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Contributors
Editorial

The English Literary Circle, Imphal (ELCI), has come a long way since its inception in 2011. As its name itself suggests, the circle was formed at Imphal by a group of like-minded teachers and scholars of the Department of English, Manipur University, with a view to promote English Literature in its different forms and genres like novel, short story, essay, poetry, drama etc. Nevertheless, as years roll by, requests came from many quarters to expand its scope of interest and the area of coverage. So, its activities and interests could no longer be confined only to Imphal or to English Literature alone. Therefore, when the members decided to get the Circle registered, the name was changed to English Literary Circle, Manipur (ELCM). Thereafter, the Circle, as can be readily observed through its various activities, has always striven to be a platform for interdisciplinary interaction. Now, it regularly organises national and international conferences and seminars where scholars and academicians from different disciplines of Humanities and Social Sciences come together, intermingle and exchange valuable ideas, thoughts and expertise. Such conferences and seminars have always been highly rewarding and enlightening.

Besides organising seminars and conferences, ELCI, which has now become an integral part of ELCM, publishes a biannual international interdisciplinary journal called Spectrum. Scholars and academicians belonging to different disciplines of Humanities and Social Sciences regularly contribute their academic articles. It is also to be noted that contributors of the research articles are not only from the state of Manipur but from all over India and some even from foreign countries. The journal, indeed, has been achieving new milestones with the bringing out each issue. It is heartening to share the news that Spectrum has been included among the UGC approved academic journals. The Circle and the Editorial Team are striving hard to scale newer heights in the days ahead.

A dedicated website of the journal has also been created in which important information and developments of the journal are regularly uploaded. The reach and operation of the journal has thus been widened to encircle the globe via the internet. Undeniably, the journal has been occasionally facing hurdles and obstacles, yet the Editorial Board is hopeful and optimistic that the difficulties in their different forms can be defeated through the cooperation and support of all the well-wishers of the journal.

The Editorial Board of the journal has been following a strict review process. Each submitted article is carefully screened by the Editor. Once the Editor is satisfied with the overall quality of the article, it is then forwarded to the Review Editor who sends it to two/three Reviewers. The journal follows a double blind review process, meaning the Authors and the Reviewers do not know each others identity. Only when the article gets positive comments from at least two reviewers, the corresponding Author is intimated about the acceptance of the article for
publication. Once the Author decides to go ahead with the publication, the paper is sent to the Language Editor for a round of language checking. It is by virtue of strict observance of these review rules and processes that the journal has been approved by the UGC. With the coming into force of new UGC regulation, the Editorial Board Members are working even harder to further improve the standard of the journal. The Editorial Board would like to encourage writing and publication of more well-researched articles in the journal by scholars and academicians belonging to the different disciplines of Humanities and Social Sciences.

The present issue too contains well-researched articles written by scholars and academicians from all over India on wide ranging topics and issues. It is hoped that this issue will be of great benefit to diligent and dedicated scholars and academicians who are pursuing their studies or teaching in the universities and colleges of the country.

It is firmly believed that through the interface and exchange of ideas among the scholars of different areas of studies, new and better perspectives on different issues will be gained and new solutions to problems will be found. The maxim, “There’s always room for improvement” is true and the Editorial Board of Spectrum is determined to explore ways and means to enhance the quality and standard of the journal. Through the support and contribution of serious and hardworking scholars, writers and academicians, the Editorial Board is hopeful and confident that the momentum of progress of the journal can be maintained and further accelerated in the coming days.

05.01.2018

Dr. Paonam Sudeep Mangang
Editor
T. S. Eliot: The Lost Leader of Literary Criticism in His Later Phase?

Dr. Ashish Kumar Pathak*

Abstract: T. S. Eliot’s later phase can be said to have begun after 1924 if we look at his literary criticism. Eliot’s views on literature and culture undergo a deep change after his conversion in 1927. Now Eliot lays emphasis on extra literary dimensions of literature and religion, belief, morality supplant the erstwhile purely aesthetic criterion of evaluation of literature. Eliot’s obsession with the Christian orthodoxy has a crippling effect on his capacity to evaluate and analyse literature in a disinterested way. His religious fundamentalism is evident in works like ‘Religion and Literature’ and After Strange Gods which made him the ‘lost leader’ of literary criticism. However, Eliot realizes this tendency and is able to cope up with this problem in his later work like On Poetry and Poets. Towards the end of his career Eliot is able to write some wonderful essays where he is able to strike a balance between literature and morality.

Keywords: Literary Criticism, Later phase, Christianity, Evaluation, Morality, Aesthetic

Scholars, undertaking the study of Eliot's development, have taken the total corpus of Eliot to show his development from the early phase to the later phase. But the development that occurs in the later phase has hardly been elaborated in detail. Stephen Spender divides Eliot’s career into three phases: the early, the middle and the later phase; but he does not take pains to show the features which differentiate the later phase from the middle phase. Spender hints at the possibility of showing a division in Eliot's post-conversion work. In this article I am supposed to undertake a detailed analysis and evaluation of Eliot's literary criticism in the later phase to demonstrate the development in terms of toning down of Christian complexion in his work.

In Eliot's literary criticism Homage to John Dryden (1924) can be taken as the culmination of the early phase where Eliot is still adhering to the aesthetic criteria of literature. Ronald Bush has pointed out that change in Eliot's critical attitude can be seen in an introduction that Eliot wrote to a thin volume of Paul Valery's verse in 1924 and the Clark Lectures that he delivered in 1926. Bush informs:

In The Sacred Wood he had compared Paul Valery unfavourably to Dante and had criticized Valery for "exorcising" philosophy from modern poetry (SW 159-60). But by 1924 … Eliot wrote that Valery 'extended' and 'completed' his personal emotions in impersonal verse … that Valery reintegrated "the symbolist movement into the great tradition" (82).

Eliot further wrote that Valery raised "the music, the fluidity" of Jules Laforgue to new height through a poetic organization of a much higher, intellectual order than Laforgue.

Thus, if Valery is being privileged over an earlier favourite, Laforgue, in the Clark Lectures of 1926 a similar exercise of reassessment is undertaken with respect to another earlier model, Donne. These eight "Lectures on the Metaphysical Poetry of the Seventeenth Century" dealt with Eliot's old preoccupations with poetic excellence and tradition by applying new criteria. In the earlier essay, "The Metaphysical Poets", Donne was held up as poet par excellence of unified sensibility. Appreciating Donne and the poets of the seventeenth century Eliot remarks:

The poets of the seventeenth century, the successors of the dramatists of the sixteenth, possessed a mechanism of sensibility which could devour
any kind of experience. They are simple, artificial, difficult or fantastic as their predecessors were: no less nor more than Dante, Guido, Cavalcanti, Guinizelli or Cino. In the seventeenth century a dissociation of sensibility set in, from which we have never recovered ..." (HJD 219).

But in the Clark Lectures Eliot argued that Donne's sensibility represented a fission of thought and feeling which was not found in the mediaeval poets like Dante and Cavalcanti. Whereas the sensibility of the Italians is 'classical' and 'ontological' rooted in man's orientation towards absolute value, the seventeenth century metaphysical ideas for their intrinsic value merely plays with them. As opposed to Donne's 'romantic' subordination of thought to feeling, Eliot recommended the wisdom of writers like Aquinas, Dante and Cavalcanti, who were interested only in the impersonal value of thought and feeling. Eliot goes on to say that the poetry of Donne was immature because it lacked the support of mature philosophy. Dante has transformed the experience of adolescent into the experience of adult in his Vita Nuova with the help of serious philosophy. Donne and Laforgue fail to do it. So the Clark Lectures show a turning point in Eliot's Criticism.

In the preface to the 1928 Edition of The Sacred Wood Eliot says that he intends to explore "the relation of poetry to the spiritual and social life of its time and of other times" (TSW X) Here Eliot seems to have been fed-up with applying purely aesthetic standards to literature. Eliot makes his intention clear that he is going to explore what relationship poetry might have with morals, religion and politics. However, For Lancelot Andrews (1928) clearly mark the beginning of the later phase of literary criticism. Emphasizing the point of departure Eliot says that "I wished to indicate certain lines of development, and to dissociate myself from certain conclusions which have been drawn from my volume of essays, The Sacred Wood" (FLA 7). Since no stage in Eliot's development shows a sharp break from the preceding one, it is not difficult to find a link between the Clark Lectures and this new collection of published essays. Denigration of Donne continues. In the Clerk Lectures Donne is compared with Dante and Cavalcanti and found to be an effete preserver of the 'unified sensibility'. In the essay entitled "Lancelot Andrews" Donne is compared with Bishop Andrews and shown to be a popular but hollow preacher.

Eliot's essays on Baudelaire and Irving Babbit more clearly consolidate his new orientation towards literature. In "Baudelaire in Our Time" Eliot uses the term 'Christianity' excessively. He, for instance, asserts:

The important fact about Baudelaire is that he was essentially a Christian born out of his due time, and a classicist, born out of his due time .... And being the kind of Christian he was, he had to discover Christianity for himself (FLA 77).

Besides his emphasis on Christianity and religion Eliot frequently refers to classicism. Eliot admires in Baudelaire the alliance of Christianity and classicism. About Baudelaire Eliot says that 'to him the notion of Original sin came spontaneously and the need for prayer' (FLA 77). Eliot seems to be affirming the classicism of T.E. Hulme. It is also worth noticing that Eliot's approval of Hulme's ideas is concomitant with his drifting away from the teachings of Irving Babbitt. So, the writer of The Sacred Wood and The Waste Land, was largely a humanist under the influence of Babbit and shared the anthropologist view of the world with Miss Jessie Weston and Sir G.S. Frazer. Earlier Eliot attacked romanticism toeing the line of Babbitt and shared his humanistic classicism but in his essay "The Second Thought about Humanism" (1929) Eliot discards it in the favour of T.E. Hulme's religious classicism.
However, before this essay Eliot has hardly mentioned Hulme in any of his published writings except 'The Idea of a Literary Review' which came out in 1926 in the *Criterion*. Infact, Eliot-Hulme relationship has been a much debated issue among critics and there is no consensus about their personal meetings. From Eliot's writings it becomes evident that Eliot came under the influence of Hulme only after the publication of *Speculations* (1924) posthumously. But Ronald Schuchard and Kenneth Asher are of the view that Eliot had met Hulme during the years of War. Quoting from Schuchard's *Eliot's Dark Angel: Intersection of Life and Art* (1999) and Asher's *T.S. Eliot and Ideology* (1995), Rebecca Beasley asserts:

... despite Eliot's statement to the contrary, Eliot and Hulme met during the period between Eliot's arrival in London in August 1914 and Hulme's death on 28 September 1917. ... Although he does not appear to have known Hulme well Eliot admired his writings and the information for the second lecture in the 'Modern French Literature' series not only gives the Action Francaise and Babbitt's definition of classicism, but adds Hulme's particular contribution that classicism may be defined as a belief in Original Sin (52).

It proves that Eliot delivered lectures on 'Modern French Literature' in 1916 and referred to 'Maurras's Action Francaise and Hulme's religious classicism. So there is no point in not believing that Eliot knew Hulme in 1916.

So, this is the point where we can clearly understand the difference between the early Eliot and the later Eliot. The early Eliot stressed upon pure literary criticism and therefore political classicism and religious classicism propounded by Charles Maurras and T.E. Hulme respectively do not attract Eliot very much. Whatever be the nature of Eliot. Hulme correspondence, it is, at least, clear that Eliot candidly referred to Hulme in "Second Thought about Humanism" and it is safe to maintain that only in the later phase Eliot drew substantially on Hulme.

The consequences of Eliot's conversion can be seen in his whole view of life which has acquired a new complexion. If Eliot's search for faith takes him to the Church of England which sets before him a new example of authority and tradition, Dante becomes for him the monument of order and unity in literature. Eliot's appreciation of Dante is not a new thing but in his earlier essay on Dante (in *The Sacred Wood*) Eliot takes a purely aesthetic stand but in 'Dante' (1929) Eliot takes a strikingly Christian stand. Here Eliot deals with Dante, the greatest Christian poet, as the brightest star of the mediaeval Europe “in which literary, religious and philosophical activities were all broadly in accord” (Ackroyd 155). In his later phase Eliot manifestly makes Dante the centre of his literary tradition. Eliot wrote 'Dante' (1929) during the years (between later twenties and early thirties) when he was assimilating the consequences of the conversion in his literary pursuits.

As a consequence of this, Eliot's literary criticism between 1927 and 1935 is particularly marred by his excessive concern about religion, orthodoxy, ethics, philosophy etc. In this regard Samuel Hynes observes:

In his literary criticism he was doing the same thing trying out answers to the question: What is a Christian critic? Clearly the central issue was the relation between literature and belief, and Eliot's principle critical essays during these years are focused on that issue in various ways (66).

During these years Eliot was contemplating over issues like in what way a poem written with a belief in dogma is different from the rest of poetry? How will its reading have different effects on Christian readers and non-christian readers? Does Christian imagination require the language of religion? For instance, language used in *Ash Wednesday* and *Murder in the Cathedral*. Even in Eliot's
language of Criticism words like Original Sin, orthodoxy and heresy occur in abundance.

Eliot, infact, became acutely sensitive to the issue of belief after his conversion although he had been making references to the problem in his earlier remarks. Kristian Smidt says that later Eliot modified his early views but they remained fundamentally unchanged. Smidt remarks that "It is natural that his thoughts regarding this problem should have been brought to a focus about the time of his entering the Anglican communion" (61). About the understanding and appreciation on the part of the reader Eliot says that the readers can enjoy the poetry fully without sharing the belief embodied in poetry. But, finally, Eliot maintains that the reader may have more pleasure in reading poetry when one shares the beliefs of the poet. And Eliot admitted that he derived more pleasure in reading Dante after his conversion. At other place Eliot states that "To have realized the Christian scheme in poetry in what makes the poetry of Dante so very great; but he had to have the background of theology and philosophy in order to do that" (Brookner 19). This is what Eliot himself tries to do during this period. Eliot's commitment to Christianity is strongly realized in his creative and critical writings.

Eliot's deviation from his purely aesthetic interests in literature led him to be called 'a lost leader' or 'a lost sheep' by his contemporaries, admirers and critics. F.W. Bateson observes that "For Lancelot Andrews shows a decline in literary criticism of T.S. Eliot and one of the eight essays, that on Baudelaire can be considered first rate criticism" (66). Bateson sees Eliot's conversion as an unnatural advancement in the progress of Eliot's life. It seems to him a superficial step and not the manifestation of his genuine choice. It cannot be justified as a moral stand but can be taken as a general social surrender. But the conspicuous change that grabs our attention is the focus on the Church of England and the association of religion and literature which will reach its crescendo in the essay "Religion and Literature" (1935) and the more radical After Strange Gods (1934).

In After Strange Gods Eliot defines tradition in a much wider context and it ceases to be a purely literary one as he had conceived in 'Tradition and the Individual Talent". Here literary tradition is replaced by Christian tradition, and individual talent or originality is replaced by heterodoxy or heresy. Eliot's newly defined Christian tradition "involves all those habitual actions, habits and customs, from the most significant religious rites to our conventional way of greeting a stranger, which represent the blood kinship of "the same people liking in the same place" (ASG 18). In judging literary artists Eliot takes an assuredly Christian stand and concentrates exclusively on the writer's philosophy. If a writer's philosophy lacks the sanction of Christian orthodoxy, it is a heresy and it should be denounced. Hence, Eliot attacks writers like Hardy, Lawrence, Yeats as well as Pound for their individualist attitudes synonymous with heterodoxy. Baudelaire, Conrad and Joyce deserve appreciation for incorporating Christian beliefs and tradition in their work.

So, the analysis of After Strange Gods shows that the modern environment is spiritually sick and only return to the church can save the heretics. Here Eliot seems to be speaking like a prophet who believes that the absence of Christian tradition and belief in orthodoxy have resulted in the degeneration of culture and society. Eliot would have realized that literary criticism and social criticism cannot go together and, therefore, he separated the two domains. The Idea of a Christian Society (1939) and Notes towards the Definition of Culture (1948) embody Eliot's social criticism. But Eliot failed to realize that literary criticism should be kept apart from religious convictions. Had Eliot kept the two things apart, he would not have been
called 'criticism's lost leader' by his contemporaries like Bateson. It has been pointed out that in After Strange Gods Eliot's urgency of faith has turned his literary criticism into polemics.

Eliot's Christian phase of criticism reaches its crescendo when he states, "Literary criticism should be completed by criticism from a definite ethical and theological standpoint." He further adds that pure literary standards are inadequate but "we must remember that whether it is literature or not can be determined only by literary standards" (SE 388) It must be noticed here that Eliot hesitates in taking absolute position. If the first half of the above quoted extract shows the peak point of Eliot's Christian phase, the second half indicate the inevitable decline of the same.

Consequently, essays in On Poetry and Poets (1957) and To Criticize the Critic (1965) are remarkably free from religious prejudices of Eliot. Most of the essays in On Poetry and Poets are lectures that Eliot directly delivered to the audience between 1940 and 1956 with some exceptions like "Milton I" (1936) and "Byron" (1937). Eliot's essay on "Yeats" (1940) can be taken as a turning point in which he is sympathetic in his attitude, tolerant in his temperament and balanced in his judgment. These qualities are noticeable in the subsequent essays on poets and poetry.

The severity of Eliot's criticism of "Milton I" becomes glaring when it is juxtaposed with another essay on Milton which Eliot wrote in 1947. In "Milton II" (1947) Eliot's tone is apologetic and he confesses that he committed an error in underrating Milton. Here Eliot seems to be reiterating his early critical principle of "Tradition and Individual Talent" when he says, "The practitioner is concerned less with the author than the poem, and with the poem in relation to his own age"(OPP147). Eliot emphasizes that a critic should be able to exploit the greatness of past to enrich the present, and he approaches Milton with this attitude. Eliot further asserts that it is unnecessary to consider a poet's political and religious affiliations in analyzing his poetry. Whether Milton was a monarchist or republican; he was a protestant or catholic is of no use in a sincere criticism. Eliot seems to have realized his own mistake in literary criticism between 1927 and 1935 and warns that "we have to be on guard against an unconscious partisanship if we aim to attend to the poetry for the poetry's sake"(OPP 149). It was also wrong to accuse Milton and Dryden for aggravating the dissociation of thought and feeling. Eliot shows respect to Milton by hailing him as the only successful epic writer in English language.

In his essay on Goethe Eliot presents himself not as a representative of the Anglican - Church but as a spokesperson of the European culture which includes European literature, mind, race and imagination Eliot regrets to have condemned Goethe in his earlier remarks and places him along with the two best representatives of European literature - Dante and Shakespeare. The criteria of permanence universality, abundance, amplitude and unity are applied to the three poets. By amplitude Eliot means "a wide range of interest, sympathy and understanding" (OPP 214). In this essay, I think, amplitude in Eliot's critical speculations is noteworthy.

During the Christian phase of his criticism Eliot was exclusively concerned with morality or better say Christian morality which demands focus on the content of literature. Although in the early phase of his criticism Eliot was not totally neglecting the content, he had concentrated chiefly on the form of literature. In the third stage of his development, the maturest one, Eliot realizes that "the notion of appreciation of form without content, or of content ignoring form is an illusion" (OPP 225). He, for instance, states that ideas or philosophy or belief embodied in a
poem cannot be accepted or rejected just because they are good or bad, it also depends on the form in which they are expressed.

**Works Cited:**

Abstract: The Weird Sisters in Macbeth tend to be read as agents of darkness, threat and disruption. The essay seeks to re-read them in terms of their agency in voicing utterances that bears relation with the discourse of fairies. Through their sybiline cryptic utterances, representing unconscious as a discourse, the Weird Sisters engender a narrative which has the potential of directing, intervening and controlling Macbeth and Banquo. The essay attempts to argue that the utterances of the Weird Sisters, instead of being anarchic and disruptive, can be read as sign of narrative agency that is associated with the figure of fairy.

Keywords: Agency, Women, Fairy, Narrative

The Weird Sisters in Macbeth have been read as agents of darkness, threat and disruption and it has been argued that “witchcraft, prophecy and magic function in Macbeth as ways of developing a particular conceptualization of social and political order” (Stallybrass 204). The Weird Sisters have also been considered as “the heroines of the piece, however little the play recognizes the fact, and however much the critics may have set out to defame them” (Eagleton 1). They figure as the unconscious that sets up a discourse of slippages and their revelation of preternatural knowledge engender a narrative of inner desire and otherness which Macbeth, Banquo and Lady Macbeth begins to translate into their respective thought/act. The Weird Sisters combine the figure of fairy god mothers in popular cultural belief and Sybil in their cryptic and enigmatic utterances. Though the sisters are generally labelled as witches, Hecate talks of a dance like “elves and fairies in a ring” (4.1. 40-1) which is reiterated by the first Weird Sister through her reference to the “antic round” (4.1. 130) or the circular dance associated with the fairies. This essay seeks to draw upon the contemporary fairy cult in order to re-read the cryptic and teasing word-play of the Weird Sisters as narratives.

Witches on the Tudor and Stuart Stage:

The use of witchcraft had been deemed heretical since 1484 with the declaration by the Pope Innocent VIII and, till 1750, nearly two hundred thousand women had been burnt as witches through the Western Europe. During an age when “gynocide” became “not only normal but also normative” (Daly 202), as women are tortured, burnt, executed on the suspicion of witchcraft, the stage was not especially interested in their fate and tended to present the witch as one among many supernatural figures who could be offered as functions of comic and tragic plots of unexpected revelation which the dramatists enjoyed. However, the representation is both complex and complicated due to the relation between witchcraft and state power. Hackett has pointed out that Ralegh’s representation of Queen Elizabeth I as Diana also bears link with Hecate – the goddess entreated by Medea. James I had argued for the reality of witches’ compacts with the devil, and believed that he had himself been the target of witches’ machinations. The figure of witch occupies a rather shadowy zone in popular culture in terms of identity, and plays concerning witches were not especially popular until the 1597 when Alice Gooderidge and Elizabeth Wright were tried on accusation of practising witchcraft. In almost each of Shakespeare’s plays “witchcraft is a topic, a metaphor, a joke, a story, a half-formulated reference point, a piece of the plot” (Purkiss 189). The witch of the Tudor and Stuart stage gradually emerges from a mass of supernatural figures: sorceresses, classical witches, wise women, prophetesses and fairies.
Narrative, Knowledge of the Future and the Fairy:

The presence of fairies in English popular and literary culture has provoked various discourses. In the popular cult fairies are at once familiar and mysterious, sharing the concern of day-to-day living and also precipitating alterations in life and controlling destiny. The term “fairy” is also thought to have originally meant “fai-erie” — a state of enchantment and remoteness and this is conveyed by Chaucer in “Wife of Bath’s Tale” (ll 1-16):

In th’ olde dayes of King Arthour
Of which that Bretons speken greet honour
All was this land fulfilled of fairye:
The elf-queen, with hir jolly compaignye
Danced ful oft in many a greene mede.
This was the old opinoun as I rede —
I spake of many hundred yeres ago.
But now can no man see none elves mo … (229)

The fairies can be seen to share with the goddess and the Sibyls, the knowledge of the future and the past, and in the stories which feature them, they foretell, warn and guide:

Fatum, literally, that which is spoken, the past participle of the verb fari, to speak, gives French fée, Italian fata, Spanish hada, all meaning ‘fairy’, and enclosing connotations of fate; fairies share with Sibyls knowledge of the future and the past, and in the stories which feature them, both types of figure foretell events to come, and give warnings. (Warner 15; emphasis author’s)

Briggs points out that the term fairy indicating those “fairyladies who visited the household at births and pronounced on the future of the baby as the Three Fates used to do” (xvii) which opens up the association with the classical Moirai or three Sisters of Fate. This carries a further implication of fairies as spinners of destiny and interventionist powers who direct the course of destiny. Milton’s poem “At Vacation Exercise in the college” provides a survival of the heathen belief and the description highlights the bestowing, controlling and magical nature of the fairies:

... at thy birth,
The FAERY LADIES daunc’t upon the hearth;
The drowsie nurse hath sworn she did them spie,
Come tripping to the room where thou didst lie;
And sweetly singing round about thy bed,
Straw all their blessings on thy sleeping head.(31)

The demarcation between fairies and witches often becomes blurred since each can be read as spaces in which the position and role of women in society is determined/negotiated/controlled. The thirteenth century prose romance “Lancelot du Lac” notes that in the by-gone days “all maidens that knew enchantments or charms were called fays, and there were many of them at this time, and more in Great Britain than in other lands. They knew … the virtue of herbs and of stones and of charms …” (qtd. in Briggs, Fairies in Tradition 5). In Malory’s (d.1471) Morte d’Arthur (1469) Morgan le Fay is a mortal woman “put to scole in a nunnery … [where] she lerned so moche that she was a grete clerke of nygromancke” (Malory 5). This anxiety regarding the anarchic or disruptive potential learned/wise women is reflected in the popular fairy tale “Coat o’ Clay” in Jacobs’ English Fairy Tales:

Once on a time, in the parts of Lindsey, there lived a wise woman. Some said she was a witch, but they said it in a whisper, lest she should overhear and do them a mischief, and truly it was not a thing one could be
sure of, for she was never known to hurt anyone, which, if she were a witch, she would have been sure to do. But she could tell you what your sickness was, and how to cure it with herbs, and she could mix rare possets that would drive the pain out of you in a twinkling; and she could advise you what to do if your cows were ill, or if you’d got into trouble, and tell the maids whether their sweethearts were likely to be faithful.

(243)

The popular fairy cult shows a steady decline in the interventionist power of fairies and a gradual shift can be noticed from possession of superior knowledge and control of events to domestic pre-occupations like “spinning, weaving, grinding, baking, cooking, churning” (qtd. in Briggs, A Dictionary 137). Fairy cult gradually becomes overtaken by ideas of sorcery and witchcraft. In The Discoverie of Witchcraft (1584) Reginald Scot translated the tenth century penitential known as the Canon Episcopi that contained a reference to fairies as beings whose actions are emulated by wicked women. James I’s Daemonologie (1597) argues that the fairies are a pleasing image employed by the devil as a form of infernal rhetorical device to fool the recipient of the vision into thinking they are gaining a benefit. James I had also characterized witchcraft as a similar demonic pact, and this became the statutory definition in the 1604 Witchcraft Act. He connects fairy beliefs with illusions of unenlightened Catholicism:

The fourth kinde of spirites, which by the Gentiles was called Diana, and her wandering court, and amongst vs was called Phairie (as I tould you) or our good neighbours, was one of the sortes of illusions that was rifest in the time of Papistrie; for although it was holden odious to Prophesie by the devil, yet whom these kinds of Spirits carried awaie, and informed, they were thought to be the sonsiest and of best life. To speak of the many vain trattles founded vpon that illusion; How there was a King and Queene of Phairie, of such a jolly court and train as they had, how they had a teynd, & dutie, as it were of all goods: how they naturallie rode and went, eate and drank, and did all other actions like naturall men and women: I think it liker VIRGILS Campi Elysii, nor anie thing that ought to be beleueed by Christians, except in general, that as I spake sundrie times before, the devil illuded the senses of sundry simple creatures, in making them beleuee that they saw and harde such things as were nothing so indeed. (73-4)

Malleus Maleficarum or The Witches’s Hammer (1643) indoctrinated the world to the dangers of free thinking women and instructed the clergy how to locate, torture and destroy them. The deemed witches included all women scholars, priestesses, gypsies, mystics, nature lovers, herb gatherers and any women suspiciously attuned to the natural world. As Zipes points out, the entire period from 1480 to 1650 constitutes a phase of historical transition in which the “Catholic Church and the reform movement of Protestantism combined efforts with the support of the rising mercantile and industrial classes to rationalize society and literally to exterminate social deviates who were associated with the devil, such as female witches, male werewolves, Jews, and gypsies” (Fairy Tales and the Art of Subversion 37). Daly, describing witch-hunt as “woman’s holocaust”, argues that the intent of European witch-hunt “was to break down and destroy strong women, to dismember and kill the Goddess, the divine spark of be-ing in women” (111). The allusion to fairies in literary fairy tales, especially immediately after the period of witch-hunt, thus implies an alternative to conventional religion, thereby making the literary fairy tale an alternative to and therefore somewhat aligned with secular culture.
The image of fairies is appropriated by the French *conteuses* or female fairy tale writers to perform and demonstrate their unique prowess as artists and for the *conteuses* “the evocation of fairies is the evocation of female powers themselves” (Duggan 260). The fairies represent the possession of information and power to control the course of events which the female authors also aim to share through their fairy tales. The allusion to fairies controlling destiny, transposed to the literary plane of the fairy tales, comes to indicate “the narrative power of women, for the fairies and writers/tellers of these texts are in control of the destinies of all the characters” (Zipes, *Why Fairy* 69). Interestingly, the *conteuses* in the seventeenth century France also prefer to describe themselves as ‘modern fairies’ with intellectual power, artistic skill, presence and critical voice against prevailing values and standards.

**Hecate and the Weird Sisters in *Macbeth***:

In his account of the performance of *Macbeth* in 1611, Simon Forman refers to “three women, fairies or nymphs” (157) and Holinshed had also attributed the three crucial prophecies to “three women in strange and wild apparell” who might have been “goddesses of destinie, or else some nymphs or fairies, indued with knowledge of prophesie by their necromenticall science” (171-72). Fairies appeared on the English stage *An Episode of Fairies* (1600), a play attributed to Lyly, as the fairies sing and dance, the characters express the wonder that Macbeth and Banquo express upon first sighting the Weird Sisters:

> Jo. What mawmets are these?
> Fris. O, they be fairies that haunt these woods. (221)

Banquo is quizzed by the appearance of beings “so withere’d and so wild in their attire” (3.1.40) who challenge gender codification: “You should be women,/And yet your beards forbid me to interpret/That you are so” (3.1.45-7). Banquo’s words “confirm the witches’ ontological oddity using the language of unreadability” (Purkiss 210) and they are so bewildered that both Banquo and Macbeth need to refer either to the appearance or the utterances of the Weird sisters to grasp the impact of the narrative of the Weird Sisters. Once Macbeth hears the prophetic utterance engendering “royal hope” (1.3.56)in him, he abrogates the “ignorant present” and begins to inhabit the “future in the instant” (1.5.57-8). He becomes fixated with the “swelling act”, debates upon the “supernatural soliciting” (1.3.128; 130) and becomes excited at the events unfolding around him. The news of Ross and Angus assures Macbeth that the Weird Sisters “have more in them than mortal knowledge” (5.1.3) but he seeks to be doubly sure that the words of Weird Sisters have engendered not fiction but truth:

Stay, you imperfect speakers, tell me more:
By Sinel’s death I know I am Thane of Glamis,
But how of Cawdor? The Thane of Cawdor lives
A prosperous gentleman; and to be king
Stands not within the prospect of belief” (1.3. 70-4)

Hence, he urges the Weird Sisters to wait and resolve his dilemmas since they have offered only enigmatic words that makes Macbeth call them “imperfect speakers” and takes upon himself to translate/elaborate the narrative that they have offered as cryptic seeds. He almost sighs at the disappearance of the witches: “Would they had stay’d!” (1.3.81) and chooses to repeat the utterances to persuade himself of the truth of narrative:

MACBETH: Your children shall be kings.
BANQUO: You shall be king.
MACBETH: And Thane of Cawdor too; went it not so? (1.3.86-8)
The impact of the prophecy also affects Banquo who cannot restrain “the cursed thoughts” (2.1.8) and confides to Macbeth regarding his dream of the Weird Sisters. When Macbeth states that he no longer thinks of the weird sisters, it can be argued that he has assumed the Bradleyn imperative of translating the narrative into ‘appalling duty’. After Duncan’s murder, Banquo observes that in order to translate the “promise” into acts, Macbeth has “play’dst most fouly for’t” (3.1.3) while he chose to defer the fulfilment to his future generations.

When Macbeth spots the spectral Banquo, Lady Macbeth’s rebuke uncannily plays upon the proposed thesis of this essay – the prophesied/engendered narrative and the agency of the teller and the actant:

O, these flaws and starts
(Imposters to true fear) would well become
A woman’s story at a winter’s fire,
Authoriz’d by her grandam. Shame itself, (3.4.62-5)

The image of the female teller evokes the alternate tag of ‘Mother Goose Tale’ applied to fairy tale, that denigrates the female telling as gossip and denies authority and agency to women. What Lady Macbeth dismisses as childish and ineffective has acquired an agency of its own as Macbeth and Banquo cannot dissociate themselves from the experience and participate in its resonance. It has been pointed out that Lady Macbeth’s “anxious allusion to women’s tales context suggests their continuing and threatening power” (Lamb 529) and the utterances of the Weird Sisters, instead of being associated with anarchy and disruption, can be read as sign of narrative agency that is associated with the figure of fairy.

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Gender Performativities in Select Afghan Women’s Life-Stories

Dr. Sindhu J.*

Abstract: Hetero-normativity is at the core of the entrenched patriarchal society of Afghanistan, with its related power structures being further bolstered by war, fundamentalism and militant Islam. The institution of marriage in its conventionally understood practice has been, and continues to be, crucial to the maintenance of hetero-normativity which is validated not just through the patriarchal value-system but by religious frameworks as well. Gender roles and identities are ascribed to women solely in relation to wifehood and motherhood, within the marriage paradigm. Female identity without these socially sanctioned gender performativities is perceived as an indefinable, unrecognisable aberration that threatens the established social order. While this practice of marriage closes off all possibilities of personal autonomy for the female self, it ironically acts as a bulwark for the negotiation of multiple gender identities and roles for the male. The Afghan historical practice of bacha posh, which allows girls to socially inhabit male identity from birth until puberty, appears to be at odds with its society’s entrenched heteronormative patriarchal framework, in that it seemingly ‘allows’ a certain gender fluidity. But research shows that bacha posh emerges as an extreme form of gender-rigidity in a society in which women cannot legitimately play ‘masculine’ roles without discarding/denying their female selves. It also creates a gender-binary dilemma for the woman in question, who experiences the violent transition from bacha posh to the traditional roles and identities expected within marriage. Surveys show that most bacha posh girls accept the inevitabilities within a conventional marriage, despite the violence done to their hitherto assumed and performed gender identities. However, there are also instances where Afghan female resistance at an individual level has played an important role in creating and enlarging subversive spaces within these two social practices. The paper seeks to examine the gender implications of these specific instances, in select Afghan women’s life-stories.

Keywords: heteronormativity, patriarchy, family, Afghan societal structure, bacha posh, gender identity

The two most prominent defining characteristic features of Afghan society, through times past and present, have been its male-centredness and its deep emphasis on gender segregation. The cultural everyday practices emanating from these characteristic societal orientations have led to the structuring and maintenance of patriarchal power in some of its rawest manifestations. Such power structures are also fed and supported by larger phenomena in recent Afghan history such as war, fundamentalist interpretations of the Islamic faith and an economy bordering on collapse. The male-centric texture of Afghan society across class and caste/tribal identity finds a focal point of expression within the social unit of the family, where the desire for male children is paramount. The marked preference for male offspring is demonstrated through a common belief that the birth of girl children is unlucky, and that families without sons are weak and vulnerable to the exigencies of life. Given the rigidly hetero-normative male-centric paradigm within which marriage and family are enacted and maintained in Afghan society, together with the vastly subordinate status of its female members, the entire ‘responsibility’ of producing a male heir is attributed to women, to a point where their gendered identities as wives and mothers can be called into question if they happen not to have sons. The scientific facts of human reproduction have made little impact on
the ‘gendering’ of sonless families as weak and effeminate. It is in this context that the practice of *bacha posh*, wherein Afghan girl children are socially inducted into male identity and role-playing, until the age of puberty, needs to be understood.

Both the institutions of marriage and *bacha posh*, as practised in the everyday life of most Afghan families, ensure that the female body remains a site of preserving patriarchal structures of societal control. The actual process of *bacha posh* involves presenting a girl, with social and religious sanction, from either birth or very early childhood, as a boy, through name-change, cross-dressing, being accorded a privileged status within the family, the deliberate encouragement of behavioural patterns and role playing that are considered ‘male’ traits, such as assertiveness, physical aggression, participating in the earning of family income, and mingling visibly in public (largely male-dominated) spaces. This projection of an assumed male identity functions like an open secret, in that every significant other of the *bacha posh* in question knows the actual facts of the individual sexed body, but the artifice is sustained by a tacit recognition of the perceived necessity of, and importance accorded to, male children. The research of Jenny Nordberg, in her fascinating 2014 book *The Underground Girls of Kabul: In Search of a Hidden Resistance in Afghanistan*, reveals that in the cases of most girls who were made to undergo the gender transformations of *bacha posh* by their families, the question of the girl’s consent to such gender-identity and performativity thereof, did not arise. It also did not arise when the families decided to turn her precipitately back into a girl at the time of puberty, a time which often coincided with her arranged marriage. The practice of *bacha posh*, as far as the girl herself was concerned, was justified by her family to her on two counts: that she had been a dutiful child to them by being designated a ‘son’ for as long as was considered necessary; the experience itself, with its deliberate suppression of ‘feminine’ tendencies and emphasis on ‘masculine’ behaviour, was paradoxically also supposed to embolden and strengthen her (traditionally considered a ‘weak vessel’) for the rigors and challenges of a conventional marriage, in which her identity and status as wife and mother would be formed through her ‘ability’ to produce sons. A further justification within marriage itself was through a popular belief that the practice of *bacha posh* by married women with only daughters would guarantee male issue in ‘weak’ families (Nordberg 72).

The contradictions within the social practice of *bacha posh* point to two important aspects of Afghan patriarchy: firstly, that such a practice emerges as yet another instrument of oppressive control of female life for the ultimate preservation of male-centred families and by extension, of a male-dominated society; secondly, that the apparent ‘gender fluidity’ of the construct is actually a reaffirmation of the rigidity of a hetero-normative society that is traditionally intolerant of any definition of human gender and sexuality other than the binary identities and performance pertaining to heteronormativity. Thus, the female child concerned is more or less inducted into inhabiting ‘male’ identity and space for the socio-cultural acceptance and convenience of her family, for as long as deemed necessary. The birth of an actual male sibling heralds for the *bacha posh* a sudden and often emotionally and psychically violent reverting to a female identity. The pressure to revert back to a female gender is even more overwhelming that the initial *bacha posh* experience, because the girl cannot be allowed, according to traditional Afghan notions of social and cultural propriety (read patriarchy), to continue inhabiting the privileged and powerful status of a male identity once she becomes physically capable of bearing children herself. Thus *bacha posh* emerges as a social space within which girls have to deny or reject their female identities in order to have a temporary experience of the freedoms afforded in a sanctioned
male identity. Their existence as females in a family that has no sons becomes the focus of social visibility in a negative sense; since the idea of raising girls to be independent and to exercise agency, as females, is unthinkable within the Afghan traditional value-system, they can be allowed to have temporary gender performativities and identities as male children only to serve the purpose of keeping up appearances. This gives them the required invisibility needed for social acceptance; and they go back into further invisibility as grown and married women. Invisibility of women in public spaces, through the social norms that govern married respectability, is tacitly projected as a social good in traditional Afghan society.

In her research, Nordberg follows the life-histories of several women who had been subjected to the *bacha posh* experience in their early childhood and growing years. Most of them reverted to traditionally accepted definitions of womanhood through marriage, with a few exceptions. Of these, the story of Zahra, a *bacha posh* from the age of two to an age well into her teens, stands out, since she steadfastly refused to go back to what she saw as the prison of womanhood, after having had the freedoms of masculinity. She continues to be a man, an act of defiance in the face of mounting social rejection and isolation. In the words of Jenny Nordberg: “Who would not walk out the door in disguise — if the alternative was to live as a prisoner or slave? Who would really care about long hair or short, pants or skirt, feminine or masculine, if renouncing one’s gender gave one access to the world?” (212). The case of Nader (Nadia), was also an exception, in that she continued in her male identity, a situation made possible by the fact that she was one of those *bacha posh* who had “aged themselves out of the marriage market ... Only then – when her body is no longer fit to be appropriated by others for childbirth does it become her own. An infertile Afghan woman is considered less of a woman ... a woman who has renounced the feminine” (Nordberg 196-7). Against unrelenting hostility and social persecution, Nader has pursued a quiet underground (both literal and metaphoric) resistance of her own by teaching tae kwon do to young *bacha posh* girls in a basement (Nordberg 215-217).

Given the stifling norms of social control over women in Afghan culture, together with the *bacha posh* experience of an artificial freedom that is tantalising in its temporariness, it is hardly surprising that many girls and women fiercely resent being forced back into ‘femaleness’, which translates into complete subservience and invisibility for the remainder of their lives. The subterranean life-stories of Bakhtawara, a *bacha posh* who remained one all her life, and Ghutama, a Kochi nomad who played the role of a *bacha posh* without formally being one, offer interesting perspectives in this context. Many women of Khost province, southeastern Afghanistan, from which Bakhtawara hails, traditionally shoulder the entire burden of household and family responsibilities, since their men folk are forced by the harshness of existence in this mountainous and dry region to seek work abroad. This often means that women have to play roles traditionally designated as belonging to masculine terrain. Bakhtawara had been brought up from the age of three as a *bacha posh* since her parents were insecure about having only one son and two daughters. With her gender transformation, her family’s composition now was of two sons and a daughter. With her brother employed abroad and her parents’ old age, Bakhtawara could not be reverted to womanhood, since her assumed ‘manhood’ was needed to guard the social reputation of her sister-in-law and her children. Thus, she remained the masculine head of the household after her parents’ deaths and continued to perform the roles and behaviours expected of such a gendered identity: she worked alone in the fields to produce food crops for the family, she dressed in men’s clothes and habitually
wore a gun and ammunition belt for their protection, and was a respected member of the local jirgah which sought her opinion on the resolution of sensitive issues. Bakhtawara’s lifelong habitation of a ‘male’ identity is not a sign of rebellion or resistance as in the earlier mentioned instances, but is to be understood as forming part of the patriarchal continuum which demands that the male-centric pattern of family life be maintained at any cost, even through the social artifice of bacha posh. As a result, Bakhtawara’s adult life is a complex mixture of sanctioned social agency and autonomy, which she realises, can be exercised only by constant and continual denial of her femaleness. Paradoxically, she receives sincere respect and acceptance from her village men folk, who perceive her bacha posh existence as a sense of duty to her parents, and simultaneously becomes the butt of ridicule at the hands of the women, who cannot or will not realise “the violence of (her) foreclosed life” (Butler, Preface [1999], xxi), and taunt her with the insulting term ‘narkhazak’, which means eunuch (Kargar 229). It becomes important to note that Bakhtawara’s acceptance of gender inscription and its reflective performativity are wholly tenable to the village men since she has consistently denied and suppressed her female bodily self, but this negated self is inscribed through cruel ridicule which defeminises and desexualises her. The final irony is that her so-called autonomy, which can be exercised only through self-denial and suppression, is viewed as social transgression by women who are themselves victims of patriarchy and who have internalised its values to a point where self-consciousness is possible only in prescriptive terms. Thus, she emerges “as a woman whose feelings had been stolen from her long ago, and then imprisoned in a place even she couldn’t access. The society she lives in has taken away her right to live as a woman; yet on the other hand she has gained a kind of freedom no other Afghan woman could ever hope to attain” (Kargar 224). Bakhtawara herself, while acutely conscious of her personal deprivations, decides to suppress her female self, in order to continue as a ‘man’; her life becomes an illustration of the ways in which the boundaries of the human body are shaped and determined by a contradictory social fabric, in which the “cultural inscription” (Butler 177) of her female body as not-female, leads to a personal autonomy she would never have had as a woman.

In the case of Ghutama, a Kochi nomad who had been living in the Northwest Frontier region of Pakistan as a refugee along with her father and two younger brothers, there was no formal arrangement whereby she became a bacha posh. Due to her mother’s early death, a lazy and irresponsible father, and the tender age of her brothers, Ghutama becomes the breadwinner of her family by herding their cattle and making Kochi handicrafts to sell in the local village. Her comparative social/bodily freedom (an unveiled face, being alone in the fields) is not contested or controlled by her father because his own comfort depends on her ‘masculine’ role-playing. Her personal autonomy is challenged only when a rich Dubai-settled suitor asks her father for her hand in marriage, offering, according to Pashtun culture, a large sum of money as bride-price. Her father is irresolute since he is loath to give up either his own domestic comfort which is sustained by Ghutama, or let go of the bride-price. Unwilling to sacrifice her personal freedom, Ghutama not only refuses the offer of marriage, but goes on to resolve the crisis by going to the mosque and openly proposing marriage to the man she loves (a relatively poor fellow Kochi). Both these open acts of rebellion by a woman, considered deeply shameful and rigidly taboo in traditional Pashtun culture, also become possible in Ghutama’s case only through a consciously gendered performance of self-assertion. Her bodily self and gendered performative acts are dissonant in terms of cultural prescription. Luckily for Ghutama the story ends in her declaration of love being reciprocated fearlessly, and marriage to the man she loves (Kargar 245-255). What
is to be noticed here is that Ghutama is one of the very few women in Afghanistan who managed to decide the course and texture of her life for herself as a woman, (without access to formal education, employment or even the relative privileges which the *bacha posh* position might have offered her) especially in relation to such a crucial social marker of Afghan female identity as the institution of marriage. She refuses to be contained and marked bodily, through socio-cultural and religious pressures which, in her country, support an entrenched patriarchy. Her life-story stands out all the more when we consider the fact that many Afghan females experience marital rape, child-rape, wife-battering, domestic violence, slavery and unwanted pregnancies in conventional arranged marriages.

In contradistinction, these forms of gender-identity violence can be taken to their logical extremes, which the Afghan conventional marriage strangely accommodates. The life-story of Anesa, a young wife and mother of three who discovers that her marriage is merely a social facade kept up to conceal the guilty homosexuality of her husband from the larger village community, is an illustration of this (Kargar 115-138). Her identity as wife and mother is called into question by her husband’s lover, who lives in the same house with them and assumes absolute power and control over her and her children. Homosexuality is traditionally criminalised in Islamic culture, carrying a death sentence with it. Anesa realises that her marriage translates into the protection of the gender choices made by her husband, while her own identity as wife and mother have been violently rejected within it.

The male-centric family paradigm, in which gender is freely constructed and practised by the male head of the household, is socio-culturally maintained through marriage, without reference to the religious frames which criminalise any sexuality other than the hetero-normative. The wife/mother is bound both by religion and social pressure to the roles she is expected to perform in the gendered identity accorded to her, and this gendered identity pertains to her in an absolute form that is inextricable from marriage and family. Afghan female experience of conventional marriage is an illustration of the ways in which “the very contours of the body” are established through markings that seek to establish specific codes of cultural coherence. Any discourse that establishes the boundaries of the body serves the purpose of instating and naturalizing certain taboos regarding the appropriate limits, postures and modes of exchange that define what it is that constitutes bodies ...” (Butler 178). In Anesa’s case, the props and artifices of conventional marriage which inscribe and contain her bodily within it, also create a subversive genderspace for her husband, who can use its facade to negotiate his gender freely in terms of body, identity and performativity.

The gender-identity experiences of women like Anesa within the practical terrains of marriage can be construed as forms of gender violence which are inescapable, with the given related factors of extreme female poverty and resultant socio-economic dependence. While it may seem that the institution of *bacha posh* allows for a kind of free play of gender identity, it actually emerges as a reflection of the extreme rigidity of the heteronormative paradigm that constructs and preserves marriage and family in Afghan society, spaces within which female life may be allowed to legitimately exist. The seemingly subversive gender space of *bacha posh* is not to be found in its patriarchally-understood context; it is created by individual women like Zahra, Nader, Bakhtawara or Ghutama who consciously exercise the autonomy it affords, while actively resisting its oppressive gender definitions through their own understanding of its performativities.
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Folklore and Computers: The Oral and the Digital in Computational Folkloristics

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Abstract: Ever since the publication of Vladimir Propp’s *Morphology of the Folktale* in 1968 there has been an insurmountable use of his taxonomic model in attempting to do a structural analysis of various narratives. He paved the way to study any narrative by breaking it into its constituent parts. Computational folkloristics is a recent phenomenon that carries the notion of plot analysis to digital scale by wedding algorithmic approach to plot interpretation problems. Not only does this method of analysis revolutionise the study of folkloristics around the world, but also in the long run would be able to achieve the ultimate folklorist dream, i.e., a creation of an ultimate database of folk forms to work on. This paper looks at computational model of folkloristics and the possibility of how this method can augment the study of narratives in the face of changing paradigms in analytical tools.

Keywords: computational folkloristics, folktales, digital, oral, archiving, collection, database, morphology

One of the seminal works that ushered in an interest in plot analysis, structuralism and narratology was Vladimir Propp’s *Morphology of the Folktale*, originally written in Russian in 1928 and translated into English in 1968. Propp, who was a Russian literary theorist, attempted a morphological analysis of some Russian fairy tales in order to identify elemental plot units that he named “functions”. Propp identified a rigid set of thirty-one functions in most of the fairy tales he analysed. He also identified eight character roles: the hero, the villain, the donor, the dispatcher, the false hero, the helper, the princess, and her father. Propp’s work influenced film scholars such as Wollen (1976); anthropologists such as Claude Lévi-Strauss (1963); folklorists such as Dundes (1964), Günay (1994); narratologists such as Barthes (1977), Greimas (1987), Todorov (1977), Eco (1979), etc., who revisited his work in order to apply its premise to various disciplines. Recently Propp’s work also entered into the domain of game theory, films, plot analysis and never thought before areas like television series, theatre, games, mimes, cartoon strips, advertisements, dance forms, sports commentaries, news reports, story generation and interactive drama systems.

Propp was the first literary theorist whose work can be called “computational” in the modern sense with connotations of mathematical precision and logic. The idea of studying a text by breaking it into its constituent units is extremely relevant now. With the advent of computers and an explosion in digital archiving of traditional expressive forms the availability of machine readable data has increased to a gargantuan scale. There is an increase in the access to digital archives encoding the texts in textual, visual and aural formats. Whereas the traditional reach of the discipline of folklore revolved around three areas i.e., collecting, editing and archiving, new possibilities of analysis are possible by wedding the oral with the digital. The winter 2016 issue of *Journal of American Folklore* was a special issue focused on computational folkloristics making it the new buzz word. Professor Tangherlini along with James Abello and Peter Broadwell brought an interest in this area in the paper titled “Computational Folkloristics” published in the July 2012 issue of *Communications of the ACM*. They clearly distinguished their work from “Digital Folklore”. Abello et al say that they term those approaches “computational” that make use of “algorithmic methods to
assist in the interpretation of relationships or structures in the underlying data. Consequently, ‘Computational Folkloristics’ is distinct from Digital Folklore in the application of computation to a digital representation of a corpus.” (Computational Folkloristics: Call For papers).

In earlier papers titled “Oral Tradition in a Technologically Advanced World” (2003) and “Legendary Performances: Folklore, Repertoire and Mapping” (2010), professor Tangherlini, a professor of folklore in the Scandinavian Section and the Department of Asian Languages and Cultures at the University of California, Los Angeles and a fellow of the American Folklore Society, had foreseen the future of computational method of analysis. Such use of computational methods allows a researcher to take recourse to analytic tools from social science thus paving the way towards digital humanities. Researchers from social science, computer science and humanities are bound to come together where each becomes relevant to the other. He also says:

There are several key research areas that need to be explored in the coming years. One of the great advantages presaged by the informational technology boom is an ever increasing access to properly encoded digital archives and texts. Working in a digitized realm allows one to answer broad questions concerning such things as vocabulary, language usage, and repetition in a manner far more sophisticated than before. (“Oral Tradition in a Technologically Advanced World” 136)

The main targets of computational folkloristic are: first, digitization of resources into machine readable form; second, development of data structures to store these resources; third, classification of folklore data; fourth, development of domain sensitive methods of search, and fifth, application of algorithmic methods for corpus study. (Abello et al 62)

Traditionally, researchers of folklore confined their work to small collections and ‘close reading’ was applied to study the data. However, as Abello et al (2012) argue, the availability of huge data sets prevent close-reading. This calls for a new approach that combines ‘distant reading’ with ‘close reading’. The concept of “distant reading” was proposed by Franco Moretti (2000) who posited:

Distance … is a condition of knowledge: it allows you to focus on units that are much smaller or much larger than the text: devices, themes, tropes—or genres and systems. (57)

This approach stands in opposition to close reading to which most scholars are tuned to. Moretti takes the problem of World Literature as a starting point because with the proliferation of texts on a large scale a close reading of everything is not possible. He says, “… but the point is that there are thirty thousand nineteenth-century British novels out there, forty, fifty, sixty thousand—no one really knows, no one has read them, no one ever will. And then there are French novels, Chinese, Argentinian, American … Reading ‘more’ is always a good thing, but not the solution”. (55) This idea of investing too much in close reading of some texts so as to be able to deal with only an extremely small part of the canon will not be productive according to Moretti. Abello et al endorse this view and finds it applicable to folklore:

We endorse this view of the need to fuse close reading and distant reading. The backbone of computational folkloristics must leverage current technological developments that allow us to semantically interconnect large amounts of data and explore them relatively easily in integrated analytical and visual environments inexpensively … This system would allow a researcher to explore the complex relationships among tradition participants (the people in the tradition group), the
historical and geographic environment in which they lived and worked, and the folklore they created, and also allow for incorporation of pertinent scholarly feedback annotations. (62)

This extensive dataset can be used in research only with the right analytical tools in the face of proliferation of digital resources. Computational model takes recourse to Hierarchical Graph Maps, that is a “an algorithmic counterpart to distant reading” (Abello et al 62); Hypergraphs, that can help in comparative study; AutoMap, that can help generate keywords and “folklore macroscope” (Tanherlini 2013) to aid in the navigation and analysis of the folk corpus. The increase in digitization of folk narratives would enable the use of “computational approaches to help understand and model variation in folk narratives. Like in the context of sociolinguistics, variation may lead to change over time, and thus analyzing the variation in folk narratives could shed more light on how narratives develop over time and across space. Furthermore, modelling the variation could lead to improved tools for the automatic enrichment of meta data, which can be used for organizing and analyzing folk narrative data.” (Nguyen, 2017, 151)

Not only will this help in studying the variations in a text over a period of time by analyzing lexical similarity and creating a more resourceful motif index, but also tackle the problem of genre classification:

Being able to automatically classify these genres will improve accessibility of narratives (e.g. filtering search results by genre) and test to what extent these genres are distinguishable from each other. Most of the genres are not well defined, and researchers currently use crude heuristics or intuition to assign the genres. (Nguyen et al 2012, 378)

Computational approach of interdisciplinary collaboration would also enhance the indexing of folklore collection. Such approach does not discard the traditional indices created by Stith Thompson (1955-58), and Hans-Jörg Uther (2004) but “more flexible indexing systems can assist in resource discovery and can support research questions not considered by the original indexing regimes. Indeed, in modern folklore research, most research questions fall outside the bounds of the narrowly conceived classification schema devised by earlier scholars. While we do not propose to discard the important and useful work that has gone into classifying folklore collections, the computational methods ... significantly augment and extend these earlier classifications”. (Broadwell 2017)

There is no limit to the extent to which such tools and procedures will mark a radical shift in a researcher’s mindset. And to quote danahboyd and Kate Crawford (2012), “Rather, it is a profound change at the levels of epistemology and ethics. Big Data reframes key questions about the constitution of knowledge, the processes of research, how we should engage with information, and the nature and the categorization of reality.” (665) The availability of such large numbers of electronic texts “has increased the attractiveness of quantitative approaches as innovative ways of ‘reading’ amounts of text that would overwhelm traditional modes of reading. They also provide access to kinds of information that are not available even in principle without them. Quantitative approaches are most naturally associated with questions of authorship and style, but they can also be used to investigate larger interpretive issues like plot, theme, genre, period, tone, and modality.” (Hoover)

Like any method of research, computational approach also faces many challenges. Professor Tangherlini called into attention the major roadblocks:

... challenges that underpin the development of a computational folkloristics. Broadly conceived, these four challenges are (1) collection and archiving; (2) indexing and classification; (3) visualization and
navigation; and (4) analysis. ("Folklore Macroscope: Challenges for a Computational Folkloristics" 8)

One of the biggest challenges for computational folkloristics is the entire research material is not available in machine readable form. This would require a close collaboration among folklorists and computer scientists. To this can be added another problem, i.e., translation of expressive forms into a common target language, especially in a multilingual country like India where collecting and archiving are still a major challenge and digitization of texts is a distant dream. Also, since the inception of the discipline of folklore when it comes to manually recording the tale, the teller isn’t even recorded, not to mention other contextual features like time and place of recording. The collector and the participant are absent from traditional data. Does this mean that the earlier approach should be eschewed in the wake of this modern technological advancement? Abello, et al says:

As a case in point, one criterion of our work is to not abandon earlier systems of classification (such as the tale type, motif indices, and collection-specific indices) but incorporate the information from them into the story representation. . . Consequently, our approach is to model each story as an attribute-valued vector, where the values of some attributes are known a priori and others are computed. Some attributes may take as values either simple scalars or "links" to more complex structures or processes. Other attributes may have associated with them time-varying functions recording a sequence of attribute values over time, or a time series. (66)

In folklore, the creator of the folk text never occupies a significant position. Since the oral texts belongs to everyone and carries no author function, the relationship between the folk culture and the creator of the folklore is always side-lined. But as Abello et al says that with the new approaches “researchers are able to combine distant reading with close reading. In so doing, they can interrogate the relationship between folk expressive culture and the individuals who created and perpetuated these expressions in time and place. Computational folkloristics offers an opportunity to read and interpret culture in a more holistic fashion than ever before”. (70)

This also takes us to the issue of relationship between science and humanities. Can one assist the other? Are they as different as they pretend to be? To quote Kenna, et al “… two branches are part of the same ultimate endeavour – systematic investigation aimed at achieving greater understanding of the world in which we live. Their disciplines do not exist in isolation and they are nowadays increasingly interconnected and interdependent.” (1)

The development of “computational methods” Professor Tangherlini says “has the potential to advance our understanding of how people, engaged in the never-ending dialectic dance with tradition, create meaning for themselves and each other” through expressive forms. (“Folklore Macroscope: Challenges for a Computational Folkloristics” 24). This encounter of the textual and the digital will augment the study of analysis and interpretation. Such ideas and approaches do not claim to supplant old ways of analysis but in the long run would only complement them thereby making the study of any text very fascinating and exciting. Scholarship in folklore and humanities in general cannot resist this dramatic change in the long run.
Notes:
1 Propp based his study on Aleksandr N. Afanás’ev collection of Russian Folktales (1957). This collection includes more than six hundred folktales, of which Propp used only 102 tales (Number 50-Number 151).
2 He defines functions as, “Function is understood as an act of a character, defined from the point of view of its significance for the course of the action” (Propp, 1968, 21).
3 Wollen did a morphological analysis of Alfred Hitchcock’s blockbuster North by Northwest (1959) starring Cary Grant, Eva Marie Saint and James Mason.
4 Propp’s work influenced Eco whose work on Ian Fleming’s (1908-1964) James Bond novels is now a classic. Eco showed how Fleming worked with similar set of “units” with his spy novels.
5 See Lesinskis 2010, 41.
6 Arinbjarnar proposes a computer game engine that can dynamically create new game plots for a murder mystery based game. She bases her work on Proppian model to create a new plot based on a probability map of a typical murder mystery novel. She says that her plot generating engine “solves the issue of replayability as it guaranties that the player always gets a new plot for each new game. It also tackles the problem of linearity as it is responsive to preset constraints instead of pre-authored narrations. This makes the plot generating engine adaptable to all kinds of game settings that require a plot to structure game play and game interaction. Simply by adapting the morphology to the respective story type and making the rules constraining the net at least partially responsive to the respective character played by the player the game engine is able to create new plots for the player to tackle” (Arinbjarnar, 2005, 3).
7 Such as the Danish Folklore Archive which is affiliated to the Royal Library and is a national archive whose primary aim is to document the culture of the everyday life: habits, conceptions, myths, stories, songs and music. The collection also consists of an archive of children’s folklore. See http://www.dafos.dk.

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Abstract
Manju Kapur in her debut novel *Difficult Daughters* delineated the lifespan of the central figure of the novel, Virmati. The plot of the novel is set at the backdrop of 1940’s India, India in its immediate pre-independence stage. The saga of the partition of India draws parallel to the split self of Virmati whose character is caught between tradition and modernity. Throughout the novel Virmati is shown as attempting to create definite space for her- space that would allow and help her to be emancipated from patriarchal dogmas of the society. This paper aims at reveal spaces that Virmati aspires to create for herself and have access to those spaces. Definite spaces that Virmati wants to create for herself works at multiple levels i.e. space at home, space for education, space for choosing life-partner, space for choosing profession, and above all space to be a human being (not only being tagged as a woman).

**Keywords:** Space, Independence, Struggle, Society

*Difficult Daughters* is the story of Virmati, whose life starts in the novel at the age of ten and continues till death. Her life is delineated by her daughter Ida who is trying to “look for ways to connect” (Kapur 4) with her mother and to do that Ida moves to Amritsar to discover the life of Virmati. And thus *Difficult Daughters* describes the life of Virmati and people and the social set up she was associated with. Nishtha Mahajan stated that:

*Difficult Daughters* recounts the story of a young woman named Virmati, her desires to study, her rejection of an arranged marriage, her involvement with her married neighbour, whose second wife she becomes and the subsequent vicissitudes in her life including her existential choices and their ambivalent outcomes. (29)

Throughout the novel Virmati is shown all the time struggling to have space of her own that would allow her to live her life to the fullest. She wanted to have space for herself that would allow her to decide things for herself and assert her own identity and be happy.

Contemporary women writers writing in English made a huge leap from being local to global. Their writings not only mirror the contemporary social scenario but also broaden the spectrum of feminist perspective. Manju Kapur not being an exception to this category, in her first novel *Difficult Daughters* delineated the story of Virmati, the protagonist of the novel. The plot of the novel is set at the backdrop of India’s struggle for independence, the 1940’s India. In this novel Manju Kapur speaks with great narrative eloquence of the idea of independence; independence sought after by the country and the independence sought by its central character, Virmati. The saga of the partition of India works as the metaphor to portray the splitted self of Virmati whose life depicts the story of the struggle of an Indian woman who strives to have definite space in her life. The search for having definite space in one’s life is surely the key theme of *Difficult Daughters*. This search would not only lead a woman to live a life of one’s own, but also a life that should be lived by a human being which is not a gendered life. A. S. Dasan opined that:
In almost all cultures and civilizations, woman is at the centre of life with her creative wisdom and myriad forms for her female angst. She has experiences of being patronized, bypassed and ignored. Her feminine psyche has to cope with the pain, rather than privilege, of performing different roles in a male dominated society. In the midst of gender based relationship, tradition vs. modernity, love and friction, sexual exploitation, domestic chores, demands of children, experiences at workplace, and her own menstrual cycle, she also seeks space to exert her womanhood, feminity, and identity. (101)

Virmati the eldest daughter of Kasturi and Suraj Prakash, belonging to the Lala Diwan Chand family is the protagonist of the novel. She is the second mother to all her siblings: “... to her younger siblings she was second mother as well.” (Kapur 6) She is over burdened with the hectic work of rearing her siblings. She is hardly given the space at home that a child of ten year old should be given; she longs for emotional space to be attached with her mother, Kasturi. “At times Virmati yearned for affection, for some sign that she was special. However, when she put her head next to the youngest baby, feeding in the mother’s arms, Kasturi would get irritated and push her away. ‘Have you seen to their food – milk – clothes – studies?’” (Kapur 6) Kasturi symbolises the typical Indian housewife who works as a reproductive machine, who is never given the space to decide things for herself. She is never asked if she would like to go for further childbearing or not. Manju Kapur wants to subvert this traditional role to be played by Indian women and thus makes Kasturi to express her unwillingness to bear any more children: “She turned to God, so beautiful with his gifts, and prayed ferociously for the miracle of miscarriage. Her sandhya started and ended with this plea, that somehow she should drop the child she was carrying and never conceive again ... and tears gathered and flowed in the only privacy she knew.”(Kapur 7) Manju Kapur’s depiction of utter suffering of Kasturi clearly reveals the need for giving women more space. Yashika Chandana reveals that:

The portrayal of woman in Indian English fiction as the silent sufferer and up holder of the tradition and traditional values of family and society has undergone a tremendous change and is no longer presented as a passive character. Manju Kapur’s novels create a space where the issue of woman and modernity can be discussed openly. But still there is angst that prevails throughout the novels regarding social and gender construct that arise as result of modernity. Her writing in 1998, Manju Kapur, in her novels presents women who try to establish their own identity. The women of India have indeed achieved their success in half a century of Independence, but if there is to be a true female, independence, much remains to be done. The fight for autonomy remains unfinished combat in her quest for identity. (86)

To restore the health of Kasturi, it was decided that she be sent to a hill station Dalhousie accompanied by her eldest and youngest daughters. By that time Virmati was seventeen and studying for her FA exams. Eventually Virmati failed in her FA as she was burdened with household works. Virmati was the eldest daughter of an Arya Samaj family, which followed the old tradition of marrying off their daughters at a certain age after they received the basic qualification of housekeeping. But Virmati’s life took different twists and turns because of her inclination to education in true sense of term. Virmati’s urge for education had traces of her having an independent wish. She wanted to have her own space, her own identity. Virmati’s chance meeting with her cousin Shakuntala at Dalhousie “planted the seeds of aspiration in Virmati” (Kapur 19); Virmati could now think
That “it was possible to be something other than a wife.” (Kapur 19) Shakuntala, “to one whose responsibilities went beyond a husband and children” fermented the aspirations of Virmati with such words: “It was useless looking for answers inside the home. One had to look outside. To education, freedom, and the bright lights of Lahore colleges.” (Kapur 17) Manju Kapur’s novel not only included the plight of Indian women and mirrored the prevailing social scenario, but also created situations which broadened the spectrum of feminist perspective. Gone are the days when female protagonists were confined to an all domestic scene with muted voice. Working on the same line Manju Kapur made Shakuntala train Virmati with such words: “‘Arre,’ exclaimed her cousin patting her on the back, ‘times are changing, and women are moving out of the house, so why not you?’” (Kapur 18)

Manju kapur in Difficult Daughters subverted the rigid social norms and made her protagonist Virmati struggle to explore definite space for herself so that she could assert her self-identity as an independent human being and not only as a woman. Independence for a girl meant resistance to powerful patriarchy and Virmati’s insistence on education was her first step to this resistance. After meeting Shakuntala at Dalhousie, Virmati thought decisively that she too would continue with her studies even if she had to fight her mother, Kasturi who was the representative of patriarchy. Kasturi was very sure that her education was over when Virmati failed in her FA exams and now she should be all ready to play the defined roles for any daughter – limited education to inculcate traditional values and an early marriage. Working on the same line, Virmati’s family had chosen a suitable groom for her and once her education was over, she had to marry Inderjit, a boy who “was a canal engineer and doing well.” (Kapur 22)

With an objective of subverting patriarchal set patterns of the society Kapur desperately gave the plot a twist with the entry of a Professor who “taught at Arya Sabha College ... had returned from Oxford ... and landed in Amritsar” (Kapur 35), who became the tenant at the house of Virmati’s uncle and aunt Chander Prakash and Lajwanti. Arrival of the professor with his family in their new house in Lepel Griffin Road turns Virmati’s life upside down. Virmati had accepted her marriage with Inderjit as her fate at the tender age of seventeen and when she could pass only FA exams. As enquired by the professor’s wife, Ganga about her marriage, Virmati replied: “‘well ...’ blushed Virmati. ‘My family ...’ ... but then my grandmother, great-aunt really, died ... Now we have to wait a year and in the meantime I will go on studying” (Kapur 41). The family tragedy of the death of the great – aunt of the family postponed the destined marriage of Virmati and then the death of the canal engineer’s father gave Virmati the passport to enter AS college where the Professor, Harish Chandra joined as “a good English teacher”(Kapur 35): “Virmati entered AS College, the bastion of male learning” (Kapur 45). The very sight of Virmati in Professor’s classroom moved him deeply and “the Professor’s desire to possess her had extended to her heart and mind” (Kapur 47). She was inextricably drawn to the Prof who wooed her on the pretext that his wife was not his companion and he yearned for a stimulating intellectual partner. He put before Virmati his incomplete life. With an illiterate wife, betrothed when both were infants and it was none of their faults that they were bound by the wed-lock: “... how could he help it if he had been married off at the age of three?”(Kapur 55) Professor Harish Chandra provided Virmati the emotional space she was looking for in a companion: “That he paid attention to her, she was aware” (Kapur 54). Virmati mused over two letters that she received from Inderjit and Harish Chandra. While reading the letter received from Inderjit, Virmati “searched the words, but could find no sense that she was important to him, no impatience to be
united with her‖ (Kapur 56). To Inderjit the individual self of Virmati, the person, did not get any importance: “For him, you are a woman that his family has arranged he should marry. For such men the individual is unimportant” (Kapur 56). On the contrary, Harish Chandra’s letter read: “You are imprinted on my mind, my heart, my soul so firmly that until we can be united in a more permanent way I live in a shadowy insubstantial land” (Kapur 56). The kind of space sought after by Virmati in a relationship between a man and a woman, was promised by the professor. Harish Chandra’s continuous tugging at Virmati’s emotional strings left Virmati more confused than ever. She got caught between tradition and modernity. Her mind was perplexed. She became unable to decide whether she should accept her marriage with Inderjit and lead a traditional life of a submissive wife or she should respond to her heart’s call and get tied with the professor. At home Virmati could not have required space to express her mental state to anybody of her blood relation. Given the societal structure, a girl having minimum of education should be destined to lead a life of traditional wife and there was no other way out of it and by no way a girl’s desire to be recognised as a human being who by virtue of her education and intellect could contribute in external affairs other than home affairs, was never given any importance. Virmati revolted against this set pattern and she wanted to lead an independent life. In the institution of marriage she was looking for a space which would give her a position of ‘intellectual companion’ rather than being only a ‘homely’ wife. Harish Chandra’s conviction: “Until I am with you every moment of the day I cannot be satisfied. Every thought and feeling I have, I want to share with you” (kapur 56), made Virmati believe that her marriage with the professor might provide her the space of ‘intellectual companion’ that she was looking for in marriage. Dr. Smita Sharma penned the similar dilemma of Virmati’s mind:

Indian woman realizes her predicament when Male geocentricism blinds man to the situation of woman who may be placed in agonizing circumstances on account of her relationship with man. This attitude is very well highlighted through Virmati who found herself torn between her duties toward her family and her own wishes and desires to live a life of social identity and refinement by becoming an acme. (86)

Virmati’s mother was adamant and would not allow her to have her ways and she would always remind Virmati about the roles needed to be played by her: “You are the eldest, Viru, your duty is greater. You know how much the younger ones look up to you” (Kapur58). Talks of marriage filled the air and everybody in the house could think of nothing else but Virmati’s impending marriage: “It seemed that her family could talk of nothing else but her wedding. Every word they said had so little relation to her inner life that she felt fraudulent even listening to them, passively, immorally silent” (Kapur 69). Virmati was not having any space at home to express her heart out. Being perplexed Virmati contemplated suicide. She made a futile attempt of drowning herself at Tarisikka and saved by her grandfather’s servants.

Caught in the whirlpool of traditional and familial love and her illicit passion for the already married Professor, she decided to shun her impending marriage with Inderjit, attempted suicide and bore confinement in the godown. Being enquired about the reasons of such behaviour by her family members she declared that she did not want to marry and willing to study further. So the impending marriage was settled with Indumati, the second daughter. In the process of exploring space for herself, Virmati could resist patriarchs of Arya Samaj and decide her own way of life. But she was not happy with her activities, she had the feeling that whatever she did was not right; she had failed in showing her
responsibilities towards her family and for that she might be punished someday. Her family’s repeated attempts to make her believe that “men are not to be trusted” (Kapur 88), fall in deaf ear to Virmati. Virmati was soon shaken out of her lousy dreams and she could soon discover that the words of her family members were right. On one hand, Virmati was swayed away by the display of Harish Chandra’s love for her but on the other he reaffirmed his physical bond with his wife leading to her second pregnancy. This news shattered Virmati’s life. She revolted like Indian Simon de Bouvoir and asserted: “If I was to be a rubber doll for others to move as they willed, then I didn’t want to live” (Kapur 92). She rebelled and insisted to pursue higher studies. Reena Kothari opined:

Her rebellion against her traditional Arya Samaj family in postponing her marriage and then refusing to marry the person she was engaged to, suggests a radical rebellious act, and provokes the reader to assume that she will succeed in carving out a niche for herself” (106).

Manju Kapur made her protagonist, Virmati very assertive not only in her protest against patriarchal set up of the society, Virmati was also very assertive while she decided her future course of action and communicated the same to the Professor through a letter: “It seems to me ... that you can do what you like so long as you go on saying you love. I know this cannot be true. In my family marriages are not made like this. ... In which world was I living, to be so caught up in the illusion of your love? Just as you must do your duty to your family, and your wife, so too I must do my duty to mine. My people have always been straightforward people, Pitaji and Bade Baoji have always been known for their honesty and high standards. ... our community respects us. I am proud that i belong to such a family, and I must keep up its traditions. I am going to Lahore to do my BT. I want to be a teacher ...” (Kapur 107) These lines by Virmati clearly indicated that she was a very focused person, she was very much aware about her responsibilities towards her family, at the same time, she was also very much aware about the space that she should have in her life and that was why she declared that she wanted to be a teacher and that was why she would pursue her BT in Lahore. She wanted to attain academic excellence, economic freedom and above all longed to attain a place in the society like that of her cousin Shakuntala. Thus, we saw the budding of a “New Woman” in Virmati who did not want “to be a rubber doll for others to move as they willed” (92). Defying patriarchal notions that enforced a woman towards domesticity, she asserted her individuality and aspired self-reliance through education. She was not a silent rebel but was bold, outspoken, determined and action-oriented. She knew she could not depend upon the Professor to sort out the domestic situation and proceeded towards Lahore to tackle it on her own. Priyanka Mahajan in her essay defined “new woman” as one “who started resisting traditions, orthodox concepts and values” (Mahajan 201). Mahajan opined that:

The birth of “new woman” in India is a reality as the concept and position of womanhood has changed in the modern context. Attitudinal shift can be seen in the woman who longer shies away from taking the initiatives. Though this new change in thought has its variables, the results are relative depending upon the individual. This new woman is an assimilation of western influences as well as her native culture. She is a hybrid who despite of all kinds of upheavals, is able to strike a balance among diverse spheres of her life. The post-colonial modern novelists depict a “new woman” in their fiction, the woman who is the product of modern mercantile society, one who revolts against the traditional social set up. There is a consistent growth in her behaviour and attitude. (202)
Accompanied by her mother, Kasturi, Virmati reached Lahore and received by Shakuntala at the railway station. The consequence of a girl’s struggle to acquire her own space in life was not a very happy go lucky life kind. Seeing Virmati and her mother at the station, Shakuntala thought “... that her family was at last waking up to the fact that women had to take their place in the world, but must it always be when marriage hadn’t worked out? Work was not second best ...” (Kapur 112) However, Virmati’s entry in RSBL college, Lahore, provided her the space of “autonomy and freedom” (Kapur 115). She got further motivated by her roommate Swarnalata and her cousin Shakuntala to lead an independent life. Though she could rebel against patriarchy and deceive matriarchy at her home at Amritsar, she could not get rid of Professor’s desire of her and here in Lahore, once again, the Professor resurfaces in her life. Though Virmati made repeated pleading before the professor to provide legitimate name and space to their relation before further proceeding with it, Professor Harish Chandra very cunningly diverted her appeal: “‘Then marry me,’ she said, trying to push him away. ‘Marry me and make it clear to everybody.’ ‘I will, I will, darling, I will. Just give me time.’” (Kapur 125) Professor with the help of his Lahore resident friend Syad Husain started wooing Virmati and once again she succumbed to the persistent pestering of the professor: “... she thought, he was right, she was meant to be his, what was the point in foolishly denying it on the basis of an outmoded morality?” (Kapur 125) Virmati once again reconciliated with the professor and got pregnant.

Manju Kapur set the plot of the novel at the backdrop of the partition of India and Pakistan. During the stay of Virmati in Lahore, the air of Lahore was filled with political affairs like the Anti-Pakistan Conference, the Urdu Conference, the All-India Sikh League. Her roommate Swarnalata was an active participant in such political affairs and Virmati being the roommate of Swarnalata got opportunities to witness political meetings and other such activities. Virmati came across women like Mohini Datta, Sita Rallia, Mary Singh, Mrs Leela Mehta, all engrossed in the National Movement. Exposure to these women figures opened up new horizon for Virmati which is very much different from her so far life, engrossed in domestic affairs. As Virmati listened to some of these women, she began to contemplate: “All the women had such strong opinions. Virmati was amazed at how large an area of life these women wanted to appropriate for themselves” (Kapur 144). At this juncture of life Virmati questioned herself: “Am I free, thought Virmati. I came here to be free, but I am not like these women. They are using their minds, organizing, participating in conferences, politically active, while my time is spent being in love, wasting it” (Kapur 142). Virmati resoluted “These larger spaces were not for her.” (Kapur 144)

Virmati, with the help of Swarnalata had undergone an abortion of which Professor knew nothing. However, completing her BT in Lahore she returned back home in Amritsar. Thereafter she was offered the post of Principal of a college at Nahan. At Nahan, Virmati thought, she would live an independent life, but she could not have the space of Nahan to breathe a free life. Soon the professor again crawled in the scene and started wooing Virmati once again. Virmati could not help the situation but indulging herself in love affair with the Professor. But she was oblivion of the fact that at Nahan “love and autonomy could never co-exist” (Kapur 183). Eventually she faced an expulsion from Nahan. Out of utter frustration and hopelessness created out of her futile and illegitimate love affair, Virmati decided not to come back to Arya samaj family at Amritsar rather move towards Shantiniketan. On her way to Shantiniketan, she met Harish’s close friend poet who was already aware of their intimate relationship. As soon as he got to
know about Virmati’s plan he called Harish and asked him to come to Delhi. Harish Chandra at once came to Delhi and on Virmati’s approval married her.

Virmati thought that her marriage with Harish Chandra would give her passport to the kind of space she had been struggling all through to have access to, a space that would allow her to lead a life according to her own wish and desires. But soon Virmati could realize that her marriage with the professor emancipated her from one patriarchy to be caught in another form of patriarchy. After marrying the professor, when the couple reached the home of the professor, they did not have an usual welcome felicitation that should have been performed by the family members of the professor, as was expected by Virmati, being a newly wedded Indian bride. Rather Virmati’s entrance was unwelcomed by the professor’s mother, Kishori Devi, his first wife, Ganga and by his children. She was termed “gandi lady” (Kapur 208) by Giridhar, the grandson of Kishori Devi. Virmati was also unwelcomed “In the big house on Lepel Griffin Road” (Kapur 222), her parental house, where Virmati herself confessed, “I shouldn’t have come” (Kapur 220). At the professor’s house, which is now Virmati’s legitimate house, Virmati had to start struggling to identify specific physical spaces that she might call belonging to herself - the bedroom, the bathroom, the kitchen, in every space of the house she had limited and restrained access: “In the short time since her marriage she had learned to look at space in a new way; to define it and mark it, to think of what was hers and what wasn’t in ways that would have been unthinkable in the fluid areas of her maternal home. She felt contrite” (Kapur 227). Harish Chandra started to shape Virmati’s very personal space as per his will; on the morning of the second day of their married life, when the couple was served tea, “Virmati felt uneasy”, as “There was only tea there, no milk, which she was used to having in the mornings” (Kapur 214). On her protest to drink tea instead of milk, Harish Chandra forced her drink tea saying “Oh, I’m sure you can, if you try” (Kapur 214). Such incidents contributed in the shaping of Virmati’s personal space according to the desire and will of new patriarch in her life, Harish Chandra. Soon Virmati was conditioned to make such remark: “A woman’s happiness lies in giving her husband happiness” (Kapur 227). Though Virmati succeeded in marrying Harish Chandra, but she failed to secure any space for herself in his family.

Virmati was never allowed to play the role of a homemaker at Harish Chandra’s house, which she desperately wanted to; moreover she had a miscarriage and this incident left her with utter depression in her life. Professor found out escape root for Virmati from all domestic nuances as it was decided that she be sent to Lahore to do her MA: “Thus was born the idea of sending Virmati off to Lahore to do an MA” (Kapur 247). However Virmati did not rejoice at the idea of going for further studies; she was not really willing “to exchange a home for a classroom” (Kapur 248). In Lahore Virmati started to stay as a paying-guest in the house of a sister of a friend of Harish’s where also Harish had careful vigil on her activities and movements. Harish Chandra disliked Virmati’s involvement in any issues related to political matters and he clearly expressed this dissatisfaction of him to Virmati: “Yes, but look at all other things you are doing. Getting involved with Swarnalata, with Leela, with Kiran, with anybody and everybody except your husband” (Kapur 261). Her life was literally shadowed by Harish Chandra. Though she hated Philosophy, but she had to study MA in Philosophy because “Harish called it a noble subject” (Kapur 257). When Harish talked of the war and the ensuing political upheavals in the country with his friend, she felt utterly left out. She no longer remained an intellectual partner to her husband. She found the space of Lahore more comfortable which was free from complexities of family life that she encountered in Amritsar. Harish Chandra never missed the opportunity to
remind Virmati that she should learn the art of adjust, adapt and compromise and settle in her life in Amritsar: “You make it so difficult for yourself there. I think by now you have had enough time to adjust … ‘My wives now know what to expect from each other,’ continued Harish. Virmati looked at him. Normally he never referred to his ‘wives’. She was the wife, Ganga was the pronoun” (Kapur 261). Soon she could realise that all these days she had been chasing a mirage in disguise of the professor, whom she thought as her soul mate who would provide her with the space that she needed to live a life of a human being. She became more withdrawn inwardly and resolutely: “If Harish’s love for her wasn’t strong enough to survive an MA, it certainly wasn’t going to survive a lifetime” (Kapur 262).

In the meantime communal tension was at its heights caused by the suspected partition of India and Pakistan. “In Amritsar, too, there were disturbances” (Kapur 264). So Ganga and her children and Kishori Devi was sent back home to Kanpur. Virmati left her study in Lahore and returned to her home in Amritsar. Though the violence outside the home was at its height, but inside the home of Moti cottage, for the first time ever in her life, Virmati became the owner of the entire space of the house. But is it only the physical space of the home that she was fighting all through to be the owner? Surely not. She wanted to be the owner of her body as well as her mind. However like every other Indian woman, despite her being highly educated, a highly educated person who was supposed to understand all complexities of life and handle them, she was never allowed to participate in the affairs outside home: “When Virmati came home to Moti Cottage, the first thing she did was shift everything belonging to Ganga to the dressing room. Doing this she felt light – headed, … In the evening there was no one to see them, no one to mind anything they did. Virmati had never had so much space around her. May be this was really what she had fought for all along, space to be … Later, when it was considered safe, she wanted to help in the camps. But Harish would not allow it … She must stay at home” (Kapur 273-274).

The realization of the lack of space in the life of Virmati made her extremely frustrated and irritated and made her inwardly withdrawn; despite having blessed with full fledged physical space at home in Delhi, where Virmati, the professor and their only child Ida shifted, Virmati was found to be living a distressed life. The novel ends with Ida confessing that she was “in searching for a woman” (Kapur 280). It is for this ‘search for a woman’, that Manju Kapur had made an attempt in her debut novel.

Conclusion:

Contemporary Indian women writers explore the mental angst of Indian women who are caught in the opposing forces of tradition and modernity. Manju Kapur follows the same tradition of Indian women writers as she draws the sketch of Virmati, the protagonist of her debut novel Difficult Daughters. Kapur draws the picture of her women characters from multiple strands. She portrays some women characters who themselves play the role of patriarchy (Kasturi, Ganga) and some women characters struggle hard to get education and lead an emancipated life who demonstrate the characteristics of “new woman” (Virmati, Ida, Swarnalata). Virmati, the protagonist of the novel, tries to become a “new woman” who throughout the novel strives to create definite spaces for herself; spaces that she can have access to for making decisions in her life so that she can move from the periphery to the central position of socio-cultural set up of a society. There is certainly no denying the fact that the new generation women crave for more space. However this can be defended on the grounds of maladjustment in the fast changing flexible world of today. Kapur has tried to assert more voice to her female characters so that they do not hesitate to speak and do as they desire. She may find
melancholy waiting for her even in the end but she doesn’t run away from it, rather she accepts it. Her state matches with what Virginia Woolf says:

Life is not a series of gig lamps symmetrically arranged. Life is a luminous halo, a semi-transparent envelop surrounding us from the beginning of consciousness to the end. (189)

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Mapping out Diasporic Sensibility in Modern Indian English Literature

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Diaspora is simply the displacement of community/culture into another geographical and cultural region. Such movements were common during colonialism. Such diasporic movements developed their own distinctive cultures which preserved, extended, and developed their ‘original’ cultures. Diaspora culture is the effect of migration, immigration, and exile. However, it is important to distinguish between kinds of migration and diaspora - refugees, asylum seekers, illegal immigrants, voluntary migrants, and job-seekers constitute different form of diasporic existence. Curiously, ‘diasporic’ writing today has come to signify the recent phenomenon of ‘Third world’ writers in Western metropolises, though diasporic writers by Africans and Asians go back to the Eighteenth century (as Dean Mahomet, the first Indian author in English, lived in England). This ‘Third World’ literature functions as national allegory (Jameson), there is some merit treating diasporic writing as both autobiographical-individual and communal-cultural. Writers mapping the diasporic experience in their fiction or poetry are invariably diasporic in their real lives. It is important to note that the diasporic as a metonym- one who stands in for a whole community. Disporic writing captures the two invariables of their experience: exile and homeland. All diasporic literature is an attempt to negotiate between these two polarities. These writers under take two moves, one is temporal and other is spatial. Temporal move is looking at the past (analepsis) and looking back at the future (prolepsis). Analepsis produces nostalgia, memory and reclamation as literary themes. Prolepsis produces the themes of ethics of work, survival and cultural assimilation. Spatial move involves de-territorialisation and re-territorialisation journeys/travel by losing territory both geographical and cultural. The significant is also is that the loss of territory is almost accompanied the gain of new ones, dislocation from is followed by new location to. Their writings, with space thus move between ‘home’ and ‘foreign country’ between the old and the new. Contrasts and comparisons between the two spaces are frequent in the writings of immigrant postcolonial authors. Having arrived in a new geographical and cultural context, they negotiate in two cultures: their own and the new one. This diasporic culture is necessarily mixed and amalgamation of the two cultures. So it is surely not a coincidence that a large number of diasporic writing has spatial location in its very title: An area of Darkness and A house of Mr Biswas (Naipaul), Tales from Ferozesha Bagh (Mistry) The Famished Road (Ben Okri), The Nowhere Man (Markandaya), Nampally Road and The House of a Thousand Doors (Alexandar).

The word ‘diaspora’ is meant ‘scattered’ or ‘dispersed’. It derives from the Greek meaning ‘to disperse’. The term diaspora finds its roots in the Greek language, based on a translation of the Hebrew word, ‘Galut’. In Hebrew, the term is initially refers to “to the setting of colonies of Jews outside Palestine. It comes from a combination of Greek words - (dia), means apart or across and ‘speirein’ means ‘sow or scatter’. In the words of Bill Ashcroft in, Key Concepts in postcolonial Studies (1998), diaspora implies “the voluntary or forcible movements of people from their homelands into new regions” (68). Robin Cohen in his book, Global Diasporas: An Introduction (2001. ix), defines diaspora as communities living together in one country who acknowledge that “the old country” — a notion often buried deep in language, religion, custom, or folklore — always has some claim in their loyalty and emotions — a member’s adherence to diasporic community is
demonstrated by an acceptance of an inescapable link with their past migration history and a sense of co-ethnicity with others of a similar background.”

The first usage of the word ‘diaspora’ in English language was in 1876 refers to refugees of the Irish famine. Later the term was popular by the mid 1950s. Up to 1960, the term diaspora was confined to the extensive studies on three classical or traditional Diasporas viz. Jewish, Armenian and Greek, It is only after 1991, after inauguration of Diaspora: A Journal of Transnational Studies, the word was widely popular in literary circles and it picked up a high acceleration. Several theorists infused their points of view in the form of arguments through several platforms and some others formulated the theory of diaspora. Quite strikingly, over the last decade, the term ‘diaspora’ has become popular in both academic literature and public discourses. Some critics are of the opinion that the word ‘transnationalism’ offers more analytical than ‘diaspora’. The former term and its derivatives, such as transnational social spaces, fields and formations have been used to connote everyday practices of migrants engaged in various activities. Finally, they argue that diaspora should be studied under ‘transnationalism’.

**Indian Diaspora:**

The Indian Diaspora is a general term to describe the people who migrated from India. Migration has taken place due to historical, political and economic reasons including higher education, better prospects and marriage. The Indian diaspora is the second largest diaspora in the world (next to Chinese), consisted of more than 28 million of population reflecting the full multiplicity and variety of the rich social, ethnic, religious and cultural tapestry of India living especially in the U.K, the US, Australia, Fiji, Trinidad, Guyana and Mauritius, Malaysia and East Africa, Canada, and in the Middle East. The Indian diaspora can be divided into three phases- ancient, medieval and modern.

The ancient diaspora refers to labourers, crafts men and traders who explored new lands for work, trade, wealth and adventures. It dates back to the days of trade and religious contacts with other civilizations like the Greek and the Mesopotamian kingdoms, such as Cholas, maintained links with South-East Asian countries. The medieval diaspora relates to the nineteenth century. Indian migration began in significant numbers during the British period. The indentured labourers were those who went to the British Colonies on an agreement to serve for five years to work in sugar plantations, and came to be known as girmitiyas. This is known as ‘desperate diaspora’.

In modern times, skilled, educated and intelligent Indians moved to the USA and other European countries for economic and professional reasons. This ‘dollor diaspora’ is made of experts in different fields like IT, Medicine, Space Technology, Engineering, and Management and so on. There are eminent intellectuals, writers, and financial experts etc. The Indian diaspora has attracted attention of the media and the people over the world.

**The Features of Indian Diasporic Literature and its Brief History:**

The literature of the Indian diaspora is considered to be the body of writing in English produced by the persons of Indian heritage and who are living or have lived for some time outside the nation state of India. In recent years, there has been an increased interest in the works of diaspora in general and in Indian academia in particular. In fact, the first Indian writing in English is credited to Dean Mahomed, who was born in Patna, India, and after working for fifteen years in the Bengal Army of the British East India Company, migrated to England in 1784. His book *The Travels of Dean Mahomet* was published in 1794. Much of the Indian diasporic writings focus on the issues of identity; often juxtaposing the individual and collective, private and public, local and foreign. Religion and politics became focal
point of discussion in many diasporic works. They largely favour a secular humanist perspective. Overall, these writers take border, secular humanist view and yet nourish a kind of nostalgia for their past and traditions. In case of women writers, the notion of identity is an important focus, who gives highly volatile expression to women’s issues in sociopolitical construction of the nation. For many diasporic writers the act of writing implies their way of reclaiming their homeland. The immigrant’s story has proved to be a very fertile subject and the Indian immigrant writers have attempted to record the predicament of displacement, celebrating and/or questioning the act of straddling two cultures and coping with new countries and their cultures.

We find several types among the Indian diasporic writers, the first one are those ‘ever aliens’ like Raja Rao who lived in England for 25 years but never became a part of that culture. He was a permanent alien there. Then there are few writers who neither ‘here’ nor do ‘there’ like ‘Trishankus’ a metaphor coined by Uma Parmeswaran. The third category is that of ‘feel natives in adopted lands’, those who take foreign lands as their homes quite willingly and live. Further the modern Diasporic Indian writers can be grouped under two categories. One category contains those writers who spent a part of their lives in India and then migrated to other countries. The second category comprises of those writers who were born on foreign land. Former category has a literal displacement but latter category writers find themselves rootless. These writers view India from “outside as an exotic place of their origin.” These immigrant writers from India live in Canada, Germany, UK and USA. Majority of Indian English writers today live abroad. Literally, the Indian diasporic writing in English began with V.S. Naipaul, Ruth Prawer Jhabvala and Anita Desai; it was accelerated by Salman Rusdie and continues through the present generation of writers who are not “diasporic” in the strict sense of the term but have chosen to live abroad. Naipaul is an Indian by origin, Jhabvala by marriage and Desai by birth. These Indian Diasporic writers have explored various genres of literature like poetry, fiction, memoirs, fictional narratives, and short stories, but fiction is the most noteworthy contribution. Hence, novel and short story are the two genres that have become quite popular in comparison with poetry and drama. The most Indian diasporic writers are V.S. Naipaul, Salman Rushdie, Raja Rao, Kamala Markandaya, Anita Desai, Amitav Ghosh, Kiran Desai, Jumpa Lahiri, Vikram Sheth, Rohinton Mistry, Bharati Mukherjee, A. K. Ramanujan, Uma Parmeswaran, Bharati Mukherjee, Meena Alexander, Anjana Apachana, Sujata Bhatt and so on.

Defining Diasporic/Expatriate Sensibility:

An expatriate focuses on the native country that has been left behind. The expatriate dwells on the ‘Ex’ status of the past, while the immigrant celebrates his presents in the new country. Expatriate sensibility is a widespread phenomenon in this century and George Steiner describes the expatriate writer as “the uncontemporary everyman”. Indian expatriate writers in the recent years have created a unique form of literature which carries dual sensibility: mingling or differentiating past and present. Surely, the sense of homelessness and nostalgia for the loss of Home is one of the most important themes in such literatures.

Generally the Indian diasporic writers have recorded their diasporic sensibility more impressively in their fiction rather than in poetry. As it were, there exists among them some novelists who have produced classic novels like The Satanic Verses, Bye-Bye Black Bird, The Glass Palace, A Fine Balance, Interpreter of Maladies and Desirable Daughters., V. S. Naipaul sets the Indian diasporic sensibility in motion. He introduced travelogues and novels based on the immigrant feelings and emotions. Salman Rushdie’s imagination added the genre known as fantasy to
the fiction and Vikram Seth enriched it by using poetry for storytelling. Anita Desai, Bharati Mukerjee, Ruth Jhabvala, Rohinton Mistry, Amitav Ghose, Jhumpa Lahiri and other novelists have taken different routes to nourish and mature this new area of human experience. This literature is equally valuable in its poetry in the works of A.K. Ramanujan, R. Parth Sarthy, Adil Jussawala, Zulfikaar Ghose, Sujata Bhatt, Lakshmi Gill, Meena Alexander, Uma Parameswaran, Chitra Banerjee Divakaruni, Melanie Silgardo, Suniti Namjoshi, Gayatri Majumdar, Mani Rao, Aga Shahid Ali and others.

In his article, “The Public Role of Writers and Intellectuals,” Edward Said says that the writer plays an integral role in “testifying to a country’s or a region’s experience, thereby giving that experience a public identity forever inscribed in the global discursive agenda.

The Common Characteristics of Diasporic / Expatriate Experiences:

Sense of Insecurity and Alienation:

Benedict Anderson presents the role of imagination and its effect on the mind of an immigrant that is being exiled as a mental state, the feeling of being a misfit in a particular given, a reject and an outcaste. This is where the question of difference and otherness comes, the feeling of being alienated and rootless. (Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism)

The Asian immigrants are never accepted as part of the white community. Hence they continue to suffer the sense of alienation, of being exiles of not belonging. Born and bred there, for generations this has a disturbing experience as they do not belong to any land, or to a land that is more strange than the one in which they are settled. Meena Alexander experiences in different contexts. Meena Alexander felt insecure and alienated in the USA. In a poem, ‘The Rootedness’. The memories of grandparents and family roots in the state of Kerala make her lonely and restless. “Almost literally/ I am dying of loneliness”

Nostalgia for Homeland, Family and Traditions of One’s Community:

Nostalgia is therefore a key theme in diasporic writing. Nostalgia, memory and the themes of lost home often occupy a significant position in diasporic literature. It is a recurrent trait in all diasporic writers. Imagination plays a significant role in recalling memories of the homeland. Indian expatriate writers in the recent years have created a unique form of works which covers dual sensibility mingling or differentiating past and present. Home or old country is thus more imaginary and imagined than real. Avtar Brah writes “Home is a mystic place of no return even it is possible to visit the geographical territory that is seen as the place of origin.” (1997:192). For example, Ramanujan prefers to be cremated in Sanskrit and sandalwood in his poem “Death and the Good Citizen” he says as follows:

\[
\text{Hide bound, even worms cannot} \\
\text{have me: they’ll cremate} \\
\text{me in Sanskrit and sandalwood,} \\
\text{have me sterilized} \\
\text{to a scatter of ash. (Collected Poems, 136)}
\]

It is true that such an attitude makes him an instinctive insider, a settler in the blood. Lakshmi Gill’s poem, Out of Canada, she is reluctant even to die over there and crave to get her dead body buried in India. In her words:

“I cannot die here, on the streets \\
Of Moncton, I tell myself over and over---- \\
People wouldn’t know where to send my body. \\
I cannot die here in this country. (The Geography of Voice 50)

Meena Alexander recalls her maternal grandfather, grandmother and her house in Tiruvella. She also recalls her childhood days, family traditions etc. Sujata
Bhatt remembers her mother, grandmother, grandfather and prominent places of Ahmedabad. She refers to animals and birds, mythological characters like Hanuman, Ganesha, and Kali and so on. She recalls rituals and customs also as a part of her nostalgia. For Sujata Bhutt, home is the part and parcel of her identity, her inner psyche. She says in her poem A sense of continuity of relationship with home remains uninterrupted and unbroken. It pervades through her poetry and she expresses her sense of home in the poem "The One Who Goes Away" in the following way:

“But I never left home
I carried it away
with me (1997: 23)

Most of the writers have given references of Indian Land Scapes, ways of worshipping Indian deities and using the examples from Indian myths and epics.

The Loss of the Language, their Mother Tongue and their Native Culture:

Anita Desai’s Bye-Bye Blackbird (1985) deals with the migration of the Indians to England and disillusionment they often experience there. Ramanujan, though lived in the USA, remained deeply rooted in India and Indian traditions. With his typical ironic tone, the ‘great house’ is presented here as a storehouse of diminishing cultural values, ceremonies, and a dominating force of engulfing all sorts of mundane and serious activities of the past. Foreign language encroaches upon one’s mother tongue. Sujata Bhatt says that one cannot live with two tongues in one’s mouth. However, she is reconciled that her dreams are in her mother tongue and English will never replace Gujarati completely. Meena Alexander also feels robbed of her mother tongue and is sad about the illiteracy in one’s own language. Moniza Alvi also remonstrates that she never knew her father’s language.

The Sense of Exile:

According to Rusdie, “Exiles or immigrants or expatriates are haunted by some sense of loss, some urge to reclaim, to look back …” (10) Writers in exile condition experience the loss of identity and they search for their identity. At first, it leads to unhappiness, then to eventual healing and regeneration. The sense of exile among the women poets has given birth to creative upsurge. For Meena Alexander, the exiled state is a catalyst for creativity. Kamala Markandaya’s novel The Nowhere Man (1972), deals with the sufferings of the first generation immigrants in England. The protagonist, Srinivas, leaves his native land to settle in England but eventually, he finds that he belongs nowhere. The novel deals with the issues of diasporic angst, psychological and physical displacement and hyphenated identity often experienced by the immigrants in an alien country

Experiencing Victimization, Racial Discrimination, and Intolerant Attitude:

In Imaginary Homelands: Essays and Criticism (1981-91), Rushdie points out that racism manifested a crisis of culture in the country of adoption. He writes, “British thought, British society, has never been cleaned of the filth of imperialism … even British born blacks and Asians are thought of as people whose real home is elsewhere.” In some way or other, the writers have come face to face with racialism, colonization, ethnic intolerance, violence and. patriarchal subjugation in case of women. Chitra Banerjee Divakaruni deals with all kinds of injustice, evil practices and Subjugation of women. Moniza Alvi refers to intolerant attitude of the Western countries after 9/11.

Adaptation and Assimilation:

Uma Parameswaran, belongs to the first generation Indian immigrant diasporic poet. She always advocates assimilating with Canadian society in her Trishanku poems, a voice named Vithal speaks:
“We shall build our temple
Here where the Assiniboine
Flows into the Red.
And I shall bring Ganga
as Bhagiratha did of old (Trishanku 79)

Cultural Conflicts:

Bhikhu Parekh argues that cultures do not coexist peacefully – they compete, come into conflict and struggle for domination and mastery. Since they are rarely equal numerically or in their political and economic power, moral and political status and so on, the dominant culture has built- in advantages and tends over time to overwhelm the rest. (2006:97) (Rethinking Multiculturalism: Cultural Diversity and Political Theory. New York: Macmillan, 2006.). Hence unequal relations between dominant and subordinate communities call for negotiations and reconciliations through unequal treatment to the minority communities to ensure cultural security and identity.

In a poem, “Tara’s Mother- in- law” in Trishanku, by Uma Parameswaran, in a poem, “Chaman Lal Dwivedi” the speaker criticizes Canadian way of life:
Where everything is opposite –
Where people monstrously huge
Make night day, and sleep till noon.
Where women chase men,
Like Surpanaka of old.” (Trishanku, 72)

Suniti Namjoshi captures this sense of being alert to the disadvantages of both West and East when she writes:
In the West I burn;
Here
When my wings give out
I can not breathe. (1989: 118)

Hybridity and Identity Crisis:

It was Homi Bhabha who located the term hybrid identity in his famous book The Location of Culture (1994) and sees the borders as thresholds, in between spaces where identities can be recast. Hybridity then is always a pleasant experience. The loss of identity which makes Alexander restless creates darkness in her life as a migrated person. So she pens:
“Scratched by light
our anonymities awoke
cried after him was it
fit of darkness in us?”

Rusdie’s Midnight’s Children narrates the story of Saleem. The novel begins with the loss of identity. His mistaken identity is a factor that contributes to his rootlessness and fractured personality. Jhumpa Lahiri, in the Namesake, the question of identity plays a vital role. The characters are constantly making comparisons between Indian and American life. For Indian immigrants such as Ashima and Ashoke, many aspects of American culture are foreign to them, and they also feel like strangers in American society.. In Vine of Desire, Divakaruni’s fiction explores women searching for their identity as human beings, independent of their traditional role as a daughter, wife or mother.

Nation’s Loyalty

All the expatriate writers express their loyalty to their own nation, when India is in crisis like wars, famines, floods and earth quakes. Thus we can see lot of diasporic literature during the partition of India and the back period of Emergency during the reign of Indira Gandhi. They also engage in their works World cricket
cup matches in favour to India. Another significant thing is that the characters in their works are enthusiastic to enjoy Indian movies and Indian music. They responded in positive manner in favour to India.

**Conclusion**

Indian diasporic writing has become multi-cultural or global and multidimensional. Indians of various linguistic backgrounds celebrating each other’s festivals in foreign cities and regions is not uncommon. This lends another dimension to their diasporic writing in becoming transnational or transcultural and ultimately cosmopolitan or global.

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‘There’s nothing to hide’: Child Sexual Abuse in Dattani’s

Thirty Days in September

Basudeb Chakrabarti*

Abstract: Patriarchal subjugation of woman is a gnawing concern in Mahesh Dattani’s theatre for, as he states, man will not give up his “privileged position” and as an inevitable fallout, “woman is still marginalized” in the Indian society (Chanana 127). germane to such a politics of repression is the issue of violence against women perpetrated chiefly in terms of physical bashing and sexual abuse often within the precincts of family itself. And since the institution of family is inextricably enmeshed in the matrix of patriarchal hegemony and power inequalities, such atrocities are seldom foregrounded. Dattani’s creative index being acutely conscious of the strategies of erasure conversely chooses to dramatize the so-called “invisible issue[s]” of the Indian society with a gusto unique in itself (Mee, “Mahesh Dattani: Invisible Issues” 20). the present article analyses Dattani’s Thirty Days in September (2001) to lay bare the vicissitudes of child sexual abuse which, by and large, remains a muted subject in the discourses on patriarchal oppression in the Indian context.

Keywords: patriarchy, family, trauma, sexual abuse

In the social patterning of the relations between men and women, “child sexual abuse” is identified as a prominent locus in the analysis of “male violence against women” and Mahesh Dattani in making the evil of such abuse the focal centre of Thirty Days in September (2001), not only explores the politics of patriarchal social structuring that contributes to its occurring, but also debunks the myth that child sexual abuse pertains to “acts of [just] a few men upon a few women” which consequently makes it a muted subject in the discourses on patriarchal oppression in the Indian context (Walby 128). The victimizer’s position of trust and authority within a familial set up – Vinay, who perpetrates the abuses in Thirty Days in September, is Shanta’s brother and Mala’s uncle – urges Dattani also to interrogate the presumptive notion about the unquestionable security of home, for it is the protective walls of the home that conversely make the abuse of Shanta and Mala possible. The “situational logic” (141) in Dattani’s play thus adopts an interrogative stance regarding the patriarchal mores that bestow authority to the exploitative male, just as it draws into its ambit of critical enquiry the tangents of familialism that aid in the unconscious internalization of patriarchal norms making the survivor plead guilty even when she is actually innocent as is evident in Mala’s utterance: “It’s not anybody’s fault, except my own” (Dattani, Thirty Days in September 9).

Thirty Days in September was commissioned by Recovery and Healing from Incest, an NGO that helps survivors of child sexual abuse. At their invitation Dattani spent a few days with about eight survivors of child sexual abuse and listened to their experiences. “I was completely exhausted at the end of it all” states Dattani (qtd. in Chaudhuri 73). In fact, he “did not go back to the material for a long time (73). After a long gap, Dattani forced himself to take up the materials he had collected and started working on the play after putting himself at a reasonable distance in order to be objective. Using very “little sub-plot” and focusing entirely on Mala who was “sexually molested by her uncle as a child,” Thirty Days in September counteracts the malaise of child sexual abuse head-on (73). In fact, situating Mala in the milieu of the upper middle class is deliberate, for Dattani wants to contest “the general perception about the prevalence of child sexual abuse...
predominantly in the working classes” (74). The centering of the periphery that Dattani always follows in his process of individuating the fringed character, suffuses this play to a nicety. Accordingly, right from the outset we are led into the psychic recesses of Mala as we embark along with her to witness her journey from a regressed person to the individual that she is to become by negotiating the trauma of sexual abuse.

The play opens with the vibrant and free Mala at the counsellor’s desk. She does not hesitate to affirm her selfhood for the trauma with which she had been living so long is over now:

Mala Khatri. February 2004 … (Listening to the counsellor.) Why not? … I do not hesitate to use my real name now. Let people know. There’s nothing to hide. Not for me. After all, it is he who must hide. He should change his name, not me. It is he who must avoid being recognized. In people’s homes, at parties, hopefully even on the streets. He should look the other way when someone spots him anywhere on this planet. And I can make that happen. I have the power to do that now. If I use my real name … (Sighing, thinking about it almost as if it were a pleasant memory.) I wish he were here now, so I could see his face when I tell him I have nothing to hide. Because I know it wasn’t my fault … Now. I know now.

Pause.

(saying it with a growing sense of joy.) But what is the point? He is dead. Today. February the 29th. He is dead. Today. (Dattani, Thirty Days in September 8)

The emphasis on the ‘[n]ow’ by Mala automatically cues us to what she had been like before February 2004. Since Mala tells us that her molester is ‘dead’ on this very day – ‘February the 29th’ – we become inquisitive about the chain of events which lead to this ‘today.’ And Dattani is prompt to take us together with Mala through a series of flash-backs interwoven with episodes rooted in the time present – a myriad journey that charts Mala’s advent to the present state of solidarity which stems from her refusing to take the onus of her trauma upon herself any longer.

Traumatized Mala is first introduced to us through her voice on the tape meant for her counsellor and the stage direction tells us that she is “more unsure and a great deal more nervous:”

I – I don’t know how to begin … Today is the 30th of September … 2001, and my name is … I don’t think I want to say my name … I don’t think I want to say my name … I am sorry. I hope that is okay with you … I am unsure about this … and a lot of other things. But this … This is the first time you see that I … (After a long pause, where we do hear her breathing.) I know it is all my fault really … It must be. I must have asked for it … Somehow, I just seem to be made for it. Maybe I was born that way, maybe … This is what I am meant for. (9)

This monologue delves deep into Mala’s psyche providing us with a poignant picture of a sexually abused girl. Girls who become victims of child abuse tend to develop a masochistic tendency as they grow up and Mala’s self-accusations are a pointer to this fact. The more she accuses herself for her tragedy the more appeased she seems to become. For, when Mala projects herself as inherently vitiated she is able to provide herself with some sort of a causation that justifies to her the status of being abused. Convinced that she deserves ‘it’, she has come to hate herself and her acute disgust makes her objectify her body as something outside her. This voluntary otherization provokes her to pile heaps of abuses on her own self. Hence Mala cannot let go any opportunity to punish her body and consequently goes
around seducing men especially older men – prototypes of her victimizer – for to her “pleasure [has become] part of the pain” (29). The crux of Mala’s situation is tellingly corroborated, for instance, in Virani’s account of inflicting self-torture by the victim on being subjected to similar duress:

I realize – and recollect – why I have so many marks on my legs, between the knees and the calves, where they could be seen when I wore dresses and skirts. Instead of going to a beauty parlour where hot wax could be poured over my legs and the hair yanked out by their root, I declared it to be a detestable process and instead would shave my legs. Strips of skin would shave off too, one gash went rather neatly almost to the bone; blood, lots of it, on the floor … As I shaved, I nicked, wounded, profusely scarred. I was hurting myself because my pain was not being validated, that I could not bear to have that man around me. (xii)

There are numerous instances in the play where Mala either offers herself voluntarily to the lust of men, or concocts imaginary situations that would make her look blatantly lascivious. One such incident occurs towards the end of Act I when Mala points out a man in a restaurant and tells Deepak that the stranger is “staring at [her] breasts” (Dattani, Thirty Days in September 31). Deepak charges at the man in rage, only to be pacified by Mala a little later who now tells him that the accusation was made up. What Deepak gets to hear next horrifies him even more, “No. He wasn’t staring at me … I wanted him to … You want to know what I feel most? … If he had looked at me, I would have felt – I would have felt – truly alive” (31).

The same Mala has intermittent moments of sanity too. She knows she loves Deepak intensely but refuses to give in because she is scared of her past and her present ways. So, when Shanta forces Malaa to acknowledge that Deepak is her “only chance” of survival, the fatigued Mala says “How can I hide all this from him if I am to marry him, Ma?” to which Santa assures: “If you forget it ever happened, then you won’t have anything to hide” (29). And it is during one such moment of compassionate sharing that Mala pours out her heart to Shanta and blames her for all that has happened to her:

I am not talking about a bad dream! I am talking about the time when uncle Vinay would molest me. When I was seven. Then eight. Ten. Every vacation when we went to visit him or when he came to stay with us. You were busy in either the pooja room or the kitchen. I would go to papa and cry. Before I could even tell him why I was crying he would tell me to go to you. You always fed me and – and you never said it but I knew what you were saying to me without words. That I should eat well and go to sleep and the pain will go away. And, and – Oh God! It would go away. But it comes back. It didn’t go away forever. (26)

Mala has always believed that it is her mother’s silence that has destroyed her childhood – a standing that is endorsed in Virani’s analysis of familial situations that conversely allow child sexual abuses to thrive:

Child Sexual Abuse happens because the system of silence around the act perpetuates it. Child Sexual Abuse happens because this system of silence encourages some more men to want it to happen; and so the political, societal, cultural and religious attitudes which serve to underestimate the child, specially the female child, creates a climate in which abuse can thrive. (xxviii)

However, Dattani’s delving into Shanta’s silence offer complexities that belie any attempt at stereotyping her as a “callous and insensitive” human being (Thankamma 50). Her eldest brother – Vinay – was her molester and the
“patriarchal norms that make it possible for [him] to abuse his six-year old sister within the protective walls of their parental home, the same norms prevent Shanta, the youngest and only girl child from accusing him” (49). Internalization of the "norms that condition women not to challenge or question male authority" compels her to "silently endure both the abuse and the conjugal relationship later on" (49). Emotionally stunned and incapable of developing any sense of autonomy, she thus turns the ‘pooja room or the kitchen’ into her recluse.

If the ideology of male authority has stunted Shanta’s individuality, her subsequent compulsion to accept financial help from her abuser has clogged her voice of protest even further. It is only when Mala declares that she would never be able to pull herself out of the trauma of abuse that Shanta, in desperation to save her daughter, pushes her way out of the rubble of patriarchy to disclose the awfulness she has lived through. Dattani’s tour de force in structuring Thirty Days in September is marked with such brilliance that prior to this point in the dramatic action, Mala has not known that it is her uncle who has traumatized her mother’s life as well. And as Santa unfurls her traumatic past, both their crises blend into one another: “I was six, Mala. I was six. And he was thirteen … and it wasn’t only summer holidays. For ten years! For ten years!! (Pointing to the picture of God) I looked to Him. He helped me. He helped me. By taking away all feeling. No pain no pleasure only silence” (Dattani, Thirty Days in September 55). This revelation helps Mala to gel with her mother as the commonality of a devastated childhood unites the survivors.

Reconciled to her condition, Mala can now take up the cudgels of reorienting her life. Annihilating the scars left by her childhood experiences is tough for her but drawing upon anew-found resilience derived from her mother’s predicament, she takes the initiative to regroup her life with a renewed zeal: “Dear mother. It just isn’t easy to forget. Occasionally I catch his reflection in the glass on a subway, hiding behind a newspaper or pretending to be asleep. But it doesn’t matter. I can live with it now. He as a person is not important to me any more” (58). And as she kneels to Shanta uttering: “It’s not your fault mother. Just as it wasn’t my fault,” (58) Mala shakes off her abused and fringed life to enter the mainstream making “February the 29th 2004" justly her “Freedom Day” (56).

Evidently in Thirty Days in September the so-called “taboo subject” of child sexual abuse has been deliberately “pull[ed] out from under the rug,” for Dattani believes that such “invisible issues” of the Indian society must be placed on the stage for “public discussion” else all that is “confrontational,” would always remain unsighted, steamrolled by the “weight of tradition” and the “cultural constructions of gender” (Mee, “A Note on the Play” 319). And as a dramatist such an orientation is necessary too for “[w]hile it is absolutely vital to have tradition and continuity,” Dattani opines, “all is not well with that. You do need change” (Dattani, “Contemporary Indian Theatre and its Relevance” 3).

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Mee, Erin B. “A Note on the Play.” Dattani, Collected Plays 319-20
Abstract: The social structures prevalent in Indian society have had a greater impact on various facets of culture and women’s identity. In the past two to three decades, tremendous changes have taken place. The idea of ‘identity’ has explored multiple roles. Various factors such as gender, nationality, caste, class, religion, marriage, education, values and beliefs, physical appearance, family, and profession determine one’s identity.

Manju Kapur in her third novel, Home, tries to bring out the existence of dualities in the Indian social structure. In terms of culture, only when one encounters or experiences a different culture, there is a realization of ‘otherness’ in the system. Then the response could be either retaliation or passive acceptance. The urge to change or deviate from the existing culture brings in catastrophe. The cultural issues such as motherhood, business, education, food and so on are dealt very vividly and cautiously. The novel represents the dichotomy between modernity and traditionalism. This paper is an attempt to explore issues related to transition in culture and identity in Kapur’s novel Home.

The protagonist, Nisha, encounters varied experiences/situations from her childhood. Consequently, her character undergoes a series of changes. Nisha fights a mild battle against the fossilized cultural taboos. Kapur’s exploration of the notions of identity in depth is very much evident in Home and this paper is an attempt to study few of the characters’ responses and attitudes in a changed cultural set-up and delineate the concept of identity in the above mentioned work.

Keywords: culture, identity, marriage, gender, education, patriarchy

Social structures in Indian scenario in the past two to three decades have undergone considerable changes. The positioning of many women at various frontiers marks the transition in culture and identity. The male hegemony suppresses the dreams and aspirations of women. According to Simon De Beauvoir, the two prerequisites for woman’s freedom are “economic independence and liberation from orthodox traditions of society” (1986: 126). The ‘culture’ itself becomes a tool of oppression in the lives of women in a few circumstances. Women strive for their identity. They try to come out of familial bonds to place themselves in an elevated position amidst societal structures. Manju Kapur in her third novel, Home (2006), explores how the ‘voice of protest’ challenges the male dominated society.

People realize the variation in culture only when they experience ‘otherness’ in the social system. They become conscious of other ways of doing certain things. In general, people try not to cross the mental boundaries set by themselves or by the living environment. Due to their conditioned mindset, they struggle to come out of their set boundaries. Women are born into a society where even in the 21st century male hegemony has not been replaced by gender equality. Nevertheless, Manju Kapur’s heroines strive to break the stringent norms set by the traditional society.

Home is a story about Banwari Lal family ranging three generations. The male members of the family take care of family business and women are restricted to enter the arena of business. The patriarch, Banwari Lal, believes in following the
traditional practices and ensures no women in the family goes against the culture. His two sons, Yashpal and Pyarelal, adhere to his dictates. At one point, when the younger generation wanted to change the family business, they fail to convince the traditional patriarch of the family.

The novel centres around three female characters (Sona, Yashpal’s wife), Rupa (Sona’s sister) and more prominently Nisha (Sona’s daughter). Arranged marriage was the only way of marriage the older generation could accept. When Yashpal falls in love with a customer (Sona) and wants to marry her, he faces a lot of opposition from his family members. The opposition from the family implies how the old generation is trying to grapple with the modern culture. Nevertheless, Yashpal gets married to Sona challenging the firmly set norms of traditional society. In fact, Manju Kapur brings out various issues related to women. In her interview with J. Dadyburjor Farhad, she asserts that this novel is based on real facts. “I teach in an all girls college (Miranda House College, Delhi) and Home was first conceived in response to the home situations of some of my students who came from conservative backgrounds” (DNA INDIA web).

The issue of childlessness has been dealt with at length in the novel. For a married woman, her identity is complete only when she becomes a mother. As Clara Nublie opines, “Being a woman in modern India means to be entrapped into the inescapable cage of, ‘being a woman-wife-mother’.” (2003:137). Attainment of motherhood becomes a social obligation. Someone who is motherless is many a times looked down upon. Sona undergoes a feeling of trauma and distress due to her childlessness for almost ten years. Her beauty doesn’t come to her aid, if she fails to give birth to a child, specifically to a son who can take the family name forward. Her mother-in-law’s unsympathetic remarks show her contemptuous attitude towards her daughter-in-law. In her disturbed state, Sona cries out, “Please, I am growing old, bless us with a child, girl or boy, I do not care, but I cannot bear the emptiness in my heart.” (Home 20) The family, one is betrothed to, determines the kind of reactions/responses one is subjected to. Sona’s sister, Rupa’s childlessness is not brought to the forefront as a major problem. She continues to lead a normal life unlike her sister as she was not humiliated or agonized by her husband or father-in-law. However, Sona’s happiness has no bounds when she gives birth to a daughter after ten years of marriage and a son after few years. For her mother-in-law, it seems like mission accomplished as she exclaims, “Now I can die in peace.” (Home 95)

The stigma attached to the girl child is still debatable. Sona’s children, Nisha and Raju are treated differently because of their gender. During her childhood, Nisha is not allowed to go out like her brother. Being a girl, she is forced to experience a stifled childhood. Girls realize the social reality of gender differentiation from their very young age. Characters such as Nisha and Rupa try to challenge the existing culture to create an identity for themselves whereas Sona and her mother-in-law continue to perpetuate the system of male hegemony.

Kapur also hints at the evils of middle class joint family system. Nisha is sexually abused by her own cousin in her own home. Home, ideally a place of comfort and security, no longer serves to be so. After the incident, Nisha is terribly affected psychologically, emotionally and physically. Anupama Chowdhury says, “Home reveals a disturbing home truth that join families can both destroy and preserve our maturity, individuality and mental progress.” (2008:68). Her traumatized life in her home couldn’t be continued for a long time. She is soon taken charge of by her aunt, Rupa, whose attitude towards life is drastically different from her sister, Sona. Nisha’s character undergoes major transformation in her aunt’s place. She takes her aunt as her role model rather than her mother.
This act of hers helps her to outgrow the conventional relationship between mother and daughter and leads her towards a new culture which she embraces to her life.

Kapur’s focus on girls’ education is another major aspect of the novel. Nisha’s uncle encourages her to study further. She experiences a varied culture in her aunt’s place. Her outlook towards life changes considerably due to her changed environment. But unfortunately, she doesn’t get the same support from her mother. Nevertheless, there wasn’t much opposition from the male members of the family. Incidentally, Sona becomes the force of patriarchy.

When Nisha returns to her home after few years of her stay at her aunt’s place, mother fails to understand her daughter’s feelings and expects her to follow the traditional role of a woman in a middle class joint family. This clash between Nisha and Sona marks the clash between modernity and tradition. Each tries her way to convince the other about the ‘other’ side of things but in vain. So there is a constant struggle to attain their ideals. Sona’s realization that her daughter doesn’t know to cook makes her cry, “Roop, I would never had imagined you, of all people, filling the girl’s head with rubbish. This is the life of a woman: to look after her home, her husband, her children, and give them food she has cooked in her own hands.” (Home 171) Sona’s conditioned mind was not ready to accept her daughter’s new ideologies. Though both the sisters have come from the same family, they exhibit different outlook towards the upbringing of the girl child. This is mainly due to their changed environment after marriage.

Widowhood is a curse in the lives of women. Women yearn for their death before their husbands as they could avoid the dehumanizing treatment from the society which they have to undergo immediately after their soul mate’s death. Immediately after Banwari Lal’s death, his wife wails because of the misfortune which has struck in her life. The narrator mentions, “They smashed the glass bangles on her wrists, pulled off her toe rings, managala sutra and removed all the colour saris from her wardrobe and left the white.” (Home 110) The wife blindly accepts the culture. The cultural norms are so ingrained into their system; women feel that it has to be accepted without any retaliation. On the other hand, we know that Nisha’s husband is a widower, who didn’t have to bear all these heart-wrenching traditional customs or practices. The hypocrisy of the male-dominated society has been brought by the author in a very subtle way.

The quest for ‘individuality’ or ‘self’ in the life of women still remains unsettled. Though a lot has been spoken about gender equality, we are aware of the harsh realities with respect to the position of women in the society. Sona feels her daughter will have an identity only when she gets married. Her focus in life is to ensure Nisha is married - “God knew what use an education would be to a girl from a trader family, one who was only going to marry and produce children.” (Home 170). However, Nisha, the protagonist of the novel has woven the fabric of ‘woman empowerment’ for herself. She completes her M.A and starts working in a school. This is a major transition in her life because no woman in her family had the opportunity to see life beyond their home. Not satisfied being a teacher, she emerges as a young entrepreneur when she starts her own business by opening ‘Nisha’s Creations’. Her father’s support in all her endeavours proves a testimony to the fact that we cannot generalize the suppression or oppression being meted out to women by the men in the society. Nisha asserts her individuality and aspires for self-reliance through her education and profession.

Marriage serves as an important instrument in the transition of a woman’s identity. When it comes to marriage, caste and class play a predominant role in the middle class joint families. Kapur delineates on the issue of marriage. Nisha is not given permission to marry the person of her choice as he belongs to a caste and a
class lower than hers. Unfortunately, her dreams and aspirations to marry Suresh and be an entrepreneur were suppressed. Sona’s restlessness until her daughter gets married shows the inevitability of marriage in a middle class woman’s life. She is forced to marry a widower and attain motherhood. Consequently, she is forced to give up her business. Though Nisha tries to cross the patriarchal threshold, she is caught into another. She feels that her free spirits are curbed. Even in the twenty first century middle class Indian women are fighting for their self-identification and independent existence. They are deprived of the domestic space, free thinking, the economic independence, and at most times even freedom of expression. They can at the most give suggestions but the final decisions are always from the gullet of the patriarch. Women are caught in the dichotomy of their innermost desires and socially oppressive customs which are still prevalent.

Unfortunately, the patriarchal structure perpetuates its well-established notions which actually puts the woman in a very servile position. Nonetheless, women are not ready to accept this as their fate, they constantly agitate to come out of this. They assert their individuality and create an identity for themselves. Consequently, one can witness the gradual transition in culture to disturb the stereotypical notions which are greatly in favour of men. Kapur’s projection of women is a real testimony to the fact that many women are striving their way to see an end to the tradition-bound practices.

Kapur delves into the workings of the human heart and mind. Her women characters create a space of their own in the society. They tread on various paths to attain self-dependence and respect. They will be remembered as valiant women who have rewritten ‘history’ to ‘herstory’ through their conscious efforts of transforming culture and identity thereby opening the minds of the numerous readers to new horizons of women strength.

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Feminism in R. K. Narayan’s Novel “The Painter of Signs”

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Abstract: “I have chosen to no longer be apologetic for my femininity. And I want to be respected in all my femaleness.” (Adichie, 15) Rasipuram Krishnaswami Iyer Narayanaswami (1906-2001) popularly known as R. K. Narayan, is one of the most respected novelists in English literature. Narayan’s contribution to Indian English literature is beyond description. As the recognition of his literary merit numerous accolades have been conferred on him: Sahitya Akademi Award (1958), Padma Bhushan (1964), AC Benson Medal by British Royal Society of Literature (1980) and Padma Vibhushan (2001). Most of his novels are set in Malgudi: a semi-urban fictional town in Southern India. His novel The Painter of Signs (1976) is a representative feminist novel. Daisy, the heroine of the novel, has been portrayed as a symbol of feminism. The paper attempts a feministic reading of the novel The Painter of Signs by highlighting the resistance that the heroine shows against patriarchy/subjugation.

Keywords: feminism, patriarchy, subjugation, domesticity, resistance, emancipation

“There is no gate, no lock, no bolt that you can set upon the freedom of my mind.” (Woolf, 76)

Feminism is a movement which tries to define and establish social, legal and cultural freedom and equality of women. Gender equality is at the core of feministic movement: it advocates women’s rights on the ground of equality of the sexes in all spheres of life. Feminism, as a literary movement, aims to revolt against the patriarchal society: it aims to emancipate women from the chains of subjugation and domesticity. By depicting domestic violence, sexual harassment, etc in their works Feminists highlight the plight of women in the patriarchal society and thereby try to inculcate a sense of rebellion and self identity in them. Robert Webb defines feminism in the following terms: “Feminism isn’t about hating men. It’s about challenging the absurd gender distinctions that boys and girls learn from childhood and carry into their adult lives.” ¹

The novel, The Painter of Signs, was written at a time when women all over the world in general and all over India in particular had started coming forefront. They had started becoming career conscious. Women no longer wanted to be restricted to domestic affairs only. They had become aware of their rights. They wanted to be treated as human beings and not merely as objects symbolizing submissiveness, weakness and subjugation.

“I am no bird; and no net snares me: I am a free human being with an independent will.” (Bronte, 280)

The Painter of Signs is one of the best novels of R. K. Narayan. Narayan, here, presents a heroine, Daisy, as an ultramodern woman who revolts against patriarchy and subjugation in the novel. Daisy wants to be free from all forms of domesticity and subjugation: “she wants to be free from the chains of marriage and social life.”² She has been portrayed as a symbol of feminism in the novel. Right from the beginning she has been a rebel, she says:

“I found my studies dull and lifeless. I was always obsessed with the thought that I ought to do something better, something more useful than this routine life, that I was in a vast meaningful organization from which there seemed to be no escape.” (Datta, 112)
The Painter of Signs as a representative feminist novel presents an unsuccessful love story of Raman, the protagonist of the novel, who tries to convince Daisy into marrying him.

Throughout the course of the novel he tries to persuade her to give up her stand on family planning but to no avail. Daisy works for the cause of family planning. “She tries hard to convince people that children are not “God’s gift” and their birth can be controlled by adopting scientific methods like contraception and sterilization.” (Battra, 147) “As a single woman working to spread information on family planning and living contentedly on her own” (Battra, 145) she presents a sharp contrast to the conventional women living in Malgudi:

“The choice of profession itself reflects her radical thinking. She does not do so out of compulsion, but out of a desire to do something unusual in life. May be, she wants to have an identity distinct from others of her sex.” (Mehta, 85)

Daisy’s reaction when she is asked to parade before a prospective bridegroom is a remarkable manifestation of feminism. She tries to break the convention whereby only a groom can inspect a bride:

“My mother called me one day into a side room and told me to be prepared to be inspected by a prospective bridegroom. They had a shock at home when I told my people that I’d not allow anyone to inspect me as a bride and that I’d rather do the inspection of the groom!

Her reply to her uncle when he insists her to do the parade is equally remarkable and feministic:

I replied, “If it is not done, it’s better that someone starts doing it now… I would like to work, rather than be a wife.”

Once questioned about Daisy’s possible heritage, Narayan answered:

“In The Dark Room I was concerned with showing the utter dependence of woman on man in our society. I suppose I have moved along with the times. The girl in my new novel is quite different, not only is she not dependent on men, she actually has no use for them as an integral part of her life. To show her complete independence and ability to stand by herself I took care not to give her a name with any kind of emotional connotation. I am calling her simply Daisy. She is a very strong character.” (Piciucco, 174-75)

Generally speaking, an author would portray a woman as weak, submissive, servile and acquiescent but Narayan breaks the tradition by presenting Daisy as a strong, obstinate, intractable young lady. Moreover, the astonishing adaptability of Daisy presented in the novel is in line with the feministic perspective of the novel:

“She could spread out the little roll of carpet that she carried in a bag and sleep anywhere. She also a little food container and a bottle of drinking water … wherever she could, she filled up the containers with what was available- eggs, bread, chicken, meat, fruit or rice. She had no taboo of any kind … she bathed in a public well…she never bothered about comforts, conveniences. She accepted any hospitality even in the lowliest, hut and proved extremely undemanding.”

When they go to the river steps and sit there, Raman tries to caress her. Her reaction is a remarkable example of her feministic outlook for it (feminism) does not want women to be treated as weak, submissive and self-sacrificing:

He threw a look at her, and felt drawn to her. He edged a few inches nearer involuntarily.

He merely said, “I like you, I feel lost without you.”

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“Better than getting lost along with me,” she mumbled on. “I love you,’ ‘I love you,’ are words which can hardly be real...When a man says, ‘I love you’ and a woman ‘I love you’- it sounds mechanical and unconvincing.”

Throughout the course of the novel Raman tries to convince Daisy into marring him. Even though she agrees to marry him, she puts some conditions: she would not bear any child for him nor would she be cooking food at home like other women. She, therefore, does not want to be a prisoner of domesticity.

One, that they should have no children, and two, if by mischance one was born she would give the child away and keep herself free to pursue her social work. Raman was not to object or modify this in any manner.

Feministic aspect of the novel is manifested in Daisy’s explanation of her stand:

“Long ago I broke away from the routine of a women’s life. There are millions of women who go through it happily. I am not one of them. I, have planned for myself a different kind of life. I have a well defined purpose from which I will never swerve.”

In a feministic style Daisy explains to Raman how committed she was to the “well defined purpose” that she has taken up and that she does not want marriage to be a means of subjugation:

“If you marry me, you must leave me to my own plans even when I am a wife. On any day you question ‘why’ or ‘how’, I will leave you.”

Udaya Trivedi commenting on the relationship between Raman and Daisy states:

“The role models in the novel seem to be reversed. Raman is ready to do the household chores and wait for her moods to be friendly. Like the Indian woman worshipping her husband he is ready to worship her and follow her.” (Trivedi, 138)

Feminism is also manifested through the character of Raman’s old Aunt in the novel. She has been portrayed as a devout, orthodox and superstitious. She has devoted her life solely to the welfare of Raman. However, when Raman asks for her assent for marrying Daisy, she protests against it. “She registers her protest by leaving on a pilgrimage to the Himalayas, to Haridwar, Badrinath and Kedarnath before reaching Benaras where she wants to spend the remainder of her life.” (Batra, 150) When Raman pleads with her to stay with him, she says:

“I’ve told you what I will do. Nothing else matters. I have drifted in the ocean of samsara for countless years.”

William Walsh comments in this context:

“As absolute as Daisy in her way except that what she is attached to be deeply weathered in time and sanctioned by the experience of generations, she too decides to give up the ordinary world and finally to himself. She will go on a permanent pilgrimage and hope to die on the banks of the sacred river.” (Walsh, 161)

Narayan gives a quintessential feminist ending to The Painter of Signs. Daisy deserts Raman because she has finally decided not to be a prisoner of domesticity. As a typical feminist, “her work takes priority and her shifting to Raman’s house can wait” (Batra, 123): Raman asks her pathetically;

“What about me?”

She says, “Well, it doesn’t seem to be possible now … No, this is the end.”

Daisy repeats that it is the end of their relationship:

“Let us face the face … Married life is not for me. I have thought it over. It frightens me. I am not cut out for the life you imagine. I can’t live except alone. It won’t work.”
The novel, *The Painter of Signs*, is a representative feminist novel. Feminism in the novel is manifested in Daisy’s highly individualistic sensibility and her aloofness from the ordinary concern of a woman. Daisy, a feminist, is a symbol of revolt against patriarchy in the novel. Throughout the novel she proves to be more assertive and dominating. She, being a feminist, revolts against the tradition whereby woman is forced into passivity, credulity and subjectivity. The novel, thus, challenges the absurd gender distinctions prevalent in our society. It would not be wrong to conclude the paper with the words of Shantha Krishnaswami:

“In the case of Daisy the existing cultural absolutes are transformed, the roles are reversed and we get a Huxleyan picture of a new world, where, without the aid of new biological weaponry – like cybernetics and pathogenesis the female attains a titanic womanhood, disregarding all known bounds.” (Krishnaswami, 135)

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The Portrayal of Women in the Santal Folktales

Anita Gua Hembrom*

The term gender refers to the socially accepted values, characteristics, roles ascribed to men and women in a society. Gender is a term which has been used as a tool since ages to define and create the image of man and woman and the duties and roles they need to perform depending upon the creation of image. Long before the availability and spread of written literature, folktales played a significant role in the propagation of the accepted gender roles among various communities. Folktales dealing with gender roles are present in abundance in every community. A critical analysis of such folktales would reveal that the construction of gender, to a large extent, is biased and unequal in nature. We can claim this biasness and inequality on the basis of the roles the male and female characters are portrayed performing. Almost all the folktales present or portray woman as subordinate to her male counterpart.

In the light of the above mentioned argument I would critically analyse the representation of gender in the Santal folktales with special reference to folktales about women. The Santals, one of the largest tribes of India, are found in the states of Bihar, Jharkhand, West Bengal, Odisha and Assam. Being a tribal community, the folktales served as a vehicle in propagating the gender ideology among the Santals since ages. In the absence of written literature as late as the late 18th century (written literature among Santals was introduced only in the 19th century), the folktales was one of the medium of passing down the cultural knowledge, values and ideologies. Unfortunately there is hardly any work dealing with the study of gender roles in the Santal folktales. For my study of gender role in the Santal folktales I have taken the book by P. O. Bodding (Santal folktales, 2007), the folktales of which was collected during the colonial period.

Before going into the detail study of the gender role in the Santal folktales I would like to discuss about the role of Santal man and woman in the society and the accepted norms. P. C. Hembrom quotes a Santali saying, “legati rena dare ho marang dare” meaning, “left hand is equally useful and powerful as the right one (81). According to him, Santals exhibit remarkable advanced attitude towards individuals in the society in spite of being educationally backward. As per general concept, it is an age old convention that men and women have equal status in Santal society (81). Even though we take this fact as truth we cannot deny the fact that the Santal society is a patriarchal society. A man is considered to be the master of the family. The society has moulded the roles and positions of women according to the convenience of the Santal men. It is to be noted that inequality or the fact that one is subordinated to the other does not depend merely on the biological and psychological differences between man and woman. Nenola says that the roles of men and women in a community are not accidental; rather they are learned and internalized through practice. Practices, the division of labour, the concepts and ideals linked to female and male, all are a part of the traditional culture of any society. (21) In Santal society the roles of men and women are divided like any other communities.

The Santal women are considered to be physically strong and also able to undergo day long physical labour. Once a Santal girl reaches five years of age she is expected to do some domestic work like collecting fuel, fetching water, serving food, looking after some small child etc. Thus, by associating with the mother or other senior women of the family, she gradually adopts the role assigned to women and thus gives her consent to the accepted norms of the society (Mondal and
Begum 191-92). We get many examples from the folktales where women are being praised for doing extreme physical labour. The Santal women enjoy certain freedom as compared to the women of other societies. A Santal woman has every right and privilege to claim for divorce from her husband, if he is found to be allegedly involved in an extra-marital relation or for any other mal-adjustment in their conjugal life. She even has the right to re-marry elsewhere. Even in the case of the death of the husband, she is exempted from the restrictions of widowhood and she is allowed to re-marry. (Hembrom 87) In spite of enjoying certain freedom, the role of Santal women is limited in certain social, political, economic and religious activities. In Santal society women have no political role to play. They are not allowed to hold office in the village council or to participate in the council meetings. Though they always have strong voice in the decision-making process in the family, they cannot give their opinions relating to common concerns in the village since they are not considered capable of it. They usually convey their opinion to the village council through their husbands and other male members. (Culshaw 29) It seems, the Santal women are praised for their physical capability but their intellectual ability is somehow ignored by the society. Apart from this, certain activities are strictly prohibited for the Santal women. They are not allowed to plough or even touch the plough. If they ever touch the plough, the village priest has to do the puja for purification of the plough and to avoid any bad omen (Murmu). Talking about Santal religion, it is essentially a “man’s religion” (Malley 122). Women are kept away from various religious ceremonies. The absence of women from certain spheres, political, economical and religious activities of the society can help us explore the process of genderisation.

In some folktales we get to see that a widower is often advised by elderly people to re-marry before the arrival of the harvesting season so that he may get a helping hand. In the tale, Mitten Kaki Ingat Rean (“The Stepmother”), the widower remarries just before the arrival of the harvesting season. (Bodding 275) In another tale, Jhore Ar Bajun (“Jhore and Bajun”), the elder brother Bajun complains about the problems he is facing in harvesting since his wife is sick. (Bodding 3) A woman who cannot undergo any sort of physical labour is considered useless and has to be taught a lesson as in the tale, Kurhni Kuri Reak Katha (“The Lazy Girl”). In this tale the woman always pretends to be sick before the arrival of harvesting season and whenever she is asked to do some work by her in-laws. Her in-laws take the help of the ojha who, knowing the cause of the sickness, makes the woman feel ashamed of her inability to do any hard work. (Bodding 60-67)

Dundhi Maejiu Rean (“The Silly Women”) and Maejiuko Reak Katha (“The Story of Some Women”) talk about women performing the ritual in the name of their ancestors. The men of the village were supposed to perform the ritual but they could not do so. (Bodding 228-235, 236-245) The men in the tale, “The Silly Women”, were taken away as labourers to work for the zamindars, and so, they could not return on the prescribed day of the worship. In the second tale, the men had gone out for trade and returned after the prescribed day of the worship. Going out to work as labourers and traders shows the changing socio-political demands of the time. The Santals were engaged in professions other than agriculture, too. The tales, on the one hand, show the broader economic activities the Santals were engaged in, and on the other hand, highlight the religious position of the Santal women. The women, in both the tales, were worried that if the worship is not done on the prescribed day, the ancestors might get angry and take revenge on them, so, in order to prevent the whole village and their family member from the anger of the ancestors, the women decided to perform the ritual in place of men.
The women made all the preparations required for the worship and for the sacrifice. On the prescribed day the women made khond (small circle) at the foot of the sal tree and plastered the circle with the cow-dung. They put a handful of rice and applied vermilion in the circle, sprinkled water on the fowl to be sacrificed. But when they were about to offer an invocation and perform the sacrifice they realized that they do not know how to do so (Bodding). From the above details, few things become clear. Firstly, rituals are an important part of the religious life of a community. Through rituals, people show their gratitude towards gods. It is for this reason that the women in these two tales are trying to perform ritual in order to show their gratitude and to appease gods. Secondly, women do not know how to perform the ritual. One might ask the question, “how is it that a woman does not know how to perform a ritual?” The only possible answer can be that women were kept away from direct participation in religious worship. The next question can be, “why is it so?” In order to answer this question I would like to quote P.O. Bodding. In his article, “Position of Women”, published in the Journal of Bihar and Orissa Anthropological Society, Bodding writes, “Theoretical accepted idea of women among the Santal seems to be that she is a kind of irresponsible and trustworthy being, a necessary and useful, but somewhat inferior member of women society” (340).

The portrayal of women as irresponsible and untrustworthy being and inferior member of human society is often evident in Santal folktales. The Santal folktales often talk about the foolishness of women, about their lack of sense and of understanding life, their depraved and untrustworthy character. These ideas heavily affect the rights, freedom and position of women in Santal society. The practical result of such ideas and concepts about women is that the Santal women usually cannot take part in religious activities.

There are certain religious restrictions for women in Santal society, which they have to follow. The Santal women are not permitted to participate in the community worship. If she wants to invoke the bonga (deity) and give him offerings, she has to do it through her male ‘owner’. She is not allowed to attend any sacrifice or even participate in the act, though she may partake of flesh to most sacrificed animals but never the head. The two tales, “Silly Women” and “Some Foolish Women”, portray this position very well. The women in the tale faced no problem in making preparation for the sacrifice but could not perform the ritual of invoking ancestors with sacrificing fowl because none of them knew how to do so. They keep on saying:

“When should I strike the animal?”, asked the woman. “I don’t know where to strike”. One of them replied, “Won’t you strike the fowl where the soul is!” “Where is that then?”, she asked. One of them replied, “Strike the fowl there where you see something moving.” (My translation)

The above lines tell that women hardly know anything regarding the worship and invocation. The portrayal of the Santal women in the above mentioned lines is
that the women in Santal society have hardly any right in the religious life of the community. The male members of the community keep distance with the women in the religious activities. In Santal society, each family has two types of deities, namely, Orak Bonga (household deity) and Abge Bonga (secret deity). The names of these deities are kept secret from the women members of the society in the fear that she would seduce the bonga to do her will. (Malley 122) Also, the flesh of not all the animals sacrificed in the name of the deities can be consumed by the women. The men follow certain rules as to which animals sacrificed to the bongas should be given to the women. No matter whether they are married or unmarried daughters of the house, they are not allowed to enter the bhitar, a small closet inside the house partitioned off by a low wall, where family deities are supposed to reside. (Culshaw 84)

The women in the tales, “Foolish Women” and “Some of the Foolish Women”, give up the act of sacrificing towards the end of the tale. Had the women in the tales completed the act of sacrificing the fowl, it would have meant breaking off the religious code of conduct. The two tales can be interpreted as the tales of protest against the prevalent norms of the society. The women in the tales, in spite of all the restrictions imposed upon them by the male members of the society; do take the responsibility of invoking the ancestors and offering sacrifice on behalf of the male members. The presence of the one reveals the absence of the other. The women in the two tales are able to initiate the ritual only because the men were absent from the scene. But the protest is never fulfilled and the voice of the women is subsided. The story-teller in the “The Silly Women” says that the women are not able to complete the ritual because the fowl to be sacrificed ran away. (Bodding 229-235) The story ends with the saying that women in the early days were foolish and silly, thus subsidus the voice of the women and restoring the prescribed religious norms of the community. In the other tale, “Some Foolish Women”, the act of breaking the rules by women is restored when the men return from trade and perform the ritual by themselves. (Bodding 236-245) In the tale, “The Lazy Girl”, the girl in question is almost silent throughout the tale. It seems that her voice is silenced because her mental and physical laziness goes against the idea of Santal women as being able to undergo day-long labour. Since she does not fit into the ideal of Santal women, she has to be taught a lesson. The lesson, of course, is taught by the men by making her the victim of public humiliation.

In Santal folktales we find quite a different picture of men. Even men are sometimes portrayed as fools and silly, but the foolishness and silliness of men has different implication. It is generally seen that tales which talk about the foolishness of a man often end with the death of the man in question. Due to certain flaw in the character of a man, whether it is in the form of foolishness or laziness or whatever, the men are punished at the end of the story. The punishment is often in the form of violence and death. The male character often dies violent and unnatural death. The stories about men are more or less similar. Due to their lack of knowledge either they bring misfortune to themselves or to their family members.

Read from the point of view of gender studies, Santal folktales seems to teach certain codes of conduct, how a girl/boy should behave when he/she grows up; what are the things that a boy/girl should know particularly about their roles and duties. Through such folktales, the story-teller seems to mould the character and general behaviour of the children in order to avoid any mistakes in future.

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Popular culture is a site where the construction of everyday life may be examined. The point of doing this is not only academic— that is, as an attempt to understand a process or practice— it is also political, to examine the power relations that constitute this form of everyday life and thus reveal the configurations of interests its construction serves. (Turner, 1996:6)

Popular culture is about performance, high culture is about contemplation; high culture is about representation, popular culture is about what is represented. The distinctions between high/low culture and serious/popular culture within a modernist frame of reference have been increasingly broken down by the emergence of cultural studies. Sheridan (1995:89) describes cultural studies as a wide-ranging area of enquiry which includes media studies and popular culture, and which incorporates ‘everyday practices and cultural habits as well as texts and institutions’. As she goes on to note, ‘cultural “representations”…have to be understood as including not only the images or textualisations of modern social experience but also the processes of their production, circulation and consumption’ (ibid.).

The intersection of postmodernism with popular culture, which some have dismissed as trivialising serious political debate, is profoundly political— if by ‘political’ it is meant an engagement with the ‘politics of everyday life’. The terrain of popular culture articulated in a range of cultural forms and expressed in a range of cultural styles is fundamentally about such a politics. Postmodernism has disturbed many of the old certainties surrounding questions of cultural value. Cultural Studies is not bent on demands to pay homage and allegiance to the timeless text of fixed value. A cultural text or practice survives its moment of production— becomes part of what Raymond Williams calls the ‘selective tradition’— because it is able to meet the needs and desires of people with cultural power. Surviving its moment of production makes it available to meet the (usually different) desires and needs of other generations of people with cultural power. Here, we can insist that the cultural texts which are valued and become part of the selective tradition are those which are sufficiently polysemic to sustain multiple and continuous readings. From this perspective, value is always the result of a historically situated encounter between reader and text. The texts that survive their original moment of production are those which are able to bear the weight of further historically situated encounters between text and reader. In such an approach, we should not fail to see the questions of power inherent in it. Questions should be raised as: ‘Who is doing the reading, in what context(s) and with what effects of power?’ The reproduction of cultural texts and practices cannot be simply an effect of a text’s polysemy.

Like value itself, the selective tradition is a construction. It is construction, as Williams points out, which always articulates particular relations of cultural power. The selective tradition is always informed by particular class interests, speaking in specific social and historical contexts. In this way, what constitutes the selective tradition is as much about policing knowledge as it is about organizing terrains of critical inquiry. Therefore, although the making of a selective tradition may well be an inevitable outcome in encounters between academic discourse and cultural production, it is the attempt to deny agency, power and struggle, which must be articulated and resisted.
Perhaps the most significant thing about postmodernism for the student of popular culture, is the dawning recognition that there is no absolute categorical difference between high and popular culture. There are no longer any easy reference points, to which we can refer, and which will automatically preselect for us the good from the bad. On the contrary, without easy recourse to fixed categories of value, it calls for rigorous, if always contingent, standards, if our task is to separate the good from the bad, the usable from the obsolete, the progressive from the reactionary. As such, postmodernism has changed the theoretical and the cultural basis of the study of popular culture. It poses many questions, not least the role that can be played by the student of popular culture: that is, what is our relationship to our object of study? With what authority, and for whom, do we speak? Bennett explains:

The field of popular culture is structured by the attempt of the ruling class to win hegemony and by forms of opposition to this endeavour. As such, it consists not simply of an imposed mass culture that is coincident with dominant ideology, nor simply of spontaneously oppositional cultures, but is rather an area of negotiation between the two within which different particular types of popular culture—dominant, subordinate and oppositional cultural and ideological values and elements are ‘mixed’ in different permutations.

This paper is an attempt to analyse popular culture as a concept of ideological contestation and variability, to be filled and emptied, to be articulated and disarticulated, in a range of different and competing ways. Even my own truncated and selective history of the study of popular culture shows that ‘studying’ popular culture can be a very serious business indeed—serious political business. This paper aims to posit how popular culture is the debilitating other of culture; the dangerous shadow which haunts and arrests the progress of the real thing. Popular culture is presented as that which keeps ‘the people’ from considered engagement with ‘real’ culture; and how it is presented as that which holds ‘the people’ in thrall to the commercial and ideological manipulations of the capitalist culture industries. The term ‘popular’ is as contested as the word defies easy definition and the term ‘popular culture’ bears an oxymoronic assemblage (Malhotra, 2016:47). If we are to invoke this term ‘popular culture’ in the Indian context, it could well be used to describe anything from a Chetan Bhagat novel to a Talk Show ‘Coffee with Karan’ on the television, from a Sufi song of Nusrat Fateh Ali Khan to a dance number picturized on Sunny Leone which enters the realm of a ‘popular song’ only after it is heard by some ten million people across the world. This is to say that when we often describe something as ‘popular’, we have to scrutinize how ‘popular’ is this ‘popular’ or what is the extent of popularity this ‘popular’ really enjoys? Or for that matter, what is ‘popular’ or how and under what circumstances or conditions does it become ‘popular’? Or is it that whatever fails to qualify as the ‘classical’ becomes ‘popular’ by sheer default? When we look through the history of Literature, we often find that writers who are today feted as the ‘classical’ writers like Homer, Shakespeare, Dante and the like were once extremely popular in their own times. This points to the fact that the divide between the ‘classical’ and the ‘popular’ is only context-specific, even porous, and that the notions of ‘popular’ and the ‘classical’ not only keep shifting and changing, but are interchangeable too.

Cultural Studies has always been a contested terrain, within which the boundaries of the tradition are themselves unstable and changing, sites of contestation and debate. The contestation within cultural studies was not only around competing theories of cultural politics, but also around competing theories about ‘the nature of cultural and historical specificity’ (Grossberg, 1993:23). The
emphasis of Cultural Studies shifted from one which positioned a reading of
culture ‘oppositionally’ in terms of the hegemonic state to one which affirmed
concepts of ‘otherness’. New expressions and modes of resistance emerged from
feminist, ethnic and women’s groups ‘committed to maintaining and elaborating
autonomous values, identities, and ethics’ (During, 1993:15).

The emphasis of the ‘new’ Cultural Studies was on agency, that is on the
agency of ordinary people in contesting and producing cultural meaning. Meaghan
Morris powerfully expresses this concept of agency as follows:

This means studying not how people are in a passively inherited culture
(‘tradition’) but what they do with the cultural commodities that they
encounter and use in everyday life (‘practice’) and thus what they make as
‘culture’. Inflected by post-structuralist theories of reading as well as by
empirical audience research … this shift enabled a crucial redefinition
of popular culture not as a stratum (the ‘low’) one of aesthetic practice but as
a social ‘zone of contestation’, in Hall’s famous phrase- the ground in and
over which different interests struggle for hegemony. (Morris, 1992:10)

Here, two senses of ‘agency’ emerge from this approach. First, there is the sense of
people producing meaning rather than passively consuming it, through their
exchanges with cultural commodities’ (Sheridan, 1995:92). Second, there is a
concept of political agency implied in ‘notions of struggle and contestation,
resistance and subversion’ (ibid.).

The texts and practices of popular culture are seen as forms of public fantasy.
Popular culture is understood as a collective dream-world. Cultural practices
function in much the same way as dreams: they articulate, in a disguised form,
collective (but suppressed and repressed) wishes and desires. Popular culture is
not a historically fixed set of popular texts and practices, nor is it a historically fixed
conceptual category. The object under theoretical scrutiny is both historically
variable, and always in part constructed by the very act of theoretical engagement.
The most common division is between the study of texts (popular fiction,
television, pop music, etc.) and lived cultures or cultural practices (seaside
holidays, youth subcultures, the celebration of Christmas, New Year, etc.).

Thus mapping the terrain of popular culture in Manipur, we can cite the
element of ‘Shumang Leela’, consumed within the realm of leisure economy as a
popular cultural performance, exhibiting issues with local cultural identities and
histories. As an insatiable opiate for masses (much like Marx’s idea of religion as an
opiate/opium for the masses), Shumang Leela espouses the basis for spectacular
shows, theatrical performances, bombardment of societal-cultural-political-
economic issues in its enactment and circuses that narcotize large segment of the
population in Manipur. Shumang Leela as a leisurely spectacle may offer mass
gratification via its performative codes and the grammar of spare time, but on the
flip side it carries the imprint of values consistent with existing economic, social,
political and cultural practices wherein functions of leisure are manifestations of
the cultural nuances of a society together with its state apparatuses of social
control.

Cultural consumption is viewed as centring on fascination with the
spectacular surfaces of media forms, the play of ever proliferating and
intermingling signs and images. This symbiotic relation between leisure industry
and media-culture complex serves as an extension of the culture industry, where
mass culture takes Shumang Leela into custody.
References:
Representing the Oral on the Screen: A Study of the Inter-semiotic Translation of Select Assamese Folk-based Movies

Arzuman Ara*

Introduction:

Literature has always been the source of ideas and themes for many movies. From Shakespeare to Premchand, many literary writings have been successfully screened both as full-length movies and TV serials besides animations. One famous TV serial based on a novel was *Tamas*. Our folktales are not an exception to such adaptations. The movie *Cinderella* is an example of that.

In the Northeast India, too, such an attempt to screen the oral folktales is seen in *Makhiye Mithoi Khale* produced by Biren Das and directed by Kripal Kalita and *Champawati* produced and directed by Gautam Baruah. Both the movies are adaptations from the folklore collection of Laksminath Bezbaruah’s famous collection *Burhi Air Xadhu* (Grandmother’s Lores). *Makhiye Mithoi Khale* is based on the story of “Latkan” and *Champawati* is based on the story of the same name. In their visualization, the background and other props provide a locale -- a setting to the events of the narratives -- which is contextual to the Assamese culture and tradition. Thus, in their visual representation, the movies represent the cultural identity of the Assamese community. This article is an attempt to understand how the cultural identity is displayed in these two movies in an inter-semiotic transmutation.

Inter-semiotic Translation in Movies:

Inter-semiotic translation or *transmutation* is basically an interpretation of the verbal signs by means of signs of nonverbal sign systems. This has its foundation in the linguistic/semiotic theories. For example, Roman Jakobson in his “On Linguistic Aspects of Translation” (1959) mentions Bertrand Russell, according to whom “no one can understand the word ‘cheese’ unless he has a nonlinguistic acquaintance with cheese” (see web source in the Reference). Here the linguistic verbal sign gains its meaning being related to a non-linguistic sign. Transmutation is a “metalinguistic” operation that works with the cognitive function in the interpretation of the signs. Media often make transmutation in various ways in creating new and attractive ways of signification. Translation is a process of finding meaning-equivalence; so, media can be understood as a meaning-making industry and transmutation can be seen as a process of meaning-making. In media, the inter-semiotic translation can be done through Audio-video translation, Multimedia translation, Inter-media translation and so on. Adaptation from literature often takes place as an inter-semiotic translation in media, particularly in the movies. Similarly, cultural and social signifiers also are translated in media in an inter-semiotic manner. Here it becomes cultural translation. The technical mechanisms used in inter-semiotic translation in media are:

- Visuals
- Props
- Background
- Voice/ sound
- Lip Synchronisation

Assamese Identity and Culture in the Inter-semiotic Translation in the Assamese Films:

Glimpses of the fluidity and dichotomy of the Assamese identity are displayed through various markers in the Assamese films. As, like culture, identities are fluid, one would agree with the contention that there is no clear or
fixed definition of what makes one an Assamese. Lipi Ghose aligns Assamese identity and culture with the Tai-Ahoms and says, “The Ahom culture in India, too, has not been established only on the basis of its traditions but is also historically conditioned and culturally mediated under local influences. To understand what is really happening in this age of globalisation, it is important to study the local evidence or the influence of ‘locality.’ This author, therefore, has to draw a conclusion in-between two extremes: the belief by one school that the Tai culture has been vanquished, on one side, and on the other, the whole-hearted persistence of Tai-ism by the second school. A more realistic position is to consider the rich Tai cultural heritage in India from a bias-free perspective of ‘shared’ cultural norms. What the Ahom culture represents in India is a shared cultural heritage or a confluence of two remote cultures (see web source in the Reference).” By “two remote cultures”, Ghose indicates the local Indian culture and the Tai culture that the Ahom community brought along with their migration from Yunan. Among the many hypotheses on the name of Assam/Asom, one dominant claim is that the name is derived from the major inhabitant community- the Ahoms the ruler/regal community of the region. At present, the word “Assamese” means the speakers of Assamase language, people inhabiting the region of Assam and also the people who culturally identify themselves as belonging to the Assamese community. One can understand that the word “Assamese” refers to a composite identity to a great extent for the people of Assam and it thus refers to multi-ethnicity. To understand how this fluidity of identity is represented in films through an inter-semiotic translation, we will consider two folk-based Assamese movies here, viz. Makhiye Mithoi Khale and Champawati.

Makhiye Mithoi Khale by Biren Das and Champawati by Gautam Baruah are made after two Assamese folk tales, thereby, literary imaginative narrative of these two films have been translated into visual narrative. We can see that the movies display the duality of the Assamese (Axomiya) and Ahom identities through different visual modes although the language used in these movies is Assamese. It is significant to note that Assamese language is seen as a “aprombhasa”- absorbed a variety of influences from Sanskrit, Tibeto-Burman and Tai. In the movies the visuals and props are used as markers of a composite identity i.e. Assamese, such as, Bihu, Japi, food items, attire (Mekhela-Sador, Dhoti-kurta), Gamochha (used both as a towel and as wrap around dress by the males), Xorai (sign of welcome, respect and gratitude), Pan-tamul (Offering betel nut and leaf is a time-immemorial practice with roots in the aboriginal Austro-Asiatic culture), respecting forefathers & elders, agrarian culture. Display of these props from the composite culture reinforces the colonial identity that is of unifying all the communities with one name (as both Saikia and Ghose find, op cit). We can also find props from the domain of religious practices, i.e. Hinduised Assamese.
The above visuals taken from *Makhiye Mithoi Khale* display a respect for the Brahmin priest who arrives in the house as a guest; this is a sign of the pro-Aryan culture displaying the dominant hierarchy of Brahminism over other castes/communities. But in the same film the house-owner (who is addressed as Bhakat, meaning a devotee) is shown to have three wives whereas polygamy was/is commonly prohibited in the Assamese Hindu society including the Sankariya Vaishnava sect though it was permissible in many tribal communities that have migrated to this region. It is interesting to note that the introduction of the wives is an addition in the film *Makhiye Mithoi Khale* which is absent in the folktale. The director has apparently made a conscious choice and this has added additional tropes of signification for showing the religion based cultural practices. Cultural and social traits of different communities as traditional and religious practices are shown through such a creative imaginative visualization.

In *Champawati* also the house-owner has two wives as mentioned in the original tale. The opening song in the movie tells us about the two co-wives- Lagi and Elagi. The evil one, Lagi, is the husband’s favourite who has a control over the husband and the household; the good one Elagi is a neglected wife who lives in penury along with her daughter Champawati. The allegorical representation of a tension between the evil and goodness is shown through these two characters that permeate to their daughters. It is noteworthy here that the custom of having more than one wife was prevalent among the Ahom kings for political purposes and progeny. So, we can assume that the practice could be prevalent among the lower classes as well. On the other hand, in mythical India there was practice of having more than one wife. This is an addition - and addition and deletions are important features in the inter-semiotic translation, especially, in the films.

Cultural props like *Xorai* appear invariably as a marker of cultural identity of the Assamese community. Here is an example taken from *Champawati*. *Paan-Tamul* (betel nut and leaf) is offered to others while *Xorai* is also used for a special offering to the Gods. *Tamul-paan* holds an important place in the cultural life of the people of this region and the movie displays that.
Similarly, Jaapi (head-covers made of palm leaves usually worn by farmers while working in the fields) becomes an important prop in visualizing the Assamese (Axomiya) identity as a cultural marker. Look at the visual below:

![Jaapi as decoration pieces in the house](image)

*Jaapi* is used as decoration pieces in the house which was not an ethnic traditional practice. *Jaapi* is traditionally used like an umbrella to shield oneself from rain and sun and it is hung in one corner of the house when not in use; it is not a decorative item in the traditional cultural practice. By showing *jaapi* as a decoration piece, there is an attempt to contemporize the “far-away” creative imagination as this type of decoration has become a common practice nowadays; we can feel that the folk-tale that often starts with “Once upon a time, far away in the land of …” etc. gives way to something so similar and familiar to our contemporary context. Nonetheless, the use of *jaapi* as a cultural prop is a marker of the history of migration of the Ahom and other communities which is a part and parcel of the collective consciousness of the people of this region.

In *Makhiye Mithoi Khale* the female attire is *Mekhela-Sador*. But in *Champawati* we find different kinds of female attires. Along with common way of wearing *Mekhela-Sador* (which has a resemblance with saree), there are different styles and attire. For example, we can look at the following visuals:

![Different styles of female attire in Champawati](image)

If we take dresses as visual markers of identity, such dressings display the fluidity and dichotomy of the Assamese (Axomiya)/Ahom identity. Interestingly, in case of the male attire, we find that there are similar visual signifiers in dressings. In *Champawati* the male characters wear *dhoti*. Champawati’s father wears a dress of a typical Hindu Assamese but her husband’s dress is similar to the dress of the males shown in the mythical epic serials on television like B. R.
Chopra’s Mahabharat. Here the male dresses are the visual markers that connect the Assamese characters to the Aryan mainland India. At the same time, Champawati’s husband is wearing a tongali around his waist which is said to have worn by the Ahoms in the olden days. Similarly, in Makhiye Mithoi Khale, the house-owner wears a Seleng which is said to be worn by the Ahoms. A hybridized practice of dressing displays a composite cultural practice.

Conclusion:

Representation is intertwined with resemblance and imitation. Films adopt the conventional signs and codes for representation: it follows Saussurean semiotics and is unlike the deconstructive approaches of semiotics. In the films, the cultural signifiers get transmuted in inter-semiotic translations which conform to the cultural practices prevalent among its audience. This is done to avoid confusion in understanding the meaning/s by the audience. Films are cultural products. “Any cultural product can be approached as a form of representation offering vital clues to a culture’s belief systems, its interpretation of reality and its ways of translating both factual and fictional situations into images….although a specific representational form may seem to be defined by techniques, devices and aims intrinsic to that form alone, we must increasingly be aware of the crucial role played by interdisciplinarity and cross-fertilization in the production of cultural images and in the dissemination of their ideological messages (Cavallaro, 2001:41).” Cavallaro also points out that “certain representational techniques evolve in response to a culture’s ideological demands (ibid, p.42).” Films as cultural products represent the images of the world, of ideology, thoughts, opinions and human beings.

In the present context, the films taken for the present study are inter-semiotic translations of two folktales transmuted into visual narratives. In their transmutation, the cultural signifiers used as props unveil the fluidity and dichotomy of the Assamese (Axomiya) community, and particularly of the Ahom community that is demanding ST status on the basis of their race, indigeneity, ethnicity and a shared memory of migration. The ideological and political demand for a separate identity of the Ahoms from a composite Assamese (Axomiya) identity may appear in our thought while watching the movies. Makhiye Mithoi
Khale and Champawati represent the dichotomous and multifaceted nature of the Axomiya/Assamese identity and culture.

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NB. Clips from the movies are taken from their YouTube uploads available for public viewing at Champawati <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Uc6_Wlb4f3k>Makhiye Mithoi Khale https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jCzQJn-ORYY
Meitei Religion: An Emic Perspective

Naorem Naokhomba Singh*

Abstract: Religion, being an important universal social institution has long been one of the focal points for social science researchers across the disciplines. In this so called ‘digital age’ people still goes to church, temple or mosque. Religion still plays a significant role in human society. It survived, changed and continues to prevail because it is functioning and it has something which other institutions cannot replace or substitute. The present paper is a humble attempt to give a brief account, an insider’s view of Meitei traditional religion.

Keywords: Religion, human society, institutions, traditional religion

Introduction: Meitei or Meetei is a major ethnic group of Manipur, one of the north-eastern states of Indian union at the easternmost part bordering Myanmar. Religion is generally understood as a system of beliefs in something which the humans consider to be beyond themselves and which binds them together as to organize their lives into some kind of group or community. Different scholars give different definitions of religion. Frazer (1890) defined religion as a propitiation or conciliation of powers superior to man which are believed to direct and control the course of nature and human life. Emile Durkheim (1915) defined it as a unified system of belief and practices relative to sacred things. For E.B.Tylor (1958) religion is the belief in spiritual beings. Yinger (1970) defines it as a system of beliefs and practices by means of which a group of people struggles with the ultimate problems of human life. It is an organized system of beliefs, attitudes, emotions, behavior and a set of beliefs concerning the cause, nature, and purpose of the universe.

Meiteis have their own religion, language, script, rich culture and a distinct history. The central valley of Manipur is their homeland since the time immemorial. Manipur was an independent kingdom till 1891 AD. By the beginning part of the Christian era (33AD), it became a Confederate nation state comprising different clan principalities under the leadership of Ningthoucha (Ningthouja) clan which is also known as Meitei. This kingdom was known by different names by its neighboring nations. In the first recorded treaty between the British East India Company and Jai Singh (then king of Manipur) in 1762, the kingdom was recorded as ‘Meeckley’. To the Burmese, the kingdom was known as ‘Kathe’. The Ahoms called it ‘Makeli’ and the Cacharis ‘Magli’; while the old Assamese name for it is ‘Moglan’ (Kabui 1988: 4). The present name, Manipur was probably given in the 18th century, after the adoption of Hinduism.

The origin history of the Meitei people is in shrouded mystery. There are different theories on this from various disciplines. Regardless of various theories and opinions, it is very much certain that the Meitei as we see today as a population group is a heterogeneous group of different characters. It is an outcome of a mixture of different population groups in different periods of history from different directions. Before the beginning period of 1st century AD, there were different clans, seven major clans and few other sub-clans who later integrated to form the Meitei nation. In that period they were independent principalities with their own geographical boundaries. They underwent a long struggle among themselves for dominance which the Meiteis or Ningthoujas succeeded and finally established supremacy over the rest of the clans and absorbed them one by one over a period of several generations (Manikchand 1988: 157). Thus, the name Meitei became the common nomenclature for all of them. Various migrant groups from
different directions were also absorbed into the Meitei society since the very early period. Eventually, the Meitei population became a heterogeneous group with different genetic and physical traits. It is also very much possible that valley dweller Meiteis are descended from surrounding hill inhabitants. It is believed that the central valley of Manipur was under water in the very early period. Human habitation in the valley could have begun in the valley after the surrounding hills, only after dry land emerged in the central valley.

**Meitei Religion:** The Meitei religion is called Sanamahism, after God Sanamahi. It is a generally accepted belief that there is a Supreme Almighty above all the gods and goddesses in the majority of the religions. It has different names in different religion. But we do not normally name the religion after his/her name. Likewise, Meitei traditional religion is not known by the name of Chingu Yaibirel Sidaba, the ultimate Supreme Almighty. Among other religious personalities, god Sanamahi, son of Yaibirel Sidaba and Leimarel Sidabi, the mother goddess, is the most important figure in Meitei religious pantheon. He is the only way to reach to the Supreme Almighty. He is the Lainingthou, king of gods, king of every Meitei households. He is the manifestation of the Supreme Almighty himself. He is the one who looks after all mankind and living beings during their livelihood and also after their death. He is known by as many as 168 different names. Thus, Meitei (traditional) religion is known by the name Sanamahism or the Sanamahi religion. It does not, however, in any case, indicate the worship of God Sanamahi only. Sanamahi religion is a polytheistic religion. It has various components of ancestral worship, animism, nature worship, the concept of mother goddess and Supreme Almighty etc.

Gods and goddesses of Meitei religious pantheon can be grouped together under certain categories. Parratt (1980) in her study put traditional Meitei gods and goddesses into three broad categories. The term Umanglai was used generally to cover all these categories of gods, although it also has a narrower meaning. But putting together all of them under the term Umanglai is indeed debatable. Perhaps it would be more appropriate to classify them simply under two categories as household (domestic) deities and outdoor (non-household) deities. For a better understanding, these deities can be classified in a systematic manner starting from the family level to the whole Meitei community. This type of grouping does not mean to describe their hierarchical structure and there may be inter-crossing between them as well.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sl. No.</th>
<th>Type</th>
<th>Examples</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Household Deities</td>
<td>Sanamahi, Leimarel Sidabi, Emoinu etc.</td>
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<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Ancestral Deities</td>
<td>Apokpa or Apokpi.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Deities of Yek (clan)</td>
<td>Pakhangba, Thangjing, Pureiromba etc.</td>
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<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Deities of particular area or village</td>
<td>Wangjing Ningthou of Wangjing, Khaplangba of Kakching and Ekop Ningthou of villages around Ekop Lake etc.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Cardinal tutelary deities</td>
<td>Koubru, Marjing, Thangjing, and Wangbren.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Deities of the royal family</td>
<td>Pakhangba, Sanamahi, Nongshaba, Yumthei Lai, Latiwa Haiba etc.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Deities of the whole Meitei community</td>
<td>Sanamahi, Emoinu, Panthoibi, Hiyangthang Laienbi etc.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Lainingthou Sanamahi, Leimarel Sidabi and Emoinu goddess are three important household deities. Emoinu is the goddess of wealth. Every Meetei household is considered to be guarded by Lainingthou Sanamahi and Leimarel Sidabi, every
member of the household is also looked after by them. Every Sagei3 has their ancestral deity called Apokpa/pi. Normally it’s worshipping ceremony called Apokpa Khurambta takes place annually. Members of the Sagei take part in the worshipping ceremony. But in some specific cases, only the male members of the Sagei are treated as its members. Females are also members of the Sagei but they are treated as nonpermanent members because of the patrilineal social structure of Meitei society. Female members become members of another Sagei after their marriage. Some Sageis also have ancestress deity. For example, Soibam Lairema of Soibam Sagei and Hijam Lairema of Hijam Sagei.

Yek is an exogamous clan group of Sageis who believed to have the same ancestry. In the very early period, before the establishment of the common Meitei identity under the leadership of Ningthouja Yek all different seven Yeks might have their own deities. These deities could be the remnants of each Yek’s religious practices before they become parts of the larger Meitei national religious pantheon. Those deities of particular area or village are also considered as UmangLais. Their worshipping ceremonies take place annually as Lai Haraoba. Even though they are associated with their respective areas other members of the Meitei community from different areas also participate in their worshipping ceremony. Every Meitei village is under the jurisdiction of one of these deities (Umang Lai) or another. Those Cardinal tutelary deities are called Maikei Ngakpa Lais, gods who guard directions. Lord Koubru, presiding deity of north-west direction, Wangbren of the south-east, Marjing of north-east and Thangjing of south-west direction are in this category. They are also worshiped as Umang Lais by the people of the surrounding area. Lord Pakhangba is considered as the progenitor of the Ningthouja clan, particularly the royal bloodline. In the creation myth, as per the advice of his father Yaibirel Sidaba, the Supreme Almighty Lord Pakhangba incarnated into human form to be the king of mankind. His elder brother Sanamahi became the kings of the gods, Lainingthou while Pakhangba became the progenitor of the royal bloodline. Meitei kings are considered as descendants of Pakhangba. The group of deities of the whole Meitei community should not be confused with those household deities. No doubt, household deities are also worshiped by the whole Meitei community, but in their respective houses. What I intend to describe here is those deities worshipped by the whole Meitei community at the community level. In this context, goddess Emoinu is found to be worshipped at the community level on its worshipping day (Emoinu Numit, the 12th day of Wakching) even though it is one of the household deities. Lainingthou Sanamahi is also worshipped at the community level in his shrine at Tolong Yumpham, Imphal besides being a household deity.

The Meitei traditional religion flourished in the Meitei kingdom as the state religion for a long period. It was only in the 17th century, during the reign of King Charairongba (1697-1709) that it began to experience Hindu influence. But the Brahmin migration to this kingdom from the southern regions started long before this period according to the BamonKhunthoklon4. According to this account earliest Brahmin settlements were in the reign of King Kyamba in the 15th century. From this period onwards the migration continued periodically. This information of Brahmin migration is also supported by the entries of Cheitharol Kumpaba/Kumpaba5, the royal chronicle of Manipur. Bamon Khunthoklon tells us nothing about proselytizing attempts of those Brahmins to the king or the people except their date of arrival, names etc. It might be due to the fact that, without political patronage, the support of the ruling authority, the king, there was nothing they could do to propagate Hindu religion. Cheitharol Kumbaba also mentions no such proselytization efforts of the Brahmins in that period. They were allotted Sageis, family names (surnames) which they bear today and were absorbed into the Meitei
community. Since they did not usually bring their women with them, many of them intermarried with Meitei women and this hastened their assimilation into Meitei society. However, they were not allowed to enter into the fold of ancient and existing social framework, the seven Yeks or Salais (clan) of the Meeteis. McCulloch (1859:18) noted that the Brahmins were obliged to marry women of the Kei class. They were slaves who had to provide and pound the Raja’s rice. This greatly lowered the status of the Brahmins and if they were not respected socially we may assume that their doctrines were not readily acceptable either.

Charairongba was the first Meitei king who had Sanskritized name, Pitambar Singh which was given after his initiation into Hinduism. Before him, there is no Meitei king who had a Hinduisised name in addition to their Meitei names in the CheitharolKumbaba. The period from the reign of GaribNiwaz (1709-1748) son of Charairongba to that of Churachand (1892-1941) was the period of Hinduisation in Manipur. In this period Hinduism was the state religion. The zenith of Hinduism glory was during the reign of Bhagyachandra (1759-1798), the grandson of GaribNiwaz. Naming the kingdom as Manipur, identification of traditional deities with Hindu gods and goddesses, identification of traditional ceremonies and festivals with concurrent Hindu festivals and identification of ancient seven clan system of the Meitei with Hindu Gotra system were the significant landmarks of that Hinduisation period. Destruction of traditional deities and burning of Puyas (ancient Meitei texts) were some of the heinous actions taken up by the Hindu Brahmins to suppress Meitei religion in that period.

During this Hinduisation period of around 213 years (1717-1930) Meitei traditional religion experienced various impacts of Hinduism. In fact, the status of Meitei traditional religion was at the lowest during this period. Hinduism remained as the state religion of the state in this period. Because of the political patronage, they got from the King there was no one to raise their voice against Hinduism. However, in this period Meitei traditional religion was never really wiped out. The roots of Sanamahi religion were so deeply embedded in Meitei society and culture that compromise, negotiation, and assimilation with it were the ways to propagate the new faith. Thus, after more than 200 years of its decline and living under the influence of Hinduism Meitei traditional religion began to revive in the 1930s. It was during the reign of King Churachand (1891-1941), in the 1930s a revivalist movement of Meitei traditional religion began to take its shape in a Meitei village in Cachar district of Assam. The leader of the movement was Naorem Phullo, popularly known as Laininghal Naoria or Naoria Phullo.

Naoria Phullo (1888-1941) was a Meitei religious leader who wanted to revive true Meitei identity with their religion, culture, language etc. He was the leader who gave a wakeup call to the Meitei people who had been in a deep slumber under the rhythm of Hinduism for more than 200 years. If it was not for him, the revival of Meitei traditional religion would have been difficult and perhaps it would not happen until a few decades later. In that period Hindu orthodoxy was so strict that lunatic, hillmen (different ethnic groups of the surrounding hill ranges), Pangals (Manipuri Muslims) and Yaithibis were considered as unclean. Any contact with them would easily get ostracised or fined. Common people end up being easy targets of being ostracised and fined. This can be a reason why the revivalist movement of Meitei traditional religion started to grow from a distant village in Cachar district of Assam.

Another reason could be the context of those Meitei Hindus living outside Manipur. The motives of those Meitei Hindus, both living inside and outside Manipur were to be like other Hindus, to be like them, particularly Bengali Hindus in order to get respectable status in Hindu fold. It was like an imitation of the way
of life of higher caste Hindus by lower caste peoples in Sanskritization process. The difference was, in the Sanskritization lower caste Hindus tried to live like higher caste groups in order to improve their caste status. But in the case of Manipur, those Meitei Hindus were not trying to improve their caste status. The intention of their attempts was to justify their caste status, the status of being Kshatriya castes\textsuperscript{10}. Those Meitei Hindus living in Manipur might not have received any reactions from the Bengali Hindus in response to their attempt, even imitation to live like those Bengali Hindus. However, outside Manipur, the context was quite different and those Meitei Hindus in Cachar often used to get reactions, sometimes even embarrassments from the Bengali Hindus for imitating their way of life. That situation led to the feeling of self-realization, more curious about their own identity, religion, culture, language etc. And eventually, the seeds of revivalism of Meitei traditional religion began to germinate.

The news of Sanamahi revivalist movement that started in Cachar in 1930 reached Manipur valley after four years in 1934. Takhellambam Bokul, later popularly known as Sanamahi Bokul got the news from a friend of his locality who had returned from Cachar. As soon as Bokul got the news from his friend the urge of meeting Naoria Phullo grew in his mind. In 1935, Bokul along with his two friends, Pukhrambam Surchand and Ibomcha left Manipur for Cachar. In Cachar, they stayed in the house of Asem Tombi, a nearby neighbor of Phullo. There they listened to the talks of Naoria on the importance of revival of traditional religion and harms of conversion to Hinduism by the Meetei people. They stayed there for one year and nine months. Naoria Phullo’s talk on Meetei culture and religion was so convincing that they renounced Hinduism then and there (Nilabir, 1991:117). They also assured Naoria that they would carry on the revivalist movement in Manipur. After coming back to Manipur they tried very hard to propagate the movement. On May 14, 1945, on the 3\textsuperscript{rd} day of Kalen, Monday at Wangkhei Thambalkhong the ‘Manipur State Meitei Marup’ commonly known as Meitei Marup, an organization to lead the revival movement of Sanamahi religion was formed.

According to Sanamahi followers, the revival movement is not against Hinduism or any other religion. They are only trying to conserve their own cultural and religious identity, to safeguard their community from cultural invasion through religion. They have a strong belief that why Meiteis should depend on other language and religion by neglecting their own? The objectives of the Sanamahi revivalist movement can be summed up as followers; to renounce Hinduism, to discard all the theories of Hinduisation propounded by the Meitei Hindu scholars, to take up necessary measures for the revival of traditional religion, culture, language, script and literature etc., to strengthen the unity between the hill and plain people and to take up research work on Meitei History. Thus, the revival movement continued in a slow but steady manner. In the post-independence period, its appreciation by the masses increased.

The incident of Nongkhrang Parei Hanba\textsuperscript{11} (unwinding the oath) was one of the most significant events in the revival movement. During the reign of GaribNiwaz, in 1729, on the 15\textsuperscript{th} day of Wakching (Dec-Jan) Meiteimen were ordered to dive in the water of Lilong, a confluence of Iril and Imphal river, about 8 km to the south of Imphal with branches of Nongkhrang in their hands. It was a serious oath taking not to renounce Hinduism. The event was called Nongkhrang Eeruppa. During the reign of Bhagyachandra (1759-98) another oath taking of the same kind was performed not to renounce Hinduism. On 6\textsuperscript{th} February 1974, on the full moon day of Phairel (Feb-Mar) in order to free the Meitei community from the binding of that oath, a special function was organized by the Sanamahi followers. The titular king of Manipur, Okendrajit attended in that ceremony. Some Maibas and followers of
Sanamahi representing the entire Meitei community dived in the water of Lilong with a ritual to free Meitei people from the binding of the oath which was taken by their forefathers. Another ritual of a similar kind was performed in 1992. On 23rd April 1992 then king of Manipur Okendrajit issued a public notice about the Nongkhrei Parei Hanba ceremony. In that declaration he added, with the revival of traditional religion all the rules and regulations which were in Hindu tradition were restored to the traditional regulations. Those gods and goddesses which were identified with Hindu deities were also restored in their traditional pre-Hindu identity. (Declaration of revival, 23/4/1992 by then King Okendrajit, Royal Palace, Imphal. Cited from Nilabir, 2015)

Today with more social awareness and higher literacy rate among the people, more and more Meiteipeople are becoming more inclined to the traditional religion than Hinduism. Another reason is the social distance between valley dweller Meiteis and different tribal groups of the surrounding hill ranges. Majority of the Meitei people particularly Sanamahi followers believe that this social distance is caused by Hinduism. They are not completely wrong in this matter when we look at the history. Sanamahi followers have a firm belief that revival of the traditional religion which is based on the equality of mankind is the stepping stone to rebuild the social relationship between valley dweller Meiteis and different ethnic groups in the hills of Manipur. Most of the rituals and festivals which had been identified and modified in Hindu manner are now revived to traditional form with the revival of Sanamahi religion. In many cases, new syncretic forms emerged as a result of deep roots of Hindu influence and surviving traits of traditional religion.

Dr. Parratt (1980) in her study discuss the religion of Manipur (Meiteis) into three phases; the pre-Hindu period, the rise of Hinduism and the modern period which she described as the synthesis period of Meitei traditional religion and Hinduism. Her work is based primarily on the data collected through fieldwork during 1971-72 and secondary sources. Dr. Parratt was quite right in her explanation. However, the synthesis of old Meitei traditional religion and Hinduism began before the reign of Bhagyachandra as well. Moreover, the whole picture started to change slightly in the later period after her work. As mentioned earlier, special rituals on February 6th, 1974 and 23rd April of 1992 were conducted with the customary king of Manipur, Okendrajit, to free Meitei people from the binding of the sacred oath which was taken by their forefathers not to denounce Hinduism. These events marked, as I believe, the beginning of the phase of the post-synthetic period. Now the religion of the Meiteis is in this post-synthetic period with certain elements of segregation of Hinduism and traditional religion.

**Conclusion:**

We are still somehow safe to call Meitei religion as a synthesis of Hinduism and Sanamahi religion. But, by no means does it mean that it is the ultimate reality of present day Meetei society. Present day Meitei society has other religious followers like Meitei Christians and Meitei Buddhists apart from the Sanamahi and Hindu followers. Moreover, the nature of synthesis is slightly different from the past. This process of synthesis followed a spiral path. In the beginning of the process, when Hinduism became a major religion with royal patronage people had only outward characteristics of Hinduism. Values, beliefs, and customs of traditional religion remained in the core of the people’s lives and their activities. Their external outlook was that of a Hindu with core elements of traditional religion inside them. As Hinduism continued to flourish with royal patronage it actually became a dominant religion in Manipur. Majority of the Meiteis became Hindus except for few sections (Yaithibis, Lois). Thus in those period elements of
Hinduism became dominant parts of the synthesis. Traditional deities began to worship by Hindu Brahmins with their ritual procedures. Thus, Hinduism actually became a state religion with some elements of traditional religion. This period is followed by that of the revival of traditional Sanamahi religion. It was also followed by the independence and merger of the kingdom into Indian union. In the post-independent period, particularly after the attainment of statehood, the revival of traditional religion became popular. It came with the revival of Manipuri language and Meitei script. The popularity and acceptance of the traditional religion also increased in the later period. As the process goes on, in the post-synthesis period (present day) the majority of the Meiteis become Hindus in their external outlook with traditional values, beliefs, and customs in the core of their lives. Majority of them become occasional devotees of Hindu gods and goddesses while worshipping traditional deities inside their homes every single day. They worship Krishna, Radha, Durga, Shiva etc., when their occasions like Holi, Durga Puja, Shivaratri and RathYatra comes but they are always in connection with traditional deities like Sanamahi, Leimarel Sidabi, Apokpa and Umang Lais etc. throughout the year of their lives. Thus, in this post-synthesis period, after following a spiral path, Meiteis become Hindus in their external outlook with core elements of traditional religion inside them.

Endnotes:
1 Meitei or Meetei carries the same historical meaning. They are simply free variations of this language like any other language so permits.
2 Seven major clans were; Ningthouja or Mangang also known as Meitei, Luwang, Khuman, Angom. Moirang, Chenglei and Khaba-Nganba. Other smaller groups were Manding, Chairem, Khende, HeiremKhunja etc.
3 A group of families who believe to have same origin and bear a common family name or surname.
4 It is an account on the various settlements of Brahmins in Manipur, giving their names, dates of their arrival in the kingdom and reigns of the settlements.
5 CheitharolKumbaba is the court chronicle of Meetei kingdom. It records events of the king and their nation. It claims to trace the history of the kingdom back to 33 AD, the reign of Pakhangba and ends with the last king, Bodhachandra, in 1955. The earlier parts of the chronicle is questionable and need to deal with healthy scepticism. However, the entries of the chronicle becomes more comprehensive and reliable from the reign of Kyampa (1430-1508) onwards. With the introduction of the Cheithapa system by this king in 1485, the entries of the chronicle includes the year, day and month of each event.
6 He was initiated into Hinduism by Guru RaiBanamali Acharya on the 5th day of Sajibu (first month of Meetei lunar calendar which usually falls in the months of March/April), Wednesday, 1704. Hindu influence must had been in the royal court, probably some years before this event. His initiation into Hinduism was not an enthusiastic act of youthful king. By that time the king was 32 years of age. A sudden radical conversion is also ruled out by his continued support of the traditional religion.
7 Here what we need to remember is that Hinduism was first accepted by the ruling class, the king and his family and then it was propagated to the masses with royal patronage. Therefore, we can safely presume that there was no Hindu influence in the religious life of the people before the king and his family accepted it, and that happened only from the period of Charairongba’s reign.
8 Even though Charairongba, the predecessor of GaribNiwaz was the first Meitei king to accept Hinduism, he did not attempt to impose the new faith to his subjects.
On 17th of Mera (Sept.-Oct.) of 1727 AD all available books were collected by the order of the King from his subjects and scholars. Thus, more than 120 precious ancient books written in Meitei script on different topics like culture, religion, history, politics, geography, literature, astronomy etc., were collected. Then they were piled up like a funeral pyre in front of the KanglaUltra (gateway at the palatial entrance) and burnt to ashes.

After the conversion, all the Meitei Hindus including the king and his family were declared to belong in the Kshatriya caste and Brahman immigrants in the Brahmin caste, although some them were not Brahmin when they came to Manipur. They were of lower Hindu castes like dhobi, cobbler, fishermen etc. (see BamonKhunthoklon).

Nongkhrang is a tree, Parei means binding and Hanba is unwind or undo. According to Meetei traditional belief ‘NongkhreiPareiHanba’ is to free one from the binding of a sacred oath.

References:


Manipur literally means the ‘land of gems’ which has a unique history and civilization of her own running through a course of more than two thousands years was the Asiatic kingdom with a 2000 years recorded history. As the majestic Himalayas gradually loop and descend in size and altitude towards the Southeast Asian frontier, interspersed with green valleys and blue hills, before immersing in the waters of the sea lays the land of Manipur washed with the Barak Basin on the west and Chindwin River on the east. Because of this geographical location and ecology, Manipur has been historically described as a meeting point of different peoples coming from the East, the South and the Southeast Asian region. The Burmese call her Kathe, Moglay by the Bengali, Mekle by the Assamese, Moogley to Cacharis, Cassay to the Shans, the people of this land experienced numerous upheavals as a result of encounters with different cultures and powers. The adoption of Hinduism as state religion in the year 1714 C.E. by King Garibaniwaz was a watershed mark in socio-cultural and religious life of Manipuri particularly the Meiteis. The emergence of Revivalist Movement in the early 1930s’ which is known as Sanamahi movement under the aegis of Apokpa Marup headed by Naoria Phullo and its offshoot Meitei Marup was the turning point in the Hindunized Meitei society. This movement tried to restore the pre-Hindu socio-religious aspect of Meiteis in particular and Manipuris in general. In this context the main attempt of this paper is to draw light the changes brought by the revivalist movement to the existing Hindunized form of socio-religious practices.

Many epoch making events had taken place in the daybreak of the eighteenth century Manipur. One of such epoch making event was the adoption of Hinduism as state religion in the year 1714 C.E. during the reign of King Garibaniwaz. We can trace back the presence of religio-cultural ‘elements’ of Hinduism before the formal adoption of Hinduism in the 18th century C.E. The influence of Hindu religion and culture on the Meitei society is a contesting space among the scholars. Scholars like L. Iboongohal Singh, R. K. Jhalajit, W. Yumjao etc are of the opinion that Hindu religious and cultural elements were found in Manipur society as early as in the 7th century C.E. whereas later scholars like Gangmumei Kamei, Saroj Nalini Parratt etc disagree the argument given by the former scholars by the fact that elements of Hinduism had enter in Manipuri society in much later period somewhere around the 15th century C.E. What we need is the rigorous research in this area otherwise it should be disastrous to accept any of the argument/opinion in the absence of confirmatory evidence from other sources. What we can say beyond doubt is the worship of Vishnu which could trace back during the reign of King Kyamba (1467-1508). It is a sense of irony that infiltration of ‘elements’ of Hinduism in Meitei society was not from mainland India but from the Burma. In the 15th century C.E., Manipur and Burma had a good cultural and political tie. According to the tradition, the idol of the Vishnu sitting on a Garuda was presented by Chaofa Khekkhomba, the Shan king of Pong in 1474 C.E. even today it is worshipped in the Vishnu temple at Bishnupur. But the kings of Manipur were not converted to Hinduism till the reign of Charairongba (1697-1709). He was the first Meitei king who converted into Hinduism. He had taken the sacred thread in 1704. Mentioned in the chronicle as the first king to change his name into Hindu name i.e. Pitamber Singh, but he did not make any attempt to establish Hinduism as the official religion in the kingdom. The chronicle also mentioned that Charairongba, inspite of his conversion to Hinduism, could never break off from the Meitei religion and its
practices. After the death of Charairongba, his son Pamheiba, who ascended the throne in the early age of twenty, turned the table.

Garib Niwaz followed his father’s faith. After following Krishna cult of Chaitanya School for 20 years, he replaced his allegiance to this Krishna cult by Rama cult (Ramadi) with the help of a preacher named Shanta Das from Narashingham Tilla, Sylhet. Shanta Das’s entry marks a significant turning point in the proselytization process. A rigorous thrust towards the use of the state power and machineries as instruments to further the propagation of the new faith could be seen henceforth. For example when the Meiteis were converted into Hinduism the seven Meitei Yeks (clans) were assigned with the Hindu Gotras and the title of ‘Maharaja’ was given to the Ningthem (king), not only these the festivals associated with the traditional Meitei religion were either banned or transformed and modified by giving Hindu names and forms.

An important festival known as the Heigru Hidongba celebrated with an annual boat race was rechristened Jal Yatra.

Ayang Yoiren Iruppa, an annual bathing ceremony in the month of Wakching (December/January) was transformed into Snan Yatra at Lilong Sahanpat.

The annual archery festival called Waira Tenkap festival in the month of Phairen (February/January) was transformed into a Kirtan of the Hindu god Rama.

Kongba Leithong Phatpa, an oracular ceremony in the Manipuri New Year month of Sajibu (April) was converted to Vishnu Sankranti.

The traditional festival associated with offerings to ancestors in the month of Langban (September/October) was replaced by Tarpan or offering to Pritulok.

Wakambung Chingnung Nongombi festival was replaced by Dasana Kwatanba of Durga Puja or Dusserah.

Chanou Hui Chintu, a festival associated with the new harvest was replaced by Goverdhon Puja.10

In the year 1724 C.E. the king ordered the openings of the tomb of his ancestors and members of the other royal family.11 The king exhumed the bones of his ancestors and cremated them on the banks of the Ningthee Turel.12 After that the ashes were scattered into the river. We have the evidence from the Cheitharol Kumbaba that it was from this period i.e. 1724 C.E. that cremation became the customary method of disposal of the dead.13 During the time of Bhagyachandra, a book known as Wayen Lairik14 was composed. It further strengthens the Hindu way of life among the Meitei.

There were many myths constructed and popularized by the Brahmin scholars to give puranic derivation of Manipur. They (The Brahmin scholars) made an effort to develop a set of mythology to change the meaning and identity of land, territory and others places of essence so that it could be established as part of the larger Hindu territory. One of such stories which created the link of naming the kingdom of Manipur with that of Hindu mythology was found in a Sanskrit work, Dharni Sambita which was written during the reign of Gambhir Singh. According to this work, Siva and Parvati performed the Ras Leela in Manipur in celebration after draining away the water in the valley through a tunnel made by Siva’s trident (trisul). Ananta, the serpent god was overjoyed and took out the gems from his hood and sprinkled with sprinkling gems; hence Manipur (Mani = gem, pur =city or land)15

The Anglo-Manipur war of 1891 was a turning point in the history of Manipur. After the annexation of Manipur by the British, all the political power was in the hands of British hence, reduced the political status and power of the titular king. In 1892, the British abolished the lallup system which was only the political and military institution of the Maharaja. In place of lallup an annual tax of
Rs.2 per house was introduced and Rs.3 in the hills was introduced. However in 1899-1900 the house tax abolished as many people tried to evade tax. The British introduced a new system of land holding. According to this new system the peasant who enjoyed fertile lands after the payment of tax in kind was given *patta* for rightful ownership of the land. Not only this after introduction of the *patta* system various other taxes were imposed on the people of Manipur like land revenue, house tax, and other odd taxes such as cycle tax, dog tax, conscription known as *pothang senkhai*, all of which had a serious negative impact on the traditional village economy of Manipur. Therefore after annexation of Manipur by the British Maharaja’s political and economic power had reduced.

The only sphere in which the Maharaja of Manipur could exercise his power was in the field of socio-religious sphere. Therefore he consolidates his power through traditional socio religious institutions, especially the Hindu institutions like Brahmmasabha, Jagoi Loisang (Department of Dance), Pandit Loisang (Department of Scholars), Pala Loishang (Department of Music and Song). After deprivation from other taxes, Maharaja started imposing various odd taxes in the name of religion such as *chandan senkhai* (tax for putting tilak), *napet senkhai* (tax for cutting hair), *lugal senkhai* (tax for wearing sacred thread after performing upanayanna) etc. The most oppressive system in the religious sphere was the practice of *asengba* and *amangba* (pure and impure). This heinous practice involved in the system of *mangba* and *sengba* became quite widespread especially during the reign of Maharaja Churachand Singh in connivance with the Brahmmasabha. Nevertheless there were no hard rules for *mangba* and *sengba*. According to this system the Maharaja and Brahmmins could declare any person as *amangba* (polluted). If a person was declared as *amangba* he/she was forbidden to cremate the dead body of their relatives and compelled to bury them. Sradha ceremony for the dead according to the Hindu custom could not be performed. He/She could not involve or participate to any religion and cultural ceremony and social gathering of the locality. But those who declared *mangba* could be readmitted to Hindu society as again *sengba* after payments.

Ironically during this period when the Brahma Sabha and its Vaishnavite rules and regulations were in its peak, the revivalist movement popularly known as Sanamahmi movement emerged under the aegis of Apoka Marup headed by Naorem Phullo popularly known as Laininghal Naoria. He was born in 1888 at Jharibam Laishram Khul Mamang Leikai in Cachar. Phullo had a varied career at first, he was a teacher, and then served as a police S.I.

The wave of Sanamahmi movement which was first originated in Cachar under the aegis of Naoria Phullo reached Manipur in the middle of the 1930s’. Some radical section of Manipur tried to organize a ‘Marup’ (association) in the line of Apokpa Marup. However, the initiative taken by some radicals to establish an association was interrupted due to the Second World War. After the Second World War when the normalcy was restored the task to form a ‘Marup’ which left unfinished due to World War was completed. On May, 1945 an organization known as ‘Manipur State Meitei Marup’ was established, under the initiative of Takhellembam Bokul popularly known as Sanamahi Bokul as President and Ngashepam Manikchand as Secretary of the ‘Meitei Marup’.

As regard the relation between the Apokpa Marup of Cachar and Meetei Marup of Manipur, Sanamahi Bokul said, “In Cachar Laininghal Naoria formed Apokpa Marup and organised a strong movement for the revival of Meetei nationality, Meetei religion and Meetei culture ... Meetei Marup as a branch of Apokpa Marup was born on May 14, 1945 in Meetei Leipak.”
Many Pro-Sanamahism organizations had sprung up in recent time. In the reconstruction of the pre-Hinduisation Meitei identity, religion plays a very crucial role. They have done the same process what Hindu colonization have done in Manipur society. At first they tried to change all the Hindu Gods and Goddess into Meitei God and Goddess. In order to restore the pre-Hindu Meitei identity they started to worship Goddess Panthoibi in place of Goddess Durga, a female deity of Hindu religion. The momentum touch in the 1970’s when many of younger generation began to worship Panthoibi, an important deity of the primal religion just to counter of Durga Puja.

In Manipur society Dipa Nwita the festival of light has celebrated at Mera Thasi (New Moon of October/November). This festival is one of the prominent festivals of Manipur. It is generally believed among the people that on this particular day Goddess Lakshmi, the female deity of wealth of Hindu religion had visited every house. In order to reconstruct the pre-Hindu religious identity many people have started worshipping Imoinu, the Goddess of wealth and prosperity of primal religion of Manipur. It was celebrated ever year on the 12th day of the month of Wakching (December/January). In this particular day every family of Meitei community worshipped Imoinu at ‘Phunga’ located inside kitchen of the house.

In the beginning of the 1970’s the nature of the worship of Imoinu was started in large scale. In the meantime at the initiative of some interested persons, the characteristic feature of the worship of Goddess Imoinu was brought from ‘Phunga’ to the public place and made it a big religious festival. Thus the worship of Imoinu began to cross the boundary of the traditional ritualistic pattern. This is an interesting departure from the old practices. The room for proper attention and attraction of the people to this religious festival was made available by an organization called ‘League of Callow Patriots’ of Wangkhei Ningthem Pukhri Mapan, Imphal in the year 1978. The members of this organization started to perform the religious festival in a large scale. It is said that one of the basic objectives of the organization was to foster and promote the rich cultural tradition which were considered to be in a stage of extinction.

Another religious organization called ‘Inat Khongul Lila Lup’ of Khudrakpam had organized a torch rally in 1986 in connection with the worshipped of Goddess Imoinu. A public meeting was arranged by the members of the organization in which the local MLA also participated. In the meantime at Yunman Leikai area the worship of Goddess Imoinu was performed at public place. The main objective of worshipping the God of a kitchen in the public place was nothing but to give a strong message to the general people for the promotion of traditional religion and culture for the maintenance of the distinctive identity of the people of this state. To see the great magnitude of this religious festival in the cultural and religious life of the people, the State government has included the day of the worship of Goddess Imoinu as the restricted holiday in the year 1993. It was declared again as the general holiday since 2000 C.E.

In order to commemorate the unfortunate event of Puya Meithaba the believer of traditional religion observed the first condolence day at Mongba Hanba Umang of the 23rd day of Wakching (December-January) 1978. On that night, a number of youths came out and made a funeral pyre in the Mongba Hanba Umang. About 500 books which had been written for Hinduisation of the Meitei society were burnt on the pyre. After few months the second condolence day was observed on January 1979 in front of Kangla utra (the old Palace Compound) Imphal. The then Speaker of Manipur Legislative Assembly Honourable Shri R.K. Ranbir Singh was the Chief Guest. Under the aegis of Manipur National Front (MNF) a
A procession was taken place wearing black dress. The effigy of King Garibniwaz and Santa Das were burnt down.  

Vishwakarma Puja, the architect and engineer God of Hindu religion is being celebrated every year on 16th day of Langban (September) of lunar calendar in Manipur. It is a very important festival among the people of Manipur particularly for those people who worked with machine, tools and implement etc such as printing press, automobile workshops etc. In this particular day all the printing press, automobile workshop will remain close because their tools and equipment are worshipped and grand feast is organized as well. Now a day instead of worshipping Vishwakarma, people started worshipping Pishatao, the God of primal religion of Meitei who has the same extraordinary quality like Vishwakarma. 

Nongkhrang Parei Hanba: During the reign of King Garib Niwaz, in 1729, on the 5th day of Wakching (December-January), Meiteis had been forced to adopt Hinduism. He ordered them to dive in the water of Lilong with branches of Nongkhrang in hand. It was a serious kind of oath taking not to renounce Hinduism. In the same nature mentioned above another oath taking was carried out during the reign of King Bhagyachandra (1759-98), not to renounce Hindu Gouriya Vaishnavism. The ‘Nongkhrang Pareihanba’ function was organized on Wednesday the 6th February 1974 at Lilong. A large number of people from all directions attended the function to perform the rites and rituals according to the religious norms of primal religion. The appearance of Shri Okendrajit Singh, son of the late king Budhachandra Singh was the significant person of the function. On that very day, by taking the advantage of his social and customary statutory position he read out a paper in which he made certain amendment in the rules and regulations to be followed by the Pundit Loisang (writers department) of the royal court. Some Maibas and devotees dived in the water of Lilong with rituals to free from the binding of the oath which had been imposed on their forefathers some two hundred and fifty year ago. They did so representing the entire Meitei community. After this event, the Meiteis are free to accept their long lost religion which is free from discrimination.

The adoption of Hinduism as the state religion in the 18th century C.E. was a watershed mark in the history of Manipur. In brought changes the socio-religious aspect in particular and politico-economic in general of the Meitei society. Recent time Manipur society has witnessed many religious movements. The Sanamahi movement which gave emphasis in the reconstruction of pre-Hindu Meitei identity is one of them. From the above discussion, the writer, in his own observation did not find any differences in the operational level of both the religion i.e. Hinduism and Sanamahism. No doubt that various Hindu Gods and Goddess and its associated festivals have changed into Pre-Hindu God of Meitei. However when we look at the functioning of these religious festival many similarities has been found. Even in the ceremony of rites-de-passages of Hindu followers and that of Sahamani followers, only the nomenclature has changed, for example Subha vibhaha into Pinsi leipun, swarti puja into Ipan thaba etc. but in the operational level of these ceremonies there are no so much different in between the two. Therefore it is the right time to rethink and reevaluate the ongoing process of revivalist movement in order to bring a radical change in the existing useless religious and social practices for the welfare of the Manipuri society.
Notes:
1 The present state of Manipur lies in the range of 23°83” N and 25°68” N latitude and in the longitude range of 93°03” E to 94°78”E
3 William McCulloch, Account of the Valley of Munnipore and of the Hill Tribes, 1859; reprinted 2016, Akansha Publishing House, New Delhi, 2
4 Historically, the Meiteis originally to the people who belonged to Mangang salai who eventually overpowered the other remaining salais who ruled over at different territories in the valley around 33 C.E. After this event Meitei became a nomenclature, which is applicable to any person belonging to nine Salies. The Meiteis presently composed of seven clan groups called yeks salais viz. Mangang (also known as Ningthauja clan after Hinduisation), Luwang, Khuman, Moirang, Angom, Khaba-Nganba and Sarai-Leishangthem.
6 In the Ancient period of Manipur, the Meitei did not have the system of idol worshipping; it was by the influence of Hinduism that idol started worshipping in the temple called Laisang or Mandir.
9 Angom salai as Gautama Gotra; Ningthouja as Shandilya; Luwang as Kashayapa; Khuman as Madhugalya; Moirang as Areya Angira; Khaba-Nganba as Bharadhwaj; Sarang Leishangthem as Vasistha. See Gangmumei Kamei, Ethnicity and Social Change, Akansha Publishing House, New Delhi, 51
10 Kishan, op.cit., part-5, 1
12 The Ningthee turel is the name for the Chindwin River. Turel means river in Manipuri language.
13 Bihari, op.cit., 91
14 Wayen Lairik is a book containing all the rules and regulations to be observed by an orthodox Meitei Hindu.
15 Gangmumei Kamei, History of Manipur: Pre-Colonial Period, Akansha Publishing House, New Delhi, 2015, 2
16 Lallup= whereby every male in the valley was bound to work ten days in every forty for the Raja.
19 Brahmasabha, the highest authority on religious affairs was set up during the reign of Maharaj Bhagyachandra and it was revitalized by Churachand Maharaj during his reign.
21 Bijoykumar, op.cit., 83
22 Apokpa Marup is a socio-cultural organization founded by Naoria Phullo in 1930 at Cachar.
23 Saroj N Arambam Parrat and John Parratt, History and Culture of Manipur, Manipur, Patriotic Writers’ Forum, Manipur, 2012, 106
27 Under Khundrakpam Assembly Constituency Ward. No. 1, 8 km from the Imphal.
28 N. Joykumar Singh, op.cit., 151
29 According to the book, Manipur Ittibriti Written by Khumanthem Kaomacha, a list of 123 books was burnt down by the order of King Garibaniwaz.
30 Sairem Nilabir, op.cit., 122
31 Ibid, 123
32 Nongkhrang=a kind of tree, Parei=binding, Hnaba=unwinding or undoing.
33 A confluence of two important rivers of Manipur i.e., Imphal river and Iril river, about 8km to the South of Imphal.
34 Sairem Nilabir, op.cit., 123-124
35 N. Joykumar Singh, op.cit., 165
36 Sairem Nilabir, op. cit., 124
Ethnic Marginalities and India: The Case of Mizoram in *Zorami*

Dr. Shobha M.*

**Abstract:** The paper looks into the notion of border, the problems of negotiating ethnic and national identities that have always rendered the North east as a complex yet an interesting site, not just in postcolonial India but also in contemporary India. Unlike the other parts of India, where the mainland/island binaries have gradually given into to the new forces of nationalism and globalization, the North east still keeps the history alive when these binaries ruptured their lives, and left unhealed wounds. The past (the tribal, colonial and the national phases) plays a significant role in the way people in the North eastern states relate to each other and to the rest of India. How far memory alive and clear can affect the present location and also shape the future? The paper examines these issues through the recently published novel, *Zorami: A Redemption Song* (2015) by Malsawmi Jacob. The novel deals with the conflict and suffering during the insurgency years of the 1960s, when the Mizo people were battling with political unrest, famine and devastation. The story captures the resentment of the Mizos towards the hegemonic indifference of the state bodies of Assam and India. As the protagonist Zorami grapples with her cruel past to make sense of her present life, she becomes the microcosmic representation of the Mizos in particular and the North eastern people in general. The paper hopes to understand and theorize on the importance of ethnic identity that has constantly come into conflict with national space and identity after the colonial impact.

*Zorami* is the first novel written by a Mizo writer in English. Speaking about the novel, Malsawmi Jacob states, “The story of Mizo people, especially what they went through during those turbulent times, is important. I used to wonder how they were dealing with the psychological trauma of the time even though political peace had returned. After listening to many people, I realised that the emotional wounds had not healed. So the novel is a quest for inner healing” (Hanghal). Thus the novel revisits the 1960s movement in Mizo history in order to understand what the Mizos went through and to look for ways to heal the emotional wounds they are unable to forget. The journey backward, however, is fraught with many complexities that defy easy resolution. The novel illustrates this difficulty through the protagonist Zorami’s life, which coincides with the Mizp people’s political upheaval and struggle for independence. Malsami Jacob uses the flashback narrative technique: the present time of the novel is Zorami’s fiftieth birthday, and the past is recollected from the time of her childhood. The novel renders the journey, which both Zorami and her community undertake as problematic. The present paper attempts to argue that the problematic nature of the journey is due to the struggle for ethnic identity within a nationalist discourse. Indian government considers it ethnic uprising/insurgency. The paper uses Nunthara’s theory on ‘ethnic consolidation’ and ‘marginalised nationality identity problem’ in North East India.

In her essay, “Ethnic Identity Formation in North East India,” C. Nunthara renders the case of the North East as one which is related to the existence of ethnic categories and nationalities. She analyses the different phases through which an ethnic category becomes an ethnic group and then through ‘ethnic mobilization,’ becomes an ‘ethno nation.’ The present paper proposes that the same phases of Mizo political history can be discerned in *Zorami* towards the construction of Mizoram as an Ethnonation. Simultaneously, it also examines how Zorami’s life
changes during these phases of her community, land and culture; Zorami becomes a metaphor for Mizoram. As Malsami Jacob says in her interview with David Lalmalsawma, “Yes, I used the name Zorami deliberately to describe the Mizo people. I also used her as a symbol. (“Zoram” is a term of endearment used to describe Mizoram; “i” denotes the name is that of a female).” In a deeply patriarchal Mizo society, invoking a woman’s life as a metaphor for her community has feminist undertones. Jacob states that she wants to reflect in Zorami, women’s deliberate exclusion from social and political decision making, even though women had actively joined and contributed to the Mizo movement for independence.

In order to get the terminological distinctions among ethnic category, ethnic group, and ethnonation, Nunthara relies on R.H. Jackson’s “Ethnicity in Giovani Sartori” in which he states that ethnic category signifies persons of the same social and cultural characteristics that identify them as members of a recognizable social category. The characteristics may include race, religion, colour, customs, language, and geographical origin. The novel being set in Mizoram, particularly in Aizawl and its suburbs, presents the Mizo society as one community in all these aspects. A vibrant folk literature is continuously interspersed with the narrative of the novel in the form of proverbs, sayings, songs, tales, war slogans, etc. The Mizo language along with English translation is used freely throughout the novel, thereby attributing a firm ethnic linguistic identity. ChhintiraMeikai, one of the favourite Pawnto games is described. An entire chapter “Tales Grandma Told” is devoted to the Mizo folk tales about the hero Chemtattrawa, the beautiful Rimenhawihi; these fables point to a rich folklore carrying the collective wisdom of the community. Stoic endurance is considered as one of the ultimate virtues among the Mizo people. The narrator says it has been practised since the time of their fore-fathers. Even when someone dear dies, once the funeral is over, they must mourn only in secret. Zorami imbibes all these qualities of her community during her growing up years. As a young girl she listens to elders talking about how from time immemorial, their ancestors lived in those hills in total independence with their own customs and practice, thus invoking ‘ethnic consciousness’ or shared cultural traits attached to their ancestral homeland.

The Mizo ethnic category as constructed in the novel, is developed into an Ethnic group, which according to R.H. Jackson, is the one that acquires additional characteristics of identity and organisation. The novel demonstrates the advent of Christianity and English as an additional attribute, which brings education and self-respect. The Mizo language, which emanates from the oral tradition, acquires the Roman script through Christian missionaries. Zorami becomes aware of this early in her life when her father stresses the importance of getting educated and learning English: “From the way her father said “English,” Zorami realized that English was a very special language. That moment she fell in love with English” (41). Later she studies English literature and becomes a teacher at a college. We find Zorami quoting lines from English poets such as Yeats, Eliot, Wordsworth, and Hardy, thereby establishing that the English language and the awareness it brings in, exist side by side with Mizo culture and language.

Both Jackson and Nunthara propose that an ethnic group aspires to become an ethnonation when it desires an interest in public authority, “which may be constitutional status of special rights, provincial autonomy and not outright sovereignty The process by which ethnic category may be awakened and transformed into ethnic group or ethnonation” is recognized by Jackson as ‘ethnic mobilization’. Thus, he considers ethnic mobilization as a crucial attribute to become an ethnonation. The novel artistically constructs Zorami witnessing, as a young Mizo girl, the process of asserting or reasserting cultural identity and group
affiliation along ethnic lines and ancestral cultural aspects. The famine, which devastates the lives of Mizos is set up as the context in which ethnic mobilization gains momentum. The chapter, “A Plague of Rats,” describes the multiplication of rats because of *mautam* (meaning bamboo dying), scarcity of water, and poor help from the Assam government and the Indian government at the centre. Zorami listens to elders expressing their dissatisfaction: “We are only a district of Assam and what do they care about tribal people like us? . . . It was a mistake to become part of India. We should have joined Burma instead. India istreating us like stepsons, because we are a different race.” (38). In the same chapter, on the Republic Day, as Zorami and her close friend, Kimi are walking back from the school celebrations of Republic Day, they witness a protest march against the imposition of Assamese language in Mizoram. The Assamese language is described as “goblin-scripts” and it has no connection with the Mizo language. One of the protesters points to the irrationality of compelling the Mizos to learn unfamiliar and difficult languages such as Hindi and Assamese: “We are starving because of the *mautam*. The government doesn’t bother to give us food. Instead they are trying to force their language on us. Will it feed our children? If it were not for the Mizo National Front organized by PuLaldenga, we would have died out” (40). Inspired by the slogans and the speech, Zorami proposes to her friends that they should join the protest march. They are the only children in the group and they shout enthusiastically “kan duh lo!” The narrator remarks, “they were so carried away with the cause they had taken up, they were not at all self-conscious” (41). The unconscious absorption of asserting Mizo identity and demanding for constitutionally special rights continues in Zorami’s life, as the movement gains momentum into a full-fledged ethnic mobilization claiming an ethnonationality status.

The chapter, “What Man has Made of Man” takes us to Damupui village, where the stage is set for PuLaldenga’s public address. He is presented as a hero radiating a strong personal magnetism. His mere presence ignited the atmosphere with a strange fervour. This chapter is crucial to understand Mizo identity formation. PuLaldenga, in his speech, constructs the freedom with which Mizo ancestors lived among the hills, not conquered or subjugated by their neighbouring countries. It is the British rule which annexed the Mizo country and brought it under their government and that is how their land became part of India. As he declares, “But we, the Mizo people, can never be at home in India, the land of the *vai* people. Our culture is different. Our customs and practices are different. Our religion is different. So they do not consider us as their people” (68). Laldenga rightly points to the discrimination meted out to his community because of their ethnic identity. The indifference of the Assam and Indian governments has resulted in underdevelopment of the Mizo land, and the only solution lies in freedom to exist independently, so that they can develop Mizoram through proper infrastructure, trade, industries and employment. Laldenga’s speech brings together ethnic mobilization and nationality mobilization. Nunthara sees this as the special feature of the North East in contrast to the ethnicity discourses of the minority groups of the United States of America and Canada. In North America, the minority groups derive their identity from ancestral culture, but are unattached to their homelands. In the North east however, Nunthara observes, “processes of ethnic mobilization and nationality mobilization are in operation simultaneously” (53). Laldenga evokes the bravery of the tribal heroes like Taitesena, Vawapa, Khuangchera who considered community’s welfare before their own and gave up their lives for it: “We are in great danger of being assimilated, consumed and annihilated. Our Mizo identity is in danger. If we continue to live as we do now,
we may become lost tribes like the lost tribes of Israel” (69). Thus, as the novel constructs the discourse of ethnonationality, which ignites many young minds, it also renders ethnonationality as complex and problematic. There are doubts in the minds of matured adults like Hrangthanga, Ralpaka’s father, who has served the Indian army. Hrangthanga says, “If we start violence, our people will suffer terribly. Mind you, we will not be treated like the youngest child. We will be punished like stepsons. Do you think the Indian government will hold their peace if we capture it offices? They will send battalions of army men to subdue us. Blood will flow in our land” (72). As the novel progresses, this forecast of Hrangthangabecomes true along with other complex dimensions of the movement, which are in Zorami’s life too.

The patriotic, ethnonationality movement soon becomes termed as Insurgency by the Indian government. The two-decade-long revolt by the MNF leads the Indian government to use even warplanes against its own citizens for the first time. A “grouping” policy is introduced where villages are burnt and civilians are sent to guarded centres so that people would be unable to shelter insurgents. Chapter “Fenced In” describes how the Indian army forces the people of New Darma village to build a fence around themselves and get imprisoned. Without being able to work in the fields and get food, many die of hunger and many are tortured to death for breaking the curfew. The narrative sketches this traumatic period in all its dimensions through different characters and their responses. Chapter 10, ironically titled, “The Patriot”launches the movement officially as Nikhuma, who is peacefully resting after a day-long hard work, is summoned by the MNF Chief (the call of the motherland). The meeting is termed as the Provincial Parliament of Mizoram, and the members who were block members are appointed as Parliament members, and they sign the Declaration of Independence. PuLaldenga enlists the injustice and violation of human rights and dignity by the Indian government; he calls out for an attack on the District Office in Aizawl on 28th Feruary. The Mizo land being termed as Mizo nation, and the ethnic mobilization called as the Freedom struggle movement are ironically similar to Indian freedom struggle movement against the British government. Nikhuma signs the Declaration and dreams of the exciting future, when Mizoram would be independent, free from slavery. However, the accidental death of Captain Chawngthinga while cleaning and fixing the grenades forecasts an ominous spell on the movement. As the movement intensifies, the brutality of the Indian army in handling the Mizo freedom fighters also increases. At the same time, the novel lays out how complications arise within the movement, as the MNF targets Mizo people, employed in Indian government offices. Some of the patriots like Lalawmpuia become troubled when they are instructed to kill their own relatives. Thus, staunch nationalism, even among the MNF group is interrogated and fissures within the movement begin to appear.

Although there are number of incidents in the novel, Zorami’s life stands as a metaphor that represents the physical and psychological torture the people of Mizo underwent. When the movement is at the peak, on a day of curfew, the fourteen years old Zorami who goes to fetch water from a well, is brutally raped by an Indian army man. The effect of rape is presented in strong words: “She was lacerated, ripped apart. A fiend in human body did it in revolting lust (197). In the hospital, after she gains consciousness, a nurse stitches her up, without anaesthesia. “How she screamed! The needle pierced her again and again. Stinging pain upon pain” (198). As the violation of Zorami’s body stands for the violation of Mizo land and people, Zorami’s suffering and pain reflect those of her community’s. As time passes, the wounds on her body would heal, leaving scars, but her wounded
psyche remains. The identification of Zorami with her community is brought out effectively in the novel, but the resolution of the conflict is not presented as easy. Although Zorami is married to Laliansanga, they are not fully drawn to each other. There is no overt conflict in her marriage, but Sanga is also haunted by the memory of Dimpuii, the girl he loved and lost to the freedom struggle. Two broken lives struggling to come together represent the broken psyche of Mizoram.

Without creating the binary between MNF and Indian army, Malsawmi Jacob offers varied responses and interpretations to the entire situation, which make attaining ethno nationality a nuanced, problematic phase in ethnic movements. The problems and fissures within the MNF and its method of fighting are handled sensitively in the novel. After the rape of his daughter, Zorami’s father Thanchhunga is critical of the method employed by the MNF. Like the author, he too feels that the movement should not have resorted to violence, which caused so much trouble to the Mizo community. Twenty-five years after their marriage, Zorami and Sanga celebrate their silver jubilee, when Zorami goes back in her mind to the important landmarks of her (Mizoram’s) life in the thirty fifth chapter, “Looking Back.” It is eighteen years since the signing of the Peace Accord between the Central government and the MNF, and a whole generation that had lived in fear of the Indian army heaves a sigh of relief: “The word ‘peace,’ a sound so sweet to all, echoes throughout the land” (262) When Mizoram becomes the twenty third state, amidst all the jubilation, Zorami thinks, “Is our land really an island of peace?” (262) She feels that the real peace is still eluding, and this gives a new entry point to the whole idea of attaining ethnonationality. The basic structure of the Mizo society that of the forefathers, is disturbed during the phase of ethnomobilization. Now, the new state of Mizoram has not completely resulted in the formation of a Mizoethnonation that was envisaged by the MNF. Instead, the gap between their ethnic roots and the modern society has widened with the coming of new funds from the centre, drugs and corruption. Without downplaying this disillusionment, the novel further complicates the Mizo case by drawing references to the conflicts caused by militant groups in the neighbouring states. That which was hailed as patriotism within the context of Mizoram is now visiting them in another form (militancy), which further reveals the problematic relationship among the concepts of freedom, ethnic identity, state and nation. Nunthara rightly points to how infiltrators such as Chakmas, Tripuras, Bru or Reangs are organizing themselves into ethnic group identity formation. Any attempt to ignore these diverse ethnic identity formations through ethnic groups, and force political or administrative imposition will lead to different forms of aggressive movement. While for Zorami, religion offers a redemption from her troubled psyche, it is more complicated in the case of the collective psyche of the community, because as Malsawmi Jacob says, inner healing has to come at an individual level.

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Oral Traditions in the New Age: Reference to Radio Archives and New Media Practices

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Introduction:
Culture is transmitted from generation to generation via social learning such as imitation, teaching or language. As it is passed along, it accumulates and accommodates different changes through time, playing a crucial role in the evolution and development of human social and communal life. In this transmission, the cultures of memory, essential for the existence of mankind as a socio cultural being, are the only means that guide a cultural group towards progress without losing its connections to past traditions. Anthropological and semiotic theories point out that culture is three-dimensional, this categorization is however only a guide, in reality, it is an amalgamation of all, comprising social (people, social relations, institutions), material (artifacts and media), and mental aspects (culturally defined ways of thinking, mentalities). (Erll, 2008)

Yet, human memory is limited and unstable, prone to external influences and easily forgotten. As Andrew Jones in Memory and Material Culture, quotes, “Human memory is fragile and finite. We mentally store our experiences as memories. However, memories are easily forgotten, and the retrieval of memories, through the act of remembering, is inexact and faulty” (Andrew Jones, 2007). It is with the help of external storage systems that much of the world’s cultures have been preserved till date. Architecture, paintings, written texts, electronic devices and the like have been indispensible to the storage and retrieval of these cultural artifacts.

Due to the shortcomings of the human mind, the material aspect of memory, including different devices for storage of physical forms have been invented. These have included notched bone implements, clay and stone tablets, and, at a later stage in history, maps, drawings, photographs, phonographs, and other recording technologies, and, finally, the computer. Each of these offers an increasing capacity for the storage of memory, providing means for human memory to store and retrieve its valuable records in a reliable fashion. Some of these newer technologies have allowed for far more avenues than just traditional archiving but have also created the ‘producer’ in the ‘consumer’ of culture.

Media and Memory:
The role that the electronic media have played in the preservation and dissemination of culture is immense. The 20th Century marked the dawn of a new era when radio was being invented, providing the world with a technology that was all pervasive and accessible. Music has been the staple of radio since its inception. The first ever broadcast of music was on 24th December 1906 when a violin rendition of the song “Oh Holy Night” was aired by Reginald Fessenden. Subsequently in the 1950s, the rise of national television further extended the earlier power that radio has wrought, bringing now visuals of what had hitherto been only imagined and heard. Folk forms such as songs, plays, puppetry, etc found a new lease of expression in this medium.

The further expansion of technology into the digital era further paved ways for the archiving of memory into an instantly accessible and high fidelity format that may be preserved for eternity. This, however, has led to debates between the optimists and retractors of technology where both sides argue over the importance or hindrance of these technical tools, especially in an age where commercial reproductions of historical events and traditions through audiovisual media affect the content and the form in which audiences relate to the events. This is even more
applicable in a so-called postmodern moment in which public confidence in the real is overall in decline.

Marshall McLuhan predicted the arrival of a global village. This is the age where it has come true. In the 1960s, McLuhan said that the new forms of communication will definitely impact space and time and human perception. Although he was criticized for being techno-deterministic, his emphasis on technical media is important for distinguishing between different modes of cultural transmission (oral, literate, electric) and that these media structure inter-subjective social relations (Stevenson, 2002). The medium, declares McLuhan, is the message. McLuhan insists, again and again, that the study of the way technical forms of media shape human perception constitutes the most important theoretical issue facing media studies today.

It is fortunate, in a way, that the current generation will not be losing touch with the traditions of the forefathers due to the faithful reproduction of artifacts in various formats although at the same time, one is skeptical about the notion of the ‘image’ overtaking the ‘real’. Whether good or bad, these trends of postmodern upheavals are here to stay with pastiche, quotation, parody and pluralism of style, with postmodernity as a more general condition.

### Remaking Memory:

The rise of digital technology, especially mobile technology and video editing software has paved the way for creative expressions and experimentations which finds a fan base amongst the younger generation of users. The social media platforms of Facebook, Twitter, Youtube, Instagram and the like, keep on increasing in popularity and membership. In *Social Media and Creativity*, Peppler points out that there is a ‘participatory culture’ in which the youth move fluidly between consuming and producing media which is a by-product of widely available creative tools and Web 2.0 platforms that enable youth to experiment with technology that was previously the exclusive domain of professionals (Peppler, 2013).

The next section will look into the communication and culture environs pertaining to oral traditions of the Khasis, vis-à-vis the archival of this tradition in both traditional (radio) and social media (Youtube) platforms.

### Folk Traditions of the Khasis:

One of the important sites of memory is the oral culture, including folk tales and folk songs. The Khasi tribe of Meghalaya has a rich repertoire of oral traditions, from folk songs to folktales dealing with a variety of themes. According to Nongkynrih, the storytelling activities of the Khasis date back to the time of their creation myths. From there, the themes progress to deal with the Khasi world view, God and religion, good and evil, the clan system and so on. Although this legacy has survived to the present age, much of it has remained undocumented and face danger of erasure due to both external and internal factors.

Here, we turn our attention to the role played by the mass media in general and the broadcast medium of radio and the new media in particular, as instruments of archiving such forms of cultural memory and preserving it for posterity.

### Radio and the Folk Songs of the Khasis:

The sound archives of All India Radio (AIR) are possibly the largest audio library of Indian music recordings by the government of India. The library preserves voice recordings of eminent personalities, freedom fighters, national leaders, award-winning radio dramas, features, documentaries and memorial lectures (livemint.com).
All India Radio Shillong too has its own archives of folk songs and traditions, but the earliest renditions have not been preserved on record as recording facilities started only in the 1960s. The earliest surviving songs of this decade include the following:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sl. No.</th>
<th>Song Title</th>
<th>Artiste</th>
<th>Composer</th>
<th>Year</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>Sier Lapalang</td>
<td>Phrangsngi Kharlukhi</td>
<td>Phrangsngi Kharlukhi</td>
<td>1960</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>Ka Juk U Suhpetbneng</td>
<td>Phrangsngi Kharlukhi</td>
<td>Phrangsngi Kharlukhi</td>
<td>1960</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td>Manik Raitong</td>
<td>Snar Manik Syiemlieh</td>
<td>Snar Manik Syiemlieh</td>
<td>1963</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.</td>
<td>Panshandi</td>
<td>Reliancy Roy</td>
<td>H.T. Pariat</td>
<td>1964</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

These songs are based on the folk tales and legends of the Khasis. *U Sier Lapalang* is about a prodigal son leaving home only to be killed by his enemies, leaving his mother alone in the world. The song is the lament of the mother for her lost son. *Ka Juk U Sohpetbneng* tells the story of the origin of the Khasi people. *Manik Raitong* is a tragic tale of love between an orphaned young man and a queen consort. *Panshandi* is another tragic love story between a poor girl and her husband who leaves her never to return.

These records, however, belong to the public broadcaster whose copyrights are owned by the station, but listeners can tune in and listen to these songs when they are played on air, through specially featured programmes or by requesting for the specific songs. The emotional tones of these tales are represented through the composer’s vividly imaginative lyrics and the soulful rendition of the artistes and are a constant reminder of the repertoire that we are descendants of.

**Role of New Media Archives:**

A host of content uploaded and shared via Youtube feature many of the folk songs already in the AIR Shillong archives as well as new interpretations of the songs by younger artistes and performers. A few of these videos are professionally produced, (example, Khmih Creative Society, Shillong Voice), some are recordings from concerts and others are uploaded personally. Other personal initiatives (Masi Raikhoh) provide a lyric video accompanying the music. These sites are steadily growing in popularity not only amongst the Khasis but also with diverse audience groups in the country and abroad.

**Conclusion:**

In a blog titled “Can Technology help preserve elements of culture in the Digital Age?” by Gameli Adzaho, a question is posed as to whether the adoption of digital technology in non-Western cultures in its proliferation will contribute to erosion of local cultural values and practices and if this cultural degeneration in turn leads to loss of identity and pride among young people, disrupting their focus and productivity, ultimately retarding social progress.

The answer depends on how we interpret our messages via the Internet which is increasingly becoming a popular hub of entertainment hall and information rolled into one and there is no doubt that this is a viable site of cultural exchanges. As Adzaho quotes, “Providing access to more local content is crucial to keep people in touch with their roots. Thankfully, technology has evolved to a stage where there are many tools easily available to create the software, graphics, websites, music and videos that will let each society transmit aspects of their culture to the youth, and indeed share their identity with everybody in a globalised world”.

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The Legendary Ballad of Khamba-Thoibi: A Cultural Text of Manipur

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Abstract: The Manipuris believed deeply in the role of Fate or Destiny. They believed that in everything that happens in life, God always has a hand. They believed that God’s ways are beyond human understanding. There is a saying in Manipuri language “Meena tambana ama, laina tambana ama”, which is equivalent to the English proverb “Man proposes and God disposes”. This is clearly evident in the story of khamba and Thoibi, a ballad which came down to Manipuri people through oral tradition, which reflects the deep belief of the Manipuri people in God’s strange ways. The story is primarily of youthful love, yet it throws up a number of diverge and sanguineous character and also events which depict vividly the then society and heroic life of Moirang. Chivalry and chastity were the coveted ideals for which the people fought and prepared to sacrifice their lives. The story reaches epic heights by virtue of the wide range of events and intensity of characters. This paper attempts to highlight the cultural practices and belief systems of the Manipuri people in the past, and which still continue to practice in our contemporary situation. The story was usually sung in social gatherings by professional minstrels accompanied with the Manipuri musical instrument called ‘Pena’, a violin-like musical instrument. The singer sings the story with dance movements before the audience gathered in an open courtyard. However, in the last century the renowned Manipuri poet, the late Hijam Anganghal Singh scripted the whole legend in black and white, entitled ‘The Khamba Thoibi Sheireng’ or the ballad of Khamba and Thoibi.

Keywords: God, Destiny, ballad, cultural practices, oral tradition, minstrel

The ballad of Khamba and Thoibi which came down to Manipuri people through oral tradition was sung in social gatherings by professional singer-cum-story tellers accompanied by the traditional Manipuri musical instrument called ‘Pena’. The singers in such presentation are dressed in formal dhoti, velvet shirt and turban. The singer will sing the story with dance movements before the audience gathered in an open courtyard or community hall. The story of Khamba and Thoibi is set at Moirang, a small town about 45 kilometres away towards the south from Imphal. The famous and the largest fresh water lake of the North-East India, the Loktak lake is situated at Moirang and the story of Khamba and Thoibi is closely connected with the Loktak lake.

The protagonist of the legend, Khamba and his elder sister, Khamnu were the wards of a noble man in the Moirang king’s court. The nobleman and his wife died young, leaving behind the two children to their fates. They were later on completely forgotten by their father’s friends and well-wishers. Khamnu, the sister, out of fear, didn’t allow her brother to go out of the house fearing that he might be harmed by the powerful people of Moirang. She sold whatever little vegetables she collected from the Loktak Lake and sold it at Moirang bazaar. Gradually, the orphans grew up and khamba became a healthy young man. The plight of these orphans was full of pathos and the writer tried to arouse a feeling of pity in the state of the brother and sister.

Destiny played a vital role in the progress of the subsequent events. Khamba decided that he ought to go out seeking some jobs; and as he came out to Moirang market, destiny led him to the house of the Yubraj, the king’s brother. Meanwhile,
the Yubraj’s beautiful daughter, Thoibi, was impressed by the youth and she fell in love with him. Destiny also played a role in the progress of events that lead to the final tragic end.

In the love triangle that followed, Nongban, a handsome young man of noble blood, played the role of antagonist and he sought the hand of Thoibi in marriage. Thoibi’s father approved of the proposal made by Nongban. Gradually, the two young men competed against each other in various games – race, games of hockey and other activities in every one of which Khamba defeated Nongban. Gradually, a rivalry grew up between the two. Nongban was portrayed as boastful and arrogant, and Khamba as defiant of him.

The destiny and coincidences played a deciding significant role in the life of people. During the season of Lai Haraoba or the festival of the God Thangjing, there was a tradition of collecting orchids from the nearby hills. Both Nongban and Khamba went there and they brought beautiful orchids. When Khamba lost his way in the forest, Lord Thangjing, in the impersonation of an old tribal woman helped him out to find his way. During the festival, Nongban presented some orchids, which he had earlier offered to Lord Thangjing, to Thoibi. Thoibi, who disliked Nongban, threw away the flowers when Nongban had left. This incident angered the Lord. The Lord then cursed that Thoibi should be separated from her lover. This forewarned Thoibi’s exile to kabow (now Myanmar) by the order of her father for defying his wish. Thoibi’s exile to kabow was a tragic chapter in the story of Khamba-Thoibi.

In the meantime, Nongban was much disappointed because Khamba defeated him in all the sporting competitions. At that time news came that a wild bull was throwing panic in a nearby village and that people were afraid of going at that area. Nongban hatched a conspiracy in such a way that the king sent Khamba to catch and kill the bull. Khamba realized that he was fixed in the conspiracy of Nongban, but he was a brave man and he was sure that he would be able to catch and kill the bull. The king was pleased with Khamba’s bravery and promised that in case he caught the bull he would give Thoibi’s hand in marriage. On the day fixed for Khamba to catch the bull, he somehow tamed the bull with his mighty strength. Nongban’s subtle and cunning design to bring harm to Khamba proved futile.

In another instance, Nongban called out Khamba from his home on some pretext and on the way Nongban asked him if he would give up Thoibi. Khamba refused to do anything like that and then they quarreled. Khamba alone was on one side and Nongban and his followers on the other side. Khamba fought bravely, but there were too many against him. They overpowered him, beaten him up, tore his clothes and bound him so that he could not move. All these happened with the knowledge of the Yubraj. So, when Nongban’s men came and informed the Yubraj that Khamba was a prisoner at their hands, the Yubraj was jubilant. The Yubraj came with a great elephant and told his men to bind Khamba to the leg of the elephant with ropes. But the man who bound Khamba knew that he was innocent and so bound him not so tightly. Then they goaded the elephant, but Lord Thangjing stayed it so that it did not move. However, Nongban pricked the elephant hard with a spear and the elephant moved. Meanwhile, in the darkness of the night the Goddess Panthoibi1 came in a dream to Thoibi and said, “Dost thou not know that the man is bound by thy father’s orders to the elephant and they have nearly killed him”. Thoibi immediately ran to the rescue of her beloved with a dagger in her hand. She found khamba still tied. She then cut the ropes. Khamba, however, was not dead and through the care of Thoibi, he recovered quickly. Then, there followed a quarrel between the Yubraj and Khamba’s supporters. The king
took Khamba’s side and pacified his supporters appealing them to bring the matter to a close.

The Yubraj was very angry with Thoibi and therefore, he ordered that his daughter should be sent to Kabow in exile. Thoibi bade goodbye to Khamba and asked him to wait for her as she would certainly come back. Thoibi stayed in the house of a nobleman called Tamurakpa. In Kabow, Thoibi was treated well there but some jealous women try to make her life miserable. However, Thoibi’s good loving nature overcame all the evil intentions of these women. Thoibi’s father felt sorry for his daughter and he sent his men to bring her back home. Thus, Thoibi returned to Moirang and went to the home of Khamba directly. This angered Nongban and he again conspired to bring evil to Khamba. At that moment, an old woman came and she told the king that there was a tiger in the jungle which threatened the villagers. The king took it as a great opportunity to settle the dispute between khamba and Nongban, believing that the Lord would take the side of the just. The king, therefore, declared that whoever the person that killed the tiger would be given the hand of Thoibi for marriage. Then on the appointed day, both Khamba and Nongban went into the forest in search of the beast. The tiger jumped upon them, specially targeting Nongban. Khamba tried to save Nongban but unfortunately the tiger wounded Nongban. In the scuffle later on Khamba wounded the beast and it ran away. Khamba then carried Nongban to the place where the king was waiting with his noblemen. After leaving Nongban there, Khamba again entered in the forest and found the tiger half-hidden in a bush. The tiger rushed towards Khamba, but he speared him through his mouth and the tiger fell to the ground. The king then gave rich gifts to khamba and bestowed upon him wide lands and rights of fishery, robes of honour and titles of high fame, and made him master of a salt-well and ordained that people should call him Pukhramba.

After this incident, Khamba and Thoibi were wedded and so was his sister Khamnu to Feirojamba, a nobleman’s son whom she was betrothed even when she was a mere girl.

Generally, after so many trials and tribulations, the hero and the heroine were expected to live a life of prolong happiness. But fate had other designs on human life. One evening Khamba teased Thoibi in order to taste her chastity. It rather angered Thoibi and she threw her knife to a man in the dark, killing him. When the true identity of the wounded person was revealed, Thoibi also committed suicide. This is how the legend of Khamba and Thoibi was brought to an end.

Talking about the ballad of Khamba and Thoibi, Professor Ch. Manihar wrote:

It is evident that the story is primarily of youthful love, yet it throws up a number of diverse and sanguineous characters and also events which depict vividly the then society and heroic life of Moirang. Chivalry and
chastity were the coveted ideals for which the people fought and prepared to sacrifice their lives. The story reaches epic heights by virtue of the wide range of events and intensity of characters. Khamba is an embodiment of virility, humility, kindheartedness and loyalty to the king. Thoibi is the symbol of beauty, tenderness, wit and constancy. Her only drawback was that she failed to love moderately, but she could take in her stride the servile works like collecting fire-wood from the hill and catching fish in the lake for the sake of love during her stay in the alien land.

There are a number of exciting events in the story of Khamba and Thoibi. The events include athletic games in which the main competitors are Khamba and his rival Nongban; the fishing episode during which Khamba’s boat crashes on Thoibi’s fishing net; the episode in which the rivals go to collect orchid flowers; the episode during the catching of bull, when Khamba is dragged around by the elephant; Thoibi’s exile; and the hunting of the tiger and so on. There is also a feeling of gloom, a feeling of heaviness surrounding all through these events. Khamba and his sister Khamnu’s poverty, loneliness at the early part of the story, Khamnu’s constant fear that something evil may befall upon her younger brother, the design of the villain Nongban to bring harm to Khamba, and the Yubraj’s hostility towards Khamba creates a feeling of impending tragedy all through the story. Finally, when the readers felt a sort of joy at the happy union of the hero and the heroine, then there came the unexpected and sudden death of both of them. This is probably comparable to the ‘pity’ and ‘fear’ that Aristotle gives so much importance in tragedy.

The Manipuris deeply believed that God’s ways are beyond human understanding. There is a saying in Manipuri language “Meena tambana ama, Laina tambana ama”, which is equivalent to the English proverb “Man proposes, Good disposes”. The ballad of Khamba and Thoibi reflects this deep belief of the Manipuri people in God’s strange ways. As a cultural text the ballad of Khamba-Thoibi reflects the aged-old traditional norms of life prevailing in Manipur which have been valued so much by the people. The literary writers and the cultural artistes played a tremendous role in upholding and transferring such aged-old values to the new generation through oral and written literature.

Notes:
1 A large section of the Manipuris believes that the Goddess Panthoibi is an incarnation of Goddess Durga.

References:
Maharas Leela of Manipur

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Abstract: Maharas Leela is the supreme among the five types of Raas Leelas performed in Manipur. This Raas form is all about shedding ego and pride. The gopies experience sorrow with Sri Krishna’s Antadhyan or disappearances due to their pride and selfishness. After making the gopies suffer, Sri Krishna’s Abirbhut or reappearance seeing their true love and devotion dance with each gopi known as Ek Gopi Eko Shyam in the structure fulfilling one of the wishes of those gopies who have performed Katyani Puja to have Sri Krishna for themselves. In Maharas’s Bhangi Pareng Achouba and Vrindavan Pareng (Vrindavan sequence) are dance out. The episode of Ek Gopi Eko Shyam is not included while performed in the mandop of Shree Shree Govindajee temple due to the absence of Krishna and Radha Avishar.

Introduction:
The Raas Leela of Manipur was created during the reign of Rajashri Bhaigyachandra (1763 – 1798) A.D.) which is considered as a genius in the tradition of Vaisnavite culture of the Meiteis of Manipur. Since its inception, gurus and scholars have classified Raas Leela into five kinds where Lord Krishna along with the gopies played Raasleela according to their respective seasons. The five kinds of Raas Leelas are – Maharas, Kunja Raas, Basanta Raas, Nitya Raas and Diva Raas. Out of these five Raas as, the first three forms were composed by Rajashri Bhaigyachandra himself. After modification of the former Raas, Maharaja Chandrakriti (1850 – 1886) composed the Nitya Raas. And lastly, Diva Raas was developed by Churachand Maharaja. The former three kinds of Raasleelas i.e. Maharas, Kunja Raas and Basanta Raas being created by Rajashri Bhaigyachandra have two forms each to be performed differently while staging at Shree Shree Govindajee mandop and Shree Bijoy Govindajee mandop.

Maharas Leela:
The Maharas Leela is offered for oblation to Shree Shree Govindajee mandop on the full moon night of Hiyangei according to Manipuri calendar, better known as “Mera waphukpa”. The sequence of Raas Leela played is based on Srimad Bhagavat. Starting from the twenty ninth (29th) chapter upto the thirty third (33rd) chapter of the tenth scandal (10th canto) of Srimad Bhagavat is known as Sri Sri Raspanchadhyai. Sri Sri Raspanchadhyai is considered as the five pranas (elements) of Sri Krishna. The ecstasy and bliss arising out of the union of the devotees and the Lord is shown clearly in this Raas form. The Maharas Leela is closely related to Katyani puja offered by braja gopies by observing Brath (fasting) to win over Sri Vishnu as their husband. Such a puja is performed for one month in the autumn season to goddess Durga to fulfil their wishes.

In Maharas Leela, Sri Krishna played “Bastaharan Leela” (hiding the dresses of the gopies) in order to teach the gopies to give up fear, shame and worldly mindedness and to have firm love and determined mind, if necessary, give up life for the sacred cause of Prema. Thus, Sri Krishna by way of Bastaharan tested the minds of the gopies. The braja gopies gave up fear, shame and everything and surrendered themselves to Sri Krishna. In turn, Sri Krishna in order to fulfill their wishes and desires played Raasleela with the gopies in the full moon night of autumn season. All the braja gopies participating in the Raasleela were the true devotees who have sacrificed everything to Sri Krishna and think only of him.
Sequences in Maharas:

Maharas Leela begins with certain preliminaries rituals. While performing in Shree Shree Govindajee Mandop, idols of Sri Krishna and Srimati Radhika are brought out from the temple and place at a designated sacred place prepared at the centre of the mandop known as Vadra Chakra (chakrapith) before the beginning of Nata Sankirtana. The Nata Sankirtana of Nupa Pala (male singers) began the Purvaranga of Raas Leela. In this regard, the chrome or sequences of Nata Sankirtana i.e. beginning with Pung Raga (mridanga), Eshei Raga (song), Abahan, Gouranga Avatar, Vrindavan Barnon, Gouranga Bhavi are followed as usual. After completion of the Nata Sankirtana part, all the Nata Palas (pungyeiba and singers) left the mandop handling over the responsibilities of the following performances of Maharas to the Rasdhari (teacher and mridanga player of the Raas). Rasdhari, Sutradhari, flutist and other musical accompanists took Leichandal (flowers, sandalwood paste) and offered prayer to the idols. The Raasleela begins with Nuwa Raga pung Raga by the Rasdhari followed by Eshei Raga i.e. Kanra Raga, Guru Bandana, Sabha Bandana, Vrindavan Barnon etc.

The Sutradhari (singer) intervenes with chants describing the beauty of Vrindavan as taken out from the Padavalies. In Maharas Leela of Shree Govindajee, the slokas are directly chanted from the Rasa Panchadhyai along with blowing of conch and a sacred spiritualistic environment is set. The sutradhari recites the following slokas as –

“Sri-badarayaniruvala
Dhagavanapi ta ratrih
Saradotphulla – mallikah-
Viksyarummanasacakre
Yoga – mayamupasritah”

The Raas ends with the last line of the third sloka of Ras Panchadhyai.

Normally, Krishna Avisahar is performed. It is the journey taken to the forest by Sri Krishna to meet Srimati Radhika and gopies to enact Raasleela. If Maharas is to be performed in Shree Shree Govindajee Mandop, Sri Krishna and Srimati Radhika are represented by idols, the part of Krishna and Radha Avisahar are excluded in the sequence. However, for other Raasleela performances especially at Bijoy Govinda mandop, Krishna’s part is an important and unavoidable sequence.

Through the songs of sutradhari’s beautiful Sharat Purnima (full moon night) lyrics it is picturised in the Raasleela. Such a thought captivates Sri Krishna coupled with enchanting night and a strong desire to inspire him to play his flute. The journey to Kunja is depicted by the narrative songs, dance movements, gestures, symbolical representations and central plot of the Maharas are highlighted during Avishar.

As soon as Sri Krishna reached Kunja (depicted either by a swan or a tree in the northern gate of the performing place) he performed the Murli Nad or playing the flute. On hearing the sweet music of Sri Krishna’s flute, all gopies are restless to join Sri Krishna in the divine love. According to Ras Panchadhyai, gopies ran to Krishna’s place leaving behind their daily works on hearing the melodious Murli Nad. These developments are recited by sutradhari in the form of slokas. All gopies clad in beautiful garments (potloi) along with the lead gopie entered the raas mandal. Radha avishar is performed at this stage of the raas. Radha Avisahar is a dance form accompanied with graceful body movements synchronised with rhythmic songs. The gopies enter the space from the western entrance in two files, one lead by Lalita sakhi and another by Bisakh asakhi. In Shree Shree Govindajee mandop, the gopies enter the mandali and bow to the idols and showed their obeisance. In Radha Avisahar, Radha shows restlessness and anticipation on hearing the sweet music of Murli Nad. The adornment and decoration of Srimati Radhika’s
is expressed through the melodious songs of sutradhari. Here Srimati Radhika is identified as the central character and visually depicted her longings to meet Sri Krishna (the sixth sloka is chanted).

Due to the representation of Lord Krishna and Radhika by the idols, the slokas from seventeenth to twenty fourth of the first chapter of Ras Panchadhyai meant for Sri Krishna is either chanted by sutradhari or priest residing behind the Vadra Chakrapith, personifying Sri Krishna. Slokas from twenty eight to thirty five are recited one by one by the eight gopies in the form of dialogues. The thirty sixth sloka to be recited by Srimati Radhika is performed by one of the gopies.

Later on, Sri Krishna dance with the gopies. As the sutradhari sings “Mandali Bhajan” the gopies stood up and performed “Jagoi Mapum” i.e. tintal, tanchap, chali. The idols of Sri Krishna and Srimati Radhika lying at Chakrapith revolves slowly at the centre of the mandali, signifying the involvement of Radha-Krishna character, meanwhile other gopies dance around it. Then, it is followed by Bhangi Pareng Achouba sequence. Bhangi is the real essence of Raasleela and is the most important part of it. Here, the most important sequences, distinctive features are highlighted, showing the continuity and the philosophy of the grand synthesis of the native rituals and beliefs. Normally, Bhangi Achouba sequences are performed at the concluding part of the sequences of Maharasleela. Certain strict rules like movements in the audience or any act of disturbances while performing bhangi is to be trail as the performance of bhangi is to be done in full concentration. After bhangi achouba pareng, duital, tanchap and chali sequences are performed along with the corresponding songs sung by sutradhari. Then, the episode of Krishna Antadhyan or disappearance of Sri Krishna intensifies the development of Raasleela to a great extent. The gopies feel immensely proud getting the favours of Sri Krishna. They sing and dance with deep contentment as they considered themselves as the most fortunate to be loved by Sri Krishna himself. After seeing such pride and ego, Sri Krishna decided to teach the gopies basic lessons of life and disappear with Srimati Radhika. At that very moment Sri Krishna again felt the same feeling of pride in Srimati Radhika’s mind and once again decided to teach the lessons of life to Srimati Radhika too. Keeping that in mind Sri Krishna once again disappear leaving behind Radha alone and vanish in the dark night. Srimati Radhika along with the gopies is panicked and soaks in sorrow and grief. For such episode in Maharas, if performed, at Shree Shree Govindajee mandop the area of Vada Chakra (chakrapith) is darkened by making the light dim. At the semi-dark area towards the north-west corner, one of the gopies acts as Srimati Radhika.

The gopies personifying as Radha sing in melancholy and dance here and there frantically in search of Krishna. Her heavy heart is filled with agony, pain, grief and bears the pang of separation. Seeing the pain of Radha, all gopies search every nook and corner for Krishna and wait for him with great anticipation. Here, such scenes are described through slokas recited by sutradhari for the search of Sri Krishna, enquiring to the trees, birds, animals etc. At this stage of the sequence, gopies performed “Gopi Geet” i.e. song sung by gopies themselves. The lyrics describe sorrows, pain of separation, anticipation and yet their longing to meet the Lord.

Seeing their painful, desperate situation Krishna decided to come out of hiding and reappear before them with great enthusiasm. This is depicted clearly in the episode of Abirbhut which is described by the slokas recited by sutradhari from the fourth chapter of Ras Panchadhyai. The area around the chakrapith which was darkened earlier was illuminated again bringing back the lively atmosphere again. At this stage, all gopies filled with excitement and exalted dance in joy and the famous episode “Ek Gopi Eko Shyam” or the cosmic Raas i.e. Sri Krishna
multiplied himself and dance with each gopi attending the divine union with Sri Krishna achieving divine salvation. However, in Maharas performed at Shree Shree Govindajee Mandop, each gopi dance between the idols of Radha and Govinda.

Then dual dance of Radha-Krishna is performed followed by “Vrindavan Bhangi Pareng” All gopies offer flowers or Puspanjali at the feet of Radha Govinda. The Pujari or the Brahmin (priest) performed Aarti to the deities. When Maharas is performed at local mandop, the role of Radha and Krishna is taken up by young actors. All gopies participating in the Raasleela stand up in semi-circle surrounding Radha-Krishna at the centre and sing Prathana (prayer) accompanied with beating of Kangshi (a kind of cymbal), burning of Burti along with chamors (fan) as an act of serving Radha – Krishna representing the resting time. At the concluding part of Maharas Leela, after offering Aarti, participants (gopies) and audiences touch the feet of Radha-Krishna and seek their blessings. This is the concluding part of MaharasLeela. Traditionally, Grihagamon part is not included in Maharas performed at the premises of Shree Shree Govindajee Temple mandop. While organising a Maharasleela, it can be started early or lately but it should end before Mangol Aarti. Next day morning, Gopi Bhojan is offered where the priest and other Vaishnavite devotees along with the participants in the Raasleela are taking part.

Conclusion:

The Maharas Leela is the supreme form of Raas Leela because the inner meaning of the word “Maha” embraces the quality of the dance, the high philosophical background, the completeness of showing the play, the display of Nritya, Natya, the overall excellence, gravity of the show and greatness. All these make Maharas a complete form of Raas and believed by the Vaishnavite of Manipur a dance filled with devotion to the Lord and spread the message of Bhakti to others. Those who want Dharma, wealth, fame etc. will get it but to those who have renounced the materialistic world will be showered with Moksha.

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Indigenous Material Culture of the Gangtes and their Cultural Significance

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Summary: The term material culture means the material objects made by man and used in the course of his daily life. It includes different objects produced and used by human beings for survival as well as for different purposes. These include crafts, clothing, tools and weapons, basketry, pottery, stone, wood and metal works, spinning and weaving, dyeing and painting, art, music, ornaments, etc. The term material culture is thus very wide. Of all the items included in the concept of material culture, the present study will discuss in brief the concept of material culture, the material culture available among the Gangte tribe settled in Manipur and also focus more deeply on the traditional clothes and ornaments and their cultural significance attached to it.

Key Word: Material culture, Gangte, tribe, Manipur

Material culture means all the objects used and made by man for his survival, for supporting and improving his life. The culture of a people may be defined as the sum of material and intellectual equipment, whereby they satisfied their biological and social needs and adapt themselves to the environment.1 According to Historian Jules Prown, Material culture is “The study through artifacts of the beliefs, values, ideas and assumptions- of a particular community or society at a given time.”2 The nuances of social, political and cultural history and untold stories can be known by the study of material culture. To sum up, material culture simply means the physical objects that culture creates for survival.

The Gangtes are one of the sub-tribe of the Kuki-Chin tribes who inhabited the hill areas of Manipur. Rama Chakraborty wrote that the Kuki-Chin tribes include Gangte, Aimol, Chotche, Chiru, Kom, Purum, Paite, Shom, Thadou, Vaiphei, Baite, Sahite, and some Lushai (Mizo tribes). Presently, the Gangtes mostly inhabit the Southern district of Churachandpur, north eastern part of Aizawl district of Mizoram and Tamenglong district of Manipur Concentrated in the southern district of Manipur with a population of 78919 (1981 Census). Their settlement in Mizoram and later migration to the neighbouring Manipur hills are recalled in their oral traditions. Their mother tongue -Gangte- belongs to the Kuki-Chin group of the Tibeto-Burman family of languages and they used the Roman script.3

During the time of their forefathers and up to the coming of the British in NE India, the Gangtes were a nomadic tribe. Wars and searching for fertile land for cultivation were the main causes for their semi nomadic life.4 Another reason was elephants of the jungle are a source of constant danger in the absence of gun powder, which was something unheard of, in the 15th century. Therefore to wage war and to defend themselves from wild animals, they used primitive types of weapons like Chemjam (dao), Thalpi (bow and arrow), Tiengcha (spear).5 With the introduction of guns in the later part of the 18th century, they used guns such as Muhpuah or Meipak Silai (first kind of gun, from Burma or Chittagong side), Olan (flint-lock gun), Tukuli (Turkish made gun).6

Their main occupation in the past and by-gone days was jhumming, and they used Chempong (dao), Heicha (axe), Tucha (hoe), and Koite (sickle) for cultivation.7 For carrying paddy from the fields, the women used Sengvang (basket made of cane) Sengzing (bamboo basket), Namkol (cane strap for carrying Sengvang and Sengzing), paddy was kept in a cane basket called Lo. For winnowing, a bamboo
trey called ‘Godal’ and a wooden paddy husker with stick called ‘Sum-Sutum’ are used.8

The Gangtes were proficient in dance and music. Their indigenous musical instruments includes Gawsem (bamboo pipe of seven reeds), Diing-duing (wooden tribal xylophone), Theile (flute), Daakpi (large gong), Daak neo (smaller gong), Daak bu (set of three gongs), Phiei-phiit (bamboo pipe) and Saki-khet (mithun’s horn).9

Household items includes earthen pots, wooden plates, bamboo cups, bamboo spoon, bamboo pipe (tuithei), wooden tub (tuidol), spinning wheel (mui), Phoi (white blanket), Sinkhup (cane container), Leel (basket with cover), Duop (large sieve for drying grains), Thingkhong (wooden box), Koh (container for storing grains), Siembu (set of instruments for weaving), Leen (fishing net), Ngakuoi (fishing hook), Bawm (fish trap), Tuibel (water pot), and Zubel (rice pot).10

Dresses are the identity of every nation or tribe. For the Gangte tribe, dresses are the unwritten constitution. It is a symbol whereby a man’s social status, culture can be determined.11 The traditional clothes of the Gangte are: Gangte Puondum, Thansuohpuon, Puonlaisan, Mithipuon, Puonpi, Lenbungthuom.

1) Puondum: a combination of yellow, red and black with a vertical ‘laikait’ of ‘siel lutun’ (mithun’s head kept upside down) pattern and used by both men and women and worn on every occasion. For e.g; functions, ceremonies, funeral services etc.

2) Thansuohpuon: is a man’s shawl worn by a man who confers status. It is interwoven in yellow, red and white thread with black as the base.

3) Mithipuon: a combination of red, black and yellow, worn by women during funeral services. Thin strips of yellow and red are woven on the lower end and black forms the base of the cloth.

4) Puonpi: ‘Puon’ means cloth and ‘Pi’ means big .The length and breadth of Puonpi is 6 ft. There is no other traditional cloth bigger than Puonpi. Therefore, the name Puonpi is given.

5) Lenbungthuom: A woman’s skirt of red, yellow and blue colour, woven to resemble a flower and python motif in geometrical forms.

The traditional clothes of the Gangtes have a social significance attached to their culture. Designs with distinctive motifs and varieties of colours are associated with meanings which have sociological significance and mystic ideologies closely knitted with religious beliefs and past reminiscences12. The Gangte Puondum is used for wrapping the dead body and is regarded as a mark of respect to the deceased. Also, in the early days, every girl was required to weave at least one Puondum so that she can carry it at the time of her marriage. If she failed to do so, it was considered her prime duty to weave one soon after going to her in-laws place as failure to have at least one Puondum was looked upon as highly disgraceful in their cultural set up.13

Puonpi is a kind of mattress, carried by a girl as a part of her dowry when going to her husband’s house for the first time or when legally married, in case of elopement.14 Another significant dress is the Thansuohpuon. It comes from two words ‘Thangsuoh’ meaning ‘one who accomplished a task’ and ‘Puon’ meaning shawl. Thus, the shawl is meant for people who have achieved a success or achievement in life and also used in honouring the brave hunters and warriors in the early days.15

Ornamentation first appeared in human history in the Palaeolithic period before the introduction of agriculture, domestication of animals, pottery, spinning and weaving.16 In fact adornment started with the imaginative Homo sapiens. Adornment as well as decoration of human body features is evident in all known
cultures and society. For the Gangte tribe, ornaments are more than a matter of aesthetic; it is the identity of individuals and groups as it helps in making statement and definition. Indeed, ornaments constitute as a part of the theory of being truly human, because it is only from a corpse that ornaments are removed.

In the material culture of the Gangtes, the practice of using different natural objects deriving from feather, cotton, teeth, horn, shells, bones, grasses, seeds etc are common phenomena. They also used ornaments made from a cotton ball to the most expensive cornelian beads. Although the ornaments used are simple, they are notable for its uniqueness. Some ornaments are in most cases functional and symbolical, however there are some ornaments which are non-functional and are commonly used. Some of the ornaments, decorative as well as functional are; Singtur Dumbel-smoking pipe, Funki/selki- Mithun’s horn for storing gun powder, Meitawk- fire lighter made up of two pieces of ivory box which carry cotton, stone and iron pieces to produce fire on friction. Another functional item is the Paigen-Baldrick, a belt made of animals hide and decorated with cowries and worn across one’s shoulder to support a Dao. Paigen has also an important social significance in regards to bride price. T. S. Gangte quotes: “... All the valuable items that one could think of was the ‘Paigen’. This was a belt made of leather and decorated with a kind of beads called ‘Longchang’ in seven lines. This was then considered to be a very rare and valuable item of property and can only be afforded by the chief alone. Chongthu being the younger brother of the chief Noimangpa, had access to it and when he arranged for the brides of his friends with whom he planned to go to his newly found land, he paid the ‘Paigen’ to the parents of the girls as the bride price. It so happened that though the commoner dared not refuse to accept the ‘Paigen’ when offered to them as bride price, they could neither dared to keep it with them owing to their marriage. Thus, along with the bride, the parents returned the ‘Paigen’ to Chongthu saying that this being a valuable property associated with the chief exclusively, they dared not keep it, lest the wrath of the unseen supernatural power visit them and bring misfortune to them. This process went on and on until Chongthu was able to arrange the marriage of 30 of his best and closest friends with the payment of the ‘Paigen’, time and again as the bride price. Hereafter, bride price of every clan was paid in terms of seven mithuns based on the seven lines of ‘Longchang’ on the ‘Paigen’. They also wore strings with a tiger’s tooth or a few fowl’s feather attached or a pair of tweezers and a thorn pick. The tiger’s tooth and feathers are to ward off the evil eye and keep them well on a journey, in addition to preventing them from suffering any misfortune.

The Gangte women are not so fond of ornaments and so they have a limited amount of decorative items. The ornaments included Bilbah (earrings), Chaucha (bracelets and bangles), Khi (necklace), Bilkam (ring shaped earrings to stretch the earlobe). They are:

Bilbah (men’s earrings): A large red stone suspended by a string forms an ornament for the ear. They also wear small wooden studs and cornelian beads suspended by a piece of string.

Numei Bilbah (women’s earrings): A big earrings, about one and a half inches in diameter. The earrings are made of circular discs of wood or ivory.

Chaucha (bracelet): The bracelets are generally plain brass. They rubbed it with stone to give a sparkling effect.
**Khi** (necklaces): Both sexes are equally fond of necklaces. They have different kinds of necklaces. Some of the notable ones are:

a) **Pumtek**: These beads are black and white in colour and sometimes oval or flat in shape. Old and beautiful *Pumtek* beads are articles of great value and prestige. They are obligatory, in several categories in the marriage price, payments that go to men of the bride’s agnatic lineage and also to such women as the bride’s father’s sister.\(^{25}\)

b) **Dangkakhi**: *Dangka* in Gangte means money. A necklace made of 25 paisa and 50 paisa coins threaded together alternately. At the edge of each coin a loop is made with silver or other metals for threading.

c) **Khibah**: Big necklace of precious stone beads, comprising of ninety small beads, ten medium sized beads and three large beads. The big and large beads are called *Alaikam*, medium beads *Khichong* and small beads *Khival*. The value of one big bead is equal to one mithun.\(^{26}\) *Khibah* is also used as a part of bride price. According to TS Gangte, the normal bride price consists of one *Dalphi* (big gong), one *Khichong* (rare beads of precious stones), one pair of *Khichang* (rare beads used as earrings) and seven mithuns.\(^{27}\) It is also used as a part of Longman.\(^{28}\) According to Lenthang, if a man dies, his mother’s relatives should kill an animal showing their deep affection to the dead person. And the family of the deceased should give a *Khiba* (necklace), *Dalphi* (gong), or mithun to their maternal family in memory of their son.\(^{29}\)

d) **Khichang**: A red cornelian bead worn by the men in their ears. One in each ear hangs horizontally on a piece of string from a hole pierced in the lobe and valued at one mithun. There is a story connected with *Khichang* stated by William Shaw;

"... in the days of Galngam, when they all lived at Lhangpelkot and Thilongbung, the man Galngam went into the jungle one day and met Hangshai of the Lion men. They made friends and the latter invited the former to his village. Galngam went and saw much hard red fruit on trees which Hangshai told him was the fruit of the Lion men and offered as many as Galngam could take away with him. Galngam did so and these he distributed to the villagers on his return. They could not eat then so they wore them in their ears as they do to this day.\(^{30}\)

In modern times, due to the impact of Christianity and growing westernisation, most of the dresses and ornaments has become obsolete especially the traditional beads. A good old genuine bead is easily valued at 5 to 10 Mithuns.

For the Gangtes, arts and crafts are the expression of man, a language to express a meaning. It also is a richness of imaginative work and a great variety of themes which are of incalculable value. They are the indigenous creation which took centuries of patient experiment under different circumstances. It is also important to mention the difficulty against which the artist has struggled- lack of materials and improvised tools, and a sense of inferiority in the face of commercial products of civilization.

**Notes:**

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Place of Thang-Ta in Lai-Haraoba Festival of Manipur as a Unique Culture

Sorokhaibam Hera Singh

Lai-Haraoba is closely linked with the creation myth of Manipur. The supreme Lord planned to create the world. After the creation of the whole world there was a lot of satisfaction among the gods and goddesses. There was merry-making among the divine beings for quite some time. This was the beginning of the ritual function known as Lai-Haraoba in Manipur. Actually Lai-Haraoba means the merry-making of the gods and goddesses or the pleasing of the gods and goddesses. As a matter of fact, the supreme Lord was planning to create the earth, the planets, the living beings and lifeless things. Lai-Haraoba shows in what ways these things were done. From time immemorial Lai-Haraoba has been organised till now.

There are some forms of Lai-Haraoba. They are:

1) Kanglei Haraoba
2) Chakpa Haraoba
3) Moirang Haraoba
4) Kakching Haraoba

Along with these, the gods and goddesses who will be involved in the various forms of Lai-Haraoba are different. As a matter of fact there are four types of gods and goddesses involved in the various forms of Lai-Haraoba. They are:

1) The forest gods and goddesses of a particular village or a particular community.
2) The deified ancestors of a particular clan or salai.
3) Gods and goddesses from other regions like goddess Kalika.
4) Human beings who were deified because of their power and activities like Yumjao Lairembi and Konthoujam Lairembi, etc.

In the organisation of Lai-Haraoba in Manipur several weapons like swords and spears are used. The way in which these weapons are used in Lai-Haraoba can be discussed under the three heads. In the first case, during the Lai-Haraoba various weapons like swords and spears are used. In the second case, during the programmes of the Lai-Haraoba these weapons are not actually held but the weapons are imagined in the course of the Lai-Haraoba. In the third case, the weapons are used and persons using the weapons will move along the lines of a sacred graph or picture called Paphal.

The use and involvement of the weapons like swords and spears in some of the programmes of Lai-Haraoba is given below. It has been mentioned already that varieties of weapons are used in almost all the programmes of Lai-Haraoba. It starts at the stage of preparing the area where the Lai-Haraoba ritual performance will take place. In the construction of the shrine, cleaning and cleansing of the Haraobung or the actual area of the performance various weapons are used. It has been the practice of the Meiteis for many years to keep some areas reserved for Lai-Haraoba. These areas are kept reserved for the local people who were not supposed to use the area except for ritual ceremonies like Lai-Haraoba and Chaklon Katpa or offering of meals to the local deities. Nowadays the shrines and the performance areas are raised and looked after carefully by the people in the localities.

Starting from the stage of Lai-Ekouba or the inviting of the deities from the water till the end of the programmes of Lai-Haraoba various weapons like swords, spears, shields and daggers are used in the programmes like Ekouba and the Laibou Jagoi (Laibou dance), Lai-Lamthokpa and Lai-Keithel Kaba, etc. some men holding
swords will lead the procession. In the case of *Chakpa Haraoba* a stick of iron or a spear are used. In the case of *Chakpa Haraoba* late at night a performance called "Laiphagi" or the merry-making activities of the deities are performed with dances. In this dance also weapons are used. These dances are supposed to be very important with a lot of moving philosophy behind it.

The four corners of the *Laiibung* or the main area of performance are kept reserved for Thangjing, Marjing, Wangbren and Koubru. Fire is raised in these corners till the end of the dance. All the weapons used in the performances will be kept carefully in the south-western corner.

In the programme called *Tangkhul Nurabi*, which is supposed to be based on the romantic activities of Nongpok Ningthou and Panthoibi, a distinct form of dance known as *Loutarol* is performed in all the forms of Lai-Haraoba. In the case of *Tangkhul Nurabi* the Maibi who is taking the role of Nurabi will have a sham or container hanging on her back. She will also hold the handle of a spade. The man taking the part of the *Tangkhul* will carry a bow and arrow on his back and hold a spear in his hand. Then they will perform a distinct kind of dance known as *Loutarol*. In this way we will find that indigenous weapons are used in almost all the programmes of Lai-Haraoba. There is another programme called *Sharoi Khangba* which is a programme meant to appease the bodiless spirits which are supposed to be everywhere to create problems for human beings. In this programme of *Sharoi Khangba* also weapons like swords or daggers are used. Even though the performances in the various forms of Lai-Haraoba may be different in many ways, the basic items like the use of weapons are always there in all the performances. The use of real weapons has been referred to as above. In addition to this there are various programmes of Lai-Haraoba in which the real weapons are not used but performances are given imaginatively as if the performers are holding the weapons.

It will be difficult for anyone to gainsay the fact that Lai-Haraoba is one of the most important and the most authentic traditional ritual observation of the *Meiteis*. Held in a big way it could be called a grand ritual festival lasting for many days. According to the orders of the supreme god, Atiya Guru Sidaba, his eldest son, Acheeba created the universe and completed the formation of the earth for the habitation of the living things, including men. To celebrate this great creative event, the gods and goddesses involved in the glorious process of creation, assembled at the top of the *Koubru hills*, the highest peak in the land. Five gods - Chandeba, Khongdeba, Moriaba, Yenbirungba and Yenbikappa - were assigned the task of organising the festive celebration successfully. Then, the gods and goddesses danced imitating the movements involved in the various works and activities of creating the universe and the earth. The sequence of the creative activities was reflected in the dance movements (Naorem, 2016:111-112). In organising Lai-Haraoba in Manipur using of weapons is compulsory.

At this point a few perceptions which have emerged will have to be put in the proper perspective. In the beginning Lai-Haraoba was meant exclusively for the divine beings. Only the gods and goddesses involved in the creative process of the myth were eager participants in the general rejoicing at the successful completion of the creation of the universe and the earth for the enactment of human drama. The venue was up on the hills of *Koubru, Langmaiching* and *Thangjing*, and the celebration was mythical. Gradually, in the story of time and the story of man it emerged as a complex ramification of the creative process, with man holding the centre-stage. At this stage the venue of Lai-Haraoba shifted down to the valleys. The function was then organised by human beings in a reverential and worshipful mood with the intention to please the gods and goddesses to bring peace, harmony
and prosperity to the king, his kingdom and his people. Thus the festive ceremonies held at the human level became ritualistic and propitiatory. (Naorem, 2016:114)

Lai-Haraoba is supposed to be a communal ceremony in which all the members or, at least, the leading members of the community are supposed to take part. The whole community is expected to extend its help and co-operation to the organisation of the ritual activities and share the experience of the festive performances. The Maiba (S), the Maibi (S) and the Pena - singers were the actors and the rest of the social and communal groups including the king, the members of the council of ministers and the courtiers were supposed to join the celebration. Those who were supposed to be engaged in Lallup duties were exempted from it. Since time immemorial the ritualistic and festive celebration had been playing a very important role in the socio-religious and politico-cultural life of the people of this ancient, land-locked land. (Naorem, 2016:115)

In this way in the world today the Meiteis and other communities living together in harmony with the Meiteis will have to give importance to the identity, the culture and other necessary activities of living. In doing this they will find that Thang-Ta or indigenous weapons are always there with them. And for the Meiteis Lai-Haraoba which is a religio-cultural and ritualistic performance, Thang-Ta will be found used in almost all the important items of performance. This relationship is like a foundation-stone of our group or community. According to the changing processes in the journey of time things may change. Even then this connection between our indigenous weapons and Lai-Haraoba will always be there. It cannot be done away with.

In conclusion it is very important to note that Manipuris are a martial community. The social and political system had been gradually built up through years of conflict, war leading to blood-shed, interaction and ultimate integration. Through its history this process has been taking place at various levels and conflicts leading to war took place very frequently. That is why weapons were always prepared and kept ready for use any time in the life of the people. As Lai-Haraoba is a central religio-cultural and ritualistic programme in the life of the Manipuris, the use of indigenous weapons like swords, daggers, spears, knife, bow and arrows and shields were ritually used in almost all the important programmes of Lai-Haraoba.

Notes:
1. Kalika: Hinduism in Manipur was manifest since the second half of the fifteen century. Hinduism began to arrive in Manipur with the immigration of a group of people from North India who are referred to as Nongchup Haram. These people worshiped Kalika. Thus the followers of Manipuri Hinduism began to worship Kalika in Manipur. Kalika is a female deity associated with ideas such as war, creation, and death.
2. Yumjao Lairembi: Yumjao Lairembi is a household Goddess of Meitei people. She was the incarnation of Petanga. During the reign of Uraonkhouba, there was a tragic love story of Naoothingkhong (son of Ura Konthouba) and Petanga, daughter of Shelloi village chief. Naoothingkhong married Petanga under a strict promise that she would be the queen of Manipur whenever Naoothingkhong ascended the throne. Naoothingkhong’s father Uraonkhouba was a bitter enemy of Shelloi people. They wanted to kill Naoothingkhong. With the help of Petanga, Naoothingkhong escaped from the place of Shelloi village. Days passed, Naoothingkhong ascended the throne with Keirunghanbi as a queen. Meanwhile, Petanga entered inside the royal palace to meet the King.
Nanothingkhong. The king pretended not to know her. Petanga submitted the past promise made by Nanothingkhong. Petanga transcended to goddess of Yumjao Lairembi just before the eyes of King. After the death of Petanga, Nanothingkhong and his people worshipped Goddess Yumjao Lairembi.

3. Konthoujam Lairembi: Konthoujam Lairembi is also the Household Goddess of Manipur. He was the wife of the Lord Lainingthou Soraren and has a son named Khoriphaba. One day she came to her mother’s place and stayed longer and shared a meal with her family. She informed her mother that her divine husband had warned her not to eat and drink anything contaminated by human touch. Her mother forced her to eat lunch. But nothing could be hidden from the divine eyes of the lord Soraren. He drew up the bridge. She could not go back to her husband and her son whom she had left sleeping in the upper region. In that desperate condition, some people came out and raised a hut in a semi-forested area for her to stay. In due course of time, the secluded area became the sanctum sanctuary of Tampah Haorok Leishang Saphabee, who had been deified and worshipped as Konthoujam Lairembi.

4. Lai Lamthokpa (Lai Nupi Thiba): The coming out of the Lai (God) from the courtyard which traditionally took place on the 5th, 9th or 10th day of the Lai Haraoba is known as Lai Lamthokpa. Originally it enacted the finding of a wife for the Lai (God) and was also known as Lai Nupi Thiba. It is related and believed to be the myth that Lord Khoriphaba son of the God Soraren and Konthoujam Tampha Lairembi. It reflects the practice of the selection of female religious functionaries through rites of possession, it also incorporates the typically Meitei interest in the Lai (God) as exponents of traditional game and sports.

5. Tangkhul Nurabi: Tangkhul Saram Pakhang and Nurabi were the incarnation of Panthoibi and Nongpok Ningthou. According to the legend, Panthoibi was a princess of the Mangang principality. Nongpok Ningthou, was the king of the East. Meitei religious philosophy regard Nongpok Ningthou and Panthoibi as the first created divinities, who reflect the “Soul” (regarded as both male and female of the High God). In the last days of the Kanglei Haraoba, Tangkhul Nurabi play is performed. It is an important role to spread mass education among the peoples for the welfare of the society.

6. Loutarol (cultivation): This is pure entertainment and seems to have little to do with the main meaning of the Lai Haraoba. Loutarol involves one of the maibis dressing up in peasant fashion. While going into the paddy field, they sing cultivation song. This is sung by the maibis and is addressed to the particular Lai for whom the Haraoba is being performed.

7. Maibi (Priestess): In Lai Haraoba performance, Maiba and Maibis play a great role from morning till evening. Their origins are lost in obscurity. They have a three-fold role, as priests and priestesses, givers of oracles and preservers of oral tradition.

References:
Which “Jana Gana Mana?”- Indian National Identity and Everyday Nationalisms

Dr. Deepthi S.*

Abstract: When the Indian nation state tries to strengthen its identity by taking recourse to a culture in the past as opposed to a lived culture, and also tries to fortify it through political means, a kind of homogenized middle class mass culture gets projected and promoted as national culture. Backed by support from media, history, politics etc. the mass culture gains a stronghold in defining Indianness and Indian culture which is founded upon exclusions and marginalization. This spirit of nationalism however, is vociferous, demanding and aggressive and the paper seeks to explore this brand of national identity. Through a detailed study of the national anthem, its historicity and its overarching manifestation in mass media, the paper tries to define this brand of nationalism and looks at issues and debates regarding the national anthem and its singing. The paper especially seeks to problematize concerns related to the north east in relation to the national anthem by looking at controversies and representations in social media some which include an Assam MPs demand to include his state’s name in the anthem and also some highly popular you tube videos of northeastern communities singing the anthem.

National Anthem – Its History and Link to Nationalism
Regarding the political benefits of introducing the anthem in India, Sir William Andrew while supporting the introduction of ‘God Save the Queen’ as the national anthem, said in 1883 that introducing the national anthem would remove differences among so many religions and castes in India and give them some utterance to voice their national sentiments. He says, “If we could only make the national anthem as symbol of imperial unity, if we could only make the plains and hills of India resound and reverberate with the national anthem, that would be an answer to the discontented or disloyal subject; and I say that such an anthem, the music of such an anthem, reverberated among the hills and ascending the passes, would stop invasion and dissatisfaction sooner and better than any number of guns and soldiers (Harford 1883:ii, quoted in Capwell). While it is clear that the introduction of the national anthem was a political enterprise, aimed at that time to strengthen the British supremacy in India by glorifying Queen Victoria, simultaneously an attempt was being made to strengthen and unify the Indian nation. While Sourindra Mohen and others were expressing loyalty to the British Raj, there was a new expression of self-awareness and national pride. Nationalistic songs were already being sung in the 1860s and 70s as part of the yearly Hindu mela of the junior branch of the Tagore family. These songs composed by Tagore were used to glorify and idealize a Hindu past and also stir up sectarian and regional feelings of loyalty and pride. The very year the anthem was commissioned to be written, the song BandeMataram from Bankim Chandra Chatterjee’s Anandmath became a symbol of anti-colonialism. In 1886, it was set to music by Tagore who sang it at the second meeting of the INC. Later in 1919, he composed Jana Gana and Amar Sonar Bangle, the national anthem of Bangladesh.

Right from its inception it was amply clear that the anthem was aimed at unifying and stirring nationalistic pride among its singers and the singing of it in the initial years of nation building was seen as crucial to the growth of nationalism.

Recently with the Supreme Court’s ruling that the anthem should be played in all theatres and that every citizen should mandatorily express their nationalistic
feelings by standing up during its playing, nationalism is once again in the process of being fashioned according to newer demands of nationhood. Speaking about the nationalism during India’s struggle for independence and the nationalism of recent years, Ashis Nandy contends that the earlier nationalism took into account India’s diversity and tried to incorporate that in its articulation. The perfect example for this Nandy says is the fact that India has two de facto national anthems, Jana Gana and Bande Mataram both in Bengali. Sare Jahan Se Acha by Iqbal is close to becoming the third. He also says that India is unique in having neither of its anthems in the national languages. This multiplicity of anthems reflects a nationalism that refuses to be fully defined and according to Nandy, Jana Gana Mana is one of the least nationalist anthems in the world as it celebrates an open ended, non-chauvinist concept of Indian civilization. Nandy says that the earlier nationalism was aware that India depended on its diversity and the idea of the nation as espoused through western notions as one language, one religion etc. did not exclude the minorities and diversities of India and India in the earlier days was unwilling to sacrifice the interest of its citizens for the sake of an idea shared only by the country’s modernizing elites.

On the other hand, in recent years, a growing number of elites have started to believe in a standardized notion of nationness as one religion, one state etc. because they believe only that way India can stand up to the international media and politics. Nandy identifies this as a pan Indian middle class consciousness, a homogenizing nationalism, and a centralizing nation state. It is this notion that a majority of Indians have started seeking and is behind the Supreme Court’s ruling. Tracing this movement towards an aggressive nationalism, Nandy identifies three types of responses towards India’s emergence as a nation state. The first response he observes is from those who were brought up under colonial rule who found it difficult to believe that India can emerge as a powerful nation state and stand its own against the world. Second are those that believe that India is emerging and slowly everything will be set right once the local, social and cultural disturbances are sorted out. Once these are taken care of, they believe the nation state will begin to represent the true interests of a majority of Indian citizens and it is to this second response that the recent rigidity in relation to the national anthem can be ascribed. Nandy’s contention that the emergence of the nation state as a hegemonic actor in the public realm, invested with the responsibility to serve the citizens but more importantly the power to control its citizens has contributed to this brand of nationalism. As Nandy says, the whole of modern India has come to see the nation state as the only valid possible concept of the state, as an institution that should have absolute priority over all other aspects of Indian civilization. The nation state he says has acquired enough clout to resist all demands of Indian society that clash with the needs of the state. The society is now required, in every instance to adjust to the state and there is a greater dependence the state to be the arbiter of ethnic conflicts and to identify the secular rational processes of the state with the tolerance of ethnic and cultural diversity.

It is against this argument that the controversy surrounding the anthem should be read. Nandy contends that “it is an indicator of the changing mood in India that the recent attempts have been made again after a gap of nearly 410 years, to discredit “Jana Gana Mana” by alleging that it was originally a paean to George V, the British sovereign. Obviously, it is not an anthem the tough minded Indian nationalist is enthusiastic about. Some of them, seeking to make up for what the anthem lacks in toughness, have tried to make the singing of it compulsory. Only a few have seen these attempts as assaults on the spirit of the anthem” (Nandy quoted in Hasan 2000). This as he perceives it, is a growing distrust towards the
citizens. He says that ‘the modern state, even when it is avowedly liberal-democratic, does draw a line between democracy and freedom and locates freedom in dispassionate, rational perception of reality and in the optimism of a progressivist theory of history’. In other words, even in an open society, the modern state expects the citizens to prove their commitment to freedom and rationality by accepting and acting according to the meaning of freedom and rationality given to them by the state and by not pushing the state too far toward accepting the diverse versions of freedom and rationality available.

Against this vociferous and more dominant nationalism is what Miller identifies as everyday nationhood. Into this category follows the third response that Nandy talks about, ‘a small number representing some vestigial forms of Gandhism and post Maoist maxims’, ‘trying to interpret the burgeoning peasant movements and the self-affirmation of a variety of minorities from the tribals to the landless’. Their worry is that India’s emergence as a nation state is actually working. They believe that they are dealing with a nation state which represents an exaggerated and ‘partly pathological extension of the normal anxieties’ of a postcolonial society. They believe that though the vision of a nation-state may not have been implemented faultily, the vision has over the years become inadequate. The nation state culturally seems to be tied up with an imaginary past, and essentialises notions of national identity. However, nationalism cannot remain as a cultural expression of identity. It also needs to be politically realized and it is in achieving this realization that the differences get articulated. In Everyday Nationhood, Cynthia Miller calls nationalism as a project to make the political unit, the state congruent with the cultural unit, the nation. However, within a country like India where diversity is the norm, any effort to unify under one common language or culture meets with a lot of opposition. Culturally though a particular representation may remain dominant, when it comes to adequate representation there have been and continue to be voices for representation heard. Hence it comes as no surprise when demands to include their state within the national anthem are made. In May last year, Meghalaya Governor V. Shanmuganathan on Friday said the Northeastern region should find mention in the national anthem. Newspapers report that the Meghalaya governor said that the Brahmaputra too should find place in the national anthem. He said, “The Northeastern region should find mention in the national anthem, only then the people of this region will feel a sense of belongingness”. Pleading for inclusion of lessons on various topics from the Northeastern region in the NCERT textbooks, he said, “There are so many things about the Northeastern region that the rest of India should know. Sankaradeva, Lachit Barphukan, numerous freedom fighters, various places of interest should be included in textbooks so that children across the country can know the region better,” Shanmuganathan said. Speaking about the same issue, Assam and Nagaland Governor PB Acharya said that there was a need to bring about emotional integration between the Northeastern region and the rest of India. He says, “There is a feeling that the tribal people are second-class citizens. This feeling must be removed”. These are attempts at unifying the cultural and the political, in other words unifying the nation state. Similar attempts are made from across India when the representativeness of the national anthem itself is questioned by the minorities and other regional identities. Another instance of such an assertion for not just cultural representation but also political visibility is the presence of a young lady in traditional Mizo dress at the 2016 Rio Olympics leading the Indian contingent.

Apart from demanding that there be a stronger nexus between the cultural representation of the nation and the political assertion by the state, another kind of
nationalism is being enacted on a day to day basis. As Edensor says, “The nation however, is not simply the product of macro structural forces; it is simultaneously the practical accomplishment of ordinary people engaging in routine activities” (537). It is in the everyday that the overarching, dominant nationalism is challenged by other identities. Everyday nationalism comes into play in allowing other nationalisms also to conjoin the nation state and demands political rights as much as cultural representation and enables it to stand alongside rather than getting subsumed under mainstream nationalism.

Edensor says that iconic places, objects, rituals and heroes which are used to establish nationalist boundaries are liable to be claimed and employed by other groups. According to him the power of such cultural symbols is that the ideas about their import may be shared, but they can be claimed by a multitude of different identities for various purposes. It is when these symbols are claimed by other identities as their own, that a more plural nationalistic voice is heard. When the north east groups post a video of their singing of the national anthem they seem to be deliberately questioning the cultural dominance of a particular kind of nationalism and asserting their rights over these symbols. The national anthem then becomes a symbol which will provide them a site for entry into the national discource. In her post on the video, Vandana Kohli, the director says, “This version of the National Anthem is distinct for its layered harmony of voices. The search for harmony led me to the North East, on the recommendation of Arjun Sen, a long-time colleague at work and in music. The North East abounds in talent and skill and Arjun, or AJ, suggested the Serenity Choir from Shillong to bring alive what we had in mind.

We shot the video with the singers of the choir in their Khasi outfits, along with other singers, in Guwahati. The track enthused all those on the set, both in front and behind the camera”, and she ends with, “We hope this version breaks through barriers of orientation, region and age, and touches you as it did us!” The video was viewed more than a lakh times and was re-tweeted by Arun Jaitley who added his own piece on the cultural heritage of India. Speaking about the need for the everyday to enter the national, Edensor says that, “As far as the local quotidian worlds are concerned, it is necessary to connect them with nationally shaped cultures, to recognize the ways in which national identity is differently scaled. Local rhythms are often co-ordinated synchronized with national rhythms, local customs may be considered part of a national cultural mosaic, national institutions penetrate local worlds and national news systems collect information from the localities which make up the nation. There are multiple overlapping networks of experience” and this is an affirmation of a nationalism which extols diversity.

One can read their singing as a deliberate attempt to claim Indian national identity. To quote Edensor once again, he believes that the national identity is grounded in the everyday, in the mundane details of social interaction, habits, routines and practical knowledge similar to Billing’s notion of banal nationalism. He says that it is in the quotidian realms experienced most of the time by most people since identity is continually reproduced here in unreflexive fashion. He looks at the unreflexive construction of national identity, its embeddedness in the everyday, by looking at how reflexive awareness can result from disruption –either by forms of common sense being interrogated by strangers or migrants, by familiar spaces, things and practices coming under threat from social and economic change, and most graphically by the habituated embodied national subject being displaced or situated in an unfamiliar context.

Attempts to draw boundaries may mobilize reified notions of history and roots, cultural traditions and often exploit popular symbolic images, rituals, sites
and objects. In a world of multiple others, boundary drawing becomes difficult and must reify difference, essentialize and fix it as rooted in space and for all time. The master narrative of the nation has subsumed all other voices or narratives or rebellions. The singing of the national anthem by the north east subsumes all other fights for independence.

It is only when the mainstream nationalism gets played onto everyday nationalism that there is true meaning for nationalism. Only then the political nationalism can find a strong opponent in the everyday nationalism. By demanding that their everyday be a part of the nationalist discourse, by tying up nationalism with everyday practices, the ordinary get heard within the nationalist discourse. Along these lines, it becomes pertinent to place the cyberspace as the everyday, the space of an alternative nationality. The nationalism that is generated, produced and consumed in the cyberspace is the nationalism of the everyday. It is the space where the nationalism as it affects the lives of ordinary people in the everyday is articulated. It is this space that offers a site of resistance to the museumized nationalism on display only during festivals and other occasions. This is the living nationalism, a site of multiple voices and pluralities.

Notes:

References:
Women and Development: Concept, Aspects and Resistance Struggle

Dr. Koyel Basu*

Abstract: Development as a concept has been understood in different ways in different moments and its impact have often been challenged. Depending on the particular moment in history, development has been understood as national development; state-led development, which focuses on controls on the private sector, international trade and investment; neo-colonial and neo-liberal development; or nation building, a development focused on constructing a country in decolonization processes. There are also other terms such as community development, local development, human/people-centred development and sustainable development.

Thus analyzing and grappling with the very concept of development is a critical challenge. Since ‘development’ is a broad term, the aspects that come within its ambit are diverse. But what is certainly a salient aspect of development is that it is in crisis. It is in crisis because its fruits are unable to percolate down to the lowest rung of society in an equal manner as expected and desired. Therefore, the debate on development needs to be revisited time and again to provide fresh perspectives.

Keywords: Women, development, resistance struggles

Development has become a catchphrase more so in an age of globalization that has become the beacon light of change in this new era. In fact under the aegis of Comprehensive Millennium Declaration which incorporates the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) there is an established timeframe ending in 2015 for the achievement of some fundamental values closely related to development. It explicitly states that no efforts would be spared to promote democracy and strengthen the rule of law as well as respect for all internationally recognized human rights and fundamental freedoms including the right to development. What is noteworthy is that in establishing a post-2015 agenda that promotes social justice, there are efforts to integrate human rights and gender into an analytical framework. Gender equality and realization of women’s rights is part of that discourse. Looking at development through the lens of gender is very important. Since development is a human-centred process, people are both at the ends and means of this process. It is “about people realizing their potential, increasing their choices and enjoying the freedom to lead lives they value.”

This development applies equally to men and women. In fact, women are vital and productive workers and are instrumental in sustaining development throughout the world. However, the fruits of development are distributed unequally among males and females. Gender differences are biological but culturally determined role differentials are not permanent and can be changed. This is where women can play a part in the whole development debate by sharpening the gender axis. Development clearly has been unable to address the needs and human rights of women. We are living in a fierce new world where the productive potential for advancement of women is not used properly. There has been growing inequality and there is viciousness that these increases in inequality have given rise to marginalization of women. Women do not get a share of larger pie. They stand on a footing with inherited handicaps. This is why the need is to make development more human for women. They deserve better deal than spasmodic doles of mercy given to them now and then. Development cannot be human-centred till women reach the same footing as that of men.
Taking cue from what has been said, it is important to note that in the present world, the meaning and nature of development is under crisis. It’s true that capitalist globalization has benefitted some but it has its pitfalls. There is rapacious resource extraction, destruction of the lives of indigenous people and ecological resources, excessive consumption among the elites, runaway financialization of global economy with growing in formalization of labour that cheapens human lives. Too often development is straight jacketed within the same category as only trickle-down economic growth. More often than not, forms of economic growth are overused, unregulated and exploitative. Women feel the brunt of such destructive development as tables are turned on them. India too is no exception when it comes to gender discrimination and exploitation. Its true that urbanization, spread of education, improved health care, improved legal rights, access to professional and public employment and careers have enabled some women to achieve independence, reputation for creative work, even positions of great power. But such gains of a minority have not helped the large majority. The myth of gender equality camouflaged the declining status and marginalization of the large majority of women.

More than forty years ago, Ester Boserup’s pioneering book spoke about women’s marginalization from mainstream development. But women’s problem is not so much that they are marginalized from the mainstream economy, but that they are included at the bottom of deeply hierarchical systems of wealth production. This keeps happening because there is a deeply rooted gender division of labour which means that women are responsible for the reproduction and care of human beings and what can be done to extract the most out of them. Even in cases where economic growth has embraced women it had not come in hand in hand with gender justice. Women are often relegated to second-class citizenship and subordinated status through gender discrimination, threats and violence and naked patriarchal power. Women’s exclusion in the present model of development needs to be understood as inherent to a system that benefits from patriarchy. Seen as a reserve force of labour, women, excluded from economic activity are valued for their unrecognized role in social production. The capitalist, patriarchal system that keeps the majority of women confined to domestic work and child rearing uses this as a way of keeping the wage rates low. The limited participation of women in economic activity is also an extension of their traditional gender roles (nursing, teaching or labour intensive jobs requiring patience and delicate skills) with wages based on gender discrimination. Largely part of the unorganized sector, deprived of the benefits of labour legislation, insecurity leads to exploitation at the workplace. In the paradigm of globalization, these forms of exploitation have greatly increased.

Even after sixty six years of so called independence, the dynamics and politics of day-to-day life shows that the way development has been conceived, has not reached its desired destination. The mainstream model of development in India has led to immense hardship for women. It is critical to question women’s positioning in any vision, model or strategy of development. As such, questions such as in which type of development do we wish to see women’s equality and women’s human rights realized? Equally, what type of development or economic organization would best support women’s human rights remain critical? If women are not given basic rights (of which most of times they are deprived) they would not be able to have a vision of life and society that is based in equality can become a reality only when women are economically empowered to protest against any injustice and it is equally important that men realize women have a right to lead a decent life. Today a large number of women are seen in the public sphere. Women
are working both in the organized and unorganized sector. Unfortunately, in spite of receiving the same education, men do not realize that women are also entitled to lead a life of dignity because the social set up in which we are born and nurtured do not reflect sensitivity towards feminist sentiments. That is why newer forms of violence against women are on the rise in the 21st century.

Violence against women at the familial and societal level is given social sanction and women are confined to a dependent life within the domestic space. Therefore, women’s access to economic and political activity itself is a first step to their participation in decision making processes rather than the symbolic steps towards their “empowerment” that are seen in this system. Although defined in feminist literature in the 1970s, empowerment became popular in the development field in the 1980s. It is about mobilizing grassroots women, encouraging their participation and giving them voice in predetermined development strategies without giving them the power to challenge existing narratives of development and to articulate new alternatives. As we unpack the impact of the systemic crisis on women and women’s rights, discussions on alternatives continue to be critical. There is a significant shift in approach to women’s advancement and empowerment. This shift in approach reflects a human rights approach to issues of concern to women. So human rights are ought to be included in the policy making processes and operational activities. The language of human rights allows legitimate claims to be articulated with a moral authority which other approaches lack. It is a language which is recognized by the powerful, and which stimulates deep chords of response in many.

**Resistance Struggles and Women**

Women’s participation in resistance struggles is a reflection of their emergence from private to public arenas. This must be seen as their attempt to find space and voice in a system which has not only neglected their communities but even their gender within it. A huge section of women who are being displaced and dispossessed leading to fierce resistance struggles inviting in response, state atrocities and violence. The phenomenon has become pan-Indian: whether in Raigad in Maharashtra, Singur and Nandigram in West Bengal, in Jagatsinghapur-Kalinganagar in Orissa or Ghaziabad in Uttar Pradesh, the patterns are comparable. In recent years, a widespread resistance movement has grown in the mineral rich areas like Chhatisgadh, Jharkhand and Orissa and also in parts of West Bengal and Maharashtra where the local people are resisting the imperialist backed model development. Women are actively participating in these movements. In spite of facing the brunt of state violence and sexual assault, they are not intimidated. In West Bengal, in the struggles at Singur and Nandigram, women spontaneously came out to fight. As was the tradition in Bengal, during the Tebhaga movement women had indigenous methods of self-defense. In Lalgarh, West Bengal, when the Committee against police atrocities was set up, it was ensured that in each area 50% of committee members would be women. In various resistance struggles women became iconic symbols of resistance. The Krantikari Adivasi Mahila Samiti (KAMS) is one of the largest women’s organizations existing in India today – that has not targeted external patriarchy but internal patriarchy as well. The unscientific practices after childbirth are being reformed. In Bihar and Jharkhand, the Nari Mukti Sangh (NMS) is a strong and popular women’s organization that is giving space to women’s voice and encouraging their participation in economic, political and social activity and decision making processes. Thousands of women and girls have learnt to read and write and have been educated in the “Kranti ka Paathshaala” by organizations like KAMS and NMS. Picketing at health centres where there are no doctors, at schools, where
teachers are absent, fighting for equitable distribution of food grains, for better wages and better remunerative prices, for equal wages for equal work between men and women, these tribal women’s organizations are democratizing the processes of women’s political, social and economic activities, thus making development and democracy more meaningful to them.

**State Response to Resistance Struggles**

The official argument of the Indian state is that it is not financially capable of providing world class infrastructure in a short time. It is necessary to invite private capital to provide it initially in chosen pockets that will boost economic growth in the surrounding regions. While private capital undertakes this task, it becomes obligatory on the part of the state to offer those concessions and subsidies in exchange. The common collective interest and public good start getting negotiated away by ideological, political and economic power-plays that privilege individual accumulation subordinating the common people and their rights in a way that is used to underpin the justification of state violence. It is during this situation that state becomes a neo-liberal facilitator of private capital from a provider.

It is beyond doubt that women have found new ideologies in social movements. These are trajectories towards social equality and liberation. If the gender axis of such struggles is sharpened then this trajectory is more likely to lead to equality and women’s liberation. If democracy and development are to be really meaningful to women in India then ways must be evolved to include women in these processes and not simply make symbolic gestures for their empowerment. At the end of the day, these struggles pin-point development is not only about ideological purity but also to experience the reality and put up a fight with it. To break the barriers of inequality, invisibility and powerlessness women can play an effective and meaningful role in development, not as victims or mere beneficiaries but as partners, even leaders.

**Conclusion:**

It is necessary and essential prerequisite for women cutting across all strata to create little islands or zones of liberation which symbolize their autonomous space and hold their own to sustain these zones. They have to make long journeys to give themselves such alternatives in the development conundrum: take an oppositional stance towards the political machinery (the state), the patriarchy, transnational companies, etc proving that change in all aspects of a woman’s lives is possible because constraints faced by women are not only familial but political too. It is imperative to navigate various social spheres to understand and problematize the dichotomous notions of activism that build up the potential blocks that transform into resistance struggles. Above all, realizing, demystifying and comprehending development as matrix for such change is the best possible narrative for future stakeholders in women.

**Notes:**


This present paper is a manifestation of my earlier work on land question for women and violations of their rights which was published in a book titled ‘Women Empowerment in India: Opportunities and Challenges’ edited and compiled by Dr Gopal Sharma published by Rupali, Kolkata, 2015 (ISBN: 978-93-81669-88-4). The book article was the outcome of research paper presented in a national seminar on ‘Development Imaginations: Gender, Ecological and Dalit Critical Engagements’ held on 13th and 14th February 2013 in the Department of History, Sree Sankaracharya University of Sanskrit, Kalady. The breadth of analysis has been
increased to widen the scope of research and bring the factor of development into the domain of analysis. The research was especially on Dalit women. However, this paper is not limited in scope and its epistemic potential has been widened.

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Teaching Writing Skills to Second Language Learners

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Abstract: Over the last few decades, research into second language acquisition (SLA) has contributed valuable insights into our understanding of teaching and learning in language classrooms. The ideas from writing-to-learn, writing across the curriculum, and writing for academic purposes have all had an impact of thinking about the process of writing in second language education. This paper investigates the second language acquisition theories and its proposition in teaching writing skills in an English language classroom.

Keywords: SLA, Writing Skills, English Language Teaching

Introduction:
Second language acquisition (SLA) like applied linguistics, is an interdisciplinary field and can have varying interpretations. Altman observes (1981, 5), “Second language teaching, expanding upon a definition of teaching by Gage (1978), consists of an activity on the part of one person intended to facilitate the learning by another person of a language which is not his or her native one”. This alludes that SLA is a process of language acquisition by a speaker who already has knowledge of another language. It deals with the acquisition of various aspects of a second language. As Long (2007: 4) perceives SLA encompasses, at the very least, the simultaneous and sequential learning and loss of second (third, fourth, etc.) languages (L2) and dialects, by children and adults, with differing motivations, abilities, and purposes, as individuals or whole communities, with varying access to the L2, in formal, informal, mixed, foreign, second, and lingua franca settings. Thus SLA theory and research findings are used in various fields like first language acquisition, theoretical linguistics, language teaching, education and psychology. The theories of second language education have evolved from the grammar translation method to the audio-lingual method and to the recent communicative approaches. Mostly, writing has been viewed as a support skill and is used to reinforce the acquisition of grammar or to support memorization of language structures. An important argument in SLA research is that of interlanguage, which means that the language that learners use is not simply the result of differences between the languages that they already know and the language that they are learning, but altogether it is a complete language system with its own rules. It is believed that this interlanguage gradually develops as learners are exposed to the second language. However, it has been observed that languages that learners already know can have a significant influence on the process of learning a new one.

Theorists posit different values on the role of interaction in SLA. Ariza and Hancock asserts, “Krashen’s (1985, 1994) theory became a predominant influence in both second language teaching practice and later theories. Krashen postulates that SLA is determined by the amount of comprehensible input, that is, one-way input in the second language that is both understandable and at the level just beyond the current linguistic competence of learners (2003)”. This theory maintains that a second language is acquired unconsciously in a manner similar to the acquisition of a first language. According to Krashen (1996), acquiring language is predicated upon the concept of receiving messages learners can understand. So instructors can make language input comprehensible through a variety of strategies, such as linguistic simplification, and the use of realia, visuals, pictures, graphic organizers, etc. While considerable SLA research has been devoted to language learning in a natural setting, efforts have also been made to investigate second-language acquisition in the classroom.
In the language learning process, it is writing that lends itself most naturally to individual practice. As Chastain (1988) asserts whereas speaking and listening, for example, normally occur ‘in the company of one or more individuals, writing is usually a solitary activity. Students can complete written tasks by themselves’. This suggests that the discussion on learning writing is relatively straightforward. However, this is not necessarily the case. The difficulty in discussing second language (L2) writing in general may be that it is historically the skill that receives the least attention in the second language classroom and is often treated as a support skill rather than an essential component of second language competence. Bloom asserts, “Few, if any, language educators would disagree with the observation that second language writing instruction has evolved from a pedagogy possessing a static product orientation, to one that emphasizes writing as a dynamic, non-linear, recursive process. Indeed the process model has remained dominant in second language writing for the past 30 years (Hyland, 2003). This model encompasses a view of writing in terms of the mental processes it involves, and defines it as a series of steps (pre-writing, writing, reviewing and rewriting) involving multiple drafts (2008: 104)”.

Statement of the Problem:

English is a second language in most of the states of India. The linguistic and cultural backgrounds of the English language learners are diverse and their needs must be addressed in various context. In second language acquisition, the development of all the four language skills i.e., listening, speaking, reading and writing is important. But almost all schools and colleges focus on developing writing and reading skills and they neglect to develop listening and speaking skills. This problem fails to deliver an effective writing skill to the learners. Another problem is that there is too much emphasis on teaching grammar and students hardly get an opportunity to get actively engaged in the writing process of language learning. In addition to this, there is an absence of relevant teaching-learning materials which fails to facilitate an effective teaching of writing skills. The lecture method of teaching also adds to the problem. The cognitive perspective of teaching-learning is always neglected and the traditional classroom is always teacher fronted. The main aim of teaching English is to make learners somehow get good marks and pass the examination as English is taught as a subject rather than a skill. These learners need ways to broaden the full range of social and academic English they need to succeed in school, college and society. A considerable part of the SLA research community has concentrated on documenting and trying to understand the discovery that language learning is highly systematic. As Bloom avers, “Although writing is viewed as a recursive process (Flower & Hayes, 1981) and the writing stage certainly involves planning and revising. Research suggests that second language writers spend more time on certain types of problem-solving behaviour while composing in their L2 and that some problem-solving strategies are more successful than others (Bosher, 1998; Cumming, 1989) (2008:111)”. This explains that the best way to teach and learn writing skills would be to help them develop cognitive strategies to support their problem-solving behaviour. The three cognitive strategies which could help develop writing skills are rereading, substitution and strategic use of first language (L1). Understanding the various SLA theoretical approaches could help deliver effective writing skills in English language classrooms.

Methodology:

For investigating teaching writing skills in an English language classroom, I took a class of 14 students of 1st semester Bachelor of Arts (English honours) from The English and Foreign Languages University, Shillong campus, Shillong, India.
The subject to be taught in the classroom is Communication Skills (Reading, Writing and Vocabulary). The students are of diverse backgrounds. Out of the 14 students, 1 is from government school which use mother tongue as the medium of instruction. The rest of the students are from English medium schools. The duration of my study is 2 months. The method employed to teach and learn writing skills is to develop cognitive strategies like rereading, substitution and strategic use of L1 to support learner’s problem-solving behaviour. For this study the four language skills i.e. listening, speaking, reading and writing are integrated into teaching writing skills in the English language classroom.

**Findings of the Study:**

The participants are investigated in the context of the proficiency of the four language skills i.e., listening, speaking, reading and writing in the classroom. They are further employed to augment the writing skills of the participants. The following are the findings of the study:

1. The process of teaching and learning English language in the classroom begins by first interacting with the students. At the initial stage, I assigned speaking task to the learners where they are encouraged to speak about themselves, interact with one another and also group discussion of current affairs so that they get a chance to exercise with the target language. These activities are further used to assess the progress of the learners. Through the observations the competencies of each learner is identified. Each learner has their own strengths and limitations. Based on this inputs, I work on the individual learner’s aptitude and skills.

2. Reading and listening skills are explored emphasizing on the pronunciation of the words being taught. I use audio-video aids for teaching listening skills. The learners are guided to listen to the audio clips and based on these discussion exercises are given. These activities engaged them with various task enabling them to use English language proficiently.

3. After the learner is internalized with the above three skills i.e., speaking, reading and listening, various exercises are assigned for developing the writing skills. For the writing lessons in the classroom, the exercise is done based around what they already know. The listening, speaking and reading task which has been assigned in the earlier classes helps the students to develop cognitive strategies like rereading, substitution and strategic use of L1 to support learner’s problem-solving behaviour which further assist them in developing an effective writing skill. The learners are encouraged to a little writing in every class in the form of note taking, dictation of a few sentences or a short paragraph about their weekend or about the current affairs. As a sentence is the cohesive device that keeps all other aspects of writing together, the learners are encouraged to write in accurately formed sentences. Based on the group discussion mentioned above to enhance effective speaking skills, writing task can be assigned on the same topics. These activities help the learners to develop their cognitive strategies to effectively use language in any style. Once the learners have a firm understanding of how to create proper sentences, I guide them into writing paragraphs. The learners are then introduced to the terms, controlling idea or topic sentence and supporting idea. The controlling idea is at the beginning, summing up what the paragraph will cover. Following that are the supporting idea, covering the thoughts and ideas that hold the controlling idea giving it validity and weight. The learners are given examples of a controlling idea and a few supporting idea and asked them to write their own paragraphs. Good visuals and easy-to-understand directions help them in this crucial area of writing lessons. I incorporate communicative learning into the writing lesson as it fosters creativity and proficiency of the language in the learners.
When communicative learning is implemented prior to writing, it helps them to have a clear understanding of what they need to do. The learners are assigned to openly discuss the writing topic with their classmates. This allows them to create interesting ideas and have fun while learning the value of teamwork. Another communicative technique I use is to break up the class into groups of 4 and assign them to work on some of the writing topics in details together. Brainstorming is one of the most important aspects within writing and the learners can build on their writing through discussion. They are given time for presentations on what each group has come up with. This can lead to a collective brainstorming as the learners share their thoughts and ideas with everyone.

At the end of the course, the learners benefitted from the writing classroom practices which I employed for the study. The learner’s competency level in the four language skills while using the writing classroom practices is higher than the previous classes. As teaching communicative English is a highly interactive process, these classroom practices engenders in reinforcing an effective interactive class which further enables them to be proficient in writing.

**Conclusions and Implications:**

As researches in SLA asserts that interlanguage gradually develops as learners are exposed to the targeted language, so use of English language in the classroom in every aspect garners the learners to achieving a proficient use of English as a second language. An integration of the four language skills i.e. listening, speaking, reading and writing is imperative for delivering an effective writing skill in the classroom. Thus the process of teaching and learning of writing not only emphasizes on the writing skill but intertwines the speaking, listening, reading skills and various other skills including cultural, social and linguistic features.

**References:**


Abstract: This paper discusses the importance of literary texts as fertile sources for character shaping with reference to Yemeni context. It throws light on the effectiveness of these literary select texts in motivating, stimulating, and inspiring classroom students to be socio-political role-players. With an adequate word power exclusively obtained from literary texts along with an increasing familiarity with strange, unique and marked syntactic structures employed in the literary texts given, a teacher can make a competent scholar out of an ordinary student. For example, incorporating a literary piece of Martin Luther King, the equality and freedom fighter, would have its own effect in shaping a student’s character in such a way that finally ends up enshrining a peaceful struggle as a means to express their opinions and achieve their goals. The paper attempts to throw a light on the importance of literary texts in helping students shape their socio-political perspectives.

Keywords: Education, Literary texts, Character Shaping, Word Power, Syntactic Structures

1. Introduction:
Literature is a magic art that does not harm but attracts, enlightens, sophisticates, and shapes the character of its practitioner. It is the expression and interpretation of a man, and the source for the change and remodeling of its reader. It does not only enable individuals to be aware of their inner qualities and properties unique to them but also imparts its special effect on them, and hence contributing to the emergence of their personal capacities to achieve and make a change. Literature mirrors human beings, their personalities and individual differences. It also depicts their reactions, miseries, desires, and their individual and social interests.

As cited in Lodge (2002), Noam Chomsky, the great linguist, takes literature as a significant key to knowledge, human life, experiences and values. For him, a novel is a picture of human life and personality. Joseph Conrad, cited in Lodge (2002) on the other hand, takes a literary text as the means to make people hear, feel and see. Through literature, one can simply learn about history, and improvise their understanding of life.

2. The Focus of the Paper:
As a literary text is not only influenced by society, it rather influences it. The focus of this paper is not what a literary text conveys, depicts and reports from its surrounding setting, but the effects it leaves on its reader. The paper discusses the impression a literary text leaves on its reader. How a literary text can be used as a tool to impress and, hence, shape and influence a target reader. The paper assumes that a literary text is one of the factors that determine a given human behavior. It takes a literary text as one of many other forces that can successfully leave its effect on a human behavior as well.

3. The Aims of the Paper:
This paper aims at discussing the importance of literary texts as a source for character shaping. It throws light on the influence of a literary text in motivating, stimulating, and inspiring a student to be a proper socio-political role-player. Moreover, it throws light on the importance of a literary text in helping students build their word power and introducing them to the manipulative use of the
language under study in such a way that helps them be that proper social-political players.

4. The Methodology:

The study was conducted on University English students. A classroom action research was conducted and a researcher’s diary was designed in the form of unstructured observation sheet to note down students’ reactions to literary texts which end up shaping their characters. The researcher here is part of the process as he keeps observing and exploring the effects a text leaves on its reader. So, a literary text was given to examine the importance of literature in character shaping and in the copying of certain behavioral attitudes that, in turn, help improve students' perspectives, horizons and awareness.

5. The Analysis:

In works over the last decades till now, writers, analysts, critics are engaged in what a literary text contains, mirrors, and exposes, but few are concerned with to what extent a literary text can radically change and influence the character of its reader. To begin with, I shall narrate a wonderful story from the past. There is a nice story in Arabic, which was transmitted orally, and which I could not trace in any written document. One day, an ordinary man went to a great literary scholar who was engaged in authenticating, recoding and documenting the literary heritage of the Arabia. The ordinary man asked the scholar a nice question. He asked him that he wants to say poetry. He wants to be a poet. The scholar requested the ordinary man to go and memorize a five-hundred poetry lines/verses and come back. The ordinary man did what the scholar asked him to do and came back to him. Then, the scholar asked him to go and wait, telling him that after some time he might be able to say poetry and become a poet. The moral of this simple story is that: once you engage yourself in any piece of literature, you will simply get influenced by it. It first helps you realize your inactive skills. Second, it motivates you to activate your literary skills, develop your new passions just emerged, enhance your capacity to change, and remold your aspirations. Many people in the present are inspired by the works of arts they have read and admired at a point of their personal life. We can hardly find a man or a woman nowadays who does not have in mind a literary piece which, according to them, was as a turning point in their personal approach to life once they were exposed to it. Let us not forget that a literary text is a means for the cultural and social documentation and transmission of human values, ideas, experiences, and life in general. It is a school of life by itself.

A reader of a literary text does not only identify themselves with the characters, taken sometimes as living examples but also helps themselves improve from the point the literary character stops. The readers of a given literary text do not stop at imagining themselves the great heroes they meet in the text. They go beyond the limits of the text and finish it with their own stories. A literary text is an effective tool to obtain an adequate word power and be aware of syntactic structures. An efficient speaker is the one who has a sufficient word bank and is competent in the usage of the language under study. This can happen through literary texts only. Let us go beyond this and see what else a literary text reader can obtain from a text.

A reader and/or a student who has a chance to go through a literary piece by Martin Luther King, for example, will not stop at the language used. They will even go beyond identifying themselves with the voice of that literary text to the copying of the attitude of that voice. The reader/student will copy and carry on from the point the voice of the text stopped.
Thus, a literary text would have its own effect in shaping that readers/students who find themselves capable to embrace and enshrine the attitude of the voice of the literary text they admire. Readers do not always identify themselves with the characters of the text, as they sometimes imitate them in their daily life instead. If this is the case, then a literary text must be taken as medium tool to transfer what an institute wants to influence students, hence reproducing them in a type the whole nation wants.

Unfortunately, Yemeni institutes still lag behind and are not even up to the expectations. The people in-charge are still unaware of the importance of such a tool to influence and create the student-type they like. I can hardly see a literary piece that is meant for sake of character shaping and character change. For instance, by incorporating a text by Nizar Qabbani, the Lebanese poet, and/or Ahmed Mattar, the Iraqi poet, we are able to reproduce a person who is going to sarcastically use their language and literary texts to indirectly disseminate their political ideas.

5.1. A Sample Literary Text:

In this section, I will quote a literary piece which is originally Martin Luther King's "I have a Dream" speech, delivered on 28 August 1963. I have chosen part of his long speech. This part was given to my students at university and is taken as a sample for this paper:

I have a dream that one day this nation will rise up and live out the true meaning of its creed: “We hold these truths to be self-evident: that all men are created equal.” I have a dream that one day on the red hills of Georgia the sons of former slaves and the sons of former slave owners will be able to sit down together at the table of brotherhood. I have a dream that one day even the state of Mississippi, a state sweltering with the heat of injustice, sweltering with the heat of oppression, will be transformed into an oasis of freedom and justice. I have a dream that my four little children will one day live in a nation where they will not be judged by the color of their skin but by the content of their character. I have a dream today. I have a dream that one day, down in Alabama, with its vicious racists, with its governor having his lips dripping with the words of interposition and nullification; one day right there in Alabama, little black boys and black girls will be able to join hands with little white boys and white girls as sisters and brothers. I have a dream today. I have a dream that one day every valley shall be exalted, every hill and mountain shall be made low, the rough places will be made plain, and the crooked places will be made straight, and the glory of the Lord shall be revealed, and all flesh shall see it together. This is our hope. This is the faith that I go back to the South with. With this faith we will be able to hew out of the mountain of despair a stone of hope. With this faith we will be able to transform the jangling discords of our nation into a beautiful symphony of brotherhood. With this faith we will be able to work together, to pray together, to struggle together, to go to jail together, to stand up for freedom together, knowing that we will be free one day. This will be the day when all of God’s children will be able to sing with a new meaning, “My country, ‘tis of thee, sweet land of liberty, of thee I sing. Land where my fathers died, land of the pilgrim’s pride, from every mountainside, let freedom ring.” (King, 1963)

The above literary piece is one of the literary texts offered to my students at university. It was organized in the form of an English poem and was introduced as an instance of English free verse, i.e. unrhymed verse. In addition to the linguistic features, form and style, the poetic characteristics and the use of figures of speech were of interest to the students in class. In this paper however, I am concerned with what else a student can learn from the speech above in addition to the things just
mentioned. This is also a question I can ask the readers and the audience of this paper too. Let us have a look again at King's masterpiece.

Now let us think of the message delivered to my students and how the message can change them. In what sense students are going to remodel their lives upon the voice of the speech given above, pointing out the ways these students are going to remodel themselves after a particular character of a text in general. I will put it as simple as that first the students were introduced to a problem that lasts for centuries and is still, in some countries, one of the social problems of the day, namely racial discrimination. After reading, each student started to develop their own speeches/ battles against other aspects of discrimination, e.g. social class discrimination, geographical discrimination (this one is quite general in my country), and other discriminations based on gender, education, wealth, position and religious discrimination, hence playing the same role been played by the voice of the text given, namely Martin Luther King. But, how could they go through it? Shall they acquire a word power and well-structured sentences parallel to that of King's, so they can deliver their own messages as strongly as King's? It seems that it is the language of Martin Luther King that makes the impression of his message lasts forever on hearers and readers.

Well then, let us go back to the text and see the vocabulary which can be taught. We see a religiously-socially-geographically-related vocabulary, and it is the task of the reader of this paper to find out. There are various types of English structures a student can be introduced to in this text: nominal clauses, independent clauses, complex clauses, and prepositional phrases, which all reflect the speaker's enthusiasm and transfer it to hearer and the reader as well. The style being used is another thing I can expose the student to. It "I" and "we", but not "I" alone. There is no ego, and there is no way a human being can work successfully while distancing themselves from the people concerned.

The students’ reaction to the text was positive and the effects anticipated have been noticed. It can be noticed the way a literary text recreates and reshapes a student's character, as the text given ignites students' inner conscience and helps them improve their language to deliver their own messages powerfully and convincingly. In general, a literary text rewrites one's own ideas and shapes their own attitudes. This can be achieved by enhancing the interaction between the text and its reader and the remodeling after characters the reader is willingly undergoing in response to the text.

6. The Conclusion:

The paper sheds light on the impression a literary text can leave on its readers, hence reshaping their characters. It throws light on the aspects of a literary text which would have a lasting and positive impact on the reader in general and the student in particular, hence influencing the whole community. A literary text is necessary for students to thrive linguistically, academically, morally and spiritually. Students are always impacted by the literary texts they are exposed to; that is because of the moral message and upbringing they offer.

The paper cites a literary text, originally a speech addressed to a gathering, and points out the ways classroom students are involved and positively impacted. The paper highlights the importance of the literary texts in influencing students who, in turn, influence the whole nation. A literary text appears to be as important as the fatherly and motherly teachings to their kids. It shapes, reshapes, sharpens, elevates and improves its practitioner.
7. **Acknowledgement:**
   I would like to extend my thanks to the editorial committee of this respected journal. I appreciate the chance I get to share with you my simple work. Mistakes and errors are all mine.

**References:**
Colonial Construction of Identity and Response of the Khasi-Jaintia: Examining the Role of Education

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The nineteenth century brought a series of change that proved beneficial as well as detrimental to societies in India. While locating the prime mover(s) for the same the coming of Christian missionaries and the beginning of the English education are easily marked along with some other factors such as the new economic avenues and administrative system. Undoubtedly education has been exposing the people to new ideologies, knowledge and skill. The Khasi-Jaintia society is not an exception to this phenomenon. It is in this background that this paper tries to highlight the role modern education in bringing the social change among the Khasi-Jaintia.

Firstly, similar type of education introduced by the missionaries to the people of Khasi-Jaintia Hills was later promoted by the Government of India from the post-independence period onwards. Despite the advancement in educational level, there was less opposition to challenge the perception of the West especially with regards to the indigenous people. We should take a keen note, that in the present context, the views that the colonizers had for the colonized may be considered unjust and prejudicial in terms of racial expression. This provides a room of thought regarding the contribution of education to the people that had succumbed to colonialist designs. Has education able in awakening and strengthening the indigenous people to put an end to Western concepts of domination, racial prejudice and colonialism? It is a matter of concern that Western philosophy and ideology has been dominated the communities even in higher academics. In the following pages, I am running arguments which some may find polemical but I assure that the interest is an attempt to look into history and its study on society(s) from a new perspective and at a scholarly level which one may engage critically or suggestively with it.

Time and again, scholars have been discussing social change in northeast India as well as the agents that brought the change. This number of pages of research, speculations and analyses of the facts attempt to find solution to the queries with regards to the process of change. (see, Impact of the West on the Khasis and Jaintias: Between Tradition and Change: a Perspective of Meghalaya; Christianity and Social Change in North East India; Missionaries, Indigenous Peoples and Cultural Exchange) It is a similar phenomenon globally and it is an issue that just does not vanish in academic discourse. However, in this paper, we will avoid verbiage discussion of dwelling on the same issues (repetition the facts and information) over again. Rather will try to locate the intrinsic effects that the changes had on the people.

In our attempt to understand the role of education from the time of its establishment by Christian missionaries in the Khasi-Jaintia Hills and promotion of the same by the colonial power, we came across the related arguments regarding the motive of these agencies. The Khasi-Jaintia had contact with the West in the last quarter of the eighteenth century when colonialism started to gain its foothold in India. Scholars point out that the question as to why the British undertake the perilous journeys into the mountainous region of northeast India was left unattended and unanswered. (European Perception of the Medieval North-East 7) While it is duly noted by scholars that the British had light encounter with the hills of northeast in the eighteenth century and this came at a time when they were carrying the same economic venture they were having in other parts of India.
Impact of the West on the Khasis and Jaintias

However, it was only in the first quarter of the nineteenth century that British administration could mark its presence in the Khasi-Jaintia Hills. The Charter Act of 1813 widened the scope of providing education to the subject of British rule in India. When English education started, it was being taught more about England and its language, poets and poems, and its history. There was less training for assimilation to England. (Power, Politics, and Culture: Interviews with Edward W. Said 263) Hence even though there was some kind of knowledge being imparted, learning process was made in such a way to prepare the people readily accessible in order to make the colonial’s work easier. Despite the admiration for India’s ancient culture and heritage, however, the educational system of the British did not care to promote them. Hence by the time the British gained full strength, India’s culture represents the flotsam of its own past. They reconstructed the past in order to justify and legitimize the present. (Culture, Ideology, Hegemony 109) One of the purposes of colonial administration was to acquire knowledge there by introducing policies that suit their interest. Moreover, western administrators and writers exposed the colonized people to the west in a manner that picture the structure that drew the attention of the west, be it economic or political gain. Were these writings to facilitate colonialism or they were true about the indigenous. Since there was no counter against them, both the western and the non-western accepted these writings and their perceptions.

Though, education has somehow contributed to the preparation of the people to meet the new challenges of modernity and globalization. However, it has its own antagonistic implication as well. This is due to the fact that not all groups of people could make use of the benefits of education per se. In order to substantiate this remark, perhaps it is best to relook on the thoughts shared by Tagore and Vivekananda who were deeply moved and saddened by the poverty and misery of the people especially in the rural areas. It was felt that strength would come to them only if they became self-reliant and that can be achieved through education. However, both of them disliked many features of western education promoted by the British since it was felt that the introduction of educational policies was to suit British interest and benefits only. (Education in India 115) The debates over the type of education to be imparted to the Indians revealed the desire of the colonial power to establish its hegemony rather than helping the people to legitimize their own claims and rights. (Culture, Ideology, Hegemony 127)

In addition, we came across the perception that the West had for the indigenous communities. Edward Said clearly mentions about the inequality in the relationships between two groups of people to which he mentions that ‘there is never anything like an equal dialogue.’ In his reference to India, he recalls the work of Edward Thompson (The Other Side of the Medal 1926) in which Thompson brought out the argument of the failure of the British to understand not only to their insensitivity to the harm that have been done to the Indians but also the harm of their representations of that relationship did to them. The continuation to represent them as savages, violent, barbarians in need of disciplining and education, inflamed them, because they are psychological hurt. Thompson remarks that the English should accept the fact that they have done wrong, politically in India, to the Indians. (Power, Politics, and Culture: Interviews with Edward W. Said 272)

As far as the Christian missionaries are concern, their contribution to the educational status and enrichment of knowledge by imparting primary, secondary and higher education has been enormous. The denominations which strived from their beginning in northeast India such as the Baptists, Presbyterians, Anglicans,
Roman Catholics, Seventh-day Adventists, etc. to established schools and colleges had greatly helped the indigenous people to engage themselves in academic scholarships right from the colonial period. Following thereafter, indigenous denominations like the Church of God (Meghalaya & Assam) and others do contribute to promote education. The contribution in this field is seen not only in cities and towns but in the periphery and rural areas. Both secular and Christian education largely accommodated all sections of the society. The Seventh-day Adventist Church in particular offered vocational training and opened the doors for those who can make use of their skills and talents in different job-oriented courses. Based on the foundation laid by the foreign missionaries, the indigenous leaders also took up the responsibility of continuing the task for promotion of education. Many are now well placed and settled, working within the guidelines of the government. Moreover, these Christian as well as non-Christian missions introduced education much before the government measures. Whether it is welfare in its true sense being practiced or it was just a scheme of proselytization and evangelism, it remains a matter of the debate and concern for further research. Even so, eventually education which included both western and vernacular gained impetus in the hills and hence may benefit from there. The question is how far the Khasi-Jaintia makes use of the education they have received.

It is generally understood that when a colonial power ruled over a country or territory, the people being ruled are known as the ‘colonised’. It ends as soon as colonialism stops. The same way the same outlook which the colonizer have about the traditional societies as ‘tribalism’ in nature should have ended with the entry of traditional societies in to the world of global enterprise and universalization. The social change which had taken place in these societies not only provide new perceptions in their world view; some which harms the cultural ethics others which come with advantages. It is without a doubt that it was education which armed the people to meet the necessities of modern life in the colonial period and after, more than that it has equipped them to challenge the influence and presence of westernization. Now many may have often classified the resistance of certain group of people in these societies as a renaissance. This has to be carefully assessed as to what extent the people has benefited from these resistance movements. Be it in terms of cultural or economic grounds, many must have come across debates that at times include religious connotations.

It is surprising to find that G. P. Singh in his article on foreign and Indian scholars’ view on the assimilation of the communities of northeast India has made an inappropriate remark about the identity of these communities. The terms ‘aboriginal’, ‘tribal’, ‘primitive tribe’, ‘native’, were commonly used. (Historical Researches Into Some Aspects of the Culture and Civilization of North-East India 255-256) In this work Singh also points out that in the nineteenth century, the missionaries established education for the purpose of converting the people into Christianity. He further writes that gradually the people realized that the main aim of the conversion and education was to root out the culture, expand western influence, denationalize the communities and secure British rule. (ibid. 257) If Singh was so oppose to the work of the missionaries and the British against the interest of the indigenous people he should also be aware that what he has written may harm the identity of these communities and reduce it to a socio-religious difference and thus creating space for communal divide. The unsuccessful attempt to marginalize the contribution of many converts showcases the authors’ perception from a narrow point of view.

It is important to highlight the view of an indigenous scholar such as O. L. Snaitang who opines that the Christian missionaries when they encountered with
the Khasi-Jaintia they did not condemn the traditions such as kinship, inheritance, polity, mother tongue and others while the components which are connected with traditional religion were rejected. Moreover, literacy and education brought by the Christian missions helped retain the distinctive identity of the Khasi-Jaintia. Snaitang also lays emphasis on the contribution of the same by introduction of alphabet, the universalization of a single language, the empowerment of women through education, the provision for indigenous leadership, and others. (A Dictionary of Khasi Literature 30-48) These helped the Khasi-Jaintia to open up their social and cultural interaction with outside world. In a nut shell, education is *sine qua non* for the overall development of a society.

From almost two centuries the people of northeast India have been exposed to western education and its manifestation of ideas and ideologies which are seen as new. However, most of them had already taken root in the form of oral traditions and folkloristic interpretations / representation in traditional societies too. In this regard Amartya Sen provides an example that valuing of liberty or defending public reasoning is not exclusively western. (*Identity and Violence: The Illusion of Destiny* 84) The general psychological attitude of the ruling power toward the subject people often generated a strong sense of humiliation and an imposition of perceived inferiority. The perception constructed by the colonialists were substantially different from what the ‘tribals’ and ‘natives’ knew about themselves. This construction not only established the foundation of colonialism but also laid the ground for a colonial perception of the self by the indigenous. Moreover, the value judgement perception that the British and Christian missions were saviors of the indigenous communities who were taken as being ‘savage’ or were living in a ‘dark period’ of their existence before the formers’ arrival is a misconception that needs to be denounced. Western Imperialism may have opened the door for colonialism which has dominated the scene till the half of the twentieth century but it should not close the door for freedom of exercising one’s right in the post-colonial era. This, submission to the power of the West could be subjugated and at the beginning of it, should start with the perception the indigenous sees themselves. And education is perhaps the best tool to achieve this objective.

The West took the liberty to choose whoever they want and classifies them into designate varieties which varies geographically, morally and culturally. In his work, *Orientalism*, Edward Said shows how the legacy of the British and French orientalism was also accepted by the United States which was best reflected in its foreign policy. The ideas about the orient took shape within the society of the colonisers. To the United Sates, the orient is Japan and China, and to the Europeans, the orient is the Africans and Asians. The Africans were intuitive and emotional, was the perception of the Europeans which the African accepted. Concept of ‘tribal’ was also a result of debates among Europeans. (see *Orientalism*) Similarly, in the same spirit, those whom they feels were disconnected from a bigger civilization were categorized as tribal’, aboriginals, native. Hence the expression “Just like one could speak in Europe of an Oriental personality, Oriental atmosphere, Oriental tale, Oriental despotism, or an Oriental mode of production, and be understood”, (*ibid.* 31-32) serves as a precedent to the rest of the world who could talk of the indigenous communities as tribal way of life, tribal character, tribal economy, tribal religion, tribal culture and so on is understood. The outcome of the discourse was accepted by the orient and it continues even in post-colonial, the mind, behavior, still being colonized. Similarly, many of the non-western societies that have encountered with colonialism had to face similar experiences. Now from such allocation, there arises, the question of superiority and inferiority is directed between the right of West and the right of the non-West.
In various stages of state formation, tribalism occupies a space where the society remains in the early stage of primitivism. The process of change taken place may be slower in comparison with the change in modern era but not static. Hobsbawm rightly refers to this when he says, “the belief that traditional society is static and unchanging is a myth of vulgar social science”. (On History 17) It should be reminded that society slowly gains momentum and rapid progress in all areas of life was accelerated with the entry of modernization and globalization. Hence it would be unjust to designate the society which has gone through a series of social change as static. In this aspect Romila Thapar opines, “A static society also meant that it lacked a sense of history”. (On Nationalism 26) The traditional societies including the Khasi-Jaintia had therefore passed the phase of primitiveness and cannot be assumed to be in a frenetic stage. This is important to point out that most of the indigenous communities of Southeast Asia and India in general, and Khasi-Jaintia in particular were in the post-primitive stage at the time of settlement in the area. During the pre-colonial period rapid change was witnessed with the introduction of education and its various policies.

In an attempt to catch up with the West in terms of modernity and development, the help of technological advancement and industrialization cannot be ignored. Apparently, the world becomes smaller and all communities are connected with near and far places. Although the progress may be slow or fast depending on the wheels of development of a concern state, however, there was a tremendous shift from a static and primitive stage of 3000 years ago. Respecting the culture and knowledge of the people, society in the indigenous communities can be traditional but cannot remain tribal. They are bonded by a unique cultural ethics but are not to be classed plebeian that lacks in refinement.

Furthermore, Edward Said also points out that education is all about instilling a critical sense. He further claims that sometimes it is ‘a kind of nasty, demanding, questioning attitude to everything’ that is being put before a learner. (Power, Politics, and Culture: Interviews with Edward W. Said 225) It is important to take advantage of the knowledge that one gains and engineered it to the best of its capacity. The way one look at things should be from broad perspectives; at the end the result of assimilating with the ideologies to counter the narrowness will shape a new outlook to the same. This can be clarified, that as scholars of the region of northeast India in general and Khasi-Jaintia in particular especially the indigenous, education received from the West should be utilized as a weapon to counter the stereotyped and prejudiced perceptions it had about them.

While the social change that stormed the indigenous communities brought tremendous alterations to the worldview and living conditions, the stagnant of perception is still being reflected in the perceived allocation allotted by the West to these communities. The question which needs immediate attention is whether we still have to rely on the old favourite interpretations and notions. It is sad that many times, the historical consciousness is still colonial and limits to condescend attitude introduced by the West. We became fully aware about colonialism only at the time it processes however many of its after effects that requires remedy still remains untouched. The question is how far did the indigenous people made use of the education that they received in their day to day activities. Despite the progress in different areas which was made possible by the contribution of education, are the indigenous communities in northeast India still tribal in nature? These questions stroke deep thought in the mind of scholars of present generation who work on indigenous communities around the globe including Asia. To find out the nearest possible explanation, it is therefore felt important to relook at the
perception of the West about the so-called ‘tribal’, ‘orient’, ‘primitive’, ‘native’, ‘aboriginal’ and so on.

There could be an end to the frustrations which the non-western had on colonial ideology once education is fully utilized to its task. Now if one continues to lisence the identity of indigenous communities as tribal in nature, one can never come out of the colonial mindset. Education has empowered the traditional culture and way of living, it is high time to make use of it to its full extend. It may involve a huge task to challenge the perceptions that has evolved and take root both in the constitutional framework of the government and the mindset of many but it is not obstinate. In today’s world, the move to resist colonial perception got nothing to do with being anti-west, but it is simply the reassertion of identity of communities who carries more or less similar features of livelihood with other societies. Moreover, it will importunate for more hard work and boost the confidence of the people who could free themselves from degrading positions that has been bound to be colonized forever, either politically or ideologically. However, it does involve a process of reassertion of the identity of ‘self’ and positive construction of identity of the ‘others’.

References:
A leader is a person who has the ability to influence a group of people over an extended period of time. S/He occupies the central role in the group. A leader decides, organises, leads and directs the group of people or organisations to accomplish an objective. S/He also inspires, motivates, co-ordinates and co-operates the subordinates or co-workers to achieve certain goals. And, in this ever changing world there is a great need of a dynamic and effective person to lead.

In an educational institution, Principal is the centre of all the activities occurred in the institution. All staff members, teaching and non-teaching members work under the guidance of the Principal. The Principal plays various roles in running the institution. To achieve a common goal s/he leads and directs the co-workers to perform their assigned task skilfully, efficiently and effectively. The Principal has to develop a good relationship with the staff, students, parents and community in order to run the institution. It is necessary for her/him to create a conducive learning environment which enhances the scholastic and co-curricular activities amongst the students. The leader has not only to accept the fundamental responsibility for the quality of the learning which forms the educational foundation for all the young people but also accountable for the quality and effectiveness of the teaching and learning programmes in the institution. Generally, the Principal is the role model for the teachers, students and staff.

Leadership:

Leadership is a process of giving meaningful direction. It is an act of organising and influencing the activities which occur in a group context. Leadership is also an ability to persuade others to seek defined objectives enthusiastically and skilfully. It is the quality that binds a group together and motivates it to move towards a common goal. Leadership is the behaviour of a person which brings changes in an individual or a group. It is a process of interaction between the leader and the followers. Leadership is a process of giving guidance to a group of people in pursuit of a mission. It is more than the behaviour or an act of a simple individual.

Leadership Style:

Style generally means a way of doing something which has become the typical nature of a person or a group and leadership style is the way or pattern adopted by a leader or an administrator for attainment of goal. It is a manner in which a person exercises leadership in a particular situation. Leadership style, therefore, is how a leader behaves during the process of directing and influencing the subordinates.

Leaders have responsibilities to balance the achievement of set tasks, development of a group of people and meeting of the needs of individuals as well as organisations or institutions. The style of supervising a new employee is different from the style of dealing an experienced employee. Also, decision making becomes more complex as the size of the organisation grows larger. It is necessary to be centralised. But in smaller organisations, consultation is easy. In short, the level of decision making, personality of the members, the state of the organisation and the degree of interaction between the leader and the subordinates are taken into account to determine the style of a leader. Therefore, a leader requires different styles of leadership to influence and direct ‘different’ people in the group towards
the set task. Hence, the various leadership styles in discuss, are either based on behavioural or situational approach.

Leadership has different approaches and theories. They are the Great Man Theory, the Trait Theory, the Behavioural theory, the Situational theory, Contingency approach, Path-Goal Theory, Transformational and Transactional leadership styles and behaviours. Psychologist Kurt Lewin and colleagues identified three major styles of leadership in 1930s. These styles are based on the degree of authority of influencing the behaviour and decision making in particular, of his/her subordinates (Newstorm and Davis, 1998, 206). They are Autocratic / Directive / Monothetic / Authoritarian leadership or Democratic / Participative / Consultative / Ideographic or Delegative / Non Directive / Laissez-faire / Free-rein leadership. These styles focus on the balance of power between the leader and the followers. Since these styles are generally adopted by the Principals of various schools and colleges, these three different leadership styles are chosen for the present study.

**Autocratic Leadership Style:**

Autocratic leadership style is a classical style. According to this style, the leader centralizes power and unilateral decision-making in self. An Autocratic leader dictates work methods and takes full authority and responsibility by giving orders, assigning tasks and duties without consulting the subordinates. The subordinates are never allowed to participate or influence his decision. She/he directs on how the things should be. In this style, the supervision is tight, direct and precise. Subordinates cannot make any contribution to their own work and even if they could, they would not. The orders are to be followed without any deviation. This style emphasises on unquestioning obedience, strict discipline and strict motivational style.

Autocratic leadership style is satisfactory to those people who love to work under the structure of a centralised authority and strict discipline like less competent subordinates. Leaders with this style are generally aggressive, parental and dictatorial in dealing with the followers. There is an overwhelming control over the subordinates. This style is the best choice in emergency situation like crisis and pressure and when the subordinates look towards their leaders for solution or answers. In this style, the production is good in the presence of the leader and the production drops down in the absence of the leader.

Autocratic leadership style might lead to frustration, low morale and discontentment. The subordinates are often under a threat of being fired or of imposing any kind of punishment. Force and fear would exist. The subordinates work as they are told and might do only the minimum. Therefore, the productivity is not high and there is hindrance in the growth and development of the subordinates. They are more dependent and have less sense of individuality. Hence, there is lack of sense of ownership and belongingness.

**Democratic Leadership Style:**

Democratic leadership style decentralises authority. A democratic leader consults with his subordinates and makes them to participate in planning and formulating policies, goal setting, problems solving and even in decision-making which arouse enthusiasm in the subordinates. Communications flow freely in both directions. This style thus promotes higher internal motivation and improve moral and job performances. The subordinates are more or less involved in running the institution and therefore, a sense of ownership and belongingness is developed. Even though the final decision is designated to the leader, the ideas of the followers are considered which eventually leads to satisfaction, contentment and less frustration amongst the subordinates. Their performance is observed at their best.
Democratic leadership style creates a situation by which an individual can learn, and a situation which enables people to check their own performance and recognises achievements. This style reduces grievances, absenteeism and employee turnover and it is more likely to win loyalty and commitment of the group. This style shows respect to all the members which are the infinite resource of constructing knowledge and improves the quality of working life. Democratic style is meaningless in organisation with complex nature. This technique rather discourages those subordinates who want minimum interaction with superiors or associates. Democratic style may not be effective when quick decisions are to be made.

*Delegative Leader:*

Delegative leader avoids power and responsibility. She/he plays a minor role by taking minimum initiation and is available to support and participate only when needed. She/he gives power and passes the responsibility for decision making to the subordinates. Subordinates are free to do whatever they like without any interference. Delegative style believes that people have skills to do a task and can do it without direction. When they are left to themselves they will put their full effort and so maximum results will be yielded. They develop their own goals, set their own means and solve their own problems. This style helps to develop independent personality. It is therefore, effective in highly motivated, professional groups. Delegative style may be damaging if the subordinates do not have the knowledge skills and self motivation to do the work effectively and also when they do not manage their time well. This may create only confusion and result to less production.

In earlier days, Principals adopting authoritarian style were appreciated and considered as the most successful. But in recent years, several pioneering researches in this field changed the views drastically. Now, Principals who have the ability to inspire, motivate and influence the staff members to perform their duties willingly are considered as successful. Therefore, a Principal needs to adopt an integrated form of leadership style.

There is no single leadership style which can be regarded as the best and definite one. No single style is appropriate in all situations. The most effective leader exercises different leadership styles according to the demand of the situation, circumstances and maturity level of the subordinates. Maturity is not related with the chronological age but is the responsibility of shouldering a task. Man has different maturity levels - high, moderate and even low. The nature of dealing with people is different according to the different maturity level. With low maturity level of the subordinates, the leader need a more directing approach and with high maturity people, a more democratic or delegative style. A leader has to deal with different subordinates with different maturity level at different situation, she/he needs to adopt different leadership styles. A leader adopting different styles is a flexible leader. Even if a flexible leader uses different styles over a period of time, one style tends to be the dominant one.

**Significance of the Study:**

Educational institution is the formal centre for achieving ‘the knowledge society’. For attaining this goal, the Head or the Principal of the institution has to play the most important role. The Principal is the person who manages, plans, controls and co-ordinates the resources of the Institution and take appropriate decisions for the purpose of attaining organisational goals. S/He performs multiple roles. The Principal co-ordinates and communicates with groups associated with the institution. S/He is the one who initiates, anticipates, recognizes changes in the set-up and explores the potentialities of the group for growth. The Principal needs
to monitor and maintain a good working relationship with others. S/He is to create a cordial and conducive atmosphere in the institution. It is the job of the Principal to make all the members understand that each and every person is responsible for the development of the institution.

Educationists and social scientists are frequently concerned with the leadership style of Principals. Leadership style of a Principal is the process of influencing teachers and other stakeholders towards the attainment and achievement of the desired goal. Therefore, the Principal who is holding a leadership position should be able to influence and identify the needs of the teachers, students and other stakeholders of the institution and act accordingly. If s/he is able to lead the followers, he may be regarded as a successful leader. Successful leaders inspire, stimulate and motivate the employees and at the same time make them to enjoy a high level of morale. S/He is able to receive new ideas and always ready to venture the ideas into new goals.

Generally, Principals show various types of leadership styles in their institution. But it is more important for a Principal to choose an appropriate leadership style suitable for the given framework and maturity levels of the subordinates. In general, most of the leaders are unaware that their leadership styles may affect their subordinates. Therefore, the concern of the study is to determine the best appropriate style of leadership that will provoke aspirations to the teachers so as to attain maximum academic achievements of the students.

At present, the colleges in Manipur are unable to show expected level of performance which may be due to inappropriate leadership styles adopted by the Principal or lack of interpersonal relationships between the Principal and the subordinates, especially the teachers. These problems may affect the achievements of the institution, and may hamper its functioning, where the future of a nation is shaped and the behaviour of the youth of the country is moulded. In view thereof, paper attempts to find out the problems of leadership styles of the Principals in the colleges of the four valley districts of Manipur.

The present study aims to identify and compare the various leadership styles of the Principals of Degree colleges of the four valley districts of Manipur - Imphal East, Imphal West, Thoubal and Bishenpur. It tries to identify the leadership styles of the Principals of the Degree colleges of the four districts as perceived by their teachers and also to examine the agreement between the leadership styles of the Principals as perceived by themselves and by the teachers working with them.

The population of the study comprises all the Principals of the Degree colleges existing in the valley region of Manipur State, i.e., Imphal East, Imphal West, Bishenpur and Thoubal. Out of 37 Degree colleges situated in the valley region of Manipur, only 29 (78.38%) Principals agreed to cooperate. Therefore, the sample of the study consists of 29 Principals.

For assessing the leadership styles of the Principal, the investigator adopted a modified Questionnaire based on the pattern and structure of the Participant Handout of Leadership Style Survey of Emergency Field Co-ordination Training (E.F.C.T.), November 2004. This Handout was originally created by Don Clark on July 15, 1998 and updated by him on February 24, 2002. The Leadership Style Questionnaires are of two types, one for Principals (self-assessment) and another Leadership Style Questionnaire (for Teachers) for assessing the Principals by the teachers. To fulfil the objectives of the study, the data was classified, tabulated and is further analysed and interpreted as required by percentages from where inferences are drawn.

From the analysis and interpretation of the data, it has been found that all the Principals had flexible leadership styles. It means that all the Principals adopted...
different leadership styles in different situations while leading the teachers working with them. All the Principals assessed themselves as having Democratic leadership style predominantly but adopted Autocratic and Delegative style or Delegative and Autocratic styles occasionally. The teachers also assessed their respective Principals as flexible leaders with a predominance of Democratic leadership style. Overall results show that only 21% of the leadership styles of the Principals as assessed by themselves is in complete consonance with the assessment by the teachers working with them. So, approximately 21% of the assessments of the leadership styles of the Principals’ self-assessment and teachers’ assessment are in agreement.

**Educational Implication:**

The study also found that majority of the Principals perceived themselves as adopting predominantly Democratic leadership style and assessments by the concerned teachers also show them as adopting predominantly Democratic leadership style. In a work place where there is a democratic leader, the workers feel good and their morale gets heightened. They develop a sense of belongingness and become committed to achieving the goals and heightened objectives of the organization. Thus, in this democratic world, there is a need of mutual respect, despite the difference in position and age. Every man is borne with a capacity or talent. The talent is to be honoured and let it exposed. This has become a voice and high concern in this ‘constructivism’ as applied to education in today’s world. Only then, a harmonious and conducive environment can be created which is highly desirable in an academic set up.

Since leadership is an art which comes from practice, it is essential that the Principals attend various leadership and orientation programmes. Knowledge obtained from such programmes may help them in selection of suitable leadership style to lead their colleagues effectively to achieve the institutional objectives.

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Rise of Insurgency in Manipur and State's Response

Dr. Kangujam Sanatomba Meitei*

Abstract: Insurgency, which arose as a form of political resistance to the Indian State, is rooted in the contested Merger Agreement of 1949. The granting of statehood to Manipur in 1972 was a response to armed insurgency in the state. However, statehood was considered too little and too late by the dissident elites as it could not fulfill their political aspiration. Lack of a consistent policy on the part of the central government is responsible for the failure to resolve the issue of insurgency. The paper argues that the basic incompatibility underlying the conflict in Manipur is centred on the question of the political status of Manipur, irrespective of whether one defines it in terms of sovereignty or autonomy. In this paper, an attempt is made to underscore the need to recognize the existence of armed conflict in Manipur as a pre-condition for seeking a political solution to insurgency.

Keywords: insurgency, resistance, statehood, armed conflict, sovereignty, dissident elite.

Setting the Theme:
Located at the margin of India’s eastern frontier, Manipur has emerged as a theatre of armed conflict between the government forces and the insurgent groups. The conflict which has remained seemingly intractable for the last five decades claimed many lives on both sides apart from inflicting heavy toll on the civilians. Peace had, indeed, always eluded Manipur ever since the emergence of insurgency in the 1960s. Efforts to seek a political solution to the conflict is often stalled primarily due to mutually incompatible claims and counter claims made by the conflicting parties. The emerging trend indicates intensification of the conflict with the rise in the incidents of armed hostilities.

Many scholars have identified various factors that were responsible for the emergence of insurgency in Manipur. The emergence of insurgency in Manipur is generally attributed to the signing of the controversial Merger Agreement in 1949. Yet the question remains as to why it did not emerge immediately after the merger. In this paper, an attempt will be made to trace how insurgency as a form of resistance is historically articulated and also explain how insurgency in the state has persisted despite various measures adopted by the government. The granting of statehood to Manipur in 1972 followed by stringent military operations under the impunity sanctioned by the Armed Forces (Special Power) Act 1958 could not curb the rising spade of insurgency. Such realities entail the need to identify the core issue underlying the conflict. In conjunction with such concern, the paper underscores the need to find a lasting solution to the decades old problem of insurgency through dialogue.

A Brief Introduction of the Context:
After her defeat in the Anglo-Manipur war of 1891, Manipur, once an independent kingdom, came under the suzerainty of the British Crown whereby Manipur retained her status as a “protected state”, a territory, which has a properly organized internal government while the state's external affairs is under the control of a hegemonic power. With the lapse of British suzerainty following the passing of the Indian Independence Act 1947, Manipur became technically and legally independent. A constitution known as the Manipur State Constitution Act 1947 was adopted and a popular government was instituted in 1948 after holding a democratic election based on Universal Adult Franchise. But such political
development in Manipur was viewed as a formidable challenge to the expansion of the Indian State and, therefore, attracted the attention of the Dominion of India which started contemplating for immediate integration of the princely state. Moreover, the strategic importance of Manipur rendered it crucial for the Indian State to annex it through any available means. The plan to take over Manipur was already hatched even before the actual transfer of power took place in 15 August 1947. In this regard, it is pertinent to recall that the Dominion of India, much before it came into official existence, secured the signing of the Standstill Agreement and the Instrument of Accession with Manipur on July 11, 1947 (Bhubon 1988, 70). According to the Instrument of Accession, Manipur and the Dominion of India had to maintain a treaty relation whereby external affairs, defense and communication were ceded to the Dominion of India while Manipur retained the autonomy to manage its own internal affairs.

On 21 September 1949 another agreement known as the Manipur Merger Agreement was signed between Maharajah Bodhchandra and the Indian authorities at Shillong under treacherous circumstances. The agreement became operative on October 15 1949. Since then Manipur has remained as a part of the Indian Union. However, organized opposition to the merger by dissident groups led to one of the most protracted armed conflict in the North Eastern region. As a matter of fact, the armed groups of Manipur have been resisting the Indian State by resorting to armed insurgency. They claim to fight for the restoration of the sovereignty and independence of Manipur. As such, the ongoing armed conflict in Manipur can be construed as a direct outcome of the merger.

**Insurgency as a Form of Resistance:**

Insurgency as a form of resistance to the Indian State had emerged in Manipur only during the 1960s. It cannot be denied that there was a series of opposition to the possible merger of Manipur with India on the eve of signing of the Merger Agreement. Besides, the erstwhile Manipur State Legislative Assembly had passed a resolution on September 28, 1949 denouncing the Merger Agreement and declaring it as null and void (The Manipur State Gazette, October 14, 1949 Part IV). But, no organized attempt was ever made to subvert the said Agreement in the immediate post-merger period. The Merger Agreement, therefore, was not an issue at the initial stage.

It was a tiny but influential section of the urban elites as represented by the Manipur State Congress Party, who had vigorously pushed forward the agenda for integration and colluded with the Indian Government to accomplish the merger of Manipur with India. They cherished strong expectation that integration of Manipur into India would ameliorate and enhance their national rights (Sanajaoba 1988, 276). Such a political dispensation was the result of the failure of the Congress Party to capture power in the Manipur State Legislative Assembly in the 1948 election. These Meitei elites were also of the view that integration with India would bring about peace and economic development to Manipur. But those aspirations were shattered following Manipur’s transformation into a Part-C State within the Indian Union after the merger (Joykumar 2002, 197).

One specific outcome of the merger was the shrinkage of democratic space. The arbitrary act of dissolving the erstwhile Manipur State Legislative Assembly without making any alternative political arrangement deprived the local elites of their right to govern and manage the affairs of the state. The central rule was established in Manipur turning it into a Chief Commissioner’s Province. Subsequently, an Advisory Council was constituted in 1953 and later Manipur was conferred the status of a Union Territory with a Territorial Council in 1957 which was again elevated to the status of a Territorial Assembly in 1963. But the working
of these democratic institutions was so limited that it could not meet the rising aspiration of the elites (Kamei 2006, 141). The Central Government’s intransigent attitude towards Manipur was also exposed when in 1956 the State’s Reorganization Commission went to the extent of recommending amalgamation of Manipur with Assam. Though the plan was averted with the timely intervention of Nehru, it nevertheless left a bad impression in the mind of the people. All these events had resulted in the birth of “dissident elites”. The dissident elites may be defined as section of the elites who could not come into terms with “the state of being merged”, an alienated condition created by the merger particularly the marginalization of the local elites from running the affairs of the state. Unable to compromise with the post-merger political scenario, the dissident elites began to realize the need to recover the democratic space that had existed in the pre-merger period. The political aspirations of the dissident elites found manifestation in a sustained movement demanding statehood and establishment of a responsible government. The statehood movement could, therefore, be regarded as a demand for restoration of the democratic space that was usurped in 1949 as a direct consequence of the merger. The political significance of the statehood movement lies in the fact that the idea for launching the ongoing insurgency movement in Manipur was seeded during that period. For example, two leaders namely Sagolsem Indramani and Yangmaso Shaiza had registered their opposition to the Merger Agreement for the first time in a public meeting held at Pologround in 1954. They had not only denounced the said Agreement, but also threatened to declare Manipur’s independence in the event of failure to grant complete statehood to Manipur immediately by the Central Government. (Kamei 2016, Part III, 118) Therefore, opposition to the Merger Agreement was obviously the outcome of the widespread dissention generated by prolonged central rule.

Even as the statehood movement continued for more than one decade, the dissident elites did not contemplate about waging an organized armed struggle against the Indian State to achieve their political objective. The character of the statehood movement was rather peaceful except for a few cases of violence amounting to vandalizing public properties. What is significant to note is that armed violence was never directed against the security forces during the entire course of the statehood movement. This was in stark contrast to what had been going on in other parts of the Northeastern region. When the Nagas and the Mizos were launching fierce guerrilla warfare against the Indian State in the Naga Hills and the Lushai Hills respectively, statehood movement in Manipur remained strictly constitutional and democratic.

The inconsistent policy adopted by the Central Government to address the problems in the Northeast only enraged the dissident elites of Manipur. They slowly realized the practical necessity to adopt armed insurgency as a form of political struggle. The interplay of two factors provided the trigger for the emergence of insurgency in Manipur at certain stage of the statehood movement. First, the granting of Territorial Assembly to Manipur in 1963 as a response to the statehood movement fell far short of the democratic aspirations of the dissident elites. Second, the creation of Nagaland as a full-fledged state out of the Naga Hills Tuensang Areas (NHTA) in 1963 in response to armed hostilities conducted by the Naga National Council had fully convinced the dissident elites that the Government of India paid more attention to violence than to democratic struggle (Joykumar 2005, 34). Granting of statehood to Nagaland while denying the same to Manipur on the ground of economic non-viability was something quite inconceivable.
In a significant turn of event, a section of the dissident elites, who hitherto had avoided armed struggle as a political strategy, established the United National Liberation Front (UNLF), the first insurgent group, in 1964 with the stated objective to restore the sovereignty and independence of Manipur. Later on, due to differences among the leadership of the UNLF on the timing of launching armed struggle, Oinam Sudhir Kumar broke away to form the Revolutionary Government of Manipur (RGM) which indulged in subversive activities against the Indian State. Differences within the RGM led to formation of the People’s Liberation Army (PLA), the armed wing of the Revolutionary People’s Front (RPF) under the leadership of N. Bisheswar in 1978. The PREPAK was founded in 1977 by RK Tullachandra and the KCP was established in 1980. Later, KYKL was formed in 1994 by the splinter groups of UNLF, PREPAK and KCP. Thus heralded the era of insurgency and armed conflict in Manipur.

At least two observations can be deduced from the historical narrative cited above. First, the abrupt dissolution of the erstwhile Manipur State Legislative Assembly coupled with inordinate denial of self-rule to Manipur had left the elites with no democratic space for political participation and representation. This naturally paved way for elite-induced mass movement culminating into armed insurrection. Insurgency in Manipur, therefore, is an elite phenomenon. Second, insurgency can be understood as an offshoot or rather the more extreme manifestation of the statehood movement. In terms of their objectives, the two movements are similar in so far as both sought to enhance the political status of Manipur, though qualitatively in varying degrees. Differences appear only in terms of the means to achieve the same. While statehood movement aimed at attaining complete statehood within the constitution of India by adopting democratic means, insurgency movement which articulates as a national liberation struggle aims at restoring the sovereignty of Manipur outside the Constitution of India through armed struggle. Yet, in spite of their inherent distinctions, the statehood movement served as a launch-pad for insurgency in the state. The dialectics of these two movements clearly indicates that insurgency in Manipur is inextricably wedded to the question of the political status of Manipur irrespective of whether one defines it in term of sovereignty or autonomy as the case may be.

Statehood: too little and too Late:

The rise of insurgency as a form of political resistance in Manipur attracted the attention of the Central Government. To appease the insurgents as well as to prevent further escalation of armed conflict, the Indian Government granted complete statehood to Manipur in 1972. In this context, there is an observation made in informed circle that RGM’s demand for an independent Manipur was met with statehood to Manipur (Sanajaoba 1988, 259). Indeed, the Central Government would have delayed the granting of statehood to Manipur by another decade if the UNLF and the RGM were not set up in the 1960s. The conferment of statehood to Manipur in 1972 was a very significant moment in the political history of Manipur as it marked a partial restoration of the political status of Manipur and the democratic rights of the people that were forfeited in 1949.

However, the Central Government had committed a serious mistake in the manner how statehood was granted to Manipur. The granting of statehood to Manipur was purely a unilateral act on the part of the Government of India as it was not a result of any formal negotiation with the insurgent group. The RGM members were arrested, imprisoned and later released after granting General Amnesty by the Manipur Government in 1972, but no political talk was initiated with them. Over and above, the granting of statehood to Manipur was perceived by some sections of the armed groups of Manipur as “too little and too late”
It was considered too little as the status conferred to Manipur under the statehood remained far too less compared to the status it had sustained earlier during the pre-merger period. Moreover, the granting of statehood was perceived too late as the stage was already set for waging a protracted armed struggle against the government by the time statehood was granted to Manipur in 1972.

The response of the Indian State that came in piecemeal political concession seemed unable to satisfy the rising aspirations of the elites. Therefore, the basic incompatibility underlying the conflict remained unresolved. That was primarily the reason why the second half of the 1970s witnessed resumption of insurgency in Manipur valley. By then, insurgency in Manipur had assumed the form of a full scale armed struggle that continues to remain till date. After the attainment of statehood, the RGM went into oblivion and instead, the People’s Liberation Army (PLA) emerged as the most powerful insurgent group of Manipur. But its founder leader N. Bisheswar was arrested and subsequently coerced into contesting the State Assembly election in the 1980s. Here too, the Indian Government failed to bring about a political solution to insurgency in the state by initiating political dialogue with the arrested leader. Rather than seeking to address the basic issue underlying insurgency, the government had always focused on elimination of the insurgents through military means. But eliminating the insurgents alone without eliminating the factors responsible for the rise of insurgency cannot bring about lasting peace in the state. As a matter of fact, insurgency can be successfully tackled only by resolving the issues that gave rise to it at the first place.

Stringent counter insurgency operations launched by the Indian military and continued imposition of AFSPA, had given serious setback to armed insurgency in the state. Nevertheless, the late 1980s witnessed reassertion and reconsolidation of the armed groups in Manipur after a brief lull. Since 1991, the armed groups had stepped up military offensive against the Indian Security Forces resulting in numerous deaths on both sides apart from inflicting massive collateral damage on the civilian. Moreover, prolonged imposition of the notorious AFSPA has resulted in large scale violation of Human Rights in Manipur. The Indian army including the para-military forces and the state police have committed serious atrocities like extra-judicial execution, indiscriminate firing in public places, enforced disappearance, arrest without warrant, fake encounter, rape and third degree torture on the pretext of conducting counter-insurgency operations. Such acts of atrocities were unleashed by the Indian security forces despite India’s own commitment to various international human rights conventions and declarations as well as in contravention to its own constitution and democratic principles.

**Concluding Remarks:**

It may take years of concerted efforts to find a durable solution to the conflict in Manipur. However, a beginning ought to be made in the right direction. Recognition of the existence of the armed conflict in Manipur is the first step towards resolving the issue of insurgency. The Union Government needs to make an official declaration to this effect. Such recognition is essential for the government to frame a specific policy to tackle the situation. No action for conflict transformation can be initiated until and unless the state of armed conflict is recognized.

A critical observation of insurgency in Manipur reveals that military solution is out of question. Stringent counter-insurgency operations launched by the Indian Security Forces and continued enforcement of AFSPA for the last 30 years or so have totally failed to quell the armed insurgency. This is largely due to the fact that the armed conflict in Manipur is a political issue that requires a political solution.
Seeking a military solution to an issue which is entirely political in nature would prove disastrous for both the parties to the conflict. As such, the situation warrants a shift from militaristic approach to a political approach in order to facilitate a satisfactory resolution to the protracted conflict through dialogue.

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Expectations of the People: Political Leaders’ Perception

Dr. Oinam Momoton Singh*

Abstract: People in Manipur are divided into ethnically separate groups and traditionally institutions are working in spite of the fact that people are adopting towards modern way of life. It is quite natural that people have high expectation from the political leaders as their representative. It is important to understand the perception of the political leaders about the expectation of the people from them.

Introduction:
Electoral politics is the medium through which political leaders in Manipur always try to be representative of the people. Representation is the process through which the attitudes, preferences, viewpoints and desire of the entire citizenry or part of them are with their expressed approval, shaped into governmental action on their behalf by a smaller number among them, with binding effect upon those represented. The business of the elected assembly is to protect the interest of the constituents. The expectations of the people are more from the political leaders and they have faith on those who can help them to solve their personal and community problems.

Expectation of the People:
It is quite natural that people have ‘high expectation’ from the political leaders who are supposed to lead the people in the right direction. They would expect the political leaders to develop educational opportunities, roads and transportation, health care centers, water supply schemes and proper implementation of development schemes. They would expect from them to regulate norms of public safety and provide individual liberty. They would also like them to be role model in dealing and addressing various state and national issues including social development and environmental issue. The expectation of the people from the political leaders is often ‘very high’ that the ability and resources at the disposal of the political leaders find it difficult to fulfill them.

Majority of the political leaders in Manipur perceived that people have high expectation from them. While some others considered that people have ‘very high’ expectation from them. A political leader¹ expressed ‘Manipur is a poor state. The people/public wants me to develop roads and bridges, provide them certain government schemes’. Another political leader² said, ‘people have high expectation that they want me to develop infrastructure like roads and bridges, health care centers, water supply schemes’. On the other hand, a political leader³ opined, ‘people think that they would become wealthy and their sorrow would become less by being with me. But this is not possible to accomplish’. A senior political leader⁴ said, ‘the expectation of the people in general is ‘very high’. But there are exaggerated expectations that they want me to do everything for them, even feed them. There are also reasonable expectations like improvement of educational and medical facilities, development of community or state and fulfilling these expectations is a part of my duty and I have to be committed to them also’. Another senior political leader⁵ observed ‘in a poor state like Manipur where there are full of shortages of everything, people’s expectation from their representative is very high that it is not possible to fulfill all the expectations. Many individuals support and work very hard for a particular candidate at the time of election with the expectation of obtaining benefit when he or she got elected. This trend adds another interpretation of democracy more than the fact that eligible and deserving
candidate should be elected as representative of the people. This also makes political confusion in the state’. 

**Techniques to Satisfy People:**

No specific technique is available to satisfy the public. People can be made satisfied by doing certain things or by saying something. Making people satisfied depends on the issue on which decision is made. Thus, the technique used by the political leaders to satisfy the public changes as per situation and time. But there are some common techniques used by the political leaders in Manipur to satisfy the public. They are: - (1) Dealing people with open and honest mind and making no false promises (2) Frequent contact/interaction with the people and share their joy and sorrow and solve their grievances (3) Fulfilling the demands of the people as far as possible and (4) Create/establish mutual understanding with people by explaining what is possible or not to materialize into action. A senior political leader said ‘I try to fulfill those things which I have committed to the public. I am accessible by all and anybody can come and meet me. I take up development work in consultation with the public’. Another political leader opined ‘I don’t believe in making false promises. I just say very honestly what I can do and what I cannot do to the public’. A senior political leader said ‘I try to know what the public want and try to fulfill their wants. But it is not easy to fulfill the wants or need of each and every person and doing so is also impossible’. Another political leader said ‘I don’t like to reveal the technique of satisfying the public and want to keep it to myself’.

**Analytical Conclusion:**

Political leaders in Manipur need to work in true spirit for the welfare of the people and lead them in the right path. They should mobilize people and establish mutual understanding with them. They are often found making false promises just to satisfy the public and take political mileage. So long as one is honest and accountable, he/she can satisfy the public. There may be momentary misunderstanding and dissatisfaction among the people but working with honesty and transparency will prevail in the long run. People should be allowed to express their expectations and appropriate decision should be taken in general interest of the people by analyzing both merits and demerits of the task in hand. It is better to convince people about the difficulty, if any, in fulfilling their expectations. Political leaders are those whom the public look upon as somebody they can trust and rely when they are in trouble and approach when they need certain things to be done. Helping people should be a part of their commitment and what they stand for. They should give priority to the maintenance of peace and order, protection of people’s rights, providing justice, provision of education, public utility services including public health and social harmony. No room should be given to the practice of nepotism in the state. Family consideration, kinship ties, friendship obligation, class, ethnic and parochial loyalties should not get precedence in public servant’s mind and commitment to rules, regulations, laws, values and ideals should come first. Transparency, responsibility, accountability, participation and response to the needs of the people are strongly needed for social development. People also need to participate in the activities of political system and engage in evaluation and criticism of the system. People can play a decisive role in developing the state. Power lies in their hand in democracy. People got the government they deserved.

Social development in Manipur needs to have better adjustment between human needs and aspiration on one hand and social policies and programmes on the other. It must have the objective of eradicating poverty, illiteracy, ignorance, inequality, irrationality, oppression prevalent in the society and improving the
quality of life. People oriented perspective; long-term scientific planning and proper implementation of the planned projects with transparency are needed for social development. It is here at this crucial point that political leaders in the state need to see and evaluate the need of the people and introduce some structural changes in society - discarding some old institutions and creating some new institutions or changing some existing institutions. They also need to make institutions more responsive to all sections of society and associate people with decision making process. Initiation and completion of development projects should not take much more time than the stipulated time period and the concerned authority should not justify delay by seeking excuse citing rainy season, interference from underground outfits and frequent bandhs and general strikes imposed by certain groups. Construction and expansion of few roads cannot be called fulfilling people’s expectations in the true sense of the term. Rather, these should be considered as normal duty of the political leaders which they are supposed to perform as representatives of the people.

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Gaggan Kumar* & Hardev Singh*

Abstract: The phenomenon of population ageing is becoming a major concern for the policy makers all over the world, both for developed and developing countries. Our country too is not immune to this demographic change. The changing demographic profile has thrown many new challenges in the social, economic and political domains. The rapid socioeconomic transformation has affected various aspects of Society. Industrialization, urbanization and migration of population have brought the concept of nuclear family, as a result of which a section of the family, primarily the elders, are confronting the problems of financial and physical support. There is an emerging need to pay greater attention to ageing related issues and to promote holistic policies and programmes for dealing with ageing society. The present is a generous attempt to study economic condition, health status and effect of changing family structure on ageing population and other related parameters in the study area of village Deoli of tehsil Bishnah which is situated in tehsil Bishnah of district Jammu.

Key Words: Ageing, population, economic, health status, Jammu

Introduction:
Human resource is considered as an asset for a country. It plays an important role in economic development and growth. Greater the proportion of young persons in the population of a country, larger is the workforce, and, thus, more is the economic potential. India, in this sense, has got an advantage at present and is considered as a leading nation in the world in terms of human power.

The huge young population is considered as its strength and it enhances its potential for faster growth. The global demographic trend, however, tells us that, with the passage of time, the countries have experienced ageing of population. The proportion of older persons in the population of a country has increased. Due to economic well-being, better health care system, good medicines, etc. there is substantial reduction in mortality in the society. Reduced mortality has led to reduction in fertility too. These factors together have resulted in increasing number of elderly persons in the population. This phenomenon, called population ageing, is a dynamic demographic trend all over the world. The population ageing, started in the last century with developed countries, is now encompassing developing countries too. India, by no means, is an exception to this phenomenon. Over the years, the structure of population has changed and will further change in the time to come. The proportion of older persons in the population will increase. Population ageing has profound social, economic and political implications for a country. The increasing number of older persons put a strain on health care and social care systems in the country. Old age comes with lot of ailment and diseases. In case of large number of elderly persons in the population, the country needs more and more health and medical services, facilities and resources. More and more number of hospitals, doctors, nurses are required. Government spending on health care is increased with the increase of average age of population. Very old people, due to their reduced mobility and debilitating disabilities, need other people to do things for them. With the increasing trend of nuclear families in the society and with fewer children in the family, the care of older persons in the
families gets increasingly difficult. To fulfill caring needs of aged persons more and more nursing people with appropriate skills are required. Social security spending of Government also increases with the increase of old age population. Due to increased longevity of life, pension bills increase. On the other hand, lesser people of working age means lower number of working people leading to lower tax base and lower tax collection. Economy grows slowly as less money is available for spending on things that help economy grow. A sizeable portion of money is spent on meeting requirement of old age population. Government, thus, has to face the double whammy. On one side the resources are shrunk, on the other, expenditure is increased. To face the challenges of ageing population, the country needs to be well prepared. Appropriate social and economic policies need to be made to mitigate its ill effects. Social policy development for the elderly needs to be critically examined for society to adapt to ageing as well as for older population. Suitable redistributive policies are required. New priorities must be added to the scarce resources for social programs for elderly, while still having to deal with the problems of the younger populations. Women issues also are of paramount importance in considering social policies for elderly population. Due to better life expectancy women live longer than men.

**Objectives:**

The major objectives of the proposed study are:

- To study about the socio economic condition of old aged population in the village
- To study their health issues and old age diseases
- To study level of awareness about national and state sponsored scheme for their welfare

**Methodology:**

Both primary and data has been used. The primary data was collected through field survey for which a detailed questionnaire is prepared with relevant socio-economic indicators. Apart from this, the secondary data is collected through District Hand Book and Census of India, 2011. The total households of village Deoli is 616 according to 2011 census and out of which 50 households have been selected randomly having ageing population of 65 out of which 30 are males and 35 are females. Simple statistical techniques, Microsoft excel software and Cartographic techniques have been used throughout the study. The location map of the study area is prepared with the help of software ArcGIS.

**Study Area:**

Deoli village is located in Bishnah Tehsil of Jammu district in Jammu & Kashmir, India. It is situated 3km away from sub-district headquarter Bishnah and 22km away from district headquarter Jammu. As per 2009 stats, Deoli village is also a gram Panchayat. The total geographical area of village is 430.6 hectares. Deoli has a total population of 3,063 peoples. There are about 616 houses in Deoli village.
Geographical Analysis of Elderly Population

The population above the age of the age of 59 or 60 in some countries is considered as ageing population. Ageing population is also called as senile population or senior citizens of the nation. Due to rapidly increasing percentage of ageing population in the developed countries and also in developing countries this issue is attracting the attention of most of the researchers and policy makers. This increase in most of the developed countries is attributed to the increased health facilities and better economic conditions as comparison to developing countries.

Table No.1: Age of the respondent

<table>
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<th>Age</th>
<th>No. of Respondents</th>
<th>%</th>
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<td>20</td>
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<td>65-75</td>
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<td>85 and above</td>
<td>9</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

From the above data, it is clear that the maximum percentage of ageing population is the age group of 65-75 years. And the minimum percentage is in the group 85 and above. The 14 percent of senile population above the age of 85 and even it has been observed that out of this 5 percent is above the age of 95 years. This shows that the life expectancy is increasing day by day. Even this 5% is attributed to the fresh environment and healthy food habits of ageing population as comparison to urban senile population.
Table No.2: Number of widows/widower/both in the family

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No. of Widows/Widower/Both</th>
<th>No. respondents</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Widow</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Widower</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Couple</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Field Survey, 2017

From the above table we arrived at the conclusion that the maximum percentage of the ageing population in the village is the single senior citizen. But here, in this table we talk in depth whether the single senior citizen is male or female. And it is clear that that the maximum percentage of that single senior citizen is attributed to females that means the widows in the village are more as comparison to widowers. Out of the total 50 families the number of widows is 20 while the widowers are 15. It can also be concluded from this calculation that the life expectancy of females is more as comparison to males and it can be proved that the females are biologically stronger as comparison to males.

Table No.3: Qualification of the Senior Citizens

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Qualification</th>
<th>%</th>
<th>Level of Education</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Literate</td>
<td>30.7</td>
<td>Primary</td>
<td>72.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Illiterate</td>
<td>69.3</td>
<td>Secondary</td>
<td>27.6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Field Survey, 2017

From the above education table of the respondents, it is clear that the maximum senile population in the village Deoli is illiterate. The literate population is only about 30% of the total surveyed senile population. Even in the literate population the maximum senior citizens (72%) have the primary level of qualification and 28% have secondary qualification. out of this the literacy among the surveyed females is 0% .This represents the literacy gap between the males and females in senile population as well as their plight condition. The literacy affects their health and family structure.

Table No.4: Health Status of elderly population in the study area

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of disease</th>
<th>No. of Respondent (%)</th>
<th>Males (%)</th>
<th>Females (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Eyesight</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>16.6</td>
<td>11.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Joint pain</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>16.6</td>
<td>8.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High BP</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>13.3</td>
<td>5.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Respiratory</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>13.3</td>
<td>17.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Diabetes</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>16.6</td>
<td>11.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Any other</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>16.6</td>
<td>5.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>49 (75.4)</td>
<td>93.3</td>
<td>60</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Field Survey, 2017

It has been observed from the table 5 that maximum percentage (75.4%) of aged population is facing the health problems while the rest are free of diseases. It is all because of their better family support and care. But if we compare the health status of male and female we come to the conclusion that the health conditions of females are much better as comparison to males. The maximum percentage of ageing population is suffering from respiratory problem, diabetes, weak eyesight and joint paint. These are the common problems due to ageing.
Table No.5: Availability of Health Services

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Health services</th>
<th>No. of Respondents</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Hospital</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>76.92</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dispensary</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>15.38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Medical shop</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>7.96</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Source:** Field Survey, 2017

The above table 7, it is clear that maximum old aged people of the Deoli prefer to for the health checkup in the Bishnah hospital, a few go to Jammu hospital and some prefer to checkup in Gandhinagar. It accounts for about 76.92% of the total respondents. Only 15.38% of the total respondents prefer to go in dispensary. It means that there are no proper facilities in dispensary. According to some senior citizens the major issue regarding health checkup is that the dispensary provides ayurvedic medicines which the old people don’t prefer. Some have complains that they are not properly checked in dispensary and those who are better economically prefer to do their checkups in hospitals and it’s only the poor who suffer because of lacking in awareness.

Table No.6: Hobby or the Work Done by Aged People at Home

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sl. No.</th>
<th>Type of work done/engaged in</th>
<th>No. of respondents</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Playing with grandchildren</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>38.46</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Farm work</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>30.76</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Interested in communication (TV/radio/newspaper)</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>23.07</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Gossiping with friends</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>7.69</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Source:** Field Survey, 2017

From the above bar graph in fig. 1, it reveals that of the type of work done or the time spend by the senior citizens, has been observed that maximum (38.46) percentage of senile population spend time in playing with their grandchildren. While some of them spend their time in farm work. The females are generally busy in household activities and form work and males are generally in playing with grandchildren and gossiping with friends.
Table No. 7: Views of the Ageing Population about the Changing Culture and Tradition Young Generation’s Feelings towards Old Age Population

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Attributes</th>
<th>No. of respondents</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Views on cultural and traditional changes</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Good</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>53.84</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bad</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>30.76</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Need of the hour</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>15.38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thought about new generation</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Take as burden</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>61.53</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Respect elders</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>38.46</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Field Survey, 2017

It is general eye view that the ageing population is not agreeing with the changing culture and tradition but the reality is different. Maximum of the ageing population is agreed with the changing lifestyle. They thought now things are easily accessible than the time of our youth. And some said change is the law of nature and need of the hour. The above table also reveals that maximum percentage of old aged are taken as burden by the youth and a very few think that youth respect aged. It can be depicted from this table that the senile population is being neglected in the villages as well and less cared and respected.

Table No.8: Works often done by Ageing Population in the Village

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sl. No.</th>
<th>Occupation</th>
<th>No. of respondents</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Retired</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>23.07</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Working</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>7.69</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>No work</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>69.23</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Field Survey, 2017

From the above table it is clear that maximum % age of aged population was unemployed and generally prefers agriculture, farm work, and household activities. About 23% of the total respondents are retired from the Indian army and a very few or negligible were involved in private jobs in their youth.

Table No.9: Different views of the regarding the saving of money, burden on economy and care in their old age by their children

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Attributes</th>
<th>No. of respondents</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Money</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Saved</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>7.69</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not saved</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>92.30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Should saved</td>
<td>53</td>
<td>81.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Should Not saved</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>18.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Views of Old Aged on the Economy of Nation</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Burden</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>69.23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not burden</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>15.38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No answer</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>7.69</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Old aged are more cared by their children in rural area than in urban</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agreed</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>92.30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not agreed</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>7.69</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Field Survey, 2017

It has been observed that those senior citizens have given everything to their children are often being left by their children. Keeping this in mind, the question regarding money is asked to the aged people in the village. It has been observed that about 8% of the total respondents have saved money and rest 92% haven’t saved. The reason behind not saved the money is their poor economic condition and labour, agricultural work and because of unemployment. Money is saved by those who have pension and are retired army men. Another question asked to the
ageing population that whether they are becoming a burden on the nation’s economy, then maximum of the aged people agree with this that they are burden on nation. A few of them mostly the ex-servicemen are not agree with it. Some said that nation should find such ways that they may use their ageing population, so that neither the ageing population feels isolation or the nation have the burden of it. Moreover 92.3% of the ageing population is agreeing with the statement that the living condition, care and attention paid by their families to the aged population are much better in rural areas as comparison to villages.

![Figure 2](image)

It has been asked to them whether money should be saved on not for old age. About 92% of the attended senior citizens have the views that money should be saved by senior citizen in order to secure their old age. And a very few think there is no to save, they said it because of their

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sl. No.</th>
<th>Last wishes</th>
<th>No. of respondents</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>To visit any pilgrimage</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>15.38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Spend time with family</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>76.92</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Others</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>7.6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Field Survey, 2017

It is clear from the above pie diagram that the maximum proportion of old aged population has the wishes to spend maximum time with their family members. More specifically, it is observed that maximum senior citizens in the village want to spend time with their grand children and prefer joint family. Some also want to visit any pilgrimage. But maximum have the views that family is the biggest pilgrimage for an old person.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Scheme/Programme</th>
<th>Yes (%)</th>
<th>No (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Indira Gandhi National Widow Pension Scheme</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>74</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Indira Gandhi National Old Age Scheme</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>64</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Field Survey 2017

From the above table it is clear that very old age person are availing the benefits of government schemes. The level of awareness is quite low. Majority of the senior citizens are unaware of the schemes.
Conclusion and suggestions

From the above calculation, observation and discussion, we came to the conclusion that the village has better socio-economic condition of ageing population. The major concern in the village is the increasing widow population. And even a very few out of the total surveyed two -three are getting widow pension. So, there is the need to spread awareness about scheme of Indira Gandhi National Widow Pension Scheme and need to register all widows and provide them pension. They have more economic expectation from the government so they should be registered with the scheme of Indira Gandhi National Old Age Scheme. The ageing population is quite dissatisfied with the changes in the family structure in the society. It has been observed that in the village the senior citizens in the joint families are more satisfied and happy than the nucleated. It’s a general view of integration of the whole family of ageing population. Socially, all are better but maximum of the ageing population have the economic problem which is directly related to their health, food, satisfaction and happiness and they have the hunger of only respect and affection from their children. The last question is about their message to the new generation and maximum of them said respect your, serve humanity. Service of man is the real service of god. Never forget human values, work hard and maintain discipline. They are quite dissatisfied with the increasing use of mobile phone and other social media because it all leads to neglect to them by their children as well as grandchildren. About the concept of ageing population and increasing burden on national economy all are agreed with it but they are still willing to support nation. Government has taken certain initiative but there is the need of doing more initiative with the increasing population to engage them in some work that make them happy, secure their social security and benefit nation also. There is need of proper management of the funds provided by the government to the aged population and their proper enquiry.

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MGNREGA and its Impact on the Socio-Economic Condition: A Study of Raimatang Tea Garden in Kalchini Block, Alipurduar District, WB

Bobby Lama*

Abstract: The inclusion of tea garden within the purview of Panchayat Raj Institution in 1998 followed by the implementation of MGNREGA in 2006 has given the native tea garden people a smile on their face. A number of development programs and welfare schemes have been launched, and people have been benefitted. Restricted, but gradually developments are percolating in to the village despite closure of the tea garden for over a decade. In the absence of alternate source of income, both (Panchayat Raj Institution & MGNREGA) have played a vital role in helping the people to sustain livelihood during difficult times. The present research paper tries to analyze the impact of MGNREGA in the socio-economic up-liftment of tea garden village. The study reveals that a sincere effort is required for a successful implementation of MGNREGA in this part of the country.

Keywords: MGNREGA, Socio-economic, Tea garden village

1.0 Introduction:
Tea industry has been the bedrock of the district economy for more than 150 years. However, since the beginning of this century, there has been a trend in closure of tea gardens in this district. The reasons may be attributed to fall in the international tea prices, and production of poor quality of tea because of aged tea bushes, poor management, and manufacturing techniques etc. Many tea gardens have been locked out or abandoned by the tea managements leaving unpaid salaries and no alternate employment. As a result, thousands of tea garden workers along with their family members have been severely affected. There is an acute food scarcity, malnutrition, and starvation all over the closed tea gardens. Thus, a high number of deaths have occurred due to inadequate food and malnutrition. As per government data, between 1 January 2006 and 31 March 2007, the number of deaths in the North Bengal tea gardens recorded was 571. Out of which 254 were females and 62 were children less than 10 years of age. On the other hand, the un-official estimate suggests a total of 2500 deaths during the year 2006-2009. Several studies have established that poverty was the main cause for a high number of deaths in the tea gardens of this district. The sample village having over 1300 tea garden workers had experienced closures many times since its inception. The villagers received the first jerk in the month of October, 1981 when the tea garden was closed for a month, and thereafter, the tea garden underwent a long closure between the year 2000 and 2010 during which the people remained unemployed without any alternate means of livelihood. The period is considered to be the most turbulent phase of their lives. As a result, the socio-economic and human right conditions of the people deteriorated drastically and the people started dying of starvation. Deaths record according to plantation dispensary is shown in table-A. Further, the condition induced large scale migration for employment and human trafficking. Many youths left the village for work to various places in the country; and many crossed the border into Bhutan to work for a pittance at local construction sites. The most vulnerable among the people were women and children. Many of them went missing from the village during the recession never to return back, and the rest remained in the village waiting for better times and hoping that ill-fate won’t strike their families. During the crisis, the state government did step in with food and medical aid but the workers only received less than half the quantity of food they required. In fact, the people had experienced outright neglect and callousness. Fact
Finding Report of Centre for Education and Communication (CEC), New Delhi and United Trades Union Congress pointed out that the Women Workers were the most Sufferers. They were under tremendous pressure and were restricted by a lack of skills from joining other income earning activities, and unfavorable conditions for migrating long distances in search of alternate opportunities of work. Many women died due to malnutrition and pregnancy related complications during the crisis. The tea garden re-opened on the 23rd of October, 2010 and ever since, the hope of the people for brighter days has rekindled. Behind this backdrop, the present study tries to un-fold the impact of MGNREGA in improving the socio-economic conditions of the people in the sample village and attempts to highlight the difficulties being faced by them in the participation of MGNREGS works.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>2004</th>
<th>2005</th>
<th>2006</th>
<th>2007</th>
<th>2008</th>
<th>2009</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Raimatang</td>
<td>53</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>63</td>
<td>73</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Deaths record (Table-A) (Source: Population Research Journal)

1.1 Main Objectives of the Study: Following are the main objectives;

To assess the impact of MGNREGA on the socio-economic condition of the people of the sample village.

1.2 Methodology:

This paper is based on both primary and secondary sources. Primary data has been collected by direct contact method. A pre-structured questionnaire was administered by way of interview to the selected people in the six wards of Raimatang tea garden. The selection of respondents was made through random sampling. About 182 people were interviewed and information on their knowledge, experiences and views about the MGNREGA were collected. Besides interviews and discussions, observation of the implementation of MGNREGS was also made. It was done by personally visiting the work sites and residences of the respective laborers of the village. The schedule for selected respondents had been regarded as the main tool in gathering their responses regarding various aspects covered by this study. Secondary data has been obtained from the magazines, newspaper, books, journals, thesis and other Government publications.

1.3 Survey Area:

The study has been carried out in the six wards of Raimatang tea garden under Kalchini Gram Panchayat, in the district of Alipurduar. With a house hold of 50231 and 26205 BPL (Below Poverty Line) families, Kalchini block stands at the highest poverty level in the district. The sample village is located north east of Kalchini Railway Station at a distance of 2 km. The village is considered to be the most backward in Kalchini block in terms of socio-economic and human right conditions.

2.0 Findings and Analysis:

In order to assess the impact of MGNREGA on the socio-economic condition of the sample tea garden village, about 182 people were randomly selected from the six different wards where 93.47 percent of them were job card holders (Table-8) and had undergone through the most fatal man made calamity in recent times. Most of them were associated with MGNREGS for a subsistence income, and were working hard for their betterment.

a. From the visit to the houses of the respondents, an encouraging change in the living condition was observed, but the ground reality did not indicate much impact of MGNREGS on the other aspects of socio-economic condition as envisaged. The demand for employment is very high and the corresponding generation of employment is very less in the village. The performance report of the concerned Gram Panchayat reveals the average employment per house
hold at 34 days, and the number of households completing 100 days of work in the block at 327 (Block wise Performance Report, 2012-13). The caste-wise distribution of selected households indicated that Scheduled Tribes and Other Backward Classes participated more in the MGNREG works due to the population distribution structure of the village and their deplorable conditions. The table-1 shows that scheduled tribes constituted the largest share (57.70%) followed by OBCs (29.67%), scheduled caste (7.15%) and general caste (5.50%). The study found that there is a certain level of relief in socio-economic condition but requires much more employment generation.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Caste</th>
<th>Number</th>
<th>%</th>
<th>Income</th>
<th>Monthly + MGNREGS</th>
<th>Per Annum</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>SC</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>7.15</td>
<td>Average</td>
<td>2941.66+385.33=3327</td>
<td>39924</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ST</td>
<td>105</td>
<td>57.70</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>OBC</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>29.67</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GEN</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>5.50</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table-1

b. During the shut-down era of the tea garden, many families got fragmented on account of various reasons. The foremost being the pathetic socio-economic condition. The larger family size required large income to support, and thus, as a measure to get relief from shouldering the family burden, many of them got split into small family sizes. From the table-2 below, it is apparent that 74.17 percent of the respondents belonged to nuclear family, and 25.83 percent of them belonged to joint family which implied that the pathetic condition led to the formation of nuclear families and helped them reduce the family burden. Besides, due to MGNREGA’s one household one Job card policy, many of the family members registered themselves as individual households. Hence, the average size of households has been surveyed at 4.2 members per family.

c. At least 72.6 percent (see Table-3 & Table-4) of the respondents below 40 years were deprived of education during the recession period. At their prime age of schooling the tea garden closed down. The study found that 46.70 percent of the respondents were illiterate, 30.80 per cent had education up to primary level, 14.84 percent of them were under-matric and only 7.75 per cent of them had education up to secondary level or more (Table-3). Hence, the low level of education has become a hindrance for the socio-economic upliftment of the village.

(Family-size of the sample households)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Family Type</th>
<th>Toddlers</th>
<th>Children</th>
<th>Teenagers</th>
<th>Adult</th>
<th>60+</th>
<th>Total</th>
<th>Average family member</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Nuclear</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>114</td>
<td>112</td>
<td>475</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>759</td>
<td>4.20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Joint</td>
<td>135</td>
<td>74.17 %</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>25.83 %</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table-2
### Education & Age wise Distribution of the respondents

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Level of education</th>
<th>Number</th>
<th>%</th>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Number</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Illiterate</td>
<td>85</td>
<td>46.70</td>
<td>18-30</td>
<td>61</td>
<td>33.51</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Primary</td>
<td>56</td>
<td>30.80</td>
<td>31-40</td>
<td>71</td>
<td>39.09</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Under-matric</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>14.84</td>
<td>41-50</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>19.78</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Under Higher Secondary</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>6.05</td>
<td>51-60</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>6.50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Higher Secondary</td>
<td>01</td>
<td>0.60</td>
<td>61 &amp; above</td>
<td>02</td>
<td>1.09</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Graduate</td>
<td>02</td>
<td>1.10</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table-3

Table-4

d. **Occupation:** The study has observed that about 34.61 percent of respondents and nearly 41.76 percent of their spouses worked in the tea plantation, and the rest did not work in the tea garden and were jobless. They were all landless and had no subsistence farming in the village. Nearly 51.64 percent of the respondents were single earners of the household with their spouses either jobless or dead or separated or not eager to work in the tea gardens. It was found that MGNREGS was a subsidiary occupation for all, and those taking part in the programs were the needy and vulnerable people of the village. Details of the occupation of the respondents and their spouses are given in Table-5 & Table-6. The study reveals that, due to large number of unemployment there is a greater urge for their participation in MGNREGS work.

e. **Land holding:** All of the respondents are landless and are deprived of subsistence agriculture. Hence they are fully dependent on the tea garden for livelihood.

f. **Housing:** The housing facility in survey area is found to be unsatisfactory. They lived in a house constructed by the parent Tea Company, or private houses constructed by individual effort, or provided by the Gram Panchayat through Indira Awash Yojana. Houses provided by the company were in a dilapidated condition which was never repaired in lifetime. The study finds out that about 84 houses were old, weak & unrepaired ones, or have been modified, repaired & extended. 41 houses were found to be provided by the Indira Awash Yojana and, 57 of them were private houses built by individual effort. It is observed that there is a considerable improvement in the condition of dwelling houses as the availability of rooms per house hold stood at 2.50. However, nearly 74.20 percent of them reported that the rooms were insufficient for their family members to live in.

g. **Drinking water:** Access to safe drinking water in every household has improved in the post shut-down era. The supply of water is carried out by the Gram Panchayat and the tea estate in the village. Most of the people walk to the nearest source of water carrying utensils to store water at home. As the people have developed the habit of washing clothes, utensils and taking bath at the water-source, the water seems to be contaminated and un-safe for drinking. It is observed that only 28.60 percent of the people were enjoying hassle free, and safe drinking water supply through their home connections.

h. **Sanitary latrine:** The tradition of using open space, kitchen gardens and going behind the bushes & jungles are slowly and gradually fading away due to constructions of latrine rooms by the Gram Panchayat, tea company and individual. The only drawback is that the agencies built toilet rooms without septic-tanks and the people used them until the tanks are full. The study found that about 68.14 percent of the people went behind the bush.

i. **Luxury items:** The study has found that the acquirement of luxury items like color televisions, motor bikes, mobile phones etc has increased considerably
in the village. The availability luxury items is an indication towards a better living condition and life style.

j. The study found that the annual income of the respondents in the village increased by 12.71 percent (table-9). However, the corresponding changes in the monthly average income is said to be insignificant in the opinion of the respondents. During the survey, about 41.20 percent of the respondents acknowledged that MGNREGS had contributed toward improving the economic health of the house-hold (table-8) while 52.20 percent of them were of the opinion that MGNREG had made no difference in the socio-economic condition of the house-hold, and complained that they were not in a position to fulfill their basic needs and not able to save any amount of money from their earnings. Thus, the socio-economic condition of the respondents in the tea garden village, as described by many apparently stands unsatisfactory.

Self & Spouse Occupation wise distribution of the respondents

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Self Occupation</th>
<th>Number</th>
<th>%</th>
<th>Spouse Occupation</th>
<th>Number</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Tea Garden Labor</td>
<td>063</td>
<td>34.61</td>
<td>Tea Garden Labor</td>
<td>76</td>
<td>41.76</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>House wives</td>
<td>111</td>
<td>61.00</td>
<td>Un-employed</td>
<td>73</td>
<td>40.10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Petty business</td>
<td>004</td>
<td>2.20</td>
<td>Dead</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>11.54</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Government Service</td>
<td>004</td>
<td>2.20</td>
<td>Rickshaw Puller</td>
<td>02</td>
<td>1.10</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table-5

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Number</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Job Card Holders</td>
<td>170</td>
<td>93.47</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Contribution of MNREG toward improving the economic health of the house hold</td>
<td>075</td>
<td>41.20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MNREG has made no difference in the socio-economic condition of the house hold</td>
<td>095</td>
<td>52.20</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table-8

3.0 Conclusion:

Gram Panchayat is the most responsible stakeholders in successful implementation of MGNREGS program. It prepares self schemes to provide employment within the stipulated 15 days of demand, and to provide timely wage. In addition, it makes arrangement for enough funds for wage payment. The study has found that, despite the enthusiasm of respondents to participate in MGNREGS works, the implementing agencies were found to be lackadaisical in the survey area. The reason may be described by various dimensions but, the important reason behind such attitude of the stakeholders, as discussed with the respondents could be the obligation towards the tea garden owners. Further, the rate of daily wage of MGNREGS is much higher than that of what the tea garden owners are paying to its workers, and the tea management suspect shortage of labor. The study has further revealed that the socio-economic condition of the households regularly working under the MGNREGA scheme were poor and vulnerable people of the village, and poverty was the main cause of their low level of education, poor health condition and starvation deaths. In these circumstances, MGNREGA is
expected to play an important role in the socio-economic development in the long run. Besides, extension of all rural development schemes to the tea garden (plantation and non-plantation areas), and execution of schemes like land development, creation of community kitchen gardens, construction of roads, drains, culverts, social forestry etc and generation of natural resource base employment with a view of creating man days for jobless men and women would definitely contribute towards the socio-economic condition of their households. Besides, good governance is imperative for the effective implementation of such diversity of works to create durable assets in the tea garden area for a long-run, which in turn will help in sustaining their livelihood. In true sense, the 100 days’ work will not only improve the socio-economic condition of the tea garden people, but it will also provide employment opportunity to their jobless spouses and dependents which will in turn reduce deaths, migration, and human trafficking. Finally, the study concludes that, as the development in the tea garden village is taking place in its own pace, the people in the tea garden village can hope for many opportunities to knock at their doors in future.

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Regional Variations of the Application of Agricultural Inputs: 
A Case Study

Dr. Lakshman Chandra Pal*

Abstracts: Agricultural operations depend on a variety of factors including climate, soil, terrain, land holdings, irrigation, farm machineries, fertilizers, pesticides, weedicides, market, capital, labours and so on. Although the farmers everywhere in the world apply these inputs but a perceptible variation is found in the application of these items. That means there are some farmers who prefer to use some selected inputs largely to produce a particular crop in their fields whereas in case of others some inconsistency is observed in its application. In the study area there are farms which belong to marginal, small, medium and large farmer’s category. That means variations are found in case of the amount of land holdings among the farmers. As a result variations are observed in case of the generation of gross and net value of crops. The present study aims to assess such variations statistically found in cases of the application of different inputs in each farms.

Keywords: Agriculture, Farmers, Inputs, Variations, Inconsistency

Introduction: Agricultural activities as well as the crops productivity is a complex function of a number of physical, socio-economic and techno-institutional factors like climate, soil, relief, irrigation, fertilizers, plant protection measures, transport, capital, market, machineries and so on. The farmers all over the world apply such inputs for the production of different crops. But the quality and dose of these inputs are not equal everywhere in different parts of a country. Somewhere, for the production of a particular crop some inputs like chemical fertilizers or pesticides or alike are used largely as the farmers desire whereas in others the dose differs although the crop remains the same. That means there is a large variation in the application of agricultural inputs in different parts of a district, state or in the country. This results in the variations in the productivities and the total production of crops and so their gross and net values. The present paper is an attempt to examine statistically the variations of the application of different inputs in agricultural operations in the Mayurakshi-Basloi interfluve of Birbhum District, West Bengal.

Objectives of the Study: Major objectives of the present paper are −

- To find out the importance of different inputs in production process.
- To study the variations of application of different inputs in different parts of the study area.

Data Base and Analytical Procedure: The present study is based on primary as well as secondary data. The statistics like land holdings, % of irrigated area to net sown area, cropping intensity, consumption of inorganic fertilizers, pesticides, weedicides and their cost, irrigation cost, labour cost, productivity of crops, gross production and expenditure value of crops per acre etc have been collected through field survey and from different agricultural offices, irrigation office and from different books.

To complete the study, twelve important independent variables ($x_1$-$x_{12}$) and one dependent variable ($y$) have carefully been selected purposively as follows:

$y = $ Net value of all crops (Rs)/acre.

$x_1$ = total amount of own land (acre).

$x_2$ = % of irrigated area to net sown area.

$x_3$ = cost of chemical fertilizer/acre of gross cropped area.

$x_4$ = cost of pesticide/acre of gross cropped area.
Here the total number of observations (n) is 50 (fifty).

After the compilation, the data are then analysed with the help of statistical method coefficient of variation and finally presented these through suitable tables.

The coefficient of variation is a standardized measure of dispersion of a frequency distribution (Das, N.G. 2007). It is often expressed as percentage and is defined as the ratio of the standard deviation to the mean. It shows the extent of variability to the mean of the population. A higher value of coefficient of variation shows higher inconsistency, irregularities and erraticness in the data whereas lower value of coefficient of variation shows higher consistency, regularity and less erraticness. There is a need to measure the dispersion in a distribution in relation to its central value for expressing the consistency in the data.

**Location of the Study Area:** Interfluve of the Mayurakshi and Basloi river in Birbhum district located in between 23°52'23.7" N to 24°32'17.5" N latitude and 87°27'16.1" E to 88°01'21.8" E longitude has been selected for the present study. The interfluve is bordered by the Basloi river in the north, the river Mayurakshi in the south, Murshidabad districts in the east and Santalparganaof Jharkhand in the west. The area covers the blocks like Murarai-I&II, Nalhati-I&II, Rampurhat-I&II, Mayureswar-I&II and Md. Bazar. It has an area of 1833 sqkms with a population of 1448338 (2001). For data collection five villages namely Angargoria, Dakshingram, Kamakha, Paikar and Tail Para have been selected purposively form different corners of the entire study area.

![Fig-1: Location of the study area and study villages](image-url)
Agricultural Scenario of the Area: The interfluve is one of the agriculturally advanced tract of the district. The agro climatic environments of the area are suitable for the cultivation of multiple crops which are grown throughout the year. In kharif season more than 94% area of this interfluve comes under plough. The farmers in the study area produce a variety of crops like aman and boro paddy, wheat, potato, mustard seed, sugarcane, mulberry, ginger, arum and a number of vegetables including cauliflower, cabbage, sponge gourd, bitter gourd, brinjal, pumpkin, bean, radish, ladysfinger, tomato etc throughout the year depending on the agro climatic situation and socioeconomic condition of the locality. During off-monsoon season they irrigate crop lands by using canal, tube well and pond water. The cropping intensity ranges here in between 122% and 266% (PAO, Suri).

During pre-independence period farmers in the district including the study area apply mainly organic manure especially farm yard manure to produce aman paddy and a few number of other crops (Mally, L.S.S.O). Productivity of crops during that time was nominal (Hunter, W.W). As a fact of green revolution, the farmers here start to use technological package especially a variety of chemical fertilizers, HYV seeds, pesticides, weedicides etc in crop production. After the application of technological package, productivity of all crops increase significantly which enhance the gross and net value of the same.

Table 1: Increase of productivity of some selected crops after the application of chemical fertilizers.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sl. No.</th>
<th>Crops</th>
<th>Increase of productivity (quintal/acre)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Aman paddy</td>
<td>3.8-15.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Boro paddy</td>
<td>7.5-20.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Mustard seed</td>
<td>1.3-3.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Wheat</td>
<td>3.8-10.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Potato</td>
<td>22.5-75.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Arum</td>
<td>20.0-62.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Field survey during 2009

Results and Discussion: The study shows that, at Angargoria village the application and cost of neematodecide and weedicide per acre of gross cropped area are very much fluctuated which indicates significant extent of irregularities in the data in comparison with other variables. That means in this village there are some farmers who apply this input largely for crop production where as its application is negligible or not any in case of some others.

In case of the distribution of ownership holding same tendency is noticed in this village. This indicates that, at Angargoria village the distributional pattern of land holding is also very much unequal. Because of the variations of the application of different inputs slight variation is noticed in case of the dependent variable although it is less than 50%.

As far as the other variables are concerned, the farmers here have almost same kind of data aspect indicating regular and consistent distribution of other variables. The table given below shows the facts in details.

Table 2: Coefficient of variation of the indicators at Angargoria village.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variables</th>
<th>Coefficient of variation</th>
<th>N</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Net value of all crops (in Rs) per acre.</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total amount of own land.</td>
<td>59</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% of irrigated area to net sown area.</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cost of chemical fertilizer per acre of GCA.</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cost of pesticide/acre of gross cropped area.</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
In case of Dakshingram village, it is evident from the table that the data regarding the cost of weedicide is very much uneven indicating that, there are some farmers who use weedicide to a large extent and bear considerable amount of cost in crop production whereas there are others also who spend relatively smaller amount of money towards the expenses for weedicide. Same fact is also applicable in case of cost of neematocide.

In case of the distribution of land ownership, it is observed that, there is significant variation and fluctuation in the distribution of land ownership pattern in Dakshingram village which further emphasized on the unequal distribution of land. Apart from these three variables the distribution is more or less regular and consistent. It reflects the fact that, the farmers have almost uniform distribution of data aspect which does not show much fluctuation.

Table- 3: Coefficient of variation of the indicators at Dakshingram village

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variables</th>
<th>Coefficient of variation</th>
<th>N</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Net value of all crops (in Rs) per acre.</td>
<td>22.6</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total amount of own land.</td>
<td>73.4</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% of irrigated area to net sown area.</td>
<td>20.7</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cost of chemical fertilizer per acre of GCA</td>
<td>14.8</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cost of pesticide per acre of GCA.</td>
<td>35.4</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cost of weedicide per acre of GCA</td>
<td>127.1</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cost of neematocide per acre of GCA</td>
<td>97.0</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Technological cost per acre.</td>
<td>20.2</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total labour cost per acre.</td>
<td>7.5</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gross value of production per acre.</td>
<td>24.5</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>gross expenditure value per acre</td>
<td>21.3</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% of net sown area to total land.</td>
<td>5.7</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cropping intensity.</td>
<td>13.5</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source-Computed from field data

In Kamakha village, the study reveals that, the distribution of ownership holdings, cost of weedicide and cost of neematodecide are very much fluctuated, indicating significant extent of irregularities in the distribution of such variables in comparison with other variables because in this case the coefficient of variation exceeds 50%. In this village smallest fluctuation is noticed in case of the % of net sown area to total land which indicates that people here cultivate almost all the land they have. It can be further indicated in the following table.

Table- 4: Coefficient of variation of the indicators at Kamakha village.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variables</th>
<th>Coefficient of variation</th>
<th>N</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Net value of all crops (in Rs) per acre.</td>
<td>41.9</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total amount of own land.</td>
<td>90.7</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% of irrigated area to net sown area.</td>
<td>14.8</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cost of chemical fertilizer/ acre of GCA.</td>
<td>27.3</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Cost of pesticide per acre of GCA. 19.5 50
Cost of weedicide per acre of GCA 63.8 50
Cost of neematocide per acre of GCA 98.4 50
Total labour cost per acre. 8.6 50
Gross value of production per acre. 34.2 50
Gross expenditure value per acre. 32.0 50
% of net sown area to total land. 4.3 50
Cropping intensity. 13.9 50

Source-Computed from field data

It is evident from the table that, the data regarding the distribution of land ownership at Paikar village is very much irregular. That means there is significant variation and fluctuation in the distribution of land ownership pattern in this village. As far as the cost of weedicide and neematodecide are concerned it is found that, there are some farmers who use weedicide and neematodecide to a large extent and bear considerable amount of cost whereas also there are some others who spend relatively smaller amount of money towards the expense for this purpose. In case of other variables the distribution is more or less regular and consistent as is found in the table given below.

Table- 5: Coefficient of variation of the indicators at Paikar village.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variables</th>
<th>Coefficient of variation</th>
<th>N</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Net value of all crops (Rs) per acre.</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total amount of own land.</td>
<td>81</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% of irrigated area to net sown area.</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cost of chemical fertilizer per acre of GCA.</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cost of pesticide per acre of GCA.</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cost of weedicide per acre of GCA.</td>
<td>67</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cost of neematocide per acre of GCA</td>
<td>192</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Technological cost per acre.</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total labour cost per acre.</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gross value of production per acre.</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>gross expenditure value per acre</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% of net sown area to total land.</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cropping intensity.</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source-Computed from field data

The study shows that, at Tail Para village wide fluctuation is noticed in case of the application and cost of weedicide and neematodecide, indicating that there are some farmers who use weedicide and neematodecide to a large extent where as there are some others who spend relatively smaller amount of money towards the expenses for weedicide and neematodecide. Also variation is noticed in case of the amount of land owned by the farm heads.Apart from these variables the distribution of other inputs is more or less regular and consistent indicating smaller variations among those inputs. Least variation at Tail Para village is found in case of % of net sown area among the farmers.

Table- 6: Coefficient of variation of the indicators at Tail Para village.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variables</th>
<th>Coefficient of variation</th>
<th>N</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Net value of all crops (in Rs) per acre.</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total amount of own land.</td>
<td>68</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% of irrigated area to net sown area.</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>--------------------------------</td>
<td>-------</td>
<td>-------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cost of chemical fertilizer/ acre of GCA.</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cost of pesticide per acre of GCA.</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cost of weedicide per acre of GCA.</td>
<td>110</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cost of neematocide per acre of GCA</td>
<td>105</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Technological cost per acre.</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total labour cost per acre.</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gross value of production per acre.</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>gross expenditure value per acre</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% of net sown area to total land.</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cropping intensity.</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Computed from field data

Conclusion:

The discussion made earlier gives a clear picture about the agricultural scenario and the nature of application of different inputs in the study area. The study also shows that, the nature and extent of application of agricultural inputs are not equal everywhere in the study area. Especially in case of the application of weedicide and neematodecide, wide fluctuations are noticed almost in all the farms and the villages. That means some farmers prefer to use these two inputs largely per acre of gross cropped area than others for the production of different crops in their field. Consistency is not also found in case of the amount of ownership holdings almost in all the farms. This indicates that, there are some farmers who have larger amount of ownership holdings whereas the farmers having very small amount of land holdings are also found here. All these make a variation in the production and generation of the net value of all crops. But in case of all other inputs roughly a consistency is found in all the sample villages.

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Mally, L.S.S.O, (1910, 1996), Bengal District Gazetteer, Birbhum District, 55-63,
Wikipedia, the free Encyclopedia, (2008)
Abstract: The nature of the trade and commerce not only reflects the economic condition of the region but also the availability of natural resources, infrastructure, political interventions, and most importantly compatibility between the trading partners, in this case Manipur and the neighbouring regions. For example, time to time, trade between Manipur and Burma was terminated due to the antagonistic relationships between the two kingdoms. So in order to have a larger understanding of this region and the connecting dots of Manipur with the whole northeast and Burma and further with the Southeast Asian countries, it is very important to study and analyse the nature of trade and commerce, trade routes through which many interactions were carried out. The paper will be discussing the nature of trade of Medieval Manipur with her neighbouring kingdoms namely the Ahoms, Cachar and the Burmese. The paper will further discuss the various trading items and tax levied on them; the market centres and the trading routes connecting the kingdoms.

The objective of my paper is to trace the relationships and linkages that Manipur had with the neighboring kingdoms to understand the larger picture of the region. Various primary sources viz. the Chronicles and Colonial accounts, archival materials such as Administrative Reports, as well as secondary sources which deal directly or indirectly with the history of the region have been used.

Key Word: Trade and Commerce, Trade routes, Manipur, Ahom, Cachar, Burma

Introduction:
Trade and commerce, even though it was not carried out on large scale, was one of the ways through which Manipur kingdom had constant contacts with the other kingdoms. GE Harvey argues that in earlier times, Manipur laid through the trade route between India and China or Southeast Asia. Many scholars claimed that the art of brick making, gun-power production and rearing of silkworm was introduced by the Chinese in Manipur. According to Gangmumei Kabui the trade between Manipur and the Yunan province of China in the year 1630 was recorded in the Manipuri Chronicle. From the very beginning of the establishment of the Meitei kingdom, trade with Burma, Assam, Cachar and Bengal and also with the various hilly regions surrounding it was going on. Some of the important items of trade recorded by the British officials consisted of livestock like ponies, buffaloes, elephants and forest products like rubber, tea seeds, elephants tusk etc. Textile products like coarse cloths and silk were also exported.

Trade with Ahom:
Ahom kingdom was one of the earliest and most important trading partners of Meitei kingdom. For the first time, during the reign of Kyamba (1508-62) a contact between Manipur and Ahom kingdom of Assam, known to the Meitei as Tekhao (derived from Dikhu river) was established. As early as 1536, a trade route to upper Assam was opened. The Ahom chronicle records that ‘envoys were exchanged with the Raja of Manipur and presents were exchanged’.

Transportations and communications were improved by Khagemba (1597-1652). Several roads were maintained. Reference was made to a ‘Makak raod’ (road to the Makak). The internal transportation was provided by the reverine network of transportation by boats. The state supervised the boat making as timber was to be extracted from the forest. Elephant trade was a royal monopoly. The king established elephant stable at Samurou at the centre of the Valley. There might
have been other items of trade but they are not recorded in the chronicle. Many immigrants including Brahmins settlers from Gujarat, Baranasi, Brindavan and Prayag came to Manipur during the reign of Paikhomba.

**Trade with Cachar:**

EW Dun argues that most of the trade of Manipur was carried on with Cachar. Jayanta Bhusun Bhattacharjee argues that there was a regular trade between Bengal and Manipur through Cachar across the Jiri frontier. He goes on to say that there was a brisk trade between Sylhet and Manipur through Cachar in wax, ivory, cotton and the duties of the trade were levied by the Raja of Cachar on the merchandise of the ghats. The exported items of Manipur to Cachar were timber, cattle and Indian piece goods and imports were European piece good, dried fish and betel-nuts. The major parts of the trade were carried through the water routes. The Barak, with her tributaries having linked with the major rivers of Bengal confluence with the Bay of Bengal was the heart line of communication. The timber, bamboo and canes were floated down the river, while other goods and cargoes were shipped by boats. James Johnstone also mentioned about the transportation of commodities by boats to the market places:

> Going through the bazaar along a fine broad road, the only masonry bridge in the country was seen crossing the river (Barak), on the opposite bank the road turned sharp to the left, and went off to Cachar. Opposite, and to the right of the road, was the sight of the morning bazaar. Here I have seen boat loads of pine-apples landed, fruits that would have done credit to Covent Garden.

**Trade with Burma:**

Several British officials have recorded about the types and items of trade between Manipur and Burma. R.B. Pemberton stated that:

> During the reign of Choorjit Singh, a very brisk trade was carried on with the Burmese inhabitants of the frontier through the Kabo valley, and Chinese merchants from Yunnan used sometimes to visit Manipoor for the purpose of traffic bringing with them the same description of articles they take to Ava, and carrying away, in return, the wax, ivory, cloths, cotton and ponies of the country.

Apart from those above mentioned regular trade, one unique feature about trade between Manipur and Burma was the slave trade between the two kingdoms. McCulloch also talked about slave trade between Burma, Manipur and Cachar. According to him, “Formerly, slaves were taken to Burma and there exchanged for ponies. This I have entirely stopped; but, though stopped, the trade is not detested ... Manipuris from Cachar sometimes come here and claim people as their slaves ...”

B.C. Allen in his *Gazetteer of Naga Hills and Manipur* also wrote:

> At one time there was a brisk trade in tea seed, a considerable quantity of which came from Burma and merely passed through Manipur. The trade has, however, been killed by the depression in tea industry which has checked any tendency to extend the area under cultivation and big the unscrupulous conduct of the contractors who injured the reputation of Manipur seed by plucking and selling it before it was ripe. Cattle and buffaloes are exported in considerable numbers, but restrictions are from time to time imposed to prevent the state from being denuded of its live stock.

The principal articles of import are mineral oil, betel nuts, dried fish, salt and cotton pieces goods and yarn. Dried fish, oil and tea seed come from the Burma frontier, but the bulk of the state trade is with Assam. Although the Manipur women are
keen and energetic shopkeepers, most of the wholesale business is in the hands of the Marwari merchants, who have practically monopolized the trade of Assam. The dealers in cattle and forest produce are generally Muhammedans from the Surma valley.  

**Role of the King of Manipur in Trade:**

From the various accounts, it can be noted that the king of Manipur tried to control or monopolize the trade and commerce of the entire valley, especially when it came to trade with other kingdoms. Many items of trade like elephants, ponies, arms and ammunitions and some varieties of cloths were totally under the control of the king. Apart from monopoly in external trade, the king was also involved in the internal trade and transactions in various forms. For example, the king would send out his people to collect taxes from many market places in Manipur. R. Brown described how the Raja used to collect the taxes from the women sitting in market places but says that it was rather a kind of open plunder rather than collecting taxes:

A certain number of the Raja’s house servants, called “Haomacha”, ten in number, daily visit this bazaar, take from the women enough food to last for one day; this is bitterly complained against by the women, who suffer much from the indiscriminate plundering which was carried on, and which comes hard to some of them; but so wedded are the Manipuris to their customs that successive political agents have failed to induced them to carry out any reform in this, although the women express their willingness to submit to any small regular tax that may be imposed, to avoid the irregular plundering that is thus openly carried on. This custom was supposed to have been abolished in 1871 on representations being made by the officiating political agents, a small tax being substituted on all the women frequenting the bazaar with articles for sale. After a time, however, the custom was revived, the Raja’s mother getting the credit of making daily requisitions in the bazaar, instead of raja’s retainers; thus matters are actually worse than before, as the poor women find themselves saddled with a tax, and get robbed, to some extent at least, as before, into the bargain.

The scenario of this monopoly of the king changed slightly with the coming of British East India Company in Manipur. For example, according to the treaty of 1833 between Manipur and East India Company, in which Jiri frontier was ceded to Manipur, one of the provisions was that the king of Manipur would not obstruct the trade carried on between the two countries i.e. Cachar and Manipur by the Bengali or Manipuri merchants, would not exact duties and would not make monopoly of any articles of merchandise. The treaty further ensured that the king would not prevent the Nagas inhabiting the Kala Naga and Nungjai range of hills from selling or bartering ginger, cotton, pepper and any other articles and produce of the country, in the plains of Cachar, at the Banskandi and Udharband Bazaars, as had been their custom.

E.W. Dun argues that in the year 1878-79, the monopoly of four articles was abolished i.e. bee’s wax, tea seed, ivory and India rubber, yet the trade did not increase; piece-goods and betel nuts were the chief articles imported from Cachar. According to Johnstone, the monopoly was again established in 1885. During these years, trade with Burma had been stopped as the passes were closed because of the pending settlement of Kongal affairs.

**Role of East India Company:**

The British political agents in Manipur had a very important role to play in the trade and commerce of the region. Sometimes they acted as the mediator
between two states, sometimes as a representative of the king towards the British government, or sometimes as a protector of the traders against the king. Various instances are found where the British officials were deeply involved in the external trade as well as internal trade of Manipur. For example, McCulloch submitted a memorandum on 18th July 1861 where he wrote that he tried to protect the traders from the delay process and oppression of the king’s officials and tried to encourage trade with Burma and Cachar as much as he could. What was the real intention behind all their involvement was not very clear. Whether the British agents were indeed helping the traders from the oppressive king or were they only looking for their share of gains and opportunities in the process and causing extra trouble to the traders could not be verified. In 1878, James Johnstone, the then political agent of Manipur, wrote a letter to the Under Secretary of Government of India, Foreign department, Trevor Chichele Plowden stating that the viceroy should look into the question of trade between Manipur and Burma and requested him to urge the Burmese to remove the prohibition on the export of ponies and buffaloes which had been existed since 1871 because it was deterring both country’s trade, and more still to the district of Cachar and Sylhet, which formerly depended, to a great degree, on Burma for a supply of these animals.

Johnstone further wrote about levying of custom duties on almost all the imported articles to the state and to some exported articles and how it protected the Manipuri industries to some extent. Thus duties paid were the only money revenue that the rajah had. During his tenure he tried to regulate the system mostly in the articles not produced in Manipur and urged the king to lower the rates. He argued that in case of cloth, he strongly advocated the duties to be kept up as he wanted to preserve the excellent manufactures of Manipur against cheap and inferior foreign goods.

It can also be noted that guns, gunpowder, lead, muskets, (percussion muskets) cartridge papers, etc were brought from the British residing in Bengal by the Maharaja of Manipur. In this particular matter, political agents of Manipur played a vital role in negotiating these transactions, in terms of granting permissions, negotiating prices, amount, taxes etc. Instances have been found in many of the letters written by the political agents to the concerned department (foreign department or military department) to make some reduction in the price of the arms.

So we can see that when it came to trade of arms and ammunitions of Manipur, the colonial officials were the sole proprietors and had full authority over the quantity, price and quality as well of the supply. As it was through these officials that the king had to mediate or contact the larger authority of East India Company in Calcutta, therefore they (the British officials in Manipur) tried to monopolize the whole system of arm and ammunition trade.

**Trading Items and Tax Levied:**

R. Brown in his statistical account of Manipur gives a list of exports and imports of Manipur in 1873-74. The export items includes ivory, wax, silk, dyed yarn mosquito-curtains, *saloo phanek and higek phanek* (wrappers used by the Meitei women to cover the lower part of their body), bed sheets, *Maring phi* (indigenous tribal shawl), *Laiphi* (a type of traditional shawl), *Chadar, Kumlang, Phurit* (ready-made shirts), thread carpets, *lasing phi* (padded cloth), silk dhoti, silk *phanek* (wrap-around for women), buffaloes, ponies and elephants. Export were divided into three categories, Jungle or forest products, i.e. ivory and wax; livestock products like buffaloes and ponies; textile products i.e. handloom cloths and shirts. The import items included betel-nuts, long cloths, Satin or Umbrella, Swiss cloths, steel, brass,
R. Brown also gives a detailed account of the tax levied on various items of exports and imports for the years 1868 and 1869. It roughly shows the amount of trade carried on in Manipur during that time. Taxes levied on import items from Cachar were as follows: Betel nuts and Pan-Rs.721, cloth-Rs. 526, yarns-Rs. 203, Brass and other metals-Rs. 228, Hukas-Rs. 205, Miscellaneous-Rs. 52. Taxes levied on exports from Manipur to Cachar were: Cloth-Rs. 505, Yarns-Rs. 127, Manipur buffaloes-Rs. 1500, Burma ditoo-Rs. 500, Manipuri ponies-Rs. 900.

Silk was exported from Manipur to Burma and tax levied on export was Rs. 100. A further sum of money was obtained by granting licenses for cutting wood, bamboo and cane in the Jiri forests and for the sale of elephants caught in the Jiri forest, the tax collected for both being Rs. 406 and 7,000 respectively. He goes on to say that it was almost impossible to get correct information of revenue of Manipur, the estimate being between twelve to fifteen thousand rupees per annum.

4.7 Market Centers:

According to Kabui, Khagemba established ten markets in 1614 which were Sana Keithel, Kha Keithel, Moirang Keithel, Kuman Keithel, Phaibung Keithel, Chairal Keithel, Namphaon Keithel, Konglang Keithel and Andro Keithel. These markets greatly facilitated the selling and the buying of the commodities, which were produced with surplus. It is interesting to note that almost all the traders or sellers in these markets were women. Hao Keithel (‘Tribal Market’) was established in Imphal in order to have better commercial activities with the hill people. James Johnstone gave a detailed account of one of the bazaar i.e. the Sana Keithal or the Golden Bazaar:

At every step, if in the evening, we passed or were passed by gaily clad women carrying baskets of goods to sell in the great bazaar, “Sena Kaithel” assembled opposite the great gate of the palace. In this bazaar the women sat in long rows on raised banks of earth, without any other covering in the rainy weather than large umbrellas. Here could be brought cloths of all kinds, ornaments, rice, etc., fowls and vegetables. Dogs were also sold for food. As a rule, articles of food other than fowls, were more plentiful in the morning bazaar. Blind people and other beggars would post themselves in different parts of the market, and women as they passed would give them a handful of rice, or any other article of food they possessed. Women are the great traders, and many would walk miles in the morning, and buy things in the more distant bazaars to sell again in the capital in the evening. It was not considered etiquette for men too often to frequent the bazaars, and few Manipuris did so, but crowds of hill-men were constantly to be seen there.

R. Brown’s description of markets of Manipur is very much similar with Johnstone’s description and says that there was no attempt made for building any shelter of kind in any of the market places and the women remained exposed to rain or sun throughout the years. The same custom was prevailed in the regions where Manipuri population settled either in Cachar and Sylhet. The content of these market places mainly consists of foods, such as dry fish, rice, vegetables, pan, supari, clothes, ornaments for hill-men, and sweetmeats.

4.8. Hill Routes:

The hills of Manipur are referred to differently by the different groups that inhabit the state. According to Meitei terminology, the most important hills are the Koubru, the Nommaiijing, the Loijing and the Langol. These hill ranges are the off shoots of the Himalayas, which constitute the northern boundary of India. The hill
ranges in the south extented as far as the Mizo hills and the Arakan Yomas, till they meet the Bay of Bengal at Cape Negrais in Burma. These hills are associated with important routes connecting Manipur with the Surma Valley of Assam, the Brahmaputra Valley, and the Kabaw Valley. The important southern routes were the Heirok route, Aimon and Maring route connecting the Burmese territory. The western routes were the Tongjei Maril, Ngaprum Chingjin and Akhui route connecting Manipur with Cachar and Sylhet. In the ancient times the people frequented their journey from the rest of India to Manipur valley through one of these passes. And from the valley they would carry on their journey to Burma through Kabaw Valley via the routes of south-eastern part of Manipur.

There are two roads, properly so called, between British territory and the Manipur valley - one from the Cachar district on the west, the other from Assam on the north, passing through Kohima. During 18th and 19th century, some important roads were developed- the Imphal to Dimapur Road, Imphal to Cachar Road, Pallel to Tamu road etc.

4.9. River Channels:

There are many rivers which flow in the valley and the hill-sides of Manipur out of which two most important ones are the Imphal turel or ‘river’ and the Barak River. The Imphal River with its tributaries, the Irl, Nambul, Nambol and Kongba drains the valley and the hill-sides and meets the Chandwin or Irrawadi river in the Kale Valley of Burma. The Barak River which is also known as the Gwai or the ‘betel-nut’ by the Meiteis flows through most of the northern and western hills in its course to Cachar and Surma Valley into the estuary of the Ganges.

The river Jamuna was considered as the boundary between Ahom kingdom and kingdom of Cachar. On the west bank of the river, the outpost of Ahom kingdom was established at Mohong, while on the east bank was the outpost of Cachar at Dijua. Jayanta Bhusan Bhattacharjee argues that this meeting place of the two kingdoms was popularly known as Mohong-Dijua and was an important market where the people from Cachar, Assam, Manipur and Naga Hills traded with each other.

R.B. Pemberton in his report of North East Frontier of India prepared a list of several routes that connected the various states of the Northeast with the rest of India and with Burma. According to him, there were three direct routes between Manipur and Cachar; one from Banskandi in Cachar via Aquee to Jainanagar in Manipur, another from Banskandi Via Kala Naga territory to Sanuyachil in Manipur, and the third from Jirighat to Imphal. So, Cachar had a line of communication with Burma through Manipur and thence with China and other Southeast Asian countries. Thus, all these kingdoms were constantly in touch and communicated either through hill roads or through river channels.

Conclusion:

In conclusion we can say that the economy and trade of Manipur from fifteenth to nineteenth centuries was not a static or a closed one. Instances have been found in which people from the far off countries like China and Bengal used to come to the valley for trade or other purposes. The Meitei kings played an important role in all the trade and commerce related activities of the kingdom. While some kings tried to encourage the traders by building roads, markets etc., some others tried to monopolise the whole trading system of the kingdom, both internal and the external trade. At the same time, the British political agents also played a significant role in external trade and commerce especially in the trade of arms and ammunitions. So, Manipur was constantly in touch with her neighbouring countries, exchanging goods and commodities, ideas, culture and so
on. These kingdoms had been economically interdependent and interlinked with each other from a very early period.

Notes:
2 Gangmumei Kabui, *History of Manipur*, 204
3 Gangmumei Kabui, *History of Manipur*, 220
4 Gangmumei Kabui, *History of Manipur*, 229
5 E.W. Dun, *Gazetteer of Manipur*, 1886, Calcutta, 62
6 J.B. Bhattacharjee, *Cachar under British Rule in North East India*, 1977, New Delhi, 46
9 Alexander Mackenjie, *The North-East Frontier of India*, 1884, New Delhi, 157
10 B.C. Allen, *Gazetteer of Naga Hills and Manipur*, 1904, Calcutta, 128-129
12 After the Chater Act of 1833 passed by the British Parliament, the East India Company was ordered to give up all commercial activities and concentrated on administrative activities of the territories they had acquired. According to the Act of 1833 between Manipur and the East India Company, Jiri which is now in Assam was ceded to Manipur by the East India Company. Some of the agreements under the treaty were related to trading activities between Manipur and Cachar.
13 Suresh K. Sharma, *Documents on North-East India*, Vol. 6, 2006, New Delhi, 7
14 Dun, *Gazetteer of Manipur*, 62
15 Kongal thanna is an outpost of Manipur situated in the Kabaw valley (on the banks of Numeah river). It formed the boundary between Manipur and Burma during those periods. On 14th December 1877, the thanna which was garrisoned by one Jemadar and 20 sepoys, was attacked by about 100 Shans of the Kabaw valley. Eight manipuris were killed and the police station was burnt. The Manipuri king believed that it was instigated by the Burmese. This whole incident is known as the 'Kongal Affairs'.
16 Mackenzie, *The North-East Frontier of India*, 157
17 National Archives Delhi, Report upon trade on Manipur, Foreign department, Political account, from the Political Agent, Letter No. 48, Manipur 4th March 1878.
18 Johnstone, *Manipur and the Naga Hills*, 111
19 National Archives Delhi, Reduction in the price of muskets purchased by the maharajah of Manipur and the exportation of 100 smooth bore muskets as a present to the Maharaja, Foreign department, Political Branch, Progs. No. 15-18, Manipur, June, 1879
20 Brown, *A Statistical Account of Manipur*, 84-89
22 Kabui, *History of Manipur*, 220
23 Johnstone, *Manipur and the Naga Hills*, 125
24 Brown, *A Statistical Account of Manipur*, 90
26 Pemberton, *The Eastern Frontier of British India*, 52-60
27 Dun, *Gazetteer of Manipur*, 8-9
29 Bhattacharjee, *Cachar under British rule in North East India*, 15
30 Bhattacharjee, *Cachar under British rule in North East India*, 153
Traditional Agricultural Tools and Technology used by the Meiteis

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Abstract: The present study is carried out with the objective to document traditional agricultural tools and technology used by Meiteis of Manipur valley. This study will identify and portray the agricultural tools and technology used by the Meiteis to increase agricultural production. Agricultural tools used by the Meiteis are economical in conditions of labour, money and time saving. This study was conducted in the villages which are located at Iril river valley, Imphal - East District of Manipur.

Keywords: Traditional Agricultural, Tools and technology, Meiteis, Iril River

Introduction:
Manipur is one of the mountainous Sub-Himalayan states of North East India. The state is bounded to the south by Burma, to the south west by Mizoram, to the west by Assam and to the north by Nagaland. The people of Manipur are composed of three major ethnic groups, the Meiteis including Meitei Pangal (Manipuri Muslim) of the valley, Naga and Kuki Chin of the surrounding hills. Besides this, other communities from the other states of India have also settled in the State. Among them the Meiteis are the most populated section of the people inhabiting mostly in the Imphal Valley. Agriculture is the dominant occupation of the people of Manipur. The 1881 census recorded that out of 2,21,070 people engaged in different occupations, about 1,03,937 were agriculturalist. Agriculture is not only the main source of livelihood of the overwhelming majority, but also a tradition and a way of life that moulds the socio-economic status of the people. For the operation of agriculture, almost all the farming communities have common traditional agricultural tools like sickle, plough, spade, winnower, axe etc. Traditional agricultural tools and technology refer to those invented in ancient times, and used for a long time, until recently or still being used now. The traditional agricultural tools and technology of the Meiteis are mostly made up from locally available materials such as stone, bamboo, wood and iron which are very economical in conditions of labour, money and time saving. Each of these tools are usually used in connection with precise operation in the chain of agricultural operations; land preparation, sowing, weeding, irrigation, harvesting, post-harvesting operations and transportation.

Materials and Methods:
The chief principle of the present study is to collect reliable information about the traditional agricultural tools and technology of the Meiteis and to document these traditional tools and technology, as these traditional tools are at the edge of extinct with the upcoming new tools and technology. This study was carried out by conducting field study in various Meitei villages which are located at Iril river valley of Imphal East district. Information related to traditional tools and technology used by them was collected through interview schedule and focus group discussions. Information was also gathered from the available published works and journals.

Result and Discussion:
For the agricultural practices, the Meiteis have been using a variety of traditional tools, which they make themselves for their convenience, but due to the impact of modernity they started using modern tools along with the traditional ones. According to T.C. Hudson, the agricultural tools used by the Meiteis are Kangpot or sledge, Langol or plough, ukai analba or smooth harrow, phou intok or
paddy spoon, humai or fan used for winnowing the paddy, ukai samjet or the
toothed harrowed, cheirong or paddy thrasher or flail, thangol or sickle, yot or
spade, thangchao or large dao and yeinaphak or threshing mat.\textsuperscript{5}

Most commonly used traditional agricultural tools in various Meitei villages
are illustrated in the study, which includes English and local name, description and
their usages. Almost every Meitei family has its own collection of agricultural tools
and do not depend very much upon others. The number of each type of tools
however, varies from family to family according to the land holding size of the
families. The larger the land holding, the larger are the number of tools. The land
system in the valley can be broadly classified into Ingkhol (homestead land) and
Lou (paddy field). Some of the common traditional agricultural tools of the Meities
can be identified as the followings.

Land clearing is the removal of any existing material from a site, in preparing
it for development. It can include the removal of trees and other vegetation, and
grubbing, which is the excavation of stumps and roots. Land clearance is most
difficult and costly operation of agricultural operations. The Meiteis have many
tools for the land clearance purpose such as axe, spade and dao.

**Singjiang (Axe - Fig. 1)**: Singjiang, the traditional axes used by the Meiteis is variety
in size, made of soft iron wedge-shaped blade and of wooden handle. The axes are
used for cutting bushes, chopping wood and clearing fields. It is generally used by
male farmers.

**Yotpak (Spade - Fig. 2)**: Yotpak or spade is used in field for land preparation like
clearing of jungle and digging of land or seed bed preparation, planting of seeds
and other seedling in the field. It is also used for formation of bunds, ridges,
furrows and irrigation channels. The handle of spade or yotpak is made up of
wood and the working area is made up of iron.

**Thangjou (Dao - Fig. 3)**: Thangjou is a long handed cutting hoe. The handle of
Thagjou is made up of wood and the working area is made up of iron. Thangjou is
multipurpose tools generally used for wood cutting, clearing of jungle, bushes,
butchering of meat, etc. For agricultural operation, Thanjou is known as Louri
Thangjou. Its handle is about 24 cm in length and working area of about 12 cm in
length.

**Langol (Plough - Fig. 4)**: Tillage is the basic operation in farming. It is done
create favorable conditions for seed placement and plant growth. This is done
mainly with a plough.\textsuperscript{6} Plough being the most important of the tools in traditional
agriculture, was very well adapted to the specifications of the locality. It has often
been the subject of attempted improvement and adaptation.

Langol is a traditional plough used by the Meiteis since time immemorial.
Earliest reference of the use of plough in Manipur valley comes from an ancient
Manipuri text called Ningthoul Kangbarol.\textsuperscript{7} Langol is made up of wood and drawn
with a pair of oxen. The basic components of the plough are a shoe, a share, a body,
a handle and a beam. The handle of the plough is about 100 cm long, 8 cm thick
and 12 cm wide and is fitted to the body of the plough. The shoe of the plough is
variety in shapes and sizes. The share is prepared from mild iron bar and it is fixed
to the shoe or body by means of a ring shaped clamp. The share point projects
beyond the shoe by 7 cm. Beams are generally in different in length. It is generally
operated by male farmers.

**Khuruphan (Digging Hoe - Fig. 5)**: Khuruphan or Digging hoe is a hand tool used
to shape soil, remove weeds and harvest root crops. It is a rectangular or square
iron blade with a handle made up of wood. Its handle is about 100 cm in length,
working area of about 22 cm in length and breadth of about 18 cm. It is used by
both male and female farmers.
Keirak (Fig. 6): Keirak is made of bamboo, which is a kind of ladder. This tool is used for the purpose of leveling land in order to enable the farmers to prepare the land for tillage and sowing, to improve the irrigation efficiency and this implement is generally operated by male farmers.

Thanggol (Sickle - Fig. 7): Thangol or sickle is a hand held agricultural tool and typically used for harvesting. The handle of sickle is made up of wood and the working area is made of iron. Handle is of 15 cm height and 5 cm width and working area has 20 cm length and 3 cm width. Thanggol is used in harvesting crops like cereal, pulses, millets and grasses. It is operated by both male and female farmers.

Yeinaphak (Threshing Mat - Fig. 8): Yeinaphak or threshing mat is a mat made up of bamboo. After cutting the paddy plants and dried up in the sunshine for sometimes. Then it was put into a wide bamboo mat called Yeinaphak and beaten with a wooden flail called Cheirong. The average length and breadth of yeinaphak is 14 feet and 7 feet respectively.

Cheirong (Flail - Fig. 9): Cheirong or flail is a tool used for threshing, the procedure of separating grains from their husks. It is made up of wood with an average length of 6 feet. Wooden thresher eases the manual threshing operation. Both man and woman operate it.

Phoumindok (Paddy Spoon - Fig.10): Phoumindok is a post-harvesting agricultural tool of the Meiteis. It is an implement for scooping or gathering paddy and also used for the purpose of overturning paddy while drying it. It is made up of wood. Handle is of 137 cm, working area is of 30 cm length and breadth is of 15 cm and it is operated by both male and female workers.

Humai (Winnower - Fig. 11): Humai is a bamboo tightly woven plate used for winnowing the grain and separating grain from husk. It involves throwing the mixture into air so that the wind blows away the lighter husk, while the heavier grains fall back down for recovery or it involves fanning the winnower over the mixture so that the wind blows the lighter husk, while the heavier grains fall back down for recovery. Its length and breadth is almost 24 cm.

Shumbal (Basket Made of Bamboo - Fig. 12): Shumbal is made up of knotted bamboo stick and it is used for carrying grains of cereals, pulses etc. It is also used for measuring amount of paddy. Two full paddy of Shumbal is considered as a one bag. Length of the Shumbal measures 38 cm in length and 38 cm in breadth.

Hanubi (Broom - Fig.13): Hanubi is a kind of Meitei’s broom which is used only for agricultural purpose. Hanubi is made up of dry paddy leaves. According to a tradition ordinary broom are not allowed to use in agricultural field.

Shumbal (Fig. 14): The traditional wooden mortars that are used for pounding rice, dried chili and any other grains or seeds are called Shum or Shumbal. Shumbal is of two types – Lep Shum and Phei - Shum. Both types were usually made of wood from a particular tree called meesi. It is said that the meesi wood becomes hard as stone as it gets drier. The pounding of rice, grains, seeds, etc., in the Shumbal is usually done collectively. As women gather to work on the Shumbal they chat, gossip, sing and tell riddles about life.

Shangari (Bullock Cart - Fig. 15): Bullock cart is made of wood and bamboo and as a source of transportation was developed long time ago to help farmers for cheap and simple transportation. The two wheels of the bullock cart are also made of wood. Bullock cart is drawn by a pair of oxen and its main work is to carry paddy from the paddy field to the owner’s house and also to carry passengers or a load.

Kei(Granary-Fig.16): A granary is a storehouse or room in a barn for threshed grain. Granaries are often built above the ground to keep the stored food away from mice and other animals. The granary is locally known as Kei. Almost all the Meitei’s
family has a Kei. Inside the kei, a pot is also placed which is considered as goddess of Paddy known as Phouoibi.

With the help of above mentioned tools and technology the farmers of Manipur cultivated at least 19 sub variety of local rice. Besides these, vegetable crops such as chilies, pumpkins, ginger, millet, sweet potatoes, cucumber, onion, cabbage, onion, cauliflower, beans, pulses, peas, etc. were also cultivated including cash crops such as cotton, tobacco, sugarcane, etc.
Fig. 7 Thanggol (Sickle)

Fig. 8 Yeinaphak (Threshing mat)

Fig. 9 Cheirong (Flail)

Fig. 10 Phoumindok (Paddy Spoon)

Fig. 11 Humai (Winnower)

Fig. 12 Shangbai (Basket made of bamboo)

Fig. 13 Hanubi (Broom)

Fig. 14 Shumbal
Conclusion
Agricultural tools are as old as the Stone Age. They were obligatory to facilitate working and to boost the productivity of human workers. Many new tools were also developed during the copper, bronze and iron ages. Besides stones, other non-metal tools made up of wood, bamboo, etc. were used but most of them became extinct with the introduction of iron. The traditional agricultural tools of the Meiteis are suitable since these tools are easy to make, use, economical, feasible and sustainable. The age old traditional agricultural tools and technology are though mostly still in used but at present along with some modern tools and, which with proper designs can be used to standardize these traditional tools and technology according to the economy of rural poor which would help in popularizing these tools and further. And thus it becomes important to document and preserve these age old traditional agricultural tools in great interest, before these tools completely extinct.

Notes:
1 Sultan Ahmed Ansari, Economic Geography of Manipur, Imphal, P. Tekendrajit, 1976, 1-2
2 E. W. Dun, Gazetteer of Manipur, Delhi, Vivek Publishing House, 1975, 5
4 Bikash Sarkar, Prem Kumar Sundaram, Amitava Dey, Ujjwal Kumar, Kamal Sarma and B P Bhatt, “Traditional Agricultural Tools used by Tribal Farmers in Eastern India” in Research Journal of Agricultural Sciences Vol. 6, January-February 2015, 215
7 Nongthonbam Angou Singh, Ningthou Kangbarol, Chinga Makhong Chongtham Leikai, Imphal, Chongtham Ibotombi, 1976, 13
8 Dr. Jogendro Kshetrimayum, “A Brief Note on Shum Hongba” in Souvenir of Shum Hongba Festival, 2016, Peoples’ Museum, Kakching, 13, 14
“Winning the Game of Thrones” through WCM- A Case Study of Amul

Dr. Saroj Vats*

Abstract: The biggest co-operative in Milk sector was established to not to cooperate with Polson, an existing giant supplier of milk to the western India of 1940’s. A risk jointly taken by farmers who were next to illiterate was later headed by a visionary called Kurian. From first co-operative dairy to first melting cheese producer, Amul has always been known for innovations and strategies.

Milk sector is mainly owned by organised sector which is consisting of co-operative societies like Amul and verka and private players like Nestle and reliance also capture the market. 7% of total milk production in India is coming from Punjab which is always considered as an agriculture state and major part is coming from AMUL i.e. 28%.

Recently Russian delegation’s successful visit to Amul proved that it is ready to spread its wings far ahead in Asia. From a small farmers movement to the largest producer of milk in Asia, Amul has gone through many changes. It changes its products, marketing strategies but neither the principals nor the financial strategies changed ever. The pattern of working capital is Amul is not much different than the norms.

Deployment of funds matters the most. Even giant fails if improper capital management is made on the floor. Kingfisher and Air India are live examples of a wrong fund management. to find out An organization fails if the working capital management fails. This paper talks about the strategy of winning the game of thrones by a milk producer giant.

Keywords: Amul, working capital management

Introduction:

Dairy farming is an old concept. In some evidences from Egypt we could see pictures of people milking the cow. Dairy farming in India is as old as Mahabharata and lord Krishna is. In some stories related to Lord Krishna we heard it often that he was a “gopal” or “Gwala” means he was a person who owned cows. In fact all of his family was indulged in the business of milk. In some of the Hindu Mythology books we read animals particularly Cows as “Dhan” means wealth. This proves that animal husbandry and milk business is always a good way to earn money. Even farmers those who do not have big land or big investment can live easily with the dairy farming.

Formally or better say as an organised sector dairy farming was initiated in 20th century where people started milking the cow with the vacuum rather than hand milking. Later it was substituted by milking pipelines, milking parlors and today fully automatic robotic milking.

What are the Co-operatives?

Co-operatives are the volunteer associations of members who get together for the mutual benefits or welfare of members. Every co-operative need to get registered itself under Co-operative society’s act 1912. Means the concept of co-operatives was launched nearly 105 years ago by British Government in India. The basic characteristics are:
Today the milk pattern is like the below in India:

**milk production**

- **26** cross bread exotic animal
- **12** indigenous cattle
- **36** indigenous buffalo

Sources- annual report 2016-17, Department of Animal Husbandry, Dairying & Fisheries Ministry of Agriculture & Farmers Welfare Government of India

**How Amul came in to existence as an option to Polson?**

India tops in the chart of milk production and how one can forget to mention Amul there, the largest milk producer in the Asia. Even no Chinese company comes nearby. The story of formation of Amul is very interesting.

The British were committed to squeeze the last drop of wealth from colonial India. Polson Dairy was one of the most famous diaries of its item which was supplying milk to Bombay and other cities where the demand was more. But Polson was following true principals of Britishers i.e. exploitation of farmers.

The farmers of Kheda District met Sardar Patel with their problems of nonpayment and exploitation by Polson. Sardar Patel. Sardar suggested them to remove Polson in between. And the only way out was just establishment of a Co-Operative that too as per the norms of co-Operative act of British government. The villagers did the same and a new co-operative society came in to existence. A Farmer owned co-operative in which production, processing and marking are at the hands of farmers.

Elimination of middlemen, Maximum return to farmer, Better quality products to customers, Massive employment generation through dairying as economic activity in rural areas, Improved quality of life of farmers, Facilitates to build an egalitarian society and nation, A social agent... Not class, not caste, not religion. This is AMUL.

The AMUL model:
The customer base in Amul:

Today everyone wants to do business with Amul but once upon a time Amul fighter for business with Polson as they (Amul) were not having access to customer. So they used to sell through Polson at a higher rate so that they can avoid exploitation. Today it’s the single largest milk producer in Asia even china is not having the same. The gates are even open for European countries. Russia is going to consume 28% of its dairy needs from Amul. What a customer!

**Literature Review:**

Das & Das, (2006), problems and prospects of the cooperative movement in India under the globalization regime, mentioned that co-operative were launched in multiple sectors of Indian economy from salt to milk and rubber productions. But half of them were failed due to improper supply chain, interference of government, mismanagement and internal manipulations. Some of them either shut down the doors or near to be declared as sick units.

Prasad and Satsangi, (2012) mentioned in their paper titled a case study of amul co-operative in India in relation to organizational design and operational efficiency that Amul is best example of rural development through co-operatives. It brought the technology together with the three M’s of economics i.e. man, machine and the material. It is a giant producer but with smallest number of members.

Kunte and Patankar (2015), A literature review of Indian dairy industry, the outcome of the paper was that majority diary in India are working at small level as fodder plays most important role. It is getting expensive day by day. So only few can survive. The study depicts that generally there is on average one co-operative is working in each state. It shows that diaries have regional reach and impact. They lost their importance as soon as they enter in other’s territory.

Brar, I. Kaur and Singh (2017) mentioned in their paper socioeconomic characteristics of small and medium sized dairy farmers in Punjab: milk production, marketing and consumption, that live stock and quality of milk is the most important factor which plays significant role in growth. Education,
Experience ownership and family size are the major aspects of socioeconomic characteristics. Improper marketing sometimes lag behind the co-operatives.

**Research design:**
Research problem- to check the working capital management of a milk giant?

Research design:
- Population – 3. (Amul, Mahi diary, and other local diary)
- Sample size – 1
- Study- Single sample study
- Type of sampling- convenient and judgmental sampling
- Type of research – exploratory
- Sources of Data collection- 5 Years audited balance sheet of Amul, Capitoline & money control
- Tools- WCM calculations

**Why Amul?**
Amul was established with a goal of benefiting the poor farmers. It was even the first experiment of co-operative movement in India. In world people were working on co-operative models but in India during Britishers time it was a bold move. Later Mr. Kurian made it a giant through technological improvements. But is it still working perfectly? The best tests are related to working capital management because organizations easily survive in long run but in short run things are difficult to manage.

**Objectives of study-**
1. To see the short term financial health of Amul.
2. To check out the sources of working capital at Amul as it is milk co-operative.
3. Why Amul is a role model for other co-operatives?

**Source of Working Capital at Amul:**
The sources of working capital at Amul are divided as Long-term source of working capital and Short-term source of working capital. Long-term funds are required to create production facilities through purchase of fixed assets such as plant and machinery, land and building, etc. Short-term funds are needed to manage the day-to-day operations of the organization. It is a temporary working capital. Amul is given 15 days credit to the GCMMF.

Societies are collecting the milk from farmers and they are giving to the Amul. Amul is paid the amounts to the societies on the basis of 10 days payment cycle. If the societies are purchased ghee, cattle feed, taking a service or also purchased any product than the deducted from the milk bill. But also they are free to pay that bill at the time of purchase. Amul is taking advances from their customers.
Short Term Loan are set to pay back in the very short period of time. **Milk Deposit** is generally Rs. 10 per Kg Fat or equivalent. Fat is retaining as a Milk Deposit and paid to societies after the end of the financial year.

**Net Working Capital**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>A) CURRENT ASSETS</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inventories</td>
<td>42810.7</td>
<td>27694.29</td>
<td>44400.55</td>
<td>43484.62</td>
<td>57261.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trade Receivables</td>
<td>14201.01</td>
<td>14595</td>
<td>19748.24</td>
<td>19777.99</td>
<td>24529.05</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cash &amp; Bank Balance</td>
<td>2023.68</td>
<td>2042.01</td>
<td>1493.59</td>
<td>2613.31</td>
<td>5171.56</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Short Term Loans &amp; Advances</td>
<td>3575.6</td>
<td>5615.82</td>
<td>6419.96</td>
<td>3361.11</td>
<td>3957.67</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other Current Assets</td>
<td>1641.09</td>
<td>273.68</td>
<td>407.75</td>
<td>548.09</td>
<td>720.15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>TOTAL</strong></td>
<td>64252.08</td>
<td>50220.8</td>
<td>72470.09</td>
<td>69785.12</td>
<td>91640.13</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| **B) CURRENT LIABILITIES**         |          |          |          |          |          |
| Short Term Borrowings              | 20045.18 | 25394.8  | 41168.78 | 27473.88 | 35478.38 |
| Trade Payables                     | 32206.6  | 33929.81 | 39654.38 | 62003.63 | 79147.71 |
| Other Current Liabilities          | 21316.93 | 9703.36  | 14313.11 | 17117.19 | 15597.06 |
| Short Term Provisions              | 250.77   | 719.27   | 1519.63  | 1018.32  | 1399.22  |
| **TOTAL**                          | 73819.48 | 69747.24 | 96655.9  | 107613.02| 131622.37|

**NET WORKING CAPITAL (A-B)**

|          | (9567.4) | (19526.44) | (24185.81) | (37827.9) | (39982.24) |

Here we found that the net working capital defined negative. Because in Amul dairy they paid, the amount to the farmer’s every 10 days. Due to that, current liability raised. Another point is that in Amul dairy they recovered some amount from GCMMF which define increase in current liabilities. Because the inventories are perishable so they are not store more inventories with compare to other industries. So the closing stock amount defines very less regarding other industries.

1) **Raw Material Conversion Period (in lakh)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Opening stock</th>
<th>Closing stock</th>
<th>Avg. R.M</th>
<th>Total R.M</th>
<th>Per.D.M.C</th>
<th>Days</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>12-13</td>
<td>2440.01</td>
<td>2895.34</td>
<td>2667.675</td>
<td>254321.36</td>
<td>706.45</td>
<td>3.78</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13-14</td>
<td>2895.34</td>
<td>3379.46</td>
<td>3137.4</td>
<td>259919.74</td>
<td>722.00</td>
<td>4.35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14-15</td>
<td>3379.46</td>
<td>3923.13</td>
<td>3651.295</td>
<td>354246.88</td>
<td>984.02</td>
<td>3.71</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15-16</td>
<td>3923.13</td>
<td>8438.97</td>
<td>6181.05</td>
<td>397805.33</td>
<td>1,105.01</td>
<td>5.59</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16-17</td>
<td>8438.97</td>
<td>14930.73</td>
<td>11684.85</td>
<td>480406.81</td>
<td>1,334.46</td>
<td>8.76</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Raw material conversion period Amul is purchasing some inventory (cattle feed raw material) in bulk it means that some of raw material prices is very fluctuating so the Amul is purchase some raw material in bulk at the low price. All types of raw materials not only milk so the raw material conversion period is moderately high.
2. **Work-in-progress Conversion Period**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Opening stock</th>
<th>Closing stock</th>
<th>A.W.C.P.</th>
<th>x360</th>
<th>Cost of production</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>12-13</td>
<td>4500.8</td>
<td>8472.66</td>
<td>6486.73</td>
<td>2335222.8</td>
<td>292,202.19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13-14</td>
<td>8472.66</td>
<td>7645.29</td>
<td>8058.975</td>
<td>2901231</td>
<td>310,148.77</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14-15</td>
<td>7645.29</td>
<td>7900.66</td>
<td>7772.975</td>
<td>2798271</td>
<td>406,865.70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15-16</td>
<td>7900.66</td>
<td>8116.98</td>
<td>8008.82</td>
<td>2883175.2</td>
<td>452,550.14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16-17</td>
<td>8116.98</td>
<td>4477.38</td>
<td>6297.18</td>
<td>2266984.8</td>
<td>543,189.23</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Cost of production = Raw material + Manufacturing Expense + 70% employee salary*

3. **Finished Goods Inventory Holding period** *(Rs. In lakh)*

\[
\text{Finished Goods Inventory Holding period} = \frac{\text{Average Finished Goods inventory X 360}}{\text{cost of production}}
\]
4. **TOTAL INVENTORY COVERSION PERIOD (In lakh)**

The inventory conversion period is the sum of raw material conversion period, work-in-progress period and finished goods conversion period.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Days</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>12-13</td>
<td>38.52</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13-14</td>
<td>37.86</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14-15</td>
<td>29.56</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15-16</td>
<td>32.62</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16-17</td>
<td>30.93</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Days = Raw material conversion period + W.I.P. conversion period + FG period

As we seen above that Amul used the modern technology to produce high quantity in minimum time. A debtor is a customer who has purchased a good or service and therefore owes the supplier payment in return. Therefore, on a fundamental level,
almost all companies and people will be debtors at one time or another. For accounting purposes, customers/suppliers are referred to as debtors/creditors.

5. **Creditors Payment Period (in lakh)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Opening Creditors</th>
<th>Closing creditors</th>
<th>Av. Cr. P.</th>
<th>X360</th>
<th>purchase</th>
<th>days</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>12-13</td>
<td>32,529</td>
<td>32,925</td>
<td>32,412</td>
<td>11,668,298</td>
<td>254,321</td>
<td>45.88</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13-14</td>
<td>32,295</td>
<td>33,930</td>
<td>33,113</td>
<td>11,920,518</td>
<td>305,394</td>
<td>39.03</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14-15</td>
<td>33,930</td>
<td>39,654</td>
<td>36,792</td>
<td>13,245,154</td>
<td>401,316</td>
<td>33.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15-16</td>
<td>39,654</td>
<td>62,004</td>
<td>50,829</td>
<td>18,298,442</td>
<td>446,629</td>
<td>40.97</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16-17</td>
<td>62,004</td>
<td>79,148</td>
<td>70,576</td>
<td>25,407,241</td>
<td>534,453</td>
<td>47.54</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Being brand Amul enjoys its status in Indian market. As the payment process includes many stages so delay in any stages would delay payment to producers. Payment against purchase of capital items are made in installments. Amul purchasing any machinery than 50% payment in advance, 40% payment at the time of installments, and 10% payment after 2 to 3 months.

6. **Calculations of Gross Operating Cycle**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Particular</th>
<th>12-13</th>
<th>13-14</th>
<th>14-15</th>
<th>15-16</th>
<th>16-17</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Raw material conversion period</td>
<td>3.78</td>
<td>4.35</td>
<td>3.71</td>
<td>5.59</td>
<td>8.76</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Finished Goods Inventory Holding period</td>
<td>26.76</td>
<td>24.16</td>
<td>18.97</td>
<td>20.65</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total (Days)</td>
<td>55.35</td>
<td>54.16</td>
<td>44.48</td>
<td>47.36</td>
<td>44.92</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Gross operating cycle define the amount required for business or its liquidity and also the stock required for the supply it in the market it’s helps to find out the days required to collect the amount from creditors.5 years gross operating cycle ratio which decrease year by year. It result that In Amul they liquidate cash more and more and reduce the time taken by them to repayment the amount. It also defined the company increase their stock movability from factory to market as compared to last few years. Which also define that company’s efficiency and selling increase rapidly.

7. Calculation of Net Operating Cycle

Operating Cycle (in days) = (RM) + (WIP) + (F G) *all in Conversion Period) + Debt collection - (Creditors Payment Periods)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Particular</th>
<th>12-13</th>
<th>13-14</th>
<th>14-15</th>
<th>15-16</th>
<th>16-17</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Add:</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Raw material conversion period</td>
<td>3.78</td>
<td>4.35</td>
<td>3.71</td>
<td>5.59</td>
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<td>24.16</td>
<td>18.97</td>
<td>20.65</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Less:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Creditors Payment Period</td>
<td>45.88</td>
<td>39.03</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>40.97</td>
<td>47.54</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total (Days)</td>
<td>9.47</td>
<td>15.13</td>
<td>11.48</td>
<td>6.39</td>
<td>(2.62)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Gross operating cycle define the amount required for business or its liquidity and also the stock required for the supply it in the market it’s helps to find out the days required to collect the amount from creditors. 5 years gross operating cycle ratio which decrease year by year. It result that In Amul they liquidate cash more and more and reduce the time taken by them to repayment the amount. It also defined the company increase their stock movability from factory to market as compared to last few years. Which also define that company’s efficiency and selling increase rapidly.

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Operating Cycle (in days) = (RM) + (WIP) + (F G) *all in Conversion Period) + Debt collection - (Creditors Payment Periods)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Particular</th>
<th>12-13</th>
<th>13-14</th>
<th>14-15</th>
<th>15-16</th>
<th>16-17</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Add:</td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Raw material conversion period</td>
<td>3.78</td>
<td>4.35</td>
<td>3.71</td>
<td>5.59</td>
<td>8.76</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Finished Goods Inventory Holding period</td>
<td>26.76</td>
<td>24.16</td>
<td>18.97</td>
<td>20.65</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Less:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Creditors Payment Period</td>
<td>45.88</td>
<td>39.03</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>40.97</td>
<td>47.54</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total (Days)</td>
<td>9.47</td>
<td>15.13</td>
<td>11.48</td>
<td>6.39</td>
<td>(2.62)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
As we have seen that it is because of the considerable difference between number of days in debtor’s collection period and number of days in creditor’s payment period.

**Conclusion:**
For every organization it is mandatory to keep itself healthy financially. Amul knows meaning of it very well. A co-operative which was fighting with financial crisis once upon a time when Kurian joined. Today it is a giant in all aspects. Form production to financial. In milk sector the working capital is highly needed. All the parameters from creditors collection to debt collection, operating cycle to inventory management, Amul is an example of quality. Not only the products where quality matters for Amul but for investors too Amul is providing quality assurance in form of good working capital i.e. financial health.

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