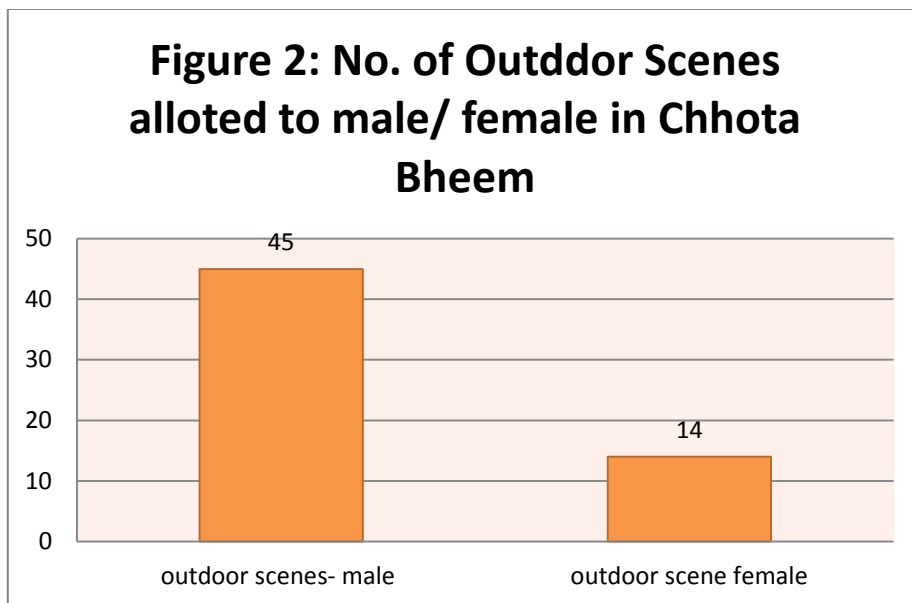
On the other hand Princess Indumati though she seems to be the heiress to the throne of Dholakpur and shares advantageous position sitting next to her father who happens to be the king of Dholakpur is often the target of the enemies of Dholakpur. She can be referred to as damsel in distress as she often gets kidnapped or attacked and Chhota Bheem and friends rush to rescue her. Though she is next to the throne of her father, yet she does not possess any of the aggressive attributes of a ruler, in fact she is a soft spoken, gentle caring girl who instantly gets afraid of cockroaches. In one of the episodes under the study, Indumati has been shown failing miserably at the game of cricket to an extent where she is struggling to hold the bat and becomes a subject of laughter.

Who Dominates the Frame? Male- Female



It is learnt from the figure 1, that the male dominates 55% of the screen space, while female occupy 22% and 23% of the screen space is shared equally by both male and female characters. This data reveals the domination of the portrayal of male characters in the plot compared to that of female characters, thus revealing more traits of male's personality and exposing more male activities. This also offers a bigger platform for the males to showcase their skills and highlight their problems. It is also indicative that female characters are underplayed and their roles are subordinate to their male counterparts thus creating the gender imbalance.

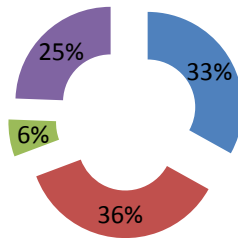
Male- Female Outdoor Appearance Ratio in Chhota Bheem



Though the story of Chhota Bheem is located in a village called Dholakpur and most of the scenes are taken outside in an open location, yet only 14 % of the outdoor scenes are allocated to females whereas 45% of the outdoor scenes are dedicated to male (figure 2). Though time is changing and today women opt for avenues outside the domain of their homes yet this data strengthens the stereotypical notion of men to be venturing out earning for the family while women to be that of a home maker and restrict her to the activities in the arena of the home. The study reveals female to be in the ambit of the home or palace cooking, serving and sleeping while their male counterparts freely moving around experiencing the adventures of the open space.

Figure 3: Conflict/ Issue in the Plot

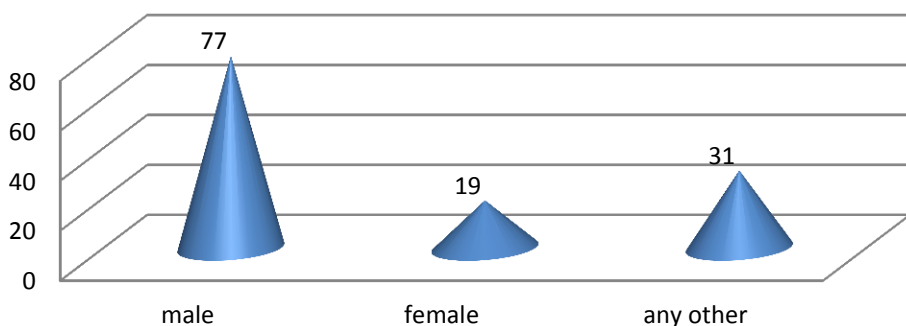
■ male centric ■ female centric ■ object ■ any other



Though Chhota Bheem is a male lead story, however 36% (refer to figure 3) of the conflicts or the problems in the plot are female centric, be it Toon Toon Mausī's Laddoo theft cases, abduction of Princess Indumati or bad Jadugarni's evil plans. Female characters have occupied a prominent space in the plot most often by becoming a hindrance or problem thus challenging the main character to take the lead and rescue. Female do occupy a central position in the plot, but her role is not that of a decision maker or someone who is empowered, provides solution and thinks independently, she is seen victimized. 36% is a clear indicative of the role assigned to female characters of those being in need of help and support, thus empowering and strengthening the male characters further.

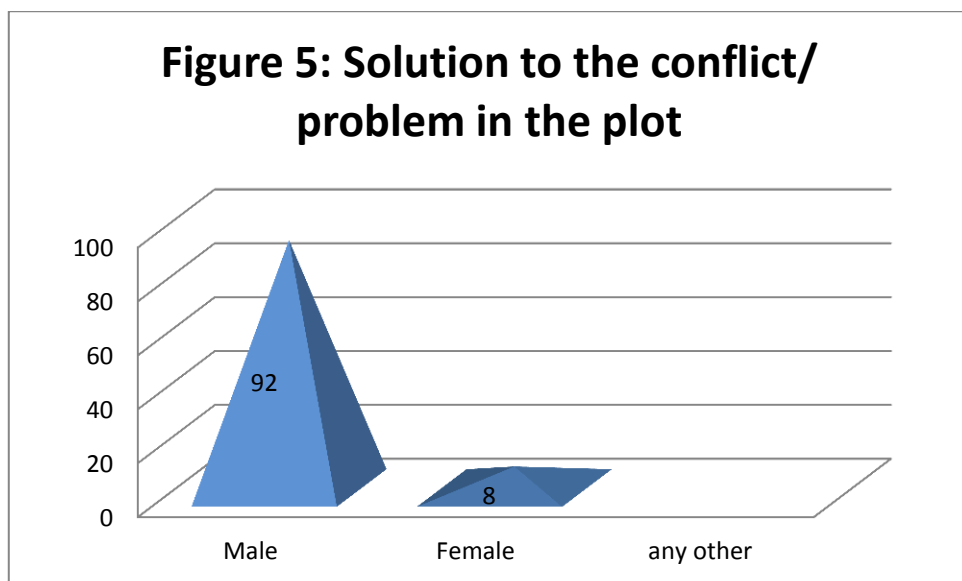
Nature of the Antagonist in Chhota Bheem

Figure 4: Nature of Antagonist in the plot of Chhota Bheem



The figure 4 highlights the nature of the antagonist in the study. 77% of the antagonist or the anti hero in the story is males, while 31% are animals and other creatures and 19% are female characters. Though Chhota Bheem is an animated series for children yet 77% of the antagonists are grown up aged people. They are dacoits, pirates, thieves or poachers. In all the episodes under study, the protagonist of the show has shown some immense strength and power and there have never been an occasion where he has failed no matter how powerful is the antagonist. On occasions when “Chhota Bheem” finds himself getting weak and the opponent seems to take over all he needs is one laddu. The moment his friend cum assistant “Chutki” pops the laddu, he is re energized and ready to take on every one single handedly. In spite of his young age, his victory over many aged antagonist makes him a superior figure among the kids and as a result he also emerges as a young leader to be worshipped and followed by the kids.

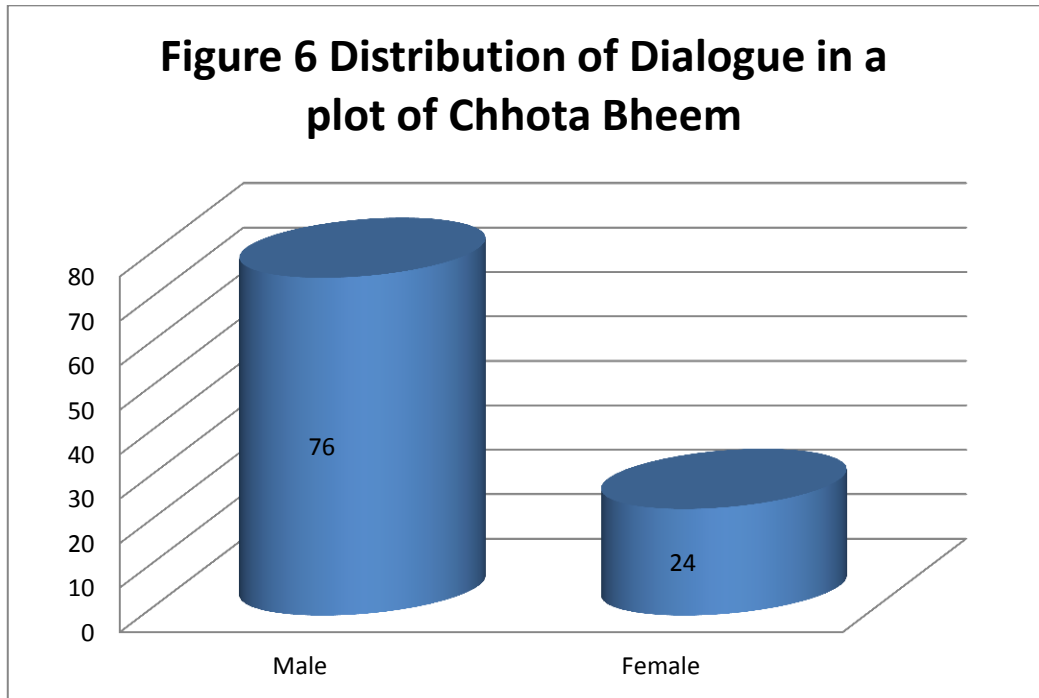
Who Provides Solution in the Plot of Chhota Bheem - Male/ Female?



From the figure 5 it is clear that males bring solution to the problem or end the conflict in the plot in 92% of the cases while female contribute towards the solution of the problem in only 8% of the cases. Chhota Bheem being the protagonist with exceptional strength and power always finds solution to every complication and conflict in the plot. This data indicates that male with their immense physical power and strength can bring a positive change and can lead to happy endings. Social cognitive theory¹ suggests that reinforcements delivered to media characters can function as vicarious incentives to viewers. As such, positive reinforcements can increase the likelihood of learning whereas negative reinforcements can decrease such effects². Therefore; a child viewer watching these programmes may vicariously learn that male with their superior physical ability can bring solution to every problem. The study also

reveals that the main protagonist thrives on aggression and violence to bring solution to the problem. The climax scenes with intense fights and accompanying music and sound effects is not just a retreat for the eye but it also hypes the child watching the scene to empathize and connect with the character. Through the study it has been found that the male gender to often associate with aggression and violence thus subtly passing on the behavior patterns to its audiences as well.

Male- Female: Distribution of Dialogue in the Plot of Chhota Bheem



Not just in terms of screen space (Refer Figure 1) female are underrepresented even in terms of dialogues. (Refer Figure 6). Female are allowed to speak only 24% of content while 76% of the story is told by the male characters. Undoubtedly Dialogue often enables decision making abilities, and expresses oneself clearly. Underrepresentation of females is a clear indicative of female not being able to take any decision or express oneself more openly.

FREQUENTLY APPEARING STEREOTYPES

From the above figures and statistical analyses, certain combinations of features can be shown to be particularly common, such as the examples presented below. They

may illustrate some of the stereotyped depictions that should be avoided in children's TV:

1. What leaders and role models look like?- the study reveals that leaders or role models i.e. the characters that most audiences connect and empathize with are firstly male characters who exhibit exceptional strength and physical ability and female characters who are not only beautiful but a strong support to their male counterparts and are sweet, gentle and kind.
2. What bad guys and girls look like?- the study reveals that the bad guys are either agedly people having deformed body parts like a missing eye or a big mole in the face or big front teeth or they are small aged boys who are overweight and mean. The study also highlights that bad girls are often ugly, with tattered dress, unruly hair, and loud, aggressive and evil sinister laughter.

DISCUSSION

As a whole, the findings of the content analysis suggest that male have larger role to play in animated cartoon programme "Chhota Bheem" for children on Indian TV than the female. The study reveals the domination of male as lead characters in the majority of programmes telecasted in the top three children's TV channel in India thereby under representing females and even categorizing them into supporting and subordinate roles. This supports previous research, such as (Götz, Hofmann, Brosius, C. Carter, K. Chan, et al. 21/2008/E: 4) There are more than twice as many male characters than female characters. In clearly constructed programmes (cartoons, shows with animals) the proportion of females is even lower. (Signorielli 1997). Children's television is even more male-dominated than prime-time American television, which has been found to have a distribution of 40 percent female and 60 percent male characters.

The study suggests that gender stereotypes do exist in animated cartoon programme "Chhota Bheem" on Indian television; females being portrayed as nurturing and gentle, whilst, males are presented as aggressive and physical. It is also revealed through the study that women are often an important element of the plot and play the role of "damsel in distress" i.e. of a victim; they are often the conflict or the problem in the plot. The plots in the study revolved around female either being kidnapped or threatened where in the male protagonist had to display extra ordinary strength to rescue these female characters. The female characters in the animated cartoon programme "Chhota Bheem" are often seen helpless and at the mercy of the male characters for freedom. Though the female characters comparatively share a lot of outdoor scenes yet, they are characterized more as an ally and depend upon the male protagonist for direction and decision. Female characters are also often seen to go missing from the fight and climax sequences and arrive at the end of the conflict.

Furthermore, the female characters not just have less screen space but they also have less amount of dialogue to be spoken, thus under voicing their opinions and interests. The show is male centric and gives much emphasis to male issues and aspirations.

As a whole, the findings might show a significant change in the way gender roles are portrayed in animated cartoon programme “Chhota Bheem” on children’s television in India, but the sample was too small, thus, the findings cannot be broadly generalized to the wider population.

CONCLUSION

The study reveals some interesting facts that often go unnoticed amidst the glitz and glam of the characters, sounds and special effects. Moreover, most often parents do not care much as long as the child is occupied. In the recent times with the increase of nuclear families TV has taken up the role of the elderly person in the house and hence is a great value teaching tool. Gender sensitization can be one of the most effective tools in dealing the rising cases of crime and violence on women and gender discrimination. Early childhood can lay the very basic foundation for a more equilibrium society where female is not looked down or her role is not stereotypically defined. We don’t want our little boys to think that their female classmates ought to be like Chutki. There’s a good chance they will because the mix of mass media and an impressionable mind is a potent cocktail. It will show up in small ways now like telling girls to take a supporting part in a game. It can show up in more serious ways when they grow up. It is also interesting to note that all the shows where the girls displayed some attitude—Power Puff Girls, Dora the Explorer, Kim Possible or Lilo and Stitch—are off the air or relegated to graveyard timings. The channels may be getting the television rating points now because the poor kids don’t have much choice, but that doesn’t mean they don’t deserve better. There’s quick need to revamp the children’s programming in Indian TV.

Parents and teachers can have a much greater impact on a child’s development than the media to which the child is exposed. Real life modeling of alternative ways of being male or female, or of resolving conflict; time spent engaging children in imaginative play, and in activities which teach pro (as opposed to anti) social values, ultimately have the most lasting influence. Media education can play a crucial role in counteracting the impact of these messages. Helping children to understand that media construct – as opposed to reflect – reality; that they communicate implicit and explicit values; and that they can influence the way we feel and think about ourselves and the world, are vitally important lessons towards achieving a society in which women and girls are seen and treated as equal to men and boys.

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THE QUEST FOR STORY WITHIN A POSTMODERN CONTEXT IN THE POETRY OF MAHMOUD DARWISH AND PABLO NERUDA: AN INTRODUCTION

Amanda Christie Tongper*

ABSTRACT

The title of the paper places a motive, the search for a story within a context that rejects the need for one, the postmodern context. The word 'story' here, is a direct reference to the grand narrative and the attempt would be to establish the relevance of grand narratives in a literary phase that popularly declares it obsolete. Grand narratives and Postmodernism are two contradictory dimensions in view of the discourse generated Lyotard's The Postmodern Condition (1984). Grand narrative implies fixity, structure and stability and is in opposition to the word postmodern, the crux of which implies destabilization and fragmentation of structure. This paper aims to establish the relevance of the 'story' within an unstable postmodern context with reference to the works of the Mahmoud Darwish and Pablo Neruda.

Keywords: Post Modern, Darwish, Neruda, Grand Narratives

The poetry of Darwish and Neruda navigate in and out of the parameters of postmodernism. Their works contain postmodern traits and yet they stand outside of it in their propensity to construct a story and to depend heavily on mythical, political and religious grand narratives. This curious mix of traditional grand narratives and the postmodern techniques questions the genuine viability of the claim that grand narratives have become inessential. The attempt will be to interrogate this intricate confluence that is nevertheless, an essential part of the poetry of Darwish and Neruda.

Postmodernism in Pablo Neruda and Mahmoud Darwish's works is two faceted. Firstly, the context in which they write lends itself to postmodern interpretations. For instance, Palestine "formed no independent geographical and political unit. It was always a land of passage as part and parcel of "greater" Syria. It has no natural

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borders” (Kramer1). In their book entitled *A History of Chile* (2004), Simon Collier and William F. Sater quote Manuel de Salas in the first chapter saying, “the Kingdom of Chile without contradiction [is] the most fertile in America and the most adequate for human happiness, it is the most wretched of Spanish dominions.” (Collier and Sater 3)

Palestine and Chile have been victims of political discord for a long period of time. The irrational contest of power by various external forces turns these countries into postmodern playgrounds. Palestine formed no independent geographical and political unit (Kramer 1). Subsequently, the sanctity of border and structure is undermined and the very concept of a nation diluted: a dispersed plot of land or space rather than Palestine as a structured nation.

Chile, by virtue of its geographical location is a fragment at the Southern tip of America. It has been for a very long time, tossed between powers both internal and external to a point where it is difficult to understand the independent life of Chile without the conquistadors, the dictators and the Western powers.

What Neruda and Darwish inherited from their experience of loss, disinheritance and displacement, is the Chile and Palestine of their visionary construct propelled by a notion of how a country should be. Hence vision in their poetry is not a utopian dream but in a Blakeian sense, their vision is a direct consequence of experience. It is a decisive, hermetic vision that chooses to return to innocence after the climax of experience is reached. The confluence of postmodern techniques and the grand narrative is a strategy employed precisely to construct a narrative for this vision and to counter the sense of cosmic loss that they inherit.

The Syrian poet Adonis writes in one of the poems which can be found in the collection *This is My Name*:

I have said
This broken jar is a defeated nation!
I see the shadow of a crow
Upon the face of my country.
I name this book a shroud,
I name this city a corpse.
Madness!
Only madness remains!

(qtd. in Nassar and Rahman)

Nassar and Rahman interpret this as Adonis's view of the Arab nation as a broken, defeated and dead corpse where nothing remains except madness (Nassar and Rahman 20). Land, as a geographical entity plays a vital role in the poetry of Mahmoud Darwish and Pablo Neruda who witness the "madness" of abuse of geographical territory and the violent disregard thereof of its inhabitants. It may be understood then, that the overarching influence in the works of the two writers, is the sediment of madness left in the overwhelming collapse of structure and the chaos of fragmentation which is the very spirit of postmodernism. Postmodern traits in the works of Darwish and Neruda, hence, may be construed to begin in the symbolic postmodern apocalypse of Palestine and Chile.

The second facet of postmodernism in Neruda and Darwish is the postmodernist traits in some of their works. What one experiences in *Residence on Earth* (1973) for example, is a simulation of the real world. The physical reality enters the prism of the poet's mind and refracts discordant rays of simulated realities. The reality expressed in *Residence* projects an idea, a spirit, an essence and that essence is the postmodern apocalypse expressed in montages:

I keep a blue flask,
Inside it an ear and a portrait:
When night forces
The owl's feathers,
When the raucous cherry tree
Shatters its lips and threatens
With husks that the ocean wind often penetrates,
I know that there are great sunken expanses,
Quartz in ingots,
Slime,
Blue waters for a battle,
Much silence, many
Veins of retreats and camphors,
Fallen things, medals, acts of tenderness,
Parachutes, kisses.

(Neruda, *Residence on Earth* 131)

The simulation technique can be understood when one takes the difference between experience and expression into account. The real that is experienced is laden with depth, feeling and substance. However, the real that is expressed is a

very ‘material’, discordant collage of ‘signs’ like “blue flasks” “ear and portrait”, “owl’s feathers”, “cherry tree” “blue waters” “fallen things” “medals”, “acts of tenderness”, parachute”, “kisses”. Neruda, in *Residence on Earth* emulates Jean Baudrillard’s concept of the hyper-real. The success of “Sexual Waters” for instance in delivering its message lies in the cinematic arrangement of shots. The essence of the vast subjective ‘real’ is captured in a few shots:

I see the vast summer, and a death rattle coming from a granary,
Stores, locusts,
Towns, stimuli,
Rooms, girls
Sleeping with their hands upon their hearts,
Dreaming of bandits of fires
I see ships,
I see marrow trees
Bristling like rabid cats,
I see blood, daggers, and women’s stockings,
And men’s hair,
I see beds, I see corridors where a virgin screams
I see blankets and organs and hotels.
(Neruda, *Residence* 151)

These are some of the postmodern traits in Neruda’s work. The attempt will be to explore this aspect in detail.

Darwish’s is a de-centered world, where the self is “diffracted” (Hassan 66). He is a Palestinian, an Arab displaced by the Israeli military troops when he was six years old. He became a wandering exile living in various Arab capitals before settling down in Paris where he died (Said 112). The diffractions of the self (Hassan 66), is evident in many of Darwish’s poems. Life, he writes, is “a chaos of personal pronouns” and further hints on this divided self by saying, “I received my other ‘I’ from her” (“Mural” 127, 133). However, this diffraction is evidently not a postmodernist conundrum in the context of the life of Darwish, since in him, there is an invariable need to define the self as an identity intricately woven with the identity of his nation, to merge the narrative of the self with the grand narrative of nation:

Remember yourself
Before all turns to dust
So that you may grow up
Remember, remember
Your ten toes and forget the shoes
Remember the features of your face
Forget the winter fog
Remember your mother and your name
And forget the letters of the alphabet
Remember your country and forget the sky
Remember, remember!

(Darwish, *In the Presence of Absence* 43)

This may be looked at as one of the instances in which Darwish navigates in and out of the parameters of postmodernism.

What is especially postmodern in the poetry of Darwish and Neruda is their rhizomatic nature. This, ironically, also becomes the point of deflection whereby one cannot categorize the works of Darwish and Neruda as postmodern. The concept of rhizome was originally applied by Deleuze and Guatarri to the corpus of Kafka's writing. Kafka's work they argue is "a rhizome, a burrow" or in other words an uncentered and meandering growth like a crab grass which is the antithesis of a root-tree structure (aborescent), a structure which has dominated western thought. Aborescences are hierarchical, stratified totalities whereas Rhizomes are non-hierarchical, horizontal multiplicities which cannot be subsumed within a unified structure. (Bogue 107)

Neruda's writing is rhizomatic in the same way as Deleuze and Guatarri concluded that Kafka's writing is rhizomatic, that he writes "like a dog who digs his hole, a rat who makes his burrow" (Deleuze and Guattari 18), that he makes German his own. For instance, *Memoirs* would bring one to conclude that the primary conviction in Neruda is to find his own voice. For instance the passage from the autobiography:

Our American stratum is dusty rock, crushed lava, clay mixed with blood. We don't know how to work in crystal. Our elegant poets sound hollow. A single drop

of Martin Fierro's wine or of Gabriel Mistral's turbid honey is enough to put them in their place: standing stiffly in the parlour like vases... (Neruda, *Memoirs* 261)

Again, this same resistance is found in Darwish as he tries to create a personal narrative in a momentary desire to do away with the narrative of the past:

Do not look for the Canaanite in you to prove that you exist. Grasp your own reality and grasp your own name and learn how to write your own proof. You, you and not your ghost, were the one driven out into this night.

(Darwish, *In the Presence of Absence* 35)

The rhizomatic nature of their poetry is however, the deciding turn that separates the poets from the categorical postmodernist umbrella. Although the poets are aware of literary movements in and around Europe, they resist being consumed in the totalitarian narratives of literary trends that have been looked upon as stratified structures (Sim 4). Darwish and Neruda sustain their individual conviction of the function of poetry even though they utilize the technical variety that postmodernism offers.

Despite the solipsist moments in Darwish and Neruda's poetry, what is central is them is a vision induced by a deep political commitment. Though their poetry reflects the influence of postmodernism, the meaning of their art is, however, not determined by it. Vision, in their poetry is a committed political 'act' which is the opposite of the spirit of postmodernism. The essence of the latter is that of "pastiche" celebrating hence meaning in fragments and moments. The spirit of postmodernism originates in the politics of language games. Vision on the other hand transcends moments as it stretches beyond the temporality of the present. It attempts to give cohesive meanings and stitch fragments to form linear narratives. The meaning of vision can be problematic as it lends itself to multiple variations. Here, one refers to Samuel Johnson's *Dictionary* and Thomas Hardy's "Thoughts on Vision" as quoted in *The Poetry of Vision* (1967) and Hardy's *Poetic Visions in The Dynasts* (1977) respectively. Johnson offers four definitions of vision:

Sight or the faculty of seeing; the act of seeing; a supernatural appearance; a dream or something shown in a dream. A dream happens to a sleeping (man), a vision may happen to a waking man.

(qtd. in Spacks, *The Poetry of Vision* 2)

Hardy interprets vision as the ability to “see the deeper reality underlying the scenic, the expression of what are sometimes called abstract imaginings” (qtd. in Dean 27). One considers the variation that explains vision as the “act of seeing” alongside the interpretation of vision as the ability to see the deeper reality. Vision in this sense is a “subjective view held by someone within an experience.” The “act of seeing” here is not just of the immediate, but the act that transcends the physical and completes itself at the realm above the chaos of the physical. It is not supernatural or mystical, but vision that is immersed in experience and looks beyond it.

Vision in the poetry of Neruda and Darwish is mobilized by a continual reference to the past. For instance, Neruda’s saga in *Canto General* (1950) is built on the foundations of Latin America’s colonial past. The Marxist ideology serves as the driving force that lead the daunting saga of *Canto General* to a hopeful end. Neruda’s vision in *Canto General* would not have been as convincing had he not expressed it against the backdrop of the past. His vision derives its strength from grand narratives, be it political or mythical. *Canto General* is not derived out of void. It is not composed of captured moments. It is a very linear composition that has a structured beginning, middle and an end contrary to the postmodernist pastiche.

Similarly, Darwish’s poetry resembles that of Neruda in his creation of saga. Most of Darwish’s ‘stories’ are placed against the backdrop of the Palestine of the Old Testament. Darwish’s narratives command the voice of a prophet and a visionary, “I am the message and also the messenger.” This may be an inherited authoritative voice from a long line of Arab poets who have been looked at as visionaries and prophets. The Arab poet, wrote Nassar and Rahman: was the voice of his tribe, its defender and representative...Mahmoud Darwish, serving as representative and spokesperson for Palestinians, is one fine example of the importance of the Arab poet in contemporary Arab society. (Nassar and Rahman 12)

Hence vision in the poetry of Darwish is propelled by the instinctive leader in him giving his narratives a didactic touch reminiscent of biblical passages. Darwish’s narratives are an interweaving of emulation and parody of the Biblical narratives. He writes:

Nothing abides forever.
A time to be born

And a time to die,
A time to speak
And a time to keep silent...

Nothing abides but my name in gold.
Once upon a time, Solomon...
What may the dead make of their names?
Does gold shine into my vast darkness
Or Ecclesiastes
Or the Song of Songs?

(Darwish, *Mural* 156)

Darwish and Neruda's vision depends on grand narratives even though they operate within an era that relates to Jean Francois Lyotard's *The Postmodern Condition* (1984). Lyotard defined grand narratives as stories and principles that give credibility to a society and justify its actions and visions of the future. He argues that society has been founded upon grand narratives which "legitimate the social bond and the relationship of science and knowledge to it" (Snipp-Walmsley 412). Mythic narratives according to Lyotard, invited the domination of the species by religion (412). One agrees with Lyotard that grand narratives are stories. However, as M. Sharoof Shah points out in his essay "Lyotard and the Meta-narrative of Religion", "Lyotardian grand narratives are technical apparatus for ordering, storing and retrieving information" (Shah 69). Grand narrative in itself is not a system of thought and belief. It transcends the informative and the didactic. It transcends the dominating propensity of a system. It is the totalizing propensity of grand narratives that Lyotard is wary of. However, one would clarify that totalizing narratives are man-made narratives and hence are within the realm of logic and reason. Grand narratives on the other hand exist, like hope and love. When the grand narrative of hope and or love is appropriated, politicized and marketed in order to fulfil an end, it runs the danger of totalizing and meets Lyotard's fear of its domination.

To support the above statements, other writers' interpretation of grand narratives may be looked at. Mark A. Eaton and Emile Griesinger in their book of essays, *The Gift of Story: Narrating Hope in a Postmodern World* (2006), state that meta-narratives are:

navigational stories that lead somewhere. They ground human experience in some larger framework, some idea or purpose that makes sense of our lives. Without meta-narratives or grand stories, we lose hope for understanding the present and imagining and working towards a better future.” (Eaton and Griesinger 10)

Sagas and stories are not ends in themselves; they are openings that lead somewhere. A grand narrative is that original utopia inherited by the world as its birthright. Even as critics advocate the spirit of postmodernism, the relevance of grand narratives is something that cannot be rendered obsolete. For example Liwhu Betiang in the paper “Postmodernism in Nigerian Drama” posits the nature of postmodernism by analogizing a Mexican myth, “A Mexican myth is told of a god named Quetzalcoatl and his double Zolotl who descend the Kingdom of the Dead to look for the bones of past generation in order to create new human beings” (Betiang 144). The very usage of this analogy shows the reluctance of writers to overlook the role that grand narratives play. It challenges Lyotard’s declaration of the end of grand narratives. That the writer uses ‘myth’ to explain the essence of postmodernism is in itself, self-explanatory and that the bones of past generation should play such a vital role in order to create new human beings explains the unassailable viability of the past in order to better the present.

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CHINA-INDIA STRATEGIC AND COOPERATIVE PARTNERSHIP: CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES

Biswajit Mohapatra *

ABSTRACT

The present paper highlights as to how the rivalry between India and China has adversely affected the economic potential of both these countries and it has benefited the western power. It is felt that the recent initiatives taken by the political leader of both of these countries are steps in the right direction, the sooner the disputes between them are resolved the better are prospects of these countries emerging as the economic giants of the present century.

Keywords: Rivalry, Impasse, Strategic Partnership, Mutual Co- Operation, Competition

The present day rivalry, seen between China and India, both developing countries, it is argued by commentators that it is contributing towards a situation of impasse, stands to benefit the US and other members of the West much more than it is seen in the context of these two rivals. This rivalry on various issues, certainly have had negative effect on each other's security, growth of economic prosperity and above all has significantly prevented both from coming together to act as bulwark against the so-called US led western domination.

When one looks at the reports of the western media, one comes across the various manipulative interpretation of realpolitik by a analysis of the realist theory propounded by Hans Morgenthau, to justify both China and India as rivals, while both need not necessarily be so, given the fact that both the countries are confronting the challenges of tackling issues, of poverty, uneven development and also being subjected to exploitation by the global economic powers and their machinations on the world stage. It's also rued by many that China India rivalry is almost suicidal for both the countries as it leads to nuclear and non nuclear arms buildup, which is being egged on by the West, which as of today, remains the single most important and largest arms producing bloc of countries, well known for their military industrial complex.

Though the competition between them is beneficial as far as it helps them to achieve faster economic growth while remaining focused on each other's growth rate and how best to overtake each other, in uplifting their population caught in the mire of poverty and their economies, yet the search for power and supremacy, both in the immediate

region and on the global level has restricted the possibilities of cooperation between them. It goes without saying that such cooperation when engaged in with seriousness without the feelings of rancor and historical bitterness, would lead to more economic dividend. And if these two countries pool their resources within their region, they can both be the leading countries of Asian century-locomotives of future economic growth in the region and also to the world that be, as they would discover the huge potential that remains untapped by way of burgeoning market for their economic goods, as in the present day circumstances these other countries of the region remain poor.

INDIA CHINA RELATIONS - A REVIEW

The contentious disputes over borders and related geopolitical competition for power, influence, resources and above all markets have contributed towards increase in tension between China and India. In the years after their independence except for a very limited period of a warm relationship during the early 1950s, the relations between the two Asian giants have never been far from any kind of conflict, containment, mutual suspicion, distrust, and rivalry.

India's bilateral relations with China as such has remained volatile and ridden with friction and tension. Notwithstanding the border dispute which led to a full-scale war in 1962 and armed skirmishes in 1967 and 1987, several rounds of talks that have been held over more than a quarter of a century (from 1981 onwards, however have not yielded any result for resolving the disputed claims. Of late China's increasing assertiveness, by way of increased incursions in Arunachal Pradesh by the People's Liberation Army (PLA) since 2005, has led to a rapid meltdown in the Sino-Indian border talks, despite public display of amity. It is felt as if the Chinese believe that a border settlement, without major Indian territorial concessions, has the risk of augmenting India's relative power position in the neighbourhood and in the global diplomacy and thus can impact negatively on China's rise and influence.

The prospects of a negotiated settlement in the near future though appear to be remote yet remains the only viable alternative though with the unsettled border problem China unduly enjoys the strategic leverage to keep India guessing about its intentions and nervous about its future actions and capabilities, while it also exposes India's vulnerabilities and weaknesses and thus ensures India's friendly disposure on issues of vital concern to China. The success of any such negotiated settlement on the border issue and the expressed desire for establishing a Strategic and Cooperative Partnership between these two powers can be hoped to influence both India - China relations both in their bilateral aspect and onto the global dimension, which can alter the existing security scenario and the adversarial nature of the Sino-Indian relationship.

It has been said that the twenty first century will be an Asia Pacific Century as it would be dominated economically, by the States in the Asia-Pacific region, in particular, i.e., China and India, besides the growth of ASEAN countries. The term Asian Century is now very skillfully put to use, for shifting greater emphasis towards Asia, more particularly, on the potential powers of China and India. The various cities in many of these countries, because of increased economic prospects, are increasingly gaining power as financial centers, displacing cities in Europe.

The kind of challenges that may arise from this whole process is really astounding as the possibilities of high economic growth in the South Countries, is something which should be welcomed by all, as these countries who had intensive pockets of their country filled with people, who are caught in a poverty trap and hence need to come out of that situation of living abysmal life.

But available literature suggests that this economic growth, the rise of China and India as a rising threat to the so-called American power in the region and may displace USA from rapidly developing Pacific nations. China has been trying to make great openings in the region by becoming the biggest trading partner of ASEAN by far. The significant challenge that we will be faced with, is that, with the rise of the Asia Pacific countries, economic, political, military and strategic influence, the countries in the region, besides India and China relations, issues like non-traditional security challenges such as terrorism, maritime security and natural disasters etc. For these reasons, it is felt that India and China as the leading countries may have to join hands together to share their positions with regard to a number of strategic interests.

INDIAN PRIME MINISTER'S VISIT TO CHINA

In this context the visit of the Indian Prime Minister, Manmohan Singh can be said to be a right step in the direction of improving its relation with China besides holding wide ranging talks on several issues including the unresolved border problem, the LAC impasse. On the occasion of this official state visit to China, the spokeswoman of China's Foreign Ministry, Hua Chunying welcomed Singh's visit and expressed that closer communication between China and India will strengthen bilateral ties and mutual trust. She further is reported to have said, "We look forward to consistently enhancing strategic mutual trust between China and India, consistently advancing practical cooperation between both sides, deepening cultural and educational communication, as well as exploring the strengthening of communication and coordination on major global and regional issues in order to push forward the development of Chinese-Indian relations through high-level communications in a joint effort with India." ⁱ

On his arrival, the Prime Minister, Mr. Singh speaking to reporters said, he was looking forward to promoting further cooperation between India and China and between the Chinese leadership and himself.ⁱⁱ "I am very happy to be in China. China is our great neighbour. We have centuries-old relationship. We have lots of things to discuss," During the meeting between Manmohan Singh and Chinese Premier Li Keqiang, the much anticipated which the Border Defence Cooperation Agreement (BDCA)ⁱⁱⁱ was signed, which was approved by the Cabinet Committee on Security on the eve of Singh's visit to China, as an additional confidence building measures, seeking to avoid incidents along the Line of Actual Control, where many an intrusion from the Chinese side have been recorded. It may be recalled that this is the second historic meeting between these two leaders while in office within a gap of only five months as in May 2013, the Chinese Premier had last made a state visit to India.^{iv}

VISION OF CHINA-INDIA STRATEGIC & COOPERATIVE PARTNERSHIP

During the talks between the two premiers held for over three hours at the Great Hall of the People, the meeting is described as "fruitful and productive" discussions, as maximum of nine agreements, which include the BDCA and another one on strengthening cooperation on trans-border rivers, were agreed to and signed by the two countries predicated on the principle of mutual and equal security, as was marked in the earlier agreements signed between these two countries in 1993, 1996 and 2005.^v

In the Official Joint Statement - A Vision for Future Development of China-India Strategic and Cooperative Partnership^{vi}, it has been stated that China and India will continue their efforts to explore a framework for the settlement of the border issue. They have further agreed that along the China-India border, peace and tranquility can be an important guarantor for the development and continued growth of bilateral relations. In this Joint Statement it has been expressed that the signing of this agreement will strengthen maintenance of stability on the border. They further agreed that the two countries will take necessary measures to promote cooperation on defense exchanges and military exercises, and to hold a counter-terrorism exercise in November 2013.

At the joint press briefing with the Prime Minister of India, Manmohan Singh, after the meeting, the Chinese premier exhibited confidence while maintaining that they both believe the two countries have more common interests than disagreements and the people and governments of the two countries have the ability to manage border dispute and requested the Special Representatives, of the two countries, charged with exploring a framework of settlement of the China-India boundary question, to maintain communication and work in the direction of finalization of a fair and reasonable solution acceptable for both sides.^{vii} Premier Li further said that the two sides should faithfully implement relevant agreements and jointly safeguard peace and tranquility in

border areas, while significantly underlining that China and India are among the biggest developing countries and are the most dynamic emerging markets. As such China-India ties enjoy great development potential and the bilateral relationship is one of the most important in the 21st century.

CRITICAL MASS

While any effort at promotion of further cooperation between India and China and between the Chinese leadership and Indian leadership is more welcome, however if the past is of any concern, we are reminded of wide ranging differences between the two countries viewpoints on issues of both bilateral and international significance. Repeated incidents of border stand-offs between India and China and the issue of stapled visas by China to Indians hailing from border Indian states insisting that China has claim over these areas as its own territories often poses great problems not only to the enhancement of the bilateral ties but also threaten the ties to a great extent bordering on great disaster.

Over the years it has been observed how the India China differences on the bilateral and multilateral issues have been responsible for many a border conflict and continuous tensions over along the 4,000-km long Line of Actual Control. have actually hindered the assured economic growth of these two rising economies, the interests of the populations of two countries will be served better by steadfast determination to implement agreements for boosting closer cooperation both in economic and non economic areas which are considered strategic in the context of the bilateral relations of both the countries.

Significantly though both the prime ministers have called the present set of agreements "strategic"^{viii} and further categorizing this border deal as a "strategic agreement", it remains to be seen if the enhanced ties will last longer to yield positive result in terms of mutual cooperation or this agreed cooperation between the two will fall victim to the big power rivalry as both China and India are engaged in asserting their ascendancy over the region in their own neighbor hood and by siding with global powers on several global strategic issues ,which nullifies all the gains that can accrue to them if they can skillfully articulate their positions than the so-called rivalry, which, if one may say so, is surely avoidable to a great extent."

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