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JKSAS is a half-yearly (June and December) and bilingual (English and Bengali) journal. Only original unpublished papers are accepted. Papers submitted for consideration must not be under consideration elsewhere. The copyright of the accepted papers will lie with Kolkata Society for Asian Studies. Decisions of the Editorial Board are final.

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Editorial

Although quite a good numbers of papers were received but twelve papers could be processed through all the requisite formalities for publication in this volume 8, number 2, December 2022. Articles of this volume cover a diverse field of study written by authors belonging to various subject specializations in India.

First paper in this volume is written by Professor Pallab Sengupta. This was delivered as Suniti Kumar Chatterji Memorial Lecture, organized by the Kolkata Society for Asian Studies in August, 2019 in Bengali. Professor Sengupta, an erudite scholar had spoken on the style of the discipline of Folklore Studies. The article, besides being of very important academic endeavour, takes the reader back to the nostalgic years of their life.

The paper, 'Nature-Man-Spirit Complex: An Anthropological Study in Indian Part of Sundarban Delta Region' written jointly by Binita Basu and Srija Mondal is also on the folk and mythological tradition present among the inhabitants of Deltaic Bengal. The life, livelihood of the people and their conflict and adjustment with nature is portrayed through the myths and cults of *Bonbibi, Dukhe and Gazi pir*.

A paper, written jointly by Janki Atul Navle and Normoda Doley, titled as 'The study of Socio-cultural scenario of eastern and western states of India by analysing stylistic features of matrimonial ads in Assamese and Marathi newspapers', made a comparison on the basis of advertisement in the matrimonial columns of weekly newspapers of the two states in India, which are situated far apart from each other. Study is on the stylistic and figurative devices used by the media, which reflects the socio-cultural background of the people under study.

Change of opinion among modern day women in the urban set up of the city of Kolkata in the perception of marriage and reproduction is presented by Monorisha Mukhopadhyay in the article 'Opinion Of Unmarried Women on Marriage, Cohabitation and Childbearing: Are There Prospects of The Second Demographic Transition In Kolkata?' The study is based on empirical data. With education and modernization through time outlook of women in Kolkata had changed towards marriage and reproduction, which may impact on demography.

The article 'Worlding Literature, Literary Cosmopolitanism and Tagore' *Visva Sahitya'* is written by Sourav Kumar Nag. This work focuses on the perspective of world literature in the light of Rabindra Nath Tagore's perspective on Visva Sahitya. The author looks deep into the divergence of Visva Sahitya from world literature.

'Rural Governance in Assam and Tripura: A Study' by Debotosh Chakraborty examined the status of rural governance in the two states of North Eastern India. The discussion is made in the light of the Seventy Third Constitution Amendment Act, of the India Government. Though the Act was for the purpose of decentralization of power and establish rural governance, in the state studied it is yet to be successful in the rural level of Gram Panchayet.

The author Phunstog Angmo made a study on the history of 'Dogra Ascedency and Integeration of Ladakh with the state of Jammu and Kashmir (1834-1846)'. An attempt is made for understanding of the details of integration of Ladakh at the time of formation of the state of Jammu and Kashmir with the subjugation of Dogra regime. Focus is on the submission of Ladakh at the time of Dogra conquest.

Neha Paliwal's paper is entitled 'Comparative advantage of India in International Trade: A quest for emerging Manufacturing Hub'. The author has discussed about the industrial development in India in the backdrop of pandemic situation and with the rise of industrial competitors of India in Asia. She has recommended some measures that may be taken up by the Government of India to reach the goal of Industrial development globally.

The paper, 'Poverty and Epidemic: District Birbhum in the Colonial Period' by Nilotpala Ghosh has taken example from a small village in the district of Birbhum in the Colonial Bengal and has pointed out how the policy of the colonials brought in poverty to the people and how hard it was for them when epidemics like cholera and similar diseases struck and people had to succumb to the epidemics under such poverty stricken, and under nourished condition.

'Performance' is viewed in the perspective of pedagogy in the paper entitled, 'Hindu College and "Performance": 1817-1867', written by Sreemati Mukherjee. She has taken the example of Presidency College at its inception with Derozeo, who introduced debate in the sphere of learning., which is considered as 'Performance" and is taken as a part of learning in the early years of establishment of Hindu College in Calcutta, later known as Presidency College and now a University.

'Impact of Interpretation Construction (icon) Model on Problem Solving and Decision-Making Abilities' by Brundabana Meher, Partha Sarathi Mallik, Saroj Sahu and Dipanjali Sahu is a study on students of secondary level through teaching of political science, with two pedagogy methods, the interpretation construction model and the Herbartian model. It was found that the former model was more effective compared to the latter model.

ঔপনিবেশিক বাংলায় টোলকেন্দ্রিক শিক্ষাব্যবস্থার বিবর্তন : সংস্কৃতচর্চার বহুমাত্রিকতা এবং ‘আধুনিক’ বাঙালী মনন’ is a paper in Bengali by Pritam Goswami. The paper discussed evolution of the institute in 'Tol'/ 'Chatuspathi' for multifarious teaching of Sanskrit and how it has impacted the thought process of the modern Bengalees.

A book, entitled 'Life's Little Tales' was sent to the Kolkata Society for Asian Studies

for review by its author B. N. Patnaik, which is elaborately reviewed by Devlina Gopalan. Dr. Patnaik's discussion on *Mahabharata* in Odiya in different versions is very interestingly portrayed by the reviewer. This has enriched the Journal.

The editorial team would like to thank the authors for presenting the valuable outcome of their research for this volume. The editors are grateful to all the reviewers for extending their help and spending their precious time for reviewing the articles and providing suggestions for the betterment of the articles. We hope that the contents of this volume will be useful for the academicians for further study and research and for referral services.

Ranjana Ray
Sarmistha De Basu

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লোককথার শৈলী*

পল্লব সেনগুপ্ত

একটা খুব গুরুত্বপুর্ণ কথা প্রথমেই বলে নিই : লোককথার শৈলী এই কথাটা কিন্তু একমাত্রিক নয়! তার কারণ লোককথার যে রূপ নিয়ে আমাদের ভাবনাচিন্তা করতে হয়, করে থাকি আমরা তা হল, তাদের লিখিত চেহারা সম্পর্কিত। অর্থাৎ, 'লিটারেচার' যার আবেদন কেবল মাত্র লিখতে-পড়তে জানে যে , তার কাছে। কিন্তু লোককথার জন্মকাল থেকে তার বয়ঃপ্রাপ্তি পর্যন্ত যে রূপটা আত্মপ্রকাশ করে, সেটা তাদের মৌখিক-চেহারা। যাকে বলে, 'ওরেচার'। তাই বললাম যে, লোককথার শৈলী বিচার করতে হবে একমাত্রায় নয়, দু'মাত্রায়। কোনোও ক্ষেত্রে মাত্রার সংখ্যা আরও বেশি হয়ে থাকে। সেই কথায় পরে আসছি আমরা।

দুই

লোককথার বিভিন্ন শাখাগুলো যে কী কী, তা তো আমরা সকলেই জানি : মিথকথা- লোককাহিনি- কিংবদন্তি এগুলো তো প্রধান তিনটি ধারা। এদেরও আবার প্রত্যেকটিরই যে কম বেশি কয়েকটা করে উপধারা (বা উপশাখা) রয়েছে; যেগুলোর ঠিকুঝি-কুলুঝি-গাঁই-গোত্র নিয়ে এখানে আলোচনা অপ্রয়োজনীয়। যেমন অপ্রয়োজনীয় (এই ক্ষেত্রে) মিথকথার থেকে লোককাহিনির, এবং তার থেকে কিংবদন্তির ক্রম-অন্বিত চরিত্র বদল কেন হয়, কীভাবে হয়, কোন কোন উপাদানের যোজন- বর্জনের ফলে সেটা ঘটে সেই বিচার-বিশ্লেষণও। এই আলোচনায়, লোককথাকে সামগ্রিকভাবে ধার্য করে, তার সেই একাধিক মাত্রার শৈলীকে বিশ্লেষণ করতে প্রয়াস পাওয়া যাবে। 'ওরেচার' ই বয়সে ঢের বড় যেহেতু, তার প্রসঙ্গেই প্রথমে আসি বরং !... এই 'ওরেচার' বা মৌখিক সাহিত্যের আবির্ভাব কবে, তার ক্যালেন্ডার-মানা কোনও সন- তারিখ বলা সম্ভব নয়। তবে প্রাগৈতিহাসিক যুগের ব্যাপার যে সেটা, তা অবশ্য স্বচ্ছন্দেই বলে দেওয়া যায়। প্রাগৈতিহাসের আমলের সেই কতশো প্রজন্মের পূর্বপুরুষ-পূর্বনারীরা প্রবল বরফ-পড়া কিংবা অঝোরে বৃষ্টি-ঝরা রাতে গুহার নিরাপদ আশ্রয়ে আগুনের চারপাশে গোষ্ঠীসুদ্ধু বসে সকলকে নানান সব কল্পকাহিনি শোনাতেন। গল্পের জন্ম যে তখন হয়েছিল, তার হদিশ মেলে বিশ্বের বিভিন্ন পর্বতগুহায়, বিশ্বের মান্যতম গুহাশিল্প- তথা- আদিমতম শিল্পের পণ্ডিত অঁরি ব্রুইলের 'ফোর হানড্রেড সেঞ্চুরিজ অব কেভ আর্ট'[১] বইতে যার অনেকবার খোঁজ মিলবে।

তো, এই যে আদিম গোষ্ঠীজীবনের গল্পবৈঠকগুলোর কথা বলছি সেখানে ঠাকুমা-দিদিমারা কী শুধুই গল্পগুলো বলে যেতেন স্থিরভাবে, বসে-বসে? হাত-পা না- নেড়ে, মুখ-চোখ- গলায় কোনও অভিব্যক্তি না প্রকাশ করে? টেপ-রেকর্ডারে কথা বলার মতন?..... স্বাভাবিক বিচারবুদ্ধি বলে যে, না তা হতো না। কেননা, দুনিয়ার সর্বত্রই লোককথার সংগ্রহ যাঁরা করেছেন, তাঁরা দেখেছেন যে প্রবীণরা গুচ্ছ- গুচ্ছ গল্প তাঁদেরকে শুনিয়েছেন, সেই শোনানোর অপরিহার্য্য কিছু অঙ্গ হল হাতের-পায়ের-মুখের-চোখের-গলার নানান ওঠা-পড়া, নড়া-চড়া, হেলা-দোলা ! যা এককথায়

* Suniti Kumar Chatterji Memorial Lecture delivered on 30.08.2019 in Bengali at the Department of International Relations, Jadavpur University. The Lecture was organized by Kolkata Society for Asian Studies in collaboration with the School of Languages and Linguistics, JU, Kolkata.

অভিনয়! (এমন কিছু কিঞ্চিৎ অভিজ্ঞতার স্মৃতি আমারও আছে!).....এই রকমের বাঙ্ময়- অভিনয়ই পরম্পরাবাহিত হয়ে লোককথার ধারাকে অব্যাহত রেখেছে অবাধ, অনাহতভাবে।

এখানে একজন সুপরিচিত লোককথা-সংগ্রাহক-সম্পাদকের কিছু কথা স্মরণ করা যায় খুব প্রাসঙ্গিকভাবে :

''Re-creation is an ideal theme for oral storytelling, because each telling re-performs earlier recitations in a new way– thereby opening possibilities for innovative interpretation. This is why all mythographers now accept *Claude Lévi Strauss's* principle that each myth is in fact constituted not by a core narrative, not by some essential meaning, but by the sum of all its re-telling. Myths– like the species of organisms– persist by evolving''.[২]

তিন

ক্লোদ লেভি-স্ত্রোস মিথকথার প্রসঙ্গে যেটা বলেছেন, প্রকৃত প্রস্তাবে তা কিন্তু সামগ্রিকভাবে সমস্ত ধরনের লোককথার প্রসঙ্গেই একান্ত মানানসই! সময়ের পলি কাহিনির উপকরণের স্তরে-স্তরে যেমন মিশে থাকে, তার বাচনীয় প্রকাশের ক্ষেত্রেও ঠিক তেমনটাই তো ঘটে। প্রজন্ম থেকে প্রজন্মান্তরে প্রবাহিত হবার সময়ে গল্পের চরিত্র ঘটনা- এই সবের যেমন চয়ন বর্জন সংযোজন হয়ে থাকে, তেমনটাই হয় তার বলার অভিব্যক্তিতেও। উপজীব্য গল্পের নানা নতুন ব্যঞ্জনা সেখানে গল্পের আস্বাদনেও নতুনত্ব আনে। আর সেটাই হল লোককাহিনির সঞ্জীবনীসুধা; বিশল্যকরণী-স্বরূপ।

ওই বিশল্যকরণী শব্দটার অনুষঙ্গেই মনে পড়ল, বাল্মীকি রামায়ণেই তো রয়েছে দন্ডকবন থেকে ভারাক্রান্ত মনে ভরতের ফিরে-আসার পর, তাঁর মনকে প্রফুল্ল করার জন্য কৈকেয়ী অযোধ্যার রাজপুরীতে ডেকেছিলেন জীবিকার্থী 'আলাপিনী'দের,যাঁরা এসে নানা ভঙ্গীতে নানা গল্প বলে শোনাচ্ছেন 'প্রিন্স রিজেন্ট' তথা যুবরাজ রামের প্রতিভূস্বরূপ রাজপরিবারের সেজ ছেলেকে![৩] তার মানে, ভরতকে। 'নানা ভঙ্গীতে গল্প বলা' এই কথার সূত্রেই, এতক্ষণ যা বলছিলুম তার প্রাচীন ভারতীয় সাক্ষ্য মেলে।

ভঙ্গীসহ কাহিনি বলার যে ব্যাপারটা বারবার উল্লেখ করছি, সেই ভঙ্গিমাগুলো কেমন?.... গোড়াতেই বলে রাখি: দেশ-কাল-জাতি-সংস্কৃতির ভেদে ওইসব ভঙ্গিমার সৃষ্টি হয়; অবশ্য বিশ্বজনীন ভঙ্গিমাও রয়েছে বেশ কিছু সংখ্যায়। লোককথার আবেদনে একটা বিশ্বজনীন অনুভবও যে থাকেই, এটা তারই দ্যোতক। ভারতের বিভিন্ন ধ্রুবপদী নৃত্যকলায় বিভিন্ন মুদ্রা যেমন প্রতীকী ব্যঞ্জনা সৃষ্টি করে, কাহিনি বলার ভঙ্গিমারাও ঠিক সেই ধরনেরই সঙ্কেতবাহী। নাচের মুদ্রার নীরব-কিন্তু দৃষ্টিগোচর ভাষা যেমন তারাই বোঝে যারা সেগুলোর অবলীন সঙ্কেতগুলোর অর্থ জানে, লোককথার ক্ষেত্রেও ব্যাপারটা ঠিক তেমনই। তবে সহজবোধ্য কিছু সঙ্কেত বা ভঙ্গীও আছে অবশ্যই। সেগুলো সবাই বোঝে।

দূরপ্রেক্ষণের নানা চ্যানেলে মাঝে মাঝেই একটা বিজ্ঞাপন দেখা যায়; বোধহয় সবাই দেখেছেন। ইস্কুলের ক্লাসে এক দিদিমণি ছোট ছোট বাচ্চাদের একটা গল্প বলছেন: ''বিরা—ট একটা গাছ'' এইটুকু বলেই তিনি গাছের ডালের মতো নিজের হাতদুটো ছড়িয়ে দিলেন, যাতে ক্ষুদে শ্রোতার দল সত্যিই একটা বড়সড় গাছের চেহারার আভাস খুঁজে পায়! আর ওই ''বিরাট'' শব্দটার উচ্চারণেও বৈশিষ্ট্য লক্ষণীয়- ''বিরা'' বলার পরে ''রা' এর আ-কার উচ্চারণটাকে খানিকদূর টেনে নিয়ে গিয়ে তবেই ''ট'' উচ্চারণ করা হল। ওই 'আ' এর লম্বা টানটাই গাছের বিরাট-ত্বের ব্যঞ্জনা বোঝাচ্ছে!..... ঠিক এই ব্যাপারটাই হয় লোককথা শোনানোর সময়ে। ওটাই হলো তার 'কথা বলার শৈলী' : ওরেচার স্টাইলিস্টিক্স।

অর্থাৎ, লোককথা বলার সঙ্গে বিশিষ্ট কিছু ভঙ্গিমাও অপরিহার্য হয়ে ওঠে। ফলে, অনেক সময়েই ব্যাপারটা প্রায় একক-অভিনয়ে পরিণতি লাভ করে। গল্পে যখন রাজপুত্রের ঘোড়া ছুটিয়ে যাবার বর্ণনা আসে, তখন ঘোড়ার দৌড়ের " টগ্‌বগ টগ্‌বগ্‌" শব্দ গলায় যেমন থাকে, ঠিক তার সঙ্গে-সঙ্গেই দু-হাতে লাগাম তুলে ঝাঁকানোর ভঙ্গীটাও হয় অনিবার্য। রাক্ষস এসে সানুনাসিক স্বরে " হাঁউ-মাউ-খাঁউ" যখনি বলে, তখনই কথকের চোখদুটো বড়-বড় করে, ভয় দেখানোর মুখভঙ্গিমা করে ঘটনাকে দৃষ্টিগ্রাহ্যও করে তোলা হবে অবশ্যই! রাক্ষসের মুখের "মানুষের গন্ধ পাঁউ" বলার সময়ে কথকের নাক সিঁটকে চোখের মধ্যে একটা উৎসুক চাহনি সৃষ্টি করে সত্যিসত্যিই যেন গন্ধটা পাওয়া যাচ্ছে! মানুষটাকে খোঁজা হচ্ছে এমন একটা অভিনয়ও করতে হয় কথককে। তার মানে, বিশেষ বিশেষ কিছু চরিত্র, বিশেষ বিশেষ কতকগুলো ঘটনা, বিশেষ বিশেষ কোনও কোনও প্রাণীর উল্লেখ এনে, প্রাসঙ্গিক ভাবটুকু প্রকাশের প্রয়োজন হলে মুখ-চোখ-নাক-হাত-পা ইত্যাদিকে যথাযথ ভাবে সঙ্কেতঋদ্ধ করে ব্যবহারও করতে হবে কথককে।

চার

মাদাম ভিনকুরোভা ছিলেন সাইবেরিয়ার এক প্রখ্যাত লোককথা-বলিয়ে![৪] আজাদোভস্কি, বির্জুকোভ, সকোলভ-প্রমুখ বিশিষ্ট রুশি লোকসংস্কৃতির পণ্ডিতরা প্রায় সকলেই তাঁর গল্পবলার অনবদ্য বৈশিষ্ট্যগুলির প্রশংসা করেছেন। রুশীয় বীলিনাগুলি (লোককাহিনি) তিনি যখন শ্রোতাসমাবেশে বলতেন ,তখন না কি তাঁর বাচনদক্ষতা এবং অভিনয়ধর্মিতার কৃতিত্ব এমনভাবে মিশে যেত যে, পুরোপুরিভাবেই যেন একটা কাহিনি সেখানে 'অভিনীত' হয়ে যেত। মুর্শিদাবাদের 'কহানি' কথকদের উপস্থাপনা যাঁরা দেখেছেন, তাঁরা সম্ভবত এই কথাটার মর্ম গ্রহণ করতে স্বচ্ছন্দ হবেন। বিখ্যাত লোকগায়িকা তিজ্জন বাইয়ের 'পান্ডবানি' অনুষ্ঠান পরিবেশনের যাঁরা শ্রোতা-দর্শক হবার সুযোগ পেয়েছেন তাঁরাই জানেন কীভাবে মহাভারতের বিভিন্ন কাহিনি গান গেয়ে শোনানোর সময়ে ঘটনা ও চরিত্রকে কেমন করে তিনি বিভিন্ন রকমের ভঙ্গিমার মাধ্যমে প্রাণবন্ত করে তোলেন! আফ্রিকান-আমেরিকানদের লোক-কাহিনিগুলির কিছু একান্ত নিজস্বতা আছে শব্দের উচ্চারণের (তথা অঙ্গভঙ্গিমারও) ফলে শ্রোতৃসমাবেশে যখন সেগুলি হাজির করা হয়, তখনও অনেকটা ওই একই ধরণের অভিজ্ঞতা হয়েছে আফ্রো-আমেরিকান লোকসংস্কৃতি নিয়ে যাঁরা চর্চা করেন, তাঁদেরও।

আসলে অঙ্গভঙ্গিমাসহ লোককথার উপস্থাপনা এমনই একটা অভিকরণ-কলা, যাকে বিশ্বজনীন বলেই মানতে হয়। আর সেই জন্যেই এন্টি আর্নে এবং স্টিথ টমসনের 'দ্য টাইপ্‌জ অব ফোকটেল' বইতে[৫] এই ব্যাপারটাকে একটা বিশেষ ধরণের প্রকরণ (টাইপ) হিসেবে ধার্য্য করেছেন : ৯২৪। এখন প্রায় বিলুপ্ত হয়ে গেলেও, ১৯ শতকের গোড়ার দিকে তো বটেই এমন কি মাঝামাঝি সময়েও কানাডা এবং মার্কিন যুক্তরাষ্টের আদি অধিবাসীরা (যাঁদেরকে কিছুটা বিভ্রান্তিসূচকভাবেই 'রেড ইন্ডিয়ান' বলা হয়ে থাকে) শুধুমাত্র অঙ্গভঙ্গিমার মাধ্যমে দীর্ঘক্ষণ ধরে আলাপ আলোচনা চালাতে পারতেন। এই অধিজাতিগুলির প্রত্যেকেরই নিজস্ব ভাষা ছিল, তাই বিভিন্ন ভাষা গোষ্ঠীগুলির মানুষেরা যখন একে অন্যের সঙ্গে আলোচনা করতেন তখন ওই অঙ্গভঙ্গীর ভাষাই হতো তার মাধ্যম। এটাকে শুধুমাত্র 'কোড ল্যাঙ্গুয়েজ' বা সাঙ্কেতিক ভাষা হিসেবেই গণ্য করা হতো না; এই সব ভঙ্গিমার ভাষায় গল্প-টল্পও বলা হতো, যার দু চারটের খোঁজ এখনও মিলবে যেসব জাতিতত্ত্ববিদরা ওই গোষ্ঠীগুলির সংস্কৃতি নিয়ে কাজ করেছেন, তাঁদের কারুর লেখায়। এমন কিছু 'কাহিনি প্রদর্শন' সঙ্কলিত হয়েছে গ্যারিক ম্যালেরির লেখা 'ইন্ট্রোডাকশ্যন টু দ্য স্টাডি অব সাঈন ল্যাঙ্গুয়েজ অ্যামং দ্য নর্থ আমেরিকান ইন্ডিয়ানস' বইটিতে[৬]। সৌগত চট্টোপাধ্যায়ের সম্পাদিত 'লোককথার বর্ণমালা' (বঙ্গীয় সাহিত্য সংসদ, কলকাতা ২০১৪) গ্রন্থে ওই বই থেকে নিয়ে এমনই একটি গল্প অনুবাদ ও বিশ্লেষণ করেছেন আমার ছাত্রী ড. অর্পিতা বসু 'লোককথার অঙ্গভাষা : একটি রেড ইন্ডিয়ান গল্প' নামে[৭]।

পাঁচ

গিলবার্ট কিথ চেস্টারটন তাঁর বিখ্যাত 'দ্য ক্লাব অব কুঅ্যর ট্রেডস' বইতে[৮] জুলুদের (দক্ষিণ আফ্রিকার আদি আধিবাসী) ভাষা নিয়ে গবেষণারত এক আধক্ষেপা পণ্ডিতের সঙ্গে এক প্রবীণ জজ সাহেবের নৃত্যের মাধ্যমে গভীরভাবে আলোচনারত থাকার আপাতভাবে গম্ভীর কিন্তু পরিহাসে টইটম্বুর বর্ণনা দিয়েছেন। অধ্যাপক মশাই প্রমাণ করতে চাইছিলেন যে, জুলুরা অতি প্রাচীন কালে মৌখিক নয় আঙ্গিক ভাষাতেই মনের ভাব প্রকাশ করতেন! সেই ভাষায়, প্রেম-ভালোবাসা, রাগ-মান, আশীর্বাদ-অভিশাপ, প্রার্থনা-দাবী ইত্যাদি তাবৎ ব্যাপার চলত কাজে কাজেই গান-গল্প-প্রবাদ ইত্যাদিরও মাধ্যম ছিল যে সেটাই, এমনই বুঝতে হবে!...*চেস্টারটন,* পরিহাস করে ঘটনাটা লিখলেও তার মধ্যে কিন্তু সত্যতার জড় আছে। এমন ব্যাপারটা বহু আদিম তথা প্রাচীন জাতিগোষ্ঠীর মধ্যেও কম বেশি চলে/ চলত এরকম উল্লেখ বিশ্বের নানা দেশে গবেষণারত জাতিতত্ত্ব- নৃতত্ত্বের পণ্ডিতরাই মনে করেছেন। সব রকম নির্বাক প্রতিবেদনই যখন ওই অঙ্গভঙ্গিমার দ্বারা সম্ভবপর তাহলে গল্প বলাটা কি আর তা থেকে বাদ পড়তে পারে!

ওরেচার-স্টোরির প্রসঙ্গটা শেষ করার আগে তার আঙ্গিক শৈলীর বিষয়ে একটা সুস্থিত সিদ্ধান্তে আসা দরকার। গল্পের ওঠাপড়া এবং ঘটনা ও চরিত্রের উপরে আলোকপাতের প্রয়োজনে শ্রোতার কান এবং চোখ দুটোই দখল করতে হলে, কথক তথা প্রদর্শককে সচেতন থাকতে হয়, যাতে প্রতিটি ভাব ও ভাবনার জন্য সঠিক শৈলীটি প্রযুক্ত হয়। সেই অঙ্গশৈলী অবশ্য দেশ-কাল-জাতি-গোষ্ঠী অনুযায়ী উপস্থাপিত হয়। সেই অঙ্গশৈলীর কিছুটা অবশ্য এখনো দজ্জাল রূপে প্রখ্যাতা কোনও কোনও প্রবীণারা ধরে রেখেছেন, যখন তাঁরা টিটকিরি-টিপ্পনী সহযোগে প্রয়োজনমাফিক প্রবাদবচন আওড়ান ছড়া কেটে, বা না-কেটে তখনই সেটা উদ্ঘাটিত হয়।

এটা মনে রাখতে হবে যে প্রবাদ মানেই কিন্তু কোনও একটা গল্পের বিশেষ চরিত্র বা বাস্তব ঘটনা-নির্ভর সারাৎসার! তাই মূল ঘটনার বা চরিত্রের সঙ্গে তুলনীয় কোনও কিছু দেখলে-শুনলে প্রবাদের প্রয়োগ হয়; এবং সেই প্রয়োগ যথেষ্ট গুরুত্ব দিয়ে প্রতিবেদিত করার সুবাদেই ওই ভঙ্গিমা। মূল গল্পটা তখন পরোক্ষে থাকলেও, ওই ভঙ্গিমাগুলোই তার আদি ব্যঞ্জনাকে পুনরুজ্জীবিত করে দেয়!

লোককথাকে যখন ভঙ্গীসমেত বলা হয়, তখন মূলত তিনটি বর্গের ভঙ্গিমা তাতে ব্যবহৃত হয়: ১) ধর্মকেন্দ্রিত, অলৌকিকতা কেন্দ্রিত এবং ধর্ম-বিরহিত অর্থাৎ 'সেক্যুলার' কিছুর সঙ্গে সম্পর্কিত। ২) চারিত্রিক এবং দৈহিক বৈশিষ্ট্য কেন্দ্রিত, ৩) মনের আবেগ-অনুভূতিকেন্দ্রিত এবং ঘটনার অনুকৃতিকেন্দ্রিত। গল্পের বর্ণনীয় বিষয়ের সঙ্গে সাযুজ্য রেখেই এগুলি প্রযুক্ত হয়। এরকম অসংখ্য ভঙ্গিমা যে হয় এবং দেশ কাল সংস্কৃতি পাত্রপাত্রী ভেদে তার সংখ্যা আরও বাড়ে এ তো সহজবোধ্য। দু'চারটে উদাহরণ হিসেবে বলি বরং : 'হাতের বুড়ো আঙুল তুলে কাঁচকলা দেখানো' (গল্পে একজন আরেকজনকে বঞ্চিত করে সানন্দে যখন সেটা ব্যক্ত করে), আবার বিদেশি, বিশেষত আমেরিকান গল্পে ওই রকম বুড়ো আঙুল দেখানোর অর্থ, 'ঠিক আছে সব'। (হোয়াটস্যাপ, ফেসবুক ইত্যাদির সুবাদে এই চিহ্নটি এখন ব্যাপকভাবে পরিচিত)। গল্পে একজন আরেকজনকে শাপমন্যি করছে যখন, তখন হাতের আঙুল মটকানোর ভঙ্গি করা, কোনও কিছুতে 'ঘেন্না' বোঝাতে হচ্ছে যখন, তখন কথকের নিজের নাক কুঁচকানো; ভয়ঙ্কর কিছু দেখছে যখন গল্পের মধ্যে তখন দু'চোখ বড়-বড় করে মুখে ভয়ের ভঙ্গীই ফোটাবেন সেই কথক; রাগ বোঝাতে চোখ পাকানো হয় বটে, তবে সঙ্গে সঙ্গে কথককে মুখেও রাগ ফোটাতে হয়!... এ ধরনের ভঙ্গিমা তো অসংখ্য। সংস্কৃতি-নির্বিশেষে বেশ কিছু নিজস্ব ভঙ্গিমাও থাকে - সেই সংস্কৃতিতে বহমান লোককথাতেই সেগুলি দেখা যায়। যেমন 'বিস্মিত হওয়া'

বোঝাতে আমাদের বাঙালি সংস্কৃতিতে 'গালে হাত দেওয়া' মেয়েদের মধ্যে বেশ প্রচলিত। বিশ্বজনীন কিছু ভঙ্গিমা, যেমন খিদে পেয়েছে বোঝাতে 'হাঁ করা মুখের কাছে ডান হাতের মুঠো তোলা', কিংবা 'কিছু প্রার্থনা করা হচ্ছে' বোঝাতে 'দু- হাতের পাতা একে অপরের সঙ্গে জোড়া করে বিছানো' এগুলোও তো আছেই[৯]।

ছয়

ওরেচার এখন অবশ্য গ্রস্ত হয়ে চলেছে লিটেরেচারের দ্বারা। তাই লোককথার বাচনিক শৈলী নিয়ে আলোচনা করাটা এখন বেশ কঠিনসাধ্য। অথচ সেটা কিন্তু একান্তই জরুরি; কারণ কালে দিনে ওই বিশিষ্ট অভিকরণ মাধ্যমটি বিলুপ্তই হয়ে যাবে হয়ত একেবারে। প্রাচীন ভারতের 'কথাক্কাড়' কিংবা 'আলাপিনী' রা এখন তো সবাই বিস্মৃতি-বিলগ্ন। 'কহানি'-বলিয়েরাও 'এনডেঞ্জারড স্পিসিজ'! প্রায় বিলুপ্তির মুখে। এমন এক পরিপ্রেক্ষায় এটা নিয়ে নতুন করে ভাবনা চিন্তা করার কথাটা সেজন্যই খুব জরুরি। নাহলে 'অরণ্যদেব' 'টিনটিন' আর 'অ্যাস্টেরিক্সের' ব্যাপক উপস্থিতিতে, বিপদ যে ঘনীভূত।

সাত

লোককথার লিখিত রূপের শৈলী নিয়ে চর্চা খুব বেশি না হলেও, এই বিদ্যাশৃঙ্খলার অনেক পণ্ডিতই কথা-বস্তু বিশ্লেষণের বেশ কিছু পদ্ধতি নির্দেশ করেছেন যেভাবে, সেগুলি থেকে উপকরণ বেছে নেওয়া যায় এবং তার মাধ্যমেও গল্পের শৈলীগত অন্বয় বিচার করা সম্ভব।

এই প্রসঙ্গে প্রথম উল্লেখ করব অ্যাক্সেল ওলরিকের নির্দেশিত ন-টি নিয়মের কথা, যেগুলি সচরাচর 'এপিক ল্য' বা 'ওলরিক'স ল্য' বলে উল্লেখিত হয়।[১০] ওলরিক অসংখ্য লোককাহিনি বিশ্লেষণ করে দেখিয়েছেন যে এই-এই ব্যাপারগুলো প্রায় সব ক্ষেত্রেই দেখা যায়ঃ 'ল্য অব বিগিনিং', 'ল্য অব ক্লোজিং', ল্য অব রিপিটেশ্যন', 'ল্য অব টু', 'ল্য অব থ্রি', 'ল্য অব ফোর', 'ল অব কনট্র্যাস্ট', 'ল্য অব ইম্পর্ট্যান্স অব ইনিশিয়েল পজিশন', 'ল্য অব ফাইনাল পজিশন'। ১৯০৯ খ্রিস্টাব্দে ওলরিক এই যে বিধিগুলি লোককথায় প্রাপ্য বলে নির্দেশ করেছিলেন তাঁকে পরবর্তীকালে স্টিথ টম্পসন বিশ্বজনীন পরিপ্রেক্ষায় পুনঃস্থাপন করেছিলেন। তাঁর বিশ্লেষণ অনুযায়ী : ক) লোককাহিনিতে সবচেয়ে প্রয়োজনীয় ঘটনাটি গল্পের মুখপাতে বলা হয় না, গল্পের শুরু এবং সারা দুটিই ধীর লয়ে ঘটে। খ) একই বা অনুরূপ ঘটনার (ভাবে কিংবা রূপে) পুনরাবর্তন তিন চার বার হতে পারে এবং তার গল্পে 'সাসপেন্স' বা উদ্বেগ সৃষ্টি হবে। গ) কাহিনির সমস্ত স্তরেই প্রধানত সক্রিয় থাকে দুটি চরিত্র, কখনও বা তিনটিও; অন্যরা ঘটনাস্থলে থাকলেও মূলত তারা থাকে নিষ্ক্রিয় হয়েই। ঘ) সব সময়ে লোককথায় ঠিক বিপরীত প্রবণতার বা চরিত্রের লোকই পরস্পরের বিরোধী বা প্রতিস্পর্ধী হয়। ঙ) একই ধরনের চরিত্র যদি কাহিনিতে দুটি থাকে তা হলে দুটিই নগণ্য বা স্বল্পক্ষম বা পার্শ্বচরিত্র বলে গণ্য হবে। চ) সবচেয়ে ছোট বা দুর্বল বা বঞ্চিত হয়ে যে থাকে কাহিনির বৃহদংশে, পরিণামে সেই হয় সফল। ছ) চরিত্রগুলির যে সব দোষগুণ কাহিনির সঙ্গে প্রত্যক্ষভাবে জড়িত থাকে সেগুলিই শুধু বর্ণিত বা ব্যাখ্যাত হয়; সেগুলি ছাড়া অন্যান্য চরিত্র লক্ষণ যদি কিছু থাকেও, গল্পে তারা অপ্রাপ্য। জ) চরিত্রের মতোই ঘটনাগুলির সংস্থানও খুব সরল হয়, এক বা একাধিক উপকাহিনি থাকলে সেগুলি একে অন্যের অনুবর্তী হয় - কখনওই কিন্তু সমান্তরালভাবে একই সঙ্গে ঘটে গিয়ে জটিলতার সৃষ্টি করে না। ঝ) লোককথার বর্ণনায় জাতীয় বা অঞ্চলকেন্দ্রিত সংস্কৃতির নিজস্ব ঐতিহ্য, প্রথা, রীতি ইত্যাদি অবিমিশ্রভাবে প্রকাশিত হয়। বিশ্বজনীনতা যদি থাকেও, তা ভাবগত ক্ষেত্রে অভিব্যাক্তিতে নয়।

আট

ওলরিক মূলত তাঁর স্বদেশভূমি ডেনমার্কের 'ভোকসডিখটুং' (লোককাহিনি) এর বিরাট সম্ভারকে ছেঁকে-ছেনে নিয়ে যে নিয়মনবক নির্দেশ করেছেন, পরবর্তীকালে সেই দেশীয় গন্ডীবদ্ধতার থেকে মুক্ত করে সেগুলিকে বিশ্বের অন্যান্য দেশের আরও বহু লোককথার সহযোগে বিশ্লেষণ করে, লৌকিক গল্পকথার শৈলীনির্ণয়ের জন্য এই পরিশীলিত ৯-টি বিচার্য্য উপকরণকে চিহ্নিত করে দিয়েছেন। এই নির্দেশনার পরেও যেটা বিশেষ করে বুঝতে হবে, তা হল : এক) লোককাহিনিতে একটি চরিত্রই সর্বপ্রধান হয় পরিণামে। তার প্রতিস্পর্ধী কিংবা সহযোগী চরিত্রগুলি তখন পিছনে চলে যায়, এবং দুই) সমস্ত গল্পটারই একটা কাঠামোগত ঐক্য থাকে সেখানে উপকাহিনি, শাখাকাহিনি, যদিও থাকে তারা পরিশেষে মূল কাহিনির ধারাস্রোতে বিলীন হয়ে যায়।

লোককথার শৈলীবিচারের পদ্ধতির এই মূল কাঠামোটি কোথায়, কতখানি অনাহত থাকে, তার তন্নিষ্ঠ সন্ধান করার জন্য ক্রমিক উদ্বর্তনে অঙ্কনির্ভর কয়েকটি পদ্ধতি উদ্ভাবিত হয়েছে, যাদের মধ্যে অ্যান্টি আর্নে এবং স্টিথ টম্পসন নির্দেশিত টাইপ নির্ণয় পদ্ধতি বিভিন্ন লোকগল্পের গোত্রলক্ষণ যে কী সেইটে দেখে। টম্পসনের মোটিফ নির্ণয় পদ্ধতির (তারা সংখ্যায় অজস্র এবং তাদের পরিমাণ উত্তরোত্তর বেড়েই চলেছে) সাহায্যে গল্পের ঘটনা এবং চরিত্রের বৈশিষ্ট্য কী কী, তা উপলব্ধি করা যায়। ভ্লাদিমির প্রপ রুশীয় বীলিনার সম্ভার খতিয়ে-যাচিয়ে দেখে ৩১ টি ফাংশনাল ইউনিট বা সক্রিয়মূল একক নির্দিষ্ট করেছেন সেগুলি চিহ্ননির্ভর।[১১] উত্তরকালে, সেই একদেশজ পদ্ধতিও বিস্তৃতি লাভ করেছে; বহুক্ষেত্রেই প্রতিটি সংস্কৃতি-বলয়ে তাদের একান্ত নিজস্ব কাহিনিগুলির নিজেদের সমাজ ও কৃষ্টিকলার সঙ্গে সাযুজ্য রেখেই ওই রকম আরও নানা ধরনের 'ফাংশনাল ইউনিট' উপস্থাপিত করে চলেছে। আমাদের বাংলা লোককথাতেও ২৮৩ ফাংশনাল ইউনিটের সন্ধান মিলেছে ১৬১৪ টি গল্পকে বিশ্লেষণের অণুবীক্ষণে ফেলে। 'বাংলা লোককথার রূপতাত্ত্বিক বিশ্লেষণ' গ্রন্থে[১২] আমার ছাত্রী ড. রীতা ঘোষ এ নিয়ে বিস্তৃত আলোচনা করেছেন।

নয়

গল্পগুলো গড়ে ওঠে ওই ফাংশনাল ইউনিটগুলিকে প্রয়োজন মাফিক ক্রমিক ভাবে সাজানোর মাধ্যমে। আর সেই সাজানোটাই হল লোককথার শৈলী। দুটো লোককথার উদাহরণ দেখিয়ে অতঃপর আলোচনাটা সাঙ্গ করব। একটা বিদেশি : 'স্নো হোয়াইট আর সাত বামন',[১৩] অন্যটা আমাদের একান্ত নিজস্ব রূপকথা, 'পাতালকন্যা মণিমালা'[১৪]।

বিদেশি গল্পটা দিয়ে শুরু করি (আশা করছি, গল্পটা সবারই জানা আছে, তাই ফাংশনাল ইউনিটগুলোই পরপর সাজিয়ে নিচ্ছি, কীভাবে ওটা গড়ে উঠেছে সেটা বোঝাতে) :

১। শয়তানি রানি মৃতা সতিনের মেয়ে স্নো-হোয়াইটকে প্রাসাদ থেকে তাড়াল;
২। রাজকন্যাকে ঘাতক দিয়ে সে খুন করাতে চেষ্টা করল;
৩। ঘাতক মায়ার বশে সেটা করল না;
৪। জঙ্গলের মধ্যে স্নো-হোয়াইটের সঙ্গে সাত বাঁটুলের দেখা হল;
৫। তারা তাকে আশ্রয় দিল;
৬। জাদু আয়নায় রানি সেটা দেখল;

৭। রাজকন্যাকে মেরে ফেলবার জন্য রানি এটা সেটা বিক্রির উদ্দেশ্যে ৩ বার ৩ জনকে ফেরিওয়ালি সাজিয়ে পাঠাল তার জঙ্গলের বাড়িতে।

৮। পরপর ৩ বারই সে প্রাণ ফিরে পেল ২ বার বাঁটুলদের সাহায্যে, শেষবার এক রাজপুত্রের সাহায্যে;

৯। ৩ বারই রানি জাদু আয়নার মারফতে সে খবর জানতে পারল;

১০। রাজপুত্র স্নো-হোয়াইটকে বিয়ে করল;

১১। আয়নায় সেই ছবি দেখে রানি হিংসেয় ফেটে মারা গেল।

একটু অনুধাবন করলেই, ওলরিক (এবং পরে টম্পসন) কাহিনির বিন্যাসের জন্যে যে সূত্রগুলি চিহ্নিত করেছেন, তার সঙ্গে গল্পটার ক্রমিক সাজানোর শৈলীটা স্পষ্ট হয়ে উঠবে।

এবারে মণিমালার রূপকথাটার ফাংশনাল ইউনিটগুলো বিচার্য :

১। দেশভ্রমণে বেরিয়ে রাজপুত্র-মন্ত্রিপুত্র একটি বিশালায়তন অজগর সাপকে মেরে তার মাথার মণিটি পেলেন;

২। মণি হাতে রাজপুত্ররা সরোবরে নাইতে নামলে, মণির স্পর্শে জল দু-ফাঁক হয়ে গেল, দুজনে পাতালপুরীতে পৌঁছে নাগলোকের রাজকন্যা ঘুমন্ত মণিমালাকে দেখলেন;

৩। রাজপুত্রের হাতের ওই মণি মাথায় ঠেকাতেই তাঁর ঘুম ভাঙল;

৪। রাজকন্যা-রাজপুত্রের গান্ধর্বমতে বিয়ে হল;

৫। মন্ত্রিপুত্র স্বদেশে ফিরলেন একাই;

৬। মণিমালা একবার এক সরোবরের তীরে উঠে এলে সেই রাজ্যের রাজপুত্রের চোখে পড়লেন;

৭। তাঁকে কোনওমতে এড়িয়ে মণিমালা ফের পাতালপুরীতে ফিরে গেলেন;

৮। পেঁচোর মা দূর থেকে ব্যাপারটা দেখল;

৯। ২য় রাজপুত্র মণিমালার জন্য দুঃখে শয্যা নিলেন;

১০। রাজা তাঁর ছেলের যে এসে আরোগ্য করতে পারবে তার হাতেই অর্ধেক রাজত্ব আর রাজকন্যাকে দেবার প্রতিশ্রুতি ঘোষণা করলেন;

১১। পেঁচোর মা রাজার কাছে গিয়ে তাঁকে ভুজুং-ভাজুং দিয়ে বিশ্বাস করাল যে, সে আর তার ছেলে পেঁচোই সেটা পারবে;

১২। সরোবরের ধারে গিয়ে একদিন পেঁচোর মা মণিসহ মণিমালাকে ভুলিয়ে ভালিয়ে রাজপ্রাসাদে এনে আটকে ফেলল;

১৩। ২য় রাজপুত্রের অসুখও সেরে গেল তখনই আর মণিমালার সঙ্গে তাঁর বিয়ের তোড়জোড় হতে লাগল;

১৪। ব্রত পালনের অজুহাতে মণিমালা বিয়েটা একটা বছরের জন্য ঠেকিয়ে রাখলেন;

১৫। এদিকে মন্ত্রিপুত্র দেশ থেকে ফিরে বারবার খুঁজেও কিন্তু রাজপুত্র এবং মণিমালার দেখা পেলেন না;

১৬। রাজ্যের লোকের মুখে সব ব্যাপারটা শুনে মন্ত্রিপুত্র গেলেন পেঁচোর মায়ের কাছে তার হারানো পেঁচো সেজে;

১৭। পেঁচোর মা-ও তাঁকেই পেঁচো ভেবে আনন্দের চোটে মণিটা দিয়ে দিল;

১৮। রাজার প্রতিশ্রুতি অনুসারে নকল পেঁচো ওরফে মন্ত্রিপুত্রের সঙ্গে সে দেশের রাজকন্যার বিয়ে হল এবং যৌতুক হিসেবে অর্ধেক রাজত্বও দেওয়া হল;

১৯। বউকে মন্ত্রিপুত্র সব জানালে, তিনিও রাজি হলেন মণিমালার সঙ্গে ১ম রাজপুত্রের পুনর্মিলনে সাহায্য করতে;

২০। মণিমালাকে রাজকন্যা সেই নাগমণি দিলেন স্বামীর কাছ থেকে নিয়ে;
২১। বর্ষান্তে ব্রতোদ্‌যাপনের ছুতোয় মণিমালা মন্ত্রিপুত্র আর রাজকন্যাকে নিয়ে সরোবরে নাইতে গেলেন;
২২। পাতালপুরীতে গিয়ে নাগপাশে বন্দী স্বামীকে মুক্ত করলেন মণিমালা;
২৩। দুই বন্ধু যে যার বউকে নিয়ে নিজের নিজের রাজত্বে ফিরে গেল।

দশ

এই রূপকথার মধ্যে বাংলার সমাজ ও সংস্কৃতির নিজস্ব কতকগুলো বৈশিষ্ট্য আছে, যারা এ-কাহিনির সক্রিয়মূল একক। যেমন, নাগমণির অলৌকিক ক্ষমতা; রাজপুত্র-মন্ত্রিপুত্রের সৌহার্দ্য ; ব্রতপালনের ছুতোয় 'পরপুরুষের' হাত থেকে নিজেকে রক্ষা করা; রাজার মর্জিতে অর্ধেক রাজত্ব ও রাজকন্যাকে লাভ করা; স্বামীর কথায় নিজের বাবা এবং ভাইয়ের বিরুদ্ধে যাওয়া- ইত্যাদি, ইত্যাদি। আসলে, 'স্নো-হোয়াইট অ্যান্ড সেভেন ড্যোয়ফর্স' এবং 'পাতালকন্যা মণিমালা' দুটোই লোককাহিনি বটে, কিন্তু বিলিতি গল্পটি একটি ছোট গল্প আর দেশি কাহিনীটি প্লটের জটিলতা এবং চরিত্রের ও ঘটনার সংখ্যাধিক্যের কারণে কিছুটা হলেও 'নভেল'-ধর্মী। ওপরে বিন্যস্ত সক্রিয়মূল এককগুলি বিশ্লেষণ করলেই দেখা যায় যে, মূল যে প্লটটি আছে ১-৬ এবং ২১-২৩ সংখ্যক ফাংশনাল ইউনিট অবলম্বন করেই গঠিত এবং সাব-প্লটটি ১ বছর ব্যাপ্ত আর ৭-২০ সংখ্যক এককগুলি নিয়ে তৈরি। এই দুটি পর্যায়কে জড়িয়েই তৈরি হয়েছে কাহিনিটি। এমন জটিল বিন্যাস কিন্তু পাশ্চাত্যের ফেয়ারি টেল- মার্শেন-ভোকস ডিখটুং - বীলিনার প্রাপ্য নয়। এই বিন্যাসের এমন জটিল সংশ্লেষণ করার শৈলীটি বাংলা রূপকথার এক অনন্য বৈশিষ্ট্য। সরল প্লটের গল্পও এখানে আছে। তাদের ফাংশনাল ইউনিটও একান্ত এদেশীয়। কিন্তু জটিল প্লটের ফাংশনাল ইউনিটের বিন্যাসের নিজস্বতা আছে একমাত্র বাংলার এই শ্রেণির লোককাহিনির।

এই আলোচনার মুখপাতেই একটা যে কথা বলেছিলুম লোককথায় শৈলীবিচারে ভঙ্গিমা নির্ভর এবং কথন নির্ভর এই দুটি প্রধান মাত্রা ছাড়াও আরও দুএকটা মাত্রাকে কখনও কখনও দেখা যায়, বিশেষত আমাদের রূপকথায়। তেমনই একটা মাত্রা হল গান আরেকটা হল ছড়া। যথাক্রমে 'শিকলি' এবং 'শোলোক' ও বলা হয় এদের। এই সূত্রেই আরও একটা কথা বলি : নির্ভেজাল লোককথা যা সংগ্রহ হয়েছে তার প্রধান ধারক ছিলেন গ্রামীণ বৃদ্ধারা—ঠাকুমা, দিদিমারাই। আঞ্চলিক গ্রাম্য উচ্চারণে বর্ণনা এবং গান (সেও আঞ্চলিক সুরেই) সহ যে কাহিনিগুলি মিলত, পরবর্তীকালে লিখিত চেহারা ধারণের সময় সেই একান্ত ঘরোয়া সাহিত্য ধারাটির আসলরূপটা প্রায় সময়েই হারিয়ে গেছে। দক্ষিণারঞ্জন মিত্র মজুমদারের 'ঠাকুমার ঝুলির' ১ম সংস্করণের লিখিতভাবেই গ্রামীণ ভাষারূপটাকে মুদ্রিত চেহারা দেওয়া হয়। কিন্তু তারপর থেকেই মূলত নাগরিক পড়ুয়াদের মুখ চেয়েই ভাষার সেই আঞ্চলিক মৌলিকতার বিলুপ্তি ঘটল কলকাতিয়া - ঘরোয়া ভাষায় পুনর্লিখিত হবার সময়ে। এই সমস্যাটা সর্বত্র ঘটেছে শুধু এদেশে নয় পাশ্চাত্ত্যেও।

তাই আজ লোককথার শৈলী নিয়ে যে আলোচনাই করি না কেন তা কিন্তু অসম্পূর্ণই থাকে। এই দুঃখের কথাটুকু বলেই আপাতত "নটে গাছটি মুড়োই"!

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লেখক পরিচিতি :

উপদেষ্টা, কলকাতা সোসাইটি ফর্ এশিয়ান স্টাডিজ, চেয়ারম্যান, স্টেট রিসোর্স সেন্টার, পশ্চিমবঙ্গ। প্রাক্তন বিদ্যাসাগর অধ্যাপক, রবীন্দ্রভারতী বিশ্ববিদ্যালয়, কলকাতা, প্রাক্তন সভাপতি, দি এশিয়াটিক সোসাইটি, কলকাতা।

Nature-Man-Spirit Complex : An Anthropological Study in Indian Part of Sundarban Delta Region

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Abstract

Man and his society cannot survive without nature, rather they are interrelated to each other reciprocally. This nature has a direct impact on shaping the culture, economy, belief system of a community. Likewise, the people of Sundarban with different caste and religious affiliations are forced to depend on their surrounding forest and rivers. For their subsistence, people of Sundarban often experience conflict between man and animal and man and authority. This paper encompasses the nature of Sundarban as an economic resource base. Human interaction with nature and how the people are related to spirit that creates an impact on their life and culture are the main focus. According to the myth and local faith, *Bonbibi* is considered as the "Guardian and Saviour spirit of the Forest". The most interesting feature that binds nature, man and *Bonbibi* is man, who in order to survive in this inimical nature, has to depend on the supernatural and superhuman power of *Bonbibi* for their safety of life. It appears that she (*Bonbibi*) gives them mental support, courage, and protection from all kinds of misfortunes and mishaps.

Keywords: *Nature, Subsistence pattern, Man-animal conflict, Coexistence of nature and Bonbibi, Existence of Supernaturalism in the form of Bonbibi, Nature-Man-Bonbibi Cult Complex*

Introduction

Man, his society and culture cannot survive without nature; rather they are reciprocally related to each other. The nature or environment or surroundings of a human population include both physical and social aspects. In its physical aspect, the environment includes its climate, soil quality, existing flora and fauna and the presence of vital resources such as water, vitamins, proteins, etc. Nature has a direct impact on shaping the culture, economy, belief system and practices of a community (Misra 2000). Man utilizes his surrounding nature and natural resources for their interest of survival and subsistence.

According to Ratzel (1899), the environment determines a culture whereas on the other hand it acts as a factor that limits man's culture (Toynbee 1947). Steward (1955) also developed the concept of cultural adaptation, which is the main theme of his work on

'cultural ecology'. Vayda and Rappaport (1968) suggested that we should give attention on the relationship of a specific human population to a specific ecosystem in studying cultural ecology.

The theoretical concept of the present work is derived from L. P. Vidyarthi's seminal work "The Maler: Nature-Man-Spirit Complex in a Hill Tribe of Bihar" (1963), based on a three-tier concept of the 'nature-man-spirit complex' as their life was revolving around the phenomenon of such complex. Vidyarhi also suggested that all aspects of culture with an emphasis on the subsistence activities, social arrangements, and supernaturalism are involved in the struggle for survival.

The society of the Sundarban islanders was selected for the present study to examine the inter-relationship between man-nature and the *Bonbibi* cult that together are forming a complex. Since this area demonstrates an ecology-based economy as well as a myth-based social harmony of people who belonged to different strata of the society, it was felt that the concept of the nature-man-spirit complex can be re-examined in a different ecological context. For this the term used here is *Nature-Man-Bonbibi Cult Complex.* The ubiquitous presence of *Bonbibi* is in the minds of the inhabitants of Sunderbans may be taken as a synonym for the term 'spirit' used by Prof. Vidyarthi (1963). Vidyarthi's original work and those of other later researches, were made basically on tribal people having a uniform type of magico-religious pantheon. The population under the present study belongs to multi-ethnic and multi-religious groups living in one ecological setting and having faith in the most undisputed, sylvan Goddess –the *Bonbibi.*

This paper is an attempt to understand the ecology of the Sundarban delta region and the economy that has evolved in managing nature and its sustainability. It also identifies the socio-cultural and economic factors related to the *Bonbibi* cult worship that creates an impact on the social life of the people of Sundarban.

For the present study, two areas have been selected. These are: *Pakhiralay*, meaning abode of birds, a village in *Gosaba* Island; and *Adivasipara* in *Dayapur-Satjalia* Island. The latter was first inhabited by seven *jeles* or fishermen. For convenience of understanding, the discussion is made under several heads as follows (after Vidyarthy 1963):

Man:

The history of reclamation of land in Sundarban as stated by Bera *et al*. (2006, 2010) dates back to 1770 when the Collector General Claude Russell planned to make use of the forest land for agriculture. In 1785, the Commissioner of Jessore, Tillman Henckell with the permission of Warren Hastings, distributed land among the cultivators. It took 40 years for the *Ijaradars,* to reclaim land in areas such as Sagar islands in south and Canning in the east. In 1814, the East India Company decided to distribute the land directly to the cultivators

and for this, in 1816 the post of Commissioner was created in Sundarban. Scott, the first Commissioner, observed that the company had not received revenues from the *ijaradars*[1] and *zamindars*[2] for a long time. In consequence, the land of Sundarban was declared as Government property in 1817. During the period from 1878 to1879 about 4856 sq. km of the total area was accepted and declared as a protected forested area of Sundarban.

In 1903, Sir Daniel Mackinan Hamilton came to Sundarban and established his *zamindari* with the purchase of 9000 acres of land in Gosaba island (lot no. 143) including the villages *Gosaba, Arampur, Dulki* and *Sonargaon*; and *Rangabelia* island (lot no. 149) comprising *Rangabelia, Pakhiralay, Bagbagan* and *Uttardanga* villages. Again in the year 1920, Sir Hamilton procured 1300 acres of land from the islands of *Satjalia* and *Lahiripur (Bera et al 2006, 2010)*. In the year 1948-49 and later, for the first time seven fishermen (*sat jeles*) belonging to Rajbanshi caste group came to settle in the island, thus giving the name *Satjalia (Bera et al 2006, 2010)*. In order to clear the virgin forest and for reclamation work, many tribals, such as, Bhumij and Munda, followed by Bengali Mahisya and Muslims were brought to this place as labourers from Ranchi district of Bihar, now in Jharkhand; and from Midnapur district. During the post-independent period, from 1948 to 1949 and 1952 to 1953, some fishermen community of East Pakistan, now Bangladesh, such as, *Malo* and *Rajbanshi,* came to the Indian part of Sundarban as refugees for settlement (Sarkar *et al*. 2003). They settled in barren plots of land near Bidya River in the two islands mentioned. Population of the early settlers of Sundarban gradually increased in later decades. By 1910, about one thousand acres of land were reclaimed by about 900 people including the tribals, Christians, Muslims and other Hindu caste people. After the independence of India in 1947, people migrated from East Bengal, erstwhile East Pakistan and settled in Sundarbans making it a place of the cultural mosaic.

The village *Pakhiralay* is inhabited by various caste groups, such as, *Poundra Kshatriya*, *Bagdi, Chamar, Jele Kaibarta, Malo, Namasudra, Rajbanshi*, *Brahmin*, *Kayastha, Mahisya,* and others. People belonging to the faiths of Islam and Christianity also live there. The *Adivasipara* is inhabited by the tribes like Bhumij, who are numerically dominant; and Munda and Bedia. The tribes are divided into different clan groups. There are three hamlets in *Pakhiralay* village. These are *Uttar-Purba para, Paschim para*, and *Dakshin para*. *Uttar-Purba* and *Dakshin paras* are more exposed to nature as these are situated near the forest and are dependent on the forest-based economy. *Paschim para* is located interiorly. Mainstay of their life here is mono-crop type of agriculture. Very often tigers swim across the river and attack the villagers. *Adivasipara* is also situated very close to the forest and has similar problems. Because of the hazardous situation the forest goers, including villagers of these *paras,* worship *Bonbibi* for their survival, safety and welfare. For this reason these people are taken as target group and data are collected from them.

The inhabitants of the area selected have migrated from various parts of Bengal and nearby regions, but over the time adopted the local belief systems, culture, economy and practices for the sake of subsistence and survival. It has given rise to a new society with a heterogeneous culture. The uncertain, unpredictable, harsh environmental condition of this locality forces the islanders to maintain the cohesiveness and unity among all of them irrespective of their caste, creed and religious affiliation.

Among the Hindus, Muslims, Christians and tribals, Bengali speaking people are numerically dominant in the study area and *Bangla* is the main communicating medium. Many Hindu cultural traits are retained by the Christian and Muslim communities in their day-to-day life. The inhabitants of the region adopted a kind of occupation depending on the surrounding natural resources. However, tribals of this region retained a few of their cultural heritages, in the form of rituals, such as, *Karma, Sahrul and Tusu,* and *Murgi Ladai,* the Cock fight and such other.

Nature:

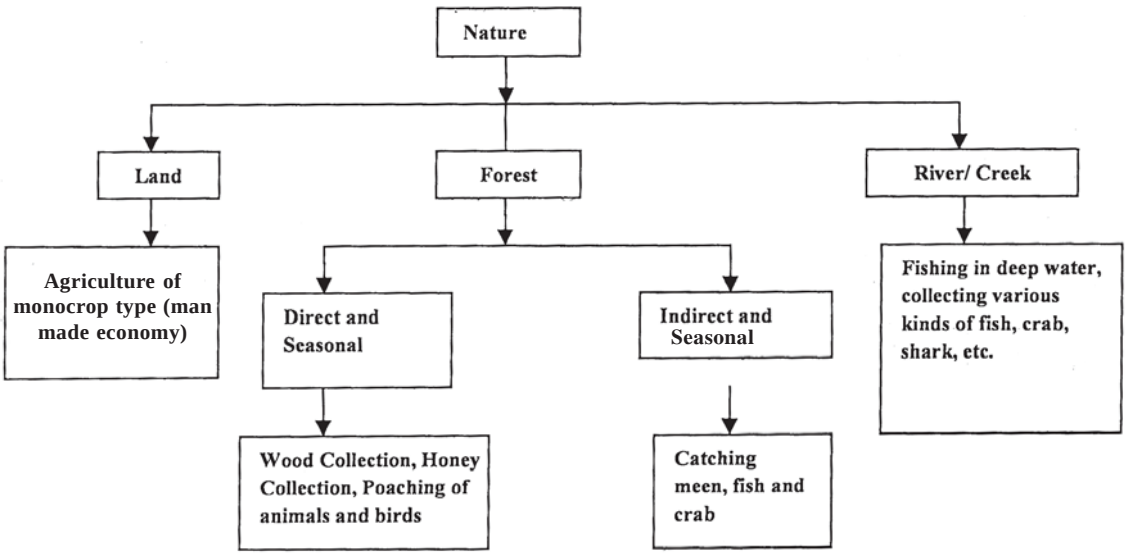
Economy in the area is based on natural resources. Nature plays a vital role in the subsistence pattern of the people. This area is surrounded by rivers, rivulets, creeks, and forests, with a unique ecological setup; and has a rich potential for resources. Sundarban is famous for having an extensive bio-diversity mangrove habitat. The unique nature of Sundarban is summarized below.

a. Unique mangrove ecosystem, which is very much productive and protects the coastal area from various natural calamities like soil erosion, cyclonic storms, and strong tidal water influx.

b. Brackish river water, rivulets and creeks are surrounding and crisscrossing the forest.

It is the only mangrove region in the World known to be inhabited by the great Royal Bengal Tiger and it seems they have uniquely adapted to the environment. Besides being expert swimmers, the big cats in the Sundarban are known to drink saline water of the river and eat fish, crabs, turtles, and even snakes. In the dearth of all such things, a tendency has been developed to invade human habitats in search of food and sweet water, causing danger to the lives of the people residing there.

Following diagram shows how Nature, as a natural resource base, provides for all the inhabitants of the Sundarban delta. -



From the above diagram, it can be seen that nature provides its resources to the islanders in three different ways, through the land, forest and rivers and/or creeks.

Land provides the islanders with livelihood by means of a mono-crop type of agriculture. They mainly cultivate *aman* paddy (*Khariff*) in wetland; a few *rabi* crops like pulses, oilseeds, etc. and vegetables in the kitchen garden. *Aman* paddy is cultivated in rainy season (June-September). During rainy season rainwater is channeled to the cultivable land and stored in ponds dug in the locality and in the homestead. The *aman* crop is sown in late June-July, Bengali month of *Ashar-Sraban*. It is harvested in October-November (*Kartik-Agrahayan*). The post-harvesting operation takes place during the month of *Agrahayan* (November-December) and *Poush* (December-January). The main steps are like *gada kara (*dumping*), dhan mara (*thrashing*), dhan jhara (winnowing)* etc. Agricultural works last for 5 months. But in reality, the agricultural operation includes tilling the land (15 days), sowing of seeds (about 1-month) and weeding (about 15 days). Harvesting and post-harvesting operations take another 1 month. During July, seedlings are transplanted in the field filled with logged rain water. The depth of standing water in the lands varies from one field to another. Sometimes over water logging and poor drainage system damage the crop. During *Khariff* season in the months of *Ashar-Sraban (June-July)*, a large number of labourers are needed for transplantation. Women are mostly involved in sowing and weeding.

Reasons for dependence on forest and aquatic products are given below:

a. Agriculture is of mono-crop type and not much profitable.

b. Destruction of crops is a common phenomenon because of the salinity of brackish water.

c. Natural calamities such as flood, cyclone and other events, inundate the land with saline water and. make the land unsuitable for cultivation for a few years together.

d. The islanders depend on rainwater for cultivation of crops.

e. Although groundwater level is high, the pumping of groundwater is discouraged because of the surrounding saline brackish water.

f. Due to the mono-crop type of agriculture, in the field labourers are needed two times in a year that is during transplantation and harvesting. As a result, people would migrate to other places in search of job during lean time in the agricultural activities.

g. With the abolition of *Zamindari* system in 1953, land was distributed in the form of small landholdings, mainly among the sharecroppers and landless people. Due to further sharing lands became smaller.

h. Ultimately, all these resulted in insufficient yields to sustain a family.

Forest-based economy is pointed out below:

a. Forest and aquatic resources are abundant because they are renewable.

b. Anybody can access the forest and river product at any time.

c. The islanders can earn hard cash within a short time period.

d. In absence of modern amenities and other economic provisions, the islanders have been trying to adjust with the forest-river based said economic pattern for their livelihood.

e. Finally, it may be said that the forest can fulfill one's basic needs for survival and subsistence.

Interaction between man and forest

Poor people are bound to enter the forest to earn their livelihood and sustenance. Attack of tiger and other wild and ferocious animals and the uncertainty of life became a part of their life.

Forest provides particular ecological set up to the islanders. The role of the forest as an economic resource base can be described from two different angles. One is the direct way of interaction where the people as they get direct exposure to the forest ground during

wood and honey collection and poaching of wild animals. The other is indirect exposure to the forest at the time of collection of fish, crab and other shellfish from the creeks. Expedition to the forest takes place mainly on seasonal basis. Usually the fishermen, woodcutters and honey collectors enter the forest. The important aspect of the forest-based economy is group effort. The unpredictable and inimical environment of the forest demands teamwork and a strong fellow feeling that persists among the teammates. A team effort plays a vital role in collection of any kind of forest products in this region.

There are seasonal forest goers, who directly depend on the forest for their subsistence. They collect wood, firewood, timbers, medicinal plants, etc. from the deep, dense forest. They are locally known as *Bauley*. The islanders set out for wood collection from the middle of August (*Bhadra*) to the end of November (*Kartik*). Agricultural work is negligible during this time. Before venturing into the forest they collect a BLC pass from the forest department. The forest department also demarcates some of the forested areas as restricted and people are not allowed to enter into those areas. Contrary to this, it has been observed and also reported that people have the tendency to enter into such restricted, undisturbed areas for greater potentiality of collection of forest products. As the forest goers enter into the core zone in search of a good yield of forest and river products, they are often arrested by the forest officers. For such trespasses, they have to pay cash as fine. In addition to paying fines, the forest authority would seize their nets and boats. People, who enter into the *jungle* legally with permit pass, get the benefit of insurance coverage of life. The family members of the permit holders get compensatory money from the authority in case of the permit holder's death within the forest. A large number of poor people of this area were engaged in collecting firewood from the forest almost on a daily basis because they were unable to buy fuel woods from the market. With the ban on wood cutting and strict measures that are imposed by the forest department, the act of wood cutting has been stopped leaving the woodcutters jobless. This resulted in rush for collection of aquatic resources in the forested areas.

Honey collection also plays a significant role in the livelihood of the people of Sundarban. Honey collection is seasonal. It starts from *Chaitra* (March-April) and continues up to *Baishakh* (April-May). Honey collection from the forest is locally known as *"mahal"*. People who go to the jungle for honey collection is called *"M auley"* and the act is locally known as *"jungol korte gechhe"* (Basu 2010). At present, people of Sundarban have taken the honey collection as one of the main professions in order to sustain their livelihood and to earn hard cash within a short period.

During the period of honey collection violent collision between the jungle goers and animals takes place. A number of cases of injury and missing of persons take place for this reason. According to the Government record, the incidences of death by tiger attack are

higher among the illegal forest encroachers. Illegal forest goers do not get proper security with arm guards, which the legal forest goers get.

The river provides the islanders with fishing as their secondary source of subsistence at present. The fishermen (*jele* or *jalia*) community sail through the river by boats in nearby forested areas in search of fish and crab. The fishermen use the traditional small and sleek boat (*jeleder nouka*) and nylon net. They explore the big rivers and small creeks within the territory of Sundarban Reserve Forest. They mostly avoid the Core area. The *jele* looks mainly for three items of river products, namely, fish, crab and prawn larvae. They catch plenty of various kinds of fish and also crabs which are lucrative items with high market demand. The types of fish generally caught by the people are *Bhetki*, *Bele*, *Boyal*, *Chanda*, *Chital*, *Punti*, *Gurjaoli*, *Ilish* (Hilsa), *Dantne*, *Parse*, *Tangra*, *Bhola*, *Bagda*, etc. They use various types of nets known as *Berajal, Kheplajal, Bintijal*, etc., which they fix into the river water or into the creeks with the help of big drums, floating balls, etc. The fishermen opine that the *khola* or the buffer zone does not yield sufficient river products due to over rush of the people. In this connection a proverb, much popular among the islanders is - '*Bagh jekhane mach sekhane*', means fish is there, where tiger is. This indicates the core area of tiger reserve. Even though it is a restricted place but the collectors in search of a good yield of fish and honey frequently enter into the core zone and often they are caught by the forest officers. Besides this, the female folk, aged person and children from different community backgrounds collect *bagda meen* (seeds of tiger prawn) from the nearby riverbanks. The supply of it rises up during the high tide. Women and children from every village and household are found in a large number collecting *bagda meen* from the river embankment by pulling drag-net (*chhakijal* or *tana jal*). Such an operation continues for about 6 hours through the duration of a high tide till its peak. They sell these prawn seeds to the owners of the *bheri* for aquaculture of prawns, which are of high demand in local market and abroad.

Man and their dependence on Nature

The people of Sundarban delta cautiously follow the seasonal variation. They depend on lunar position and variable wind directions. These aspects are interrelated and control availability of resources and subsequently affect subsistence pattern of the people. The dependence and inter-relationship between man and nature are reflected mainly in the economic life of those individuals who depend on immediate nature, i.e., forest and river, for their sustenance. Such people are fishermen (*jele*), woodcutters (*bauley*), honey collectors (*mauley*) and others. It has been observed that all the people of this area are knowledgeable with system of seasonal variation and lunar position for the procurement of the natural resources surrounding them.

Concept of the seasonal calendar

For the subsistence, survival and good yield from collection from forest and water bodies, the people of Sundarban delta depend heavily on the age-old traditional knowledge, which is handed down from one generation to another. Following the *Bengali* calendar, the people of this area divide the seasons mainly into three categories. They are *garam kal* (the hot season, summer) in the months of *Chaitra* to *Jaistha* (March-June); *barsha kal* (monsoon, the rainy season) in the months of *Ashar* to *Kartik* (July-October); and *sheet kal* (winter, cold season) in the months of *Agrahayan* to *Falgun* (November-February).

During summer season fishing is prohibited by the order of the forest department because this is the breeding time of the fishes. In the months of *Chaitra* and *Baisakh* (March-May), the forest authority issues passes and gives permission for honey collection only from the forest. The rainy season is not a suitable time for fishing because of heavy current and high water level in the rivers and creeks. During this time crab is available but in low quality. The month of *Bhadra* (August-September) offers Hilsa (*Ilish*) fish from the river. Its availability depends on the weather to some extent. As per the knowledge of the local people, during this time the river water becomes bluish in colour for a few days. . Along with different kinds of fish, Hilsa fish is also caught, but it is only for a couple of days, when the colour of water remains bluish mixed with saliva of Hilsa. In the months of *Falgun* (February-March) and *Kartik* (October-November) men and women enter the forest during high tide for crab collection and return back with low tide. According to local people, winter is the best season for fishing and collection of crab, prawn seeds and prawn from the river. However, prawn, crab and few kinds of fish, like *parse*, *tangra*, *dantne*, etc. are more or less available throughout the year.

Change in direction and flow of wind is an important variable, which is related to the availability of resources from the forest. Experience has taught the people about this phenomenon. They have divided the wind movement mainly into two types: *dakshiner hawa* (wind from south) and *utture hawa* (wind from north). The *dakshiner hawa* prevails in the months from *Chaitra* to *Aswin* (middle of April to middle of October) and the local people consider this time as the best for honey and fish collection. The months from *Kartik* to *Falgun* (middle of October to middle of February) is the time of *utture hawa*. During this period the villagers collect various types of fish, crab, etc. The water level at the rivers and creeks becomes low during this time. In between *utture hawa* and *dakshiner hawa,* the two months, i.e., *Agrahayan* and *Poush* are considered unsuitable for any collection because of the wind blowing from west. This is locally known as *paschimer hawa* (west wind). During this time the rivers turn very rough and strong undercurrent prevails causing damage to

village roads and embankment of the rivers. During *Sraban* and *Bhadra* months, in the rainy season, the environment is not suitable for any type of collection as the wind blows from east and the rivers turn very rough with high water level, undercurrents, and whirlpools. Such wind is locally known as *puber hawa* (east wind). Table 1 shows the availability of resources depending on the season and wind variation. (Please find at the end of this article)

Concept of lunar position:

The position of the moon also plays an important role in the livelihood of the islanders. Depending on the lunar position, the water level in the river and creeks varies during the time of ebb and tide. This, coupled with the velocity of the water current, influences the quantity of fish and crab. The availability decreases or increases accordingly. This relation of time with the lunar position and its effect on ebb and tide is locally known as "*tithi*".

Each month is divided into two halves or fortnights, each of which is locally known as "*paksha*". One *paksha* is known as *Sukla paksha.* It is the period between dark and full moon, i.e., the time of waxing of moon. The other fifteen days is known as *Krishna paksha,* darkening of the moon. It is the time between full moon and dark moon. The day of new moon is called *Amabasya* and the full moon day as *Purnima* by the local inhabitants.

Each *paksha* can further be subdivided into three *tithi* categories. Firstly comes *Sukla paksha* with "*Gonmukh*" from 1st to 5th day of the same *paksha*; secondly "*Marani*" or "*Marakotal*" from 6th to 9th day of *Sukla paksha;* and lastly "*Barogo*"' or "*Bharakotal*" from the 14th day of *Sukla paksha* to 2nd day of *Krishna paksha*. During *Gonmukh*, the water level of rivers and creeks becomes high and saturated with less water current and this time is considered as the best time for catching fish and crab. During *Marani* or *Marakotal*, the water level of the rivers and creeks remains calm. This is the best time to collect *bagda meen*. During *Barogon* or *Bharakotal*, water level reaches an optimum level with a strong undercurrent. It is the best time for catching various types of fish and crabs.

Krishna paksha or the period of darker moon is subdivided into three *tithi* categories. First *tithi* is *Gonmukh'*, from 1st to 5th day of *Krishna paksha* with high water level and saturated surface water. This is considered the best time for collection of fish and crab. Second *tithi* is '*Marani'* or '*Marakotal'*, from 6th to 9th day of *Krishna paksha* with calm water. This time is not suitable for catching fish and crab. The third one is "*Barogon*" or "*Bharakotal*" from the 10th-14th day of *Krishna paksha*, continuing into the 3rd day of *Sukla paksha.* This is the best time for fishing and crab hunting because of its strong undercurrent. According to Basu (2007), people follow the traditional way of the calendrical system, which is the part and parcel of collection of aquatic resources like fish and crabs from river and creek.

Table 2 is showing the nature of procurement and activities based on lunar position and *tithi.* (Please find at the end of this article)

Spirit:

Sundarban is also known as *Bhatir Desh,* which means, country of tide. The region is rich with its own history, cultures and belief system. From the very beginning, religion played a vital role in the daily life of the inhabitants. The oral tradition of Sundarban is rich with myths and folk tales. The interaction and relation with the forest are explained in the light of the myths. It is the crises of survival that brings the people together under a common canopy of belief system.

As their economy is mainly forest-based, the lives of the people are merged into uncertainty, danger, anxiety and fear. In order to reduce the anxiety and fear, people have devoted themselves to various Gods and Goddesses, *Pirs* and *Darvesh*. The cult of *Bonbibi* is based on both the faiths of Hinduism and Islam. *Bonbibi* may be considered as part of 'little tradition' of the Sunderban. It is a belief system which is conceived centering around the forest and Royal Bengal tiger.

Impact on Muslim community is reflected on the name of the local diety, the *Bonbibi. Bibi* is an Urdu word. It is used to address a dignified and aristocratic lady. In Bengali "*Bon"* means forest. It can be said that *Bonbibi* is the noble, dignified and respectable lady of the forest. The *Bonbibi* cult does not represent any religious affiliation of a particular group. It reflects an intimate bond that nature shares with the men in Sundarban. Everybody living in the forested area of Sundarban worships *Bonbibi,* and considers her as the 'Sylvan Goddess of the Forest'. She is the sole protector of all the inhabitants of Sunderban who depend on forest for their meager sustenance. People, irrespective of their caste and creed worship *Bonbibi* with faith and reverence and consider her as the only undisputed Goddess who can save them from the malevolent tiger god *Dakshin Rai. Dakshin Rai* in the form of a tiger is part of the tiger cult continuing from the remote past. The worshippers of *Bonbibi* are mostly those who enter into the forest, namely, *bauley* (woodcutters), *mauley* (honey and wax collectors) and *jele* (fisherman). Before starting the journey into the deep forest and in the creeks of Sundarban, all the *bauley*, *mauley,* and *jele* worship *Bonbibi* with offerings and propitiate the goddess for her blessings to overcome all sorts of danger. *Bonbibi* is represented by a stone slab or by clay made vessel in their voyage. The story of *Bonbibi* is described in folktales of *Bonbibi Johurnama*, *Dukhe Kahini* and in *Dhana Manar Pala.* These are very popular folk theatres in Sunderban.

The last stanza of *Bonbibir gan* (Basu 2006) is given below:

proti bachor boshekh maser shes mangalbare,

(Every year on the last Tuesday of the month of *Baisakh* (middle of April to middle of May)

dal bendhe sab nouko niye ase boner dhare,

(People in groups bring their boats next to the forest)

bonbibir name tara sara diya jae,

(They utter the name of *Bonbibi* and enter the forest)

morag kingba murgi diya manat metae.

(Vow to *Bonbibi is fulfilled with the sacrifice of a cock or hen*)

bonbibir jangalete esab pratha ache,

(All these customs are prevalent in the forest of *Bonbibi*)

sodarboner geyno manush esab niye banche.

(The rural people of Sundarban live depending on such things.)

People of Sundarban have strong faith on supernatural powers. Adverse conditions of the environment create lots of problems in the daily life of the people. *Bonbibi* protects the people from all sorts of adversities by her supernatural power. There is a very interesting and popular local saying, which implies that *Bonbibi* is the mother of everyone, regardless of their caste, creed and religious backgrounds in this land of eighteen tides, as is reflected in a folk song mentioned below:

atharo bhatir madhye ami sabar ma

(I am the mother of all in this land of eighteen tides)

ma bole je dake tar dukhya thake na

(Person who calls me as mother, does not face sorrow).

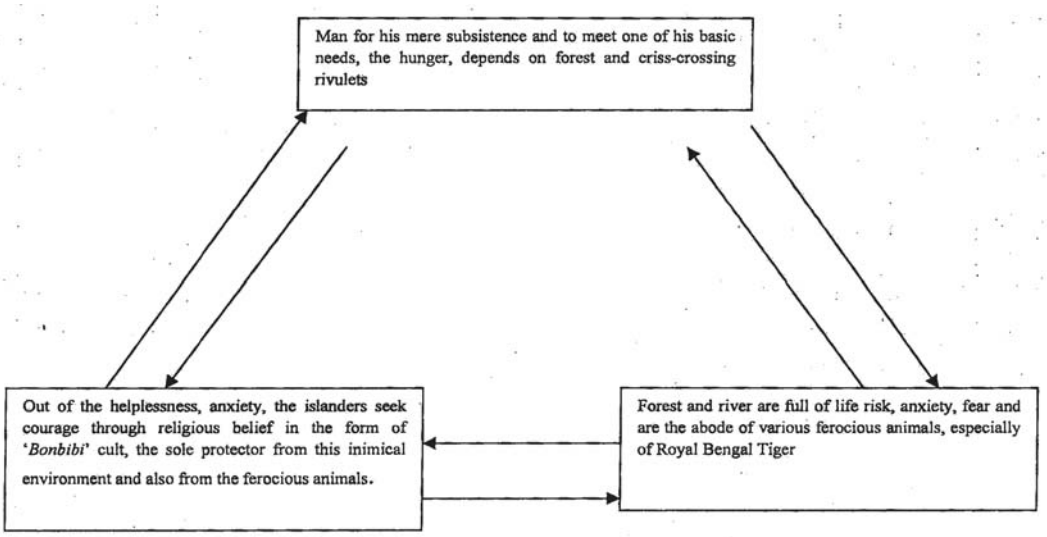
Along with *Bonbibi*, the name of *Shahjangali*, *Gazi Saheb*, *Dakshin Rai,* and *Dukhe* are reported to be very popular. They are worshipped and appeased together with *Bonbibi*. In addition to annual worship, daily offerings are also made to these deities at the respective places of worship. The places are locally known as *Than.* Offering is done by the head of the family members or by his wife with blowing of conch shell. Along with the icons of *Bonbibi* and his associates, the icon of *Bonbibi* in miniature form is placed by the local inhabitants in fulfillment of the vow, at the *Than.* This is known as *chhalan* locally. In front of the idols, five earthen mounds are prepared in the name of *Bonbibi* and her associates, who preside over the *Than*. In case of any sickness, accident, or any problem, the inhabitants smear themselves with this soil of *than* in full faith and reverence that this will act like magic and relieve them of the maladies.

Traditionally, all the inhabitants of Sundarban area worship *Bonbibi.* However, it is found that there are three different dates in a year for the different groups among the

inhabitants. People of *Jele para* of *Dakshin para* and *Pakhiralay* worship *Bonbibi* on *Poush Sankranti* (middle of January). Other people of Hindu and the Muslim faith worship her on the very next day of *Poush Sankranti*, i.e., on the first day of *Magh*. The tribals of *Adivasipara* worship *Bonbibi* on *Basanta Panchami* (in February on the day of *Saraswati* Puja). In this area, caste does not play any role to become a priest or, in other words, any person from any caste or community background can act as a priest. *Bonbibi Johurnama* is recited from back to the front, as is done in Urdu literature. *Bonbibi Johurnama* depicts victory over tiger who is the Lord of the forest. In other words, it indicates victory of good over evil. *Bonbibi* is the owner of *Atharobhatir desh,* i. e., the land of eighteen low tides. She is the saviour and protector of the people from the attack of wild animals, especially tiger, crocodile, snake, etc. She also is a healer, who cures sufferers from serious diseases, fulfills desires, gives child to issueless and solves many more problems of the people. *Bonbibi* as the cult image of Sundarban is established.

Nature-Man-Bonbibi Cult Complex

While discussing the trichotomic relationship between Nature-Man-*Bonbibi* cult that forms a complex whole in this area, it is essential to know the interdependence and interaction among these three. The trichotomic concept centering around Nature-Man-*Bonbibi* cult can be shown in the following way:



(Source: Basu, B. 2012. 'Nature-Man-*Bonbibi* Cult Complex: An Anthropological Study in Sundarban Delta Region' Unpublished Ph.D. Report)

In this diagram, man is compelled in this particular environment to depend mainly on the forest and riverine products for their livelihood. From this point of view, 'Nature' of Sundarban as a donor at the macro level remains static for its inhabitants, both in case of collecting forest products and agriculture, which is full of uncertainty, unpredictability, and with high risk. Only the change can be seen at the micro-level.

In the ecological setup of Sundarban, 'man' depends on natural resources mainly for his mere sustenance. He catches fishes, crabs, tiger prawn from the rivers, whereas from the forest he collects honey and wax, fuel wood, medicinal plants, etc. While doing so, he often confronts ferocious Royal Bengal Tiger, crocodile, etc. Because of having high life risk and anxiety, many of the islanders are gradually changing their economy from forest-based resources to land resources in the form of agriculture. A kind of shift and transformation in their subsistence pattern can be seen with much more production, certainty of production and safety. Sundarban is a mono-crop type of zone where saline river water gradually engulfs the land and makes it unsuitable for producing crops for round the year. This is a threat to the economic life of the inhabitants. Having no other alternative, people are forced to depend on nearby forest and river for resources. This, in turn, brings the inhabitants to harness the same environment. For the subsistence, people enter into a conflict situation with animals like tiger, crocodile, snake, shark, etc. and also with the forest authority. Hence, the economy of man in this area is vulnerable in nature.

The islanders visit the forest for collecting forest products having full knowledge of every danger and uncertainty of their life in the forest since they do not have any other alternative. The river system in this area is also unique. The rivers are divided into several tributaries giving rise to criss-cross creeks that are further surrounded by the forest. Therefore, for collecting aquatic products, people have to interact with the forest indirectly. In these situations, out of their helplessness or anxiety, they seek courage through the religion in the form of *Bonbibi* cult. The ubiquitous presence of *Bonbibi* manifests that she remains at the cognitive level in the mind and belief system of the islanders.

Previously, *Bonbibi* used to be worshipped mainly by the forest goers, like *jele*, *mauley*, and *bauley*, as the forest deity for their safety, survival and good yield. But, at present, across the boundary of the forest, she has achieved a distinct place in the household of more or less every islander. Now she is worshipped not only for safety and survival but also for family welfare, childlessness, serious diseases, etc. This fact suggests that from the very beginning of the formation of this society, the faith on *Bonbibi* and her ubiquitous presence was in the mind of the people and it has been continuing in their day-to-day activities. Many sustainable changes have come up over time but the Goddess *Bonbibi* has been accepted and assimilated as an integral part of the traditional Hindu worship.

Conclusion

At the very beginning, Sundarban was just a geographical area with its unique natural resources for survival. The area was full of uncertainty and high life-risk. The people from various ethnic backgrounds were brought to Sundarban to make the virgin forest habitable. Nature, in this deltaic part of Sundarban, provides the base of economic resources to all the inhabitants irrespective of their ethnic backgrounds. The typical ecology and economic resources gave rise to new social norms, traditions and belief systems. All these factors are closely related and form the superstructure, where forest plays a vital role. The ecology of this particular region forces the inhabitants to harness the surrounding natural resources for their survival. They mainly depend on the forest and surrounding brackish water for their livelihood. While doing so, a kind of direct relation or interaction is seen between man and forest or nature giving rise to a man-animal conflict situation both in the forest and habitats. The moment man has been defeated or killed repeatedly by animals of the forest, mainly by the tigers; they started seeking for a third power in the form of a supernatural or superhuman kind, to save them from these kinds of situations.

The cult of *Bonbibi* has been understood in this deltaic region as an integral part of the inhabitants' life and culture. According to the myth and local faith, she is considered as the 'Guardian and Saviour Goddess of the Forest'. Being the 'Guardian of the forest', *Bonbibi* is the owner of the forest products and the sole protector of the forest goers and the inhabitants from all mishaps, accidents, etc. The most interesting feature that binds all these three points is the man, who in order to survive in this inimical nature, have to depend on the supernatural and superhuman power of *Bonbibi* for their safety of life as if she (*Bonbibi*) gives them mental support, courage, and protection from all kinds of misfortunes and mishaps.

Endnotes

1. The system of landholding called *ijara* given on lease by a bigger landlord or *zamindars.*
2. They are the feudal chieftains of colonial India.

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Fig 1: Idol of Bonbibi along with a Child Dukhe, Shahjangali and Dakshin Rai in the form of a Tiger



Fig. 2: Collection of honey



Fig. 3: Collection of honey

Table 1: Availability of resources depending on the season and wind variation

Seasons	Months according to Bengali Calendar	Equivalent English Months	Availability of Resources	Wind Variation
Summer	Chaitra	March-April	• Fishing restricted	Dakshiner Hawa (southward wind)
	Baisakh	April- May	• Collect bagda meen (tiger shrimp) from the river bank	
	Jaistha	May- June	• Best time of honey collection • Crab hunting	
Rainy	Ashar	June-July	• Hilsa Fish especially in Bhadra month	
	Sraban	July-August		Puber Hawa (eastward wind)
	Bhadra	August-September	• Fishes like Gurjaoli, Topse, Pamphret, prawn	
	Aswin	September-October		Dakshiner Hawa (southward wind)
Winter	Kartik	October-November	• Best time to collect crab, bagda meen (tiger shrimp), prawn, etc.	Utture Hawa (northward wind)
	Agrahayan	November-December	• Fishes like Chakul, Rupamati, Parse, Chanda, Mochan(maximum), Hilsa (for few days) are available	Poschimer Hawa (westwaed wind)
	Poush	December-January		
	Magh	January-February		
	Falgun	February-March		Utture Hawa (northward wind)

Table - 2 : Lunar position and nature of procurement

Lunar Position (in local term)	English Equivalent	*Tithi*	Activities & Nature of Procurement
Sukla paksha	Full Moon	*Gonmukh*	A little collection of fish and crab hunting
		Marani/ Marakotal	Best time to collect of bagda meen (tiger shrimp), Fishing
		Barogon/ Bharakotal	Catch various types of fishes and crabs
Krishna paksha	New Moon	*Gonmukh*	A little collection of fish and crab
		Marani/ Marakotal	Not suitable for any collection, phase of return from economic activities
		Barogon/ Bharakotal	Best time for fishing and crab hunting

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The Study of Socio-Cultural Scenario of Eastern and Western States of India by Analysing Stylistic Features of Matrimonial Ads in Assamese and Marathi Newspapers

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Abstract

A detailed study of the stylistic features of the matrimonial advertisements found in Marathi and Assamese newspapers has been taken into account for this research paper. This paper mainly discusses the socio-cultural aspects of the eastern and the western states of India, namely- Assam and Maharashtra. The prominent focus of this study is to acknowledge the distinguished social and cultural features which can be seen through languages. Languages are the prominent source to understand the society and its people. This can be done by analysing the stylistic features of local languages used in matrimonial advertisements. Some of these are; figurative expressions, code mixing, metaphors, alliteration, acronyms, transliteration, and uses of lingua franca. Our main aim is to know more about the sociological aspects reflected through them. Information may be gathered about educational hierarchy, importance of caste, religious beliefs, financial hierarchy, societal beauty standards, conventional age barriers, personal attributes and such other issues. etc. After analysis of linguistic data, we could comprehend the unique and distinct socio-cultural backgrounds of the two states. A recognizable cultural distinction was seen through conventional food habits of the two states. Strong mention of vegetarianism in Marathi matrimonial ads and the absence of the same in Assamese ones are noted. Given this background, a critical stylistic analysis was employed, where selected matrimonial advertisements from the weekly Marathi newspapers (Loksatta, Sakal) and Assamese newspapers (Amar Asom, Dainik Janambhumi and The Assam Tribune) were explored and analysed to find out the socio-cultural aspects of the two linguistic communities mentioned. This study helped in dissecting the matrimonial advertisements on the ground of a sociolinguistic basis.

Key Words: *Assamese, Marathi, Stylistic Analysis, Advertisements, Society and Culture*

1. Introduction

The evolution of mankind is the story of its progress in communication methods. The digital age has availed many efficient ways of advertising in today's world. Many times

people opt for electronic media over print media when it comes to advertising and connecting people. But some conventional methods have survived even in the strong wave of digital media, one of which is the newspaper. In the era of digital media, newspapers still play a significant role in mass communication. Filled with all the horrors and achievements of different kinds of people, it gives us the real reflection of the society and helps us to understand the socio-cultural scenario of diverse communities. The authenticity and reliability of newspapers are not waned by any means. Print media has some incredible advantages; for instance, it has a higher frequency of viewing than internet ads. It is flexible in targeting the audience. It has a whole page dedicated to the small boxes of ads, which contains 'buy and sell', 'lost and found', 'plots' and 'flats' and mainly eye-catching matrimonial ads with strident colours. Newspapers are packed with debates, poetry, arts, sports, obituaries, achievements, etc.

Here we are exploring the age-old method of finding the right spouse for oneself, i.e. *matrimonial ads*. These days matrimonial ads have been digitised with the growth of online platforms like *shaadi.com* and *jeevansathi.com.* There are professional matchmakers as well. Still a huge amount of ads persist in physical form through newspaper ads. It is surprising that people still choose to use this conventional method to find a suitable life partner in this era.

A lot of these newspapers are still following the archaic ways of displaying ads. In these ads the major factors of choosing a spouse appears to be the criteria as; religion, caste, income and unreal standards of beauty, rather than considering compatibility and intimacy. The researchers had two preconceptions. Firstly, matrimonial ads in the newspapers have decreased in number, and secondly, the language used in them is wholly simple, without any figurative or decorative linguistic features. On the contrary, the number of matrimonial ads is still high in papers, having a whole page dedicated to it and the language used in them is also captivating and occasionally complicated even for the native speakers. The language used in these ads contains metaphors, alliteration, code-mixing, abbreviations, transliteration, words with figurative meaning and also some pretentious sentence constructions, which are discussed further.

These ads are capable of showing a vivid picture of the current situation of the society by giving a sneak peek into the issues like casteism, financial hierarchy, sexism, conventional beauty standards, and age barriers.

In Marathi newspapers the number of ads saying 'जातीचीअटनाही (jaati chi at naahi) which means caste is no bar' are increasing. However, on the other hand, there are still plenty of ads showing the candidates are expecting grooms or brides from the same caste. Many people also would mention sub-castes. Some ads are dedicated to matchmaking of higher castes in the society.

In Assamese newspapers, religion and caste play a vital role in match-making. Some seekers want the other party to be of the same religion/caste while others not. A strong preference is given to homely, fair and good-looking women. Similarly, the usual TDH (tall, dark and handsome) for men can still be seen lingering in the minds of the Indian society.

Research Objectives

In order to achieve the main objectives of the research following are taken into consideration:

- Investigate and discuss the most common stylistic devices, employed in the matrimonial ads of Assamese and Marathi weekly newspapers.
- Examine how these two local languages used in the selected advertisements reflect the socio-cultural scenario of the eastern and the western states of India, namely- Assam and Maharashtra.
- Analyse the unique and distinctive socio-cultural beliefs reflected through the usage of native languages in popular newspapers of these states.
- Compare the social backgrounds of the two communities by studying the two widely used Indo-Aryan languages of the Indian subcontinent.

2. Background

Advertising has extended its horizon in recent years, tackled from a broad range of disciplines, such as anthropology, linguistics, sociology, media studies and literary criticism. The language used in ads is seen in manifold forms. With the use of parabolic and verbal utterances in language we express our ideas, feelings, and emotions. Linguistics is the scientific study of language through which we examine the system of languages using morphology, phonetics, phonology, syntax, semantics and pragmatics.

Study of style, in linguistics is called as the discipline of stylistics. This is a mainly studied field in the discipline. Its aim is to explore how the words portray meaning and how the meaning depends on the socio-cultural background of the native speakers. The language explored might be literary or non-literary. Simpson (2994) says that language is vital to stylistics because the varied forms, patterns and levels that constitute linguistic structure are important in the function of the text.

In the past few decades, advances in the advertisement industry have triggered the constant change of language used in ads. In the matrimonial advertisement sector, we have noticed a wide range of linguistic devices, which are explored to understand the socio-cultural mindset of people. Matrimonial ads are categorized under the umbrella term

of *classified advertisements.* It includes brief personal information about the bride and the groom and their families. In this stylistic analysis, we noticed that the language used while mentioning the preferences of both the parties play a pivotal role. Language has worked as the mediating equipment to interpret the societies, the mindset of the people, the cultural background differentiating two communities, language preferences, socio-economic surrounding and socio-cultural scenario.

3. Literature Review

In the next half of the twentieth century, the sub-discipline of Linguistics, popularly known as *Stylistics* emerged with the influential work of Roman Jakobson. Earlier, the focus of stylistic analysis was mainly limited to literary texts. But gradual developments in the field of Stylistics looked at the language of texts, its interpretations and its effect on readers led to the analysis of non-literary texts as well.

As stated by Halliday (1978:89), the socio- cultural phenomena dominate the language. The structure of the society is preserved and imparted through language. He also argued that the role of the linguistic system is impossible to disentangle from the socio-cultural milieu.

As per *Fairclough* (1992), stylistics look at the language by analyzing its texts, their discourse and context with focus on the spatial, temporal, cultural, social and cognitive aspects. He stated, *"Language use reflects the culture and it is impossible to disassociate the two in any real sense – the way a culture sees the world is reflected in its language."* (Fairclough 1992:207)

According to Simpson (2004:3), it could be inappropriate to analyze the stylistic features of only literary language. He mentions that the language of advertising, music, media, and also informal conversation can portray a high degree of discourse and stylistic artistry. Simpson (2004:2) proclaims that *"The creativity and innovation in language use should not be seen as an exclusive preserve of literary writing*." Simpson believes that if the description of language is complete and perfectly contextualized then the stylistic analysis will be fuller and accurate.

4. Methodology

For this research, the study aimed to conduct a stylistic analysis of the language used in matrimonial advertisements of Marathi and Assamese newspapers. It is a context-bound qualitative research which explores the views, perceptions, attitudes and beliefs of these two linguistically distinct states of India. This study revolves around the fulcrum of explorative

research which helped to investigate the socio-linguistic idea of a language being the mirror of the current picture of the society.

It was noticed that many previous studies were conducted to explore the stylistic features of advertisements focused only on linguistic features. As a result, it appeared that the explorative research design would provide the most suitable framework since this study attempted to investigate not only linguistic but also socio-cultural aspects of the language used in matrimonial advertisements.

For this research, random sampling was used to collect an appropriate number of samples from the primary data sources. Convenient sampling was used to choose the advertisements from Marathi newspapers namely -*Sakal, Loksatta* and the three news papers published from Assam are, *Dainik Janambhumi, Amar Asom* in Assamese language and *The Assam Tribune* in English.

The data analysis was done by taking into account the linguistic-stylistic theory. The researchers explored matrimonial advertisements in local newspapers to study the use of linguistic features such as metaphors, alliteration, code-mixing, abbreviations, transliteration, words with figurative meaning and also some pretentious sentence constructions to understand the socio-linguistic aspects behind it. This analysis resulted in knowledgeable findings and conclusions.

5. Analysis of Assamese Matrimonial Ads

Some advertisements throw some expected nuances that are exclusive to the culture. When it comes to matrimonial ads in Assamese newspapers, we can see a realistic picture of religion and caste playing a vital role in match-making. Some seekers want the other party to be of the same religion/caste while others not. It can also be seen that the description of the bride/groom is given in not more than two lines. Salary plays a major role in seeking alliance. A groom would not go for a bride who earns more than the former. Parents' professions also play a major role in match-making. An authentic display of Assamese society and culture has been attempted in this research to acquaint the readers on how Assamese people seek an alliance through matrimonial ads in print media. The data are reviewed based on the use of language and how these stylistic devices work in captivating the audience.

5.1 Charges for advertisement in various newspapers

The rates charged for matrimonial ads differ from paper to paper and from region to region. It also depends on the target audience. If a seeker is targeting his/her locality, then the number of printed copies would be less compared to the ones seeking within the state or

beyond. *Amar Asom*, an Assamese daily charges 350 rupees for 20 words, whereas, The *Assam Tribune*, an English daily charge 360 for 12 words. The matrimonial ads are displayed weekly, and they give emphasis on the bride/groom's caste, background, profession, degree, height, salary (sometimes), parents' profession and they would also add if a person is divorced.

5.2 Religion and Caste

Religion and *Caste* plays a crucial role in the area of match-making. However, some people post as "Caste no bar", but still mention their religion and caste. This is done to make the other party aware of the former's background. In this way, the latter party can decide whether they should proceed or not.

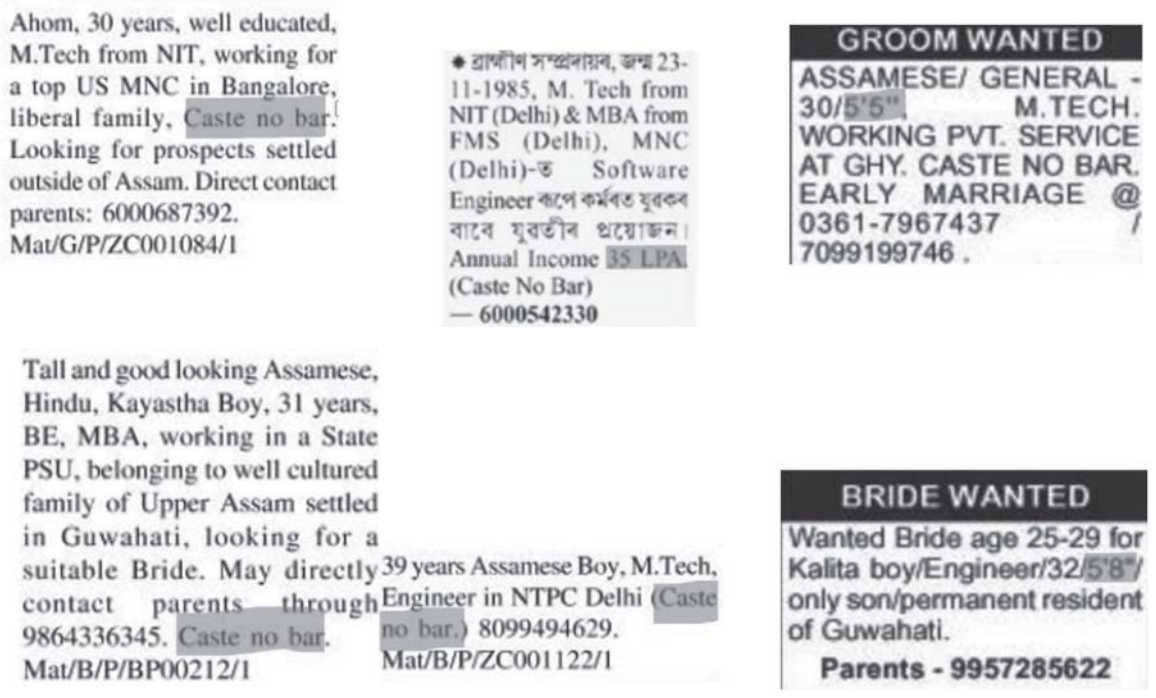
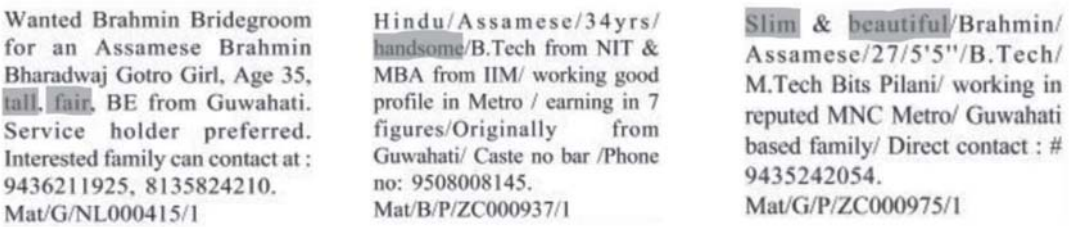


Figure 5.2.1. *Samples of matrimonial classifieds from "The Assam Tribune" dated 8 Aug 2021.*

In Fig 5.2.1, we can see that the parties do not have any problem with the caste; still they have mentioned their caste to let the other party know of their background. It can also be seen that the description of the bride/groom is given in not more than two lines.

5.3 Salary, Height and Beauty

The earning of the groom is of utmost importance when it comes to seeking an alliance. A groom would not go for a bride who earns more than the former. Also, salary is mentioned to give an idea how affluent the person is. A strong preference is given to homely, fair and good-looking women. Similarly, the usual tall and handsome men can still be relevant in Indian society. Height plays a major factor in match- making. The groom's height is given to invite brides shorter than the groom. Whereas, the bride's height is mentioned to pull grooms taller than her. Parents' occupations also play a major role. It is mentioned in order to set the bar to the limit to which they are seeking alliance. The matrimonial ads in the Assamese dailies lack figures of speech and dialectal variation.


Wanted Brahmin Bridegroom for an Assamese Brahmin Bharadwaj Gotro Girl, Age 35, tall, fair, BE from Guwahati. Service holder preferred. Interested family can contact at : 9436211925, 8135824210. Mat/G/NL000415/1

Hindu/Assamese/34yrs/ handsome/B.Tech from NIT & MBA from IIM/ working good profile in Metro / earning in 7 figures/Originally from Guwahati/ Caste no bar /Phone no: 9508008145. Mat/B/P/ZC000937/1

Slim & beautiful/Brahmin/ Assamese/27/5'5"/B.Tech/ M.Tech Bits Pilani/ working in reputed MNC Metro/ Guwahati based family/ Direct contact : # 9435242054. Mat/G/P/ZC000975/1

Figure 5.3.1. Samples of matrimonial classifieds from *The Assam Tribune, Amar Asom and DainikJanambhumi. (month of July-August 2021)*

5.4 An analysis of the text in Assamese matrimonial ads

In this segment, an in-depth analysis of some of the matrimonial adverts is mentioned. A thorough study of the ads is done to explicate the linguistic and socio-cultural context of the Assamese community. The examples are taken from the weekend edition of *Dainik Janambhumi* and *The Assam Tribune* and are illustrative of the majority of the corpus data in terms of the linguistic and cultural outline.


5'9", PGDM from Bangalore having own firm related to Media and Entertainment at Guwahati and other Business, seeks qualified working Brahmin Girl also having interest in cultural line. Father ACS Officer (Rtd.). Only son from Upper Assam, well settled at Guwahati. Parents contact: 9678001810. Mat/B/P/UP000712/1

Fig. 5.4.1

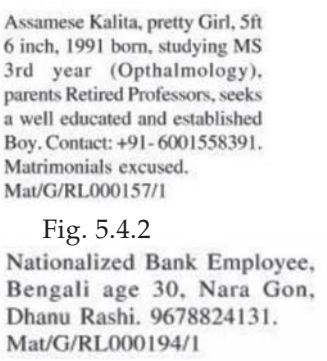

Assamese Kalita, pretty Girl, 5ft 6 inch, 1991 born, studying MS 3rd year (Opthalmology), parents Retired Professors, seeks a well educated and established Boy. Contact: +91- 6001558391. Matrimonials excused. Mat/G/RL000157/1

Fig. 5.4.2

Nationalized Bank Employee, Bengali age 30, Nara Gon, Dhanu Rashi. 9678824131. Mat/G/RL000194/1

Fig. 5.4.3


• Divorcee (Issueless)/ জন্ম 16-02-84/ MBBS & MD from Silchar Medical College/ Guwahati-ত Govt. Doctor কাৰ্যৰত যুবকৰ বাবে যুবতীৰ প্ৰয়োজন। (Widow & divorcee with child also acceptble.) — 9707902256

Fig. 5.4.4

The selected ads *fig.5.4.1 and 5.4.2* identify the caste of the bride/groom as Brahmin and Kalita. In *Fig. 5.4.3,* Ganakoota is of utmost importance in Hindu marriage match making system. It is believed that if there is conflict in gana/gan/gon, there will be quarrels and disharmony in relationships. The seeker's family has mentioned both the gon and the zodiac sign of the seeker. After denoting the caste and the astrological descriptions, the age and the height are seen. Then the educational qualifications come into play. These are mentioned in *abbreviations:*

Fig.5.4.1-PGDM (Post-graduate Diploma in Management), ACS (Assam Civil Service), Rtd. (Retired)

Fig.5.4.2-MS (Master of Science)

Fig.5.4.4-MBBS (Bachelor of Medicine and Bachelor of Surgery), MD (Doctor of Medicine), Govt. (Government)

We see that the parents' qualifications also play a crucial role when it comes to seeking alliance with an educated family. In fig.5.4.1, the father's profession is given as a retired ACS (Assam Civil Service officer) and in fig.5.4.2 both the parents as retired professors.

Fig. 5.4.4 shows us the case of a divorcee. The adjective 'issueless' is raised to prove the seeker's innocence. যুবকের বাবে যুবতী (jubokor babe juboti) presents the figurative speech-*alliteration. Alliteration* is the occurrence of the same letter or sound at the beginning of adjacent or closely connected words.

The grammatical properties display phrase structures- separated by commas. The jargons fig.5.4.2 (Ophthalmology) are mostly nouns. And a wide range of adjectives and nouns are seen with a lesser range of verbs, adverbs and conjunctions.

6. Analysis of Matrimonial Advertisements in Marathi Newspapers

These ads are capable of showing the current situation of the society by giving a sneak peek into the issues like caste system, financial hierarchy, and sexism. The number of ads saying 'जातीचीअटनाही' (jaati chi at naahi) Fig. 6. (i), Fig. 6. (ii) which means 'No caste bar' is increasing. However, on the other hand, there are still plenty of ads showing the candidates expecting grooms or brides from the same caste as them. Many people also mention sub-castes. The fascinating part of these pages is that it has some ads of matchmaking groups which are only dedicated to matchmaking of higher castes in the society.



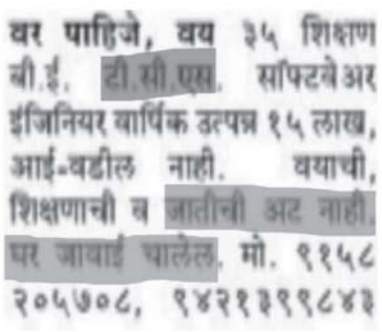


Fig.6.(i) **Fig.6.(ii)**

Some have a headline saying 'For Brahmins and also others', and some people mentioned 'no caste bar' only for the so-called higher castes of society, this demonstrates the entrenched system of caste hierarchy. Surprisingly the significant number of ads was dedicated to quadragenarians who are remarrying. We have the rigid history of patriarchy where remarriage was opposed, but the number of widow applicants has increased progressively. Some people also mentioned that they are ready to accept the child of a divorcee. 'घरजावईचालेल' Fig. 6. (ii) (gharjavaichalel) is also mentioned in some ads. 'Gharjavai' is the term used for a groom who lives with the family of a bride.

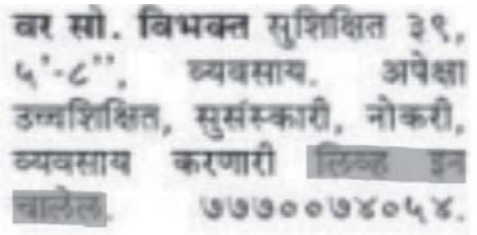


Fig. 6. (iii)

One of the most significant findings was the mention of 'Live-in relationship' in matrimonial ads Fig.6.(iii), Fig.6.1.3(i). Many people did not culturally accept this phenomenon earlier; however, it is now freely mentioned in the matrimonial ads of print media. Kundli, zodiac signs are not mentioned in these ads anymore as they were earlier. Yet, unfortunately, the expectation of unrealistic beauty standards is still pervasive in society. The words like 'गोरा"(gora/gori) fair, उंच" (uncha) tall, (sadpaatal) thin, 'सावली" (sawli) dusky etc., can be seen in matrimonial ads.

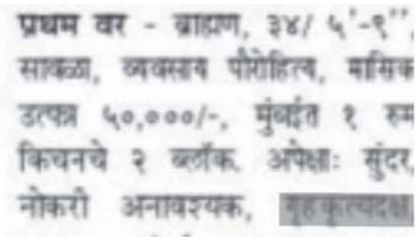

प्रथम वर - ब्राह्मण, ३४/ ५'-९",
साकळा, व्यवसाय पौरोहित्य, मासिक
उत्पन्न ५०,०००/-, मुंबईत १ रू
किचनचे २ ब्लॉक अपेक्षाः सुंदर,
नोकरी अनावश्यक,

Fig.6.(iv)

A small portion of the society is working hard to make it a better place with no discrimination based on caste, race, financial condition etc. Yet, a massive number of the population is still stuck in these age-old societal norms. An analysis of matrimonial ads shows that the language used in matrimonial ads is full of various linguistic features. The choice of words has changed from earlier. Interestingly, the fusion between colloquial expressions and fancy literary terms can also be seen. 'Matrimonial advertisements' are a useful tool to get an idea of changing socio-cultural situations and even a language of the particular area.

6.1 Linguistic Features

6.1.1 Abbreviations

In some cases, English abbreviations are used in matrimonial ads published in Marathi newspapers Fig.6.1.2(i), for example:
PQM: Professionally Qualified Match
BHP: Biodata Horoscope Photograph
Engr: Engineer, B'ful: Beautiful,
fmly: Family, H.some: Handsome,
Wrkg: working, mglk: manglik
SM4: Suitable Match For
Marathi abbreviations of caste titles used in the ads:
को. ब्रा. (Konkani Brahmin) दे. ब्रा. (Deshasth Brahmin) कु. म. (Kuli Maratha)

6.1.2 Transliteration

The educational qualification and occupation of the candidate are written by transliterating English abbreviations into Marathi (Devanagari). एम.ए., बी.ए., एच. आर. एम. बी. ए., एम. एस. सी., गर्व्ह. (Government job) English to Marathi transliteration of a phrase 'well-settled' (वेलसेटल्ड) is also typed in an advertisement of 'Sakal'. Some more examples of English to Marathi transliteration are as follows: प्रोफेसर (professor), डिप्लोमा (diploma) परमनंट (permanent), जॉब (job), फारमसी (pharmacy), प्रॉब्लेम (problem), ग्राज्युएट (graduate), पी.एच. डी. (PhD), लिव-इनरिलेशनशिप (live-in relationship) etc.

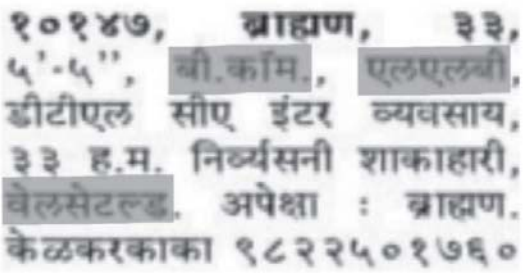
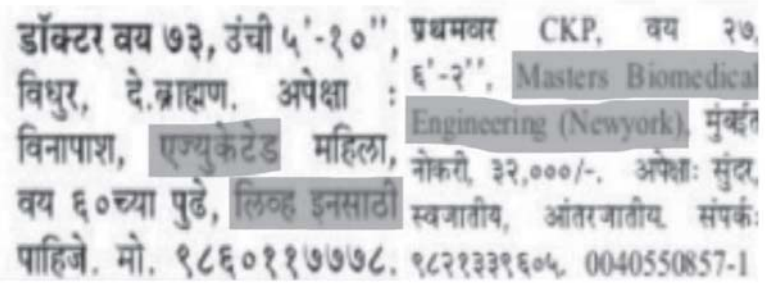

१०१४७, ब्राह्मण, ३३,
५'-५", बी.कॉम., एलएलबी,
डीटीएल सीए इंटर व्यवसाय,
३३ ह.म. निर्व्यसनी शाकाहारी,
वेलसेटल्ड. अपेक्षा : ब्राह्मण.
केळकरकाका ९८२२५०१७६०

Fig.6.1.2(i)

6.1.3 Code-mixing

In the newspaper 'Loksatta', while mentioning a degree of the candidate, code- mixing is used between English and Marathi Fig.6.1.3(ii). One of the Marathi ads mentioned only one English sentence which is 'retired from state government', which was written in Devnagari.


डॉक्टर वय ७३, उंची ५'-१०", विधुर, दे.ब्राह्मण. अपेक्षा : विनापाश, एज्युकेटेड महिला, वय ६०च्या पुढे, लिव्ह इनसाठी पाहिजे. मो. ९८६०११७७७८.

प्रथमवर CKP, वय २७, ६'-२", Masters Biomedical Engineering (Newyork), मुंबई नोकरी, ३२,०००/-. अपेक्षा: सुंदर, स्वजातीय, आंतरजातीय. संपर्क: ९८२१३३१६०५, 0040550857-1

Fig. 6.1.3(i) Fig. 6.1.3(ii)

6.1.4 Metaphor

Only one example of this linguistic feature is seen in matrimonial ads of Marathi newspapers, that is; 'हलदीचाडाग" (haldi cha daag) which literally means 'stain of turmeric' Fig. 6.1.4(i). This phrase denotes, the bride already had been engaged before and performed a cultural ceremony of 'Haldi' which takes place a day before the wedding day. In other words, this metaphor interprets that the candidate was engaged but could not get married at the last moment because of some unfortunate reasons. It can be said that an unspoken phenomenon is disguised with the use of figurative devices of the language, such as Metaphor.

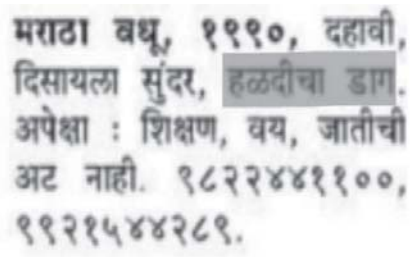

मराठा वधू, १९९०, दहावी,
दिसायला सुंदर, हळदीचा डाग.
अपेक्षा : शिक्षण, वय, जातीची
अट नाही. ९८२२४४११००,
९९२१५४४२८९.

Fig. 6.1.4(i)

6.1.5. Antonym and figurative meaning

'अंधक्लर्ककरिताडोलसवधूपाहिजे" (andhklarkkaritadolasvadhupahije), Fig.6.1.5(i).
A blind clerk needs a sighted bride. This sentence was used in a Marathi newspaper called 'Sakal' on 11th October 2020. Here, the word 'andh' (blind) and 'dolas' (the person who has eyes) are literal antonyms, which are used in a single sentence; in addition to this, the word 'dolas' has one more meaning, that is 'an insightful person'. Thus, this sentence carries a literal sense and also a figurative one.

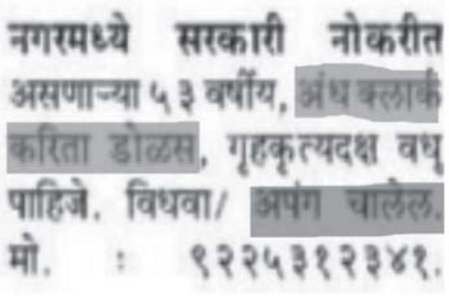

नगरमध्ये सरकारी नोकरीत
असणाऱ्या ५३ वर्षीय, अंध क्लार्क
करिता डोळस, गृहकृत्यदक्ष वधू
पाहिजे. विधवा/ अपंग चालेल.
मो. : ९२२५३१२३४१.

Fig.6.1.5(i)

6.2 Different 'Styles': Same Meaning

Many grooms mention that they need a bride who is a housewife, the one who is interested in being a homemaker, in conveying this particular expectation of the candidate, some advertisements use simple words and easy sentence constructions which are used in daily life. For example; ' घरसांभालणारीपाहिजे (gharsambhalnaripahije), which can be translated as, 'the bride should be able to manage the "home".' However, on the other hand, some ads choose to use extremely complicated words in Marathi literature, which has the same meaning as earlier but is not used in spoken language by native speakers. For example; 'गृहकृत्यदक्ष' (gruha-kruttya-daksha) Fig.6.(iv), 'the one who is aware of his/her duties towards home.

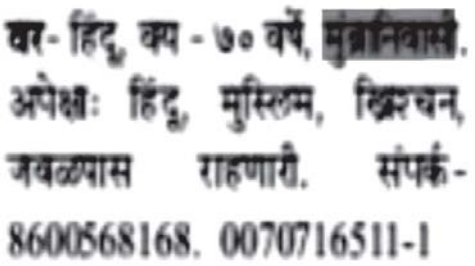

वर- हिंदू, वय - ७० वर्षे, मुंबानिवासी.
अपेक्षः हिंदू, मुस्लिम, क्रिश्चन,
जवळपास राहणारी. संपर्क-
8600568168. 0070716511-1

Fig.6.2 (i)

This indicates that, the language used in these ads changes its style according to the socio-cultural and linguistic background of the people. The dialectic changes, the different choice of words shows the distinction in use of language of different backgrounds. The use of colloquial terms in the media has become common, which is also seen in the form of matrimonial ads. However, some still choose to stick with the use of literal and fancy terms which are only used in literature and not in real life conversations. Another example of this feature is, while mentioning the expected city of an applicant many ads use simple statements like मुंबईतराहणारापाहिजे (Mumbai trahnarapahije) translated as, the applicant should be staying in Mumbai. On the other hand, the same context is portrayed with different 'Style' by using an adjective '. 'मुंबानिवासी" (Mumbanivasi) Fig.6.2 (i), which is typically used in literary language. The word used in Marathi literature, 'गहूवर्ण" Fig.6.2(ii) and a colloquial word 'सावला", both have the same meaning, that is 'dusky complexion'. These two words are used in two different ads in the same newspaper.

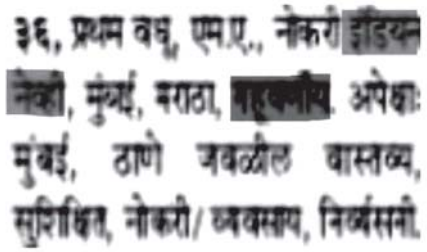

३६, प्रथम वधू, एम.ए., नोकरी इंडियन
नेव्ही, मुंबई, मराठा, गहूवर्णीय. अपेक्षः
मुंबई, ठाणे जवळील वास्तव्य,
सुशिक्षित, नोकरी/ व्यवसाय, निर्व्यसनी.

Fig. 6. 2(ii)

7. Distinctive Features of Assamese and Marathi Matrimonial Ads

A fair amount of similarities can be seen in both communities ranging from the caste bars to the unrealistic beauty standards and sexism in Indian society. However, certain differences related to the usage of languages and conventional assumptions are noticed which are as follows:

- In Marathi newspapers, half of the candidates are aged above 40 years of age. Some of them are also in the range of 60-70 years which portrays the deviation from conventional age barriers. Whereas in the Assamese newspapers, the seekers are mostly in the range of 30-40 years. And a lesser number of candidates can be seen in the age group of 20+ or 40+.
- In Marathi newspapers, a large number of ads are dedicated to quadragenarians who are remarrying, candidates with a broken engagement, person with a physical disability, suitors who are looking for companionship in old age. Contrarily, in the Assamese matrimonial ads, we see that the major number of applicants is "conventionally eligible bachelors", with a few numbers of ads representing the issueless divorcees.
- Special columns dedicated to marriage unions of only higher caste people are noticed only in one of the Marathi newspapers having the title "Brahman ani itar" translated as Brahman and others.
- Suitors mentioning their parents' profession and the background are spotted in the Assamese newspapers which display how affluent the family is. Whereas, in the Marathi newspapers, only the educational background of candidates is mentioned.
- The unusual mention of 'live-in relationship'; picturing the modern progressive society was noticed in one of the Marathi newspapers which was not culturally accepted earlier in many communities.
- The language used in Assamese ads is quite straightforward and technical with a higher emphasis on abbreviations, nouns and adjectives. However, Marathi ads are highly decorated with the use of literal, non-colloquial words and catchy figurative devices such as metaphor, antonyms and fabricated sentence constructions.

Conclusion

To achieve the aims and objectives, this study has explored the usual stylistic devices seen in the matrimonial ads of Assamese and Marathi weekly newspapers. A vivid picture of the eastern and the western states of India, namely Assam and Maharashtra has been depicted in this study by looking into the socio-cultural scenario through the uses of language in their local newspapers. Therefore, this research has highlighted the linguistic structural analysis and the role of social context to disclose functions and intrinsic meanings of the text. By examining the stylistic features of local languages used in matrimonial advertisements such as- figurative expressions, code mixing, metaphors, alliteration, acronyms, transliteration and uses of lingua franca, this study has explored the sociological aspects reflected through them. The study analysed the unique and distinctive socio-cultural beliefs and compared the social backgrounds of these two communities by studying the two widely used Indo-

Aryan languages; Assamese and Marathi. The research findings would help researchers, who are into the field of Stylistics, to investigate the figurative devices used in the media and the way they reflect the socio-cultural scenario of the community.

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Opinion of Unmarried Women on Marriage, Cohabitation and Childbearing: Are There Prospects of The Second Demographic Transition in Kolkata?

Monorisha Mukhopadhyay

Abstract

Fertility decline is explained by change in attitude of the individual towards marriage and childbearing and preferences for number of children. This paper focuses on opinions and preferences of single women in a low fertility sub-population of Kolkata. A two-stage systematic random sampling method had been chosen with city wards as the first stage unit and married women as second stage unit. It is entirely based on primary information collected through semi structured questionnaires and face to face interview schedules. The study shows that preference for small families is high, idea of non marriage is not widespread and idea of sexual liberation is not accepted widely in practice. The phenomenon of voluntary childlessness is found little support in the studied population. The responses indicate that the low fertility in Kolkata has been achieved without actually following the path of Second Demographic Transition.

Keywords: *fertility behaviour, low-fertility, non marriage, education*

Introduction:

Fertility decline in the Asian countries have been taking place in the past decades. The Asian countries are grouped as two broad regions; east and southeast Asian countries and south Asian countries. The lowering of fertility in the former had been largely governed by change in marriage pattern where voluntary childlessness from voluntary non marriage played a substantial role in fertility decline of the region (Jones 2007: 453). Southeast Asian countries like Myanmar, Japan, Thailand, Singapore, Malaysia, Taiwan, South Korea and Indonesia had begun to avoid marriages or postpone their marriages; since it is likely that societies industrialize and urbanize when they converge towards western conjugal life (Cherlin 2012: 577); though this argument has received criticism from several quarters (Jones 1995: 184). In the past, in these countries, marriage was near universal but the trend is gradually changing. In general the age of marriage and proportion not marrying at all is

rising greatly with abandonment of traditional universal marriage and shift in preference towards singlehood.

After late 20th century, with increasing level of education among girls the rate of arranged marriages declined. This happened as there was less of structural need for sustenance of the arranged marriage system. Rather, increasing level of education and self reliance have prompted towards later marriages and subsequently less marriages in east and southeast Asia (Jones 2005: 93). The weakening of arranged marriages is a clear effect of remarkable development of women education in the urban areas and increased involvement of women in the economic activities (Anderberg & Yu Zhu 2009: 2). Besides economic security, education gave a fulfilling career thus giving an alternative route to self fulfillment through marriage and childbearing (Jones 2005).

Education in women makes them certain about their preferences and they often unwilling to marry unless expectations are met. It is likely that the lack of partner is compensated by peer group with same mental plane where likelihood of monotony is reduced (Jones 2010: 6). It was found that both highly educated women and less educated men faced difficulties in getting a partner. Opportunity cost of marriage and family formation was greater for educated women. Moreover, educated women develop values that were feministic while the male remained traditional in their value judgments and thinking. Thus, in addition to shortage of male partners it was more of scarcity in terms of thought (Quah 1998; Tsuya & Bumpass 2004).

Besides, it is still expected from a girl to de-prioritize their parents after marriage. Educated and self-reliant girls who are often a single child themselves avoid marriage as they feel that it will not be possible for them to look after their aging parents. Also, post marriage , instead of co-sharing of the household responsibilities by both the partners it is still expected that the effective functioning of the household will be the primary responsibility of the women. This is often anticipated as an added burden to the women. All these factors have led to wearing down of the idea that marriage has to be preserved at any cost.

On the other hand, in south Asia universal arranged marriages is still a norm in the society. In Bangladesh, and India around 99 per cent of marriages were estimated to be arranged (International Institute of Population Sciences [IIPS] & ORC Macro 2000; Islam, Mamun, & Bairagi 1998: 3). By 1990s, south Asian women from Bangladesh, India and Nepal were marrying before 20 years of age but there was an indication of rising age at marriage (Choe, Westley & Retherford 2002: 31). Particularly, in India the kinship involves principles like exogamous marriage, and non-inheritance of property by females (Jones 2010). In India arranged marriages is seen as an easy way to uphold the family honour, chastity and humility (Desai & Lester 2010: 686). Hindu system emphasize the absorption of the wife into the husband's family (Jones 2010). Marriage is generally viewed as a permanent arrangement,

and divorce rates, although rising, are still quite low. Furthermore, a large regional diversity in age at marriage is intrinsic characteristics of the country (Visaria 2004).

The discussion reflects that the family norms in south Asia in general or India in particular are distinctively different and function differently from the way the east and southeast Asian do (Choe et al. 2002). The debate on demographic behaviour in India had been well explored under the framework of Demographic Transition Model which was driven by socio- economic needs. The popular academic discourses in the country is highly polarized towards the disparate demographic rates between the southern and the northern states in Indua (Dyson & Moore 1983: 39); where more emphasis was given to factors like traditional role of women, son preferences and early age at marriage (Uberoi 1993).

In contrast, there is pocket of sub-population in Kolkata where couples are going for late marriages or lesser number of children (Ghosh 2017: 26). For that matter West Bengal had been historically experiencing a low fertility regime (Basu & Desai 2016; 4). The Calcutta Fertility survey conducted in 1970 studied the fertility level in the Calcutta Metropolitan area. The marital fertility rates in European countries corresponding to early reproductive years were higher than those observed for Kolkata (Indian Statistical Institute, 1974). The fertility transition in Kolkata started in 1970 and achieved lowest TFR of 2.0 in India. Recent study based on reverse survival estimation using 2011 census revealed that TFR of the city-Kolkata had come down to 1.2 (Guilmoto & Rajan 2013: 15). It seems the value system of sub-population residing in Kolkata is inadequately captured in the history of demographic literature in the state (Basu & Amin, 2000: 4).

Summarizing the hypotheses

This paper hypotheses that the probable divergence of low fertility in the sub-population of Kolkata may possibly be explained by Second Demographic Transition (SDT).

The phase of lowest-low fertility in the southern, central and eastern Europe (Kohler, Billari & Ortega 2002) led to the emergence of SDT (Van De Kaa 1987: 5). Some of the characteristics of SDT were non-marital childbearing, adoption of modern contraception, voluntary childlessness, and legitimization of cohabitation, individualism and emphasis on personal lifestyle (Van De Kaa 1994). The SDT theorized that a large proportion of women would forego marriage when they start getting educated and become economically independent and fertility decision would be primarily guided by individual choices. With the associated affluence of economic growth there will be shift from "irreducible needs" to "higher order needs" (Lesthaeghae & Surkyn 1988: 3). Higher order needs stressed on individualism, love, freedom, shift in value orientation and preferences (Maslow 1954: 100).

The idea of SDT had been criticised from various quarters. It has been argued that there is no clear cut transition between the first and second demographic transition (Cliquet 1992: 11). The terminology was also not accepted widely as it was argued that SDT deals more with transition in living arrangement rather than demographic behaviour (Coleman 2004: 12). It was argued that within Europe there was a large number of anomalies in family pattern and demographic behaviour which is not possible to accommodate under one umbrella of SDT (Micheli 2004: 127; Sobotka 2008: 213). Moreover, most of the propositions that surround SDT were based on European countries. Although the convergence of similar phenomenon has been noticed in developed countries of east and south east Asia with diverse family system and fertility behaviour (Sobotka 2008: 174).

In this paper the principal conjecture is that the divergence of low fertility in Kolkata and associated change in behaviour can be attributed to the onset of SDT. This will result in change of the socio-psychological perception of the society from traditional domestic roles to attainment of individual aspirations (Basu & Desai 2016: 5). Accordingly, this article tries to explore the following questions: Firstly, What will the attitudes and opinions of the singles be towards marriage and childbearing in a society that is experiencing sub-replacement fertility within broader societal framework where traditional notion of marriage and childbearing still exists? Secondly, can the shift in attitude be attributed to shift in value system in line with the SDT?

Methods and Materials

The psyche of the unmarried girls towards marriage and childbearing is significant as these women are probable future mothers and their inclination will indicate the course of family building and level of fertility in the population. The proportion of ever married women in the age group 30-34 years was about 93 per cent for urban female which showed that proportions never marrying were small (RGI 2014). So far, four rounds of the nationally administered demographic and health survey namely National Family and Health Survey (NFHS) had been conducted and the reports of these were published. The estimates from the third round (IIPS 2007) and fourth round (IIPS 2017) showed that proportion of unmarried girls in urban areas of West Bengal was about 13 per cent and 12.2 per cent in the age group 25- 29 years and 3.8 per cent and 4.2 per cent at age 40 to 49 years respectively. In India most of the fertility surveys in the past covered only married women; the NFHS covered unmarried women but did not collect information on attitudes towards marriage, cohabitation etc. In view of the need of the information from unmarried women, a field survey conducted by the researcher covered unmarried women in addition to married women. Particularly for this study primary survey becomes important to understand their views on education, career, necessity of marriage, attitudes towards childbearing, notion on family size and childbearing outside the ambit of marital institution.

This paper is primarily based on the information collected from unmarried women in Kolkata. In a metropolis like Kolkata, the population is widely heterogeneous i.e., varies socially, economically and demographically. Therefore, a two-stage systematic random sampling method had been chosen with city wards as the first-stage unit and currently married and unmarried women from these as the second stage unit. Kolkata covers an area of 185 square kilometers and divided in to 141 municipal wards and four special wards (RGI 2011) and among these 141 wards, four wards were chosen for sample survey. Female Literacy Rate was chosen as an indicator to arrange the wards in descending order and a systematic sample of four were selected; this amounts to implicit stratification by female literacy. The data from the 2011 census were not available at the time of data collection and hence the selection of wards was based on the data from the previous census, that of 2001. From each ward two localities, one identified as poor and the other as non poor, were selected based on the local enquiries and perception of the researcher. After listing of households in each locality, it was proposed to select 25 currently married in the age group of 15-49 years and 12 unmarried women in the age group of 16-40 years at random but in order to allow for non-response up to 30 currently married women of reproductive age and 15 unmarried women in age group 15-40 years were selected from each locality (The findings associated with married women are discussed in a separate paper). Structured interview schedules were prepared.

The data were collected between February and March 2014. Unmarried girls were asked about career objectives, opinion on institution of marriage, ideal age of marriage, ideal family size and notions on childbearing outside marriage. Besides, information on socio-economic background was collected. The primary aim of the paper was to get an opinion of the respondents which is unlikely to change in recent times with the sustained low fertility in the studied region. The possible role of factors such as education, level of income (or poverty), female employment and religion on marriage and childbearing is well recognized in demographic literature. (Isen & Stevenson 2010: 2). Also, uncertainty of future jobs makes people go for higher education so that eventually they get better placed in the job market (Adsera 2004: 18). Family is one of the important institutions of our society. Thus, family system is one of the institutional factors that determine the value orientation, individual choices and in turn develop opinion about marriage and number of children. For example, joint family system encourages higher number of children (Bebarta 1966: 633; Shaw 1988: 329). In such families there are elders to look after the new member in the family. Moreover, members other than in-laws put pressure on women to bear children in the first few months of the marriage. Given India's caste structure, belonging to a caste, especially to highly deprived and traditionally socially excluded groups like the Scheduled Castes (SC) and tribes can have a bearing on institutions like marriage followed by childbearing. The influences of modern education and socio-economic transformations have led to enormous changes

in the existing pattern of choosing one's life partner and marriage practices in India (Goli, Singh & Sekhar 2013: 194). Besides, the role of cultural factors influencing low fertility in Bengali speaking population had been discussed in literature (Basu & Amin 2000:6).

In this paper caste (Scheduled Caste, 'others'), education (no education, primary, secondary, graduate, post graduate), mother tongue (Bengali, 'others'), religion (Hindu, 'others'), type of family (nuclear, non nuclear), household income (<10,000, 10001-25000, >25000 rupees per month) and type of locality (non poor and poor) were included as explanatory factors of attitudes on marriage and childbearing. It is to be noted that the information on household income is discussed as given by the respondents. Also, the nature of the locality was based purely on the perceived judgment of the researcher as assessed by personal observation and categorized as non poor and poor. Reporting of income was often incorrect but the purpose here was to obtain a broad categorization on the basis of income and not a precise estimation of income.

The differentials on opinions and attitudes were presented by background characteristics in the paper. It was recognized that some of the background factors were associated and ideally multivariate analysis should be carried out to assess net influences of various factors. However, the number of respondents was too small to permit a meaningful multivariate analysis. To find out the association chi-square test was carried out. Chi-square test is a statistical test commonly used to compare observed data with data that is expected to obtain according to a specific hypothesis. The distribution used in the paper will help in understanding the attitude and behaviour of the sample group. It must be noted that this paper is based on the responses of women from Kolkata. This is not an average or typical population of India and generalization to India or to urban India would not be appropriate

Opinion of unmarried women on necessity of marriage

The changes that arrived with SDT brought along with it changes in value orientation and preference for marriage, family and childbearing. But it is also important to understand the significance of forming a family. Gary Becker in his Treatise on the family (Becker 1981: 135) commented that husband and wife complemented each other in a marriage as husband specializes in market activities and wife specializes in the domestic activities. But this production complementariness became weak in the twentieth centuries when there was an increase access to education, decline in labour market discrimination and increase in wage rate. Consequently the declining value of production efficiencies decreased the value of marriage. Delayed or avoidance of marriage can be assumed to be closely linked particularly in the southeast Asian countries (Jones 2007). On the other hand, in south Asia most of the unmarried women stayed at home and marriage signals the initiation of conjugal life and progression towards family building (Jones 2012: 89).

In the survey, unmarried girls were asked whether they thought marriage is at all necessary for girls (Table 1). About four out of ten opined that marriage is not necessary for girls. A large proportion of girls believed that girls can do without marriage but it is indispensable for boys. They believed that economically independent women can take care of themselves and eventually marriages can be forgone. A higher proportion of women from older age cohort felt that marriage is not necessary for women. Often in the process of attaining higher education and pursuing challenging career women miss the right age as perceived by the society (Jones 2007). Moreover, they lack choice of a good partner who will be at the same or higher mental plane. The views shared by the respondents referred to marriage in general and may not be the same for the girls' own marriage. Many respondents linked non- marriage with economic independence and felt that 'marriage will curb their freedom and can be forgone if economic independence is achieved'. Some girls also associated marriage with 'increasing hassles and domestic troubles'. When the responses were cross-classified across the socio-economic background it was found that the preference for avoidance of marriage was significantly higher among Bengali speaking women. They were found to believe that one may forgo marriage and live a comfortable life. Thus among all the background variables ethnicity of the women was found to be more crucial in shaping the opinion of the respondents.

Similarly, when asked to the girls whether they think marriage is necessary for boys, about one-fifth said that marriage was not necessary for boys (Table 2). When the responses were cross-classified across the socio-economic background it was found that age of the women significantly affect the opinion on avoidance of marriage for boys. The women from higher age cohort gave more explicit responses and six out of ten women believed that marriage is indispensable for boys (Table 2).

In the sample population it was found that marriage is still an important institution and for a majority alternative living arrangements were not foreseeable in the recent future. However, at very nascent stage, there is an undercurrent of shift of opinion in favour of non marriage. The respondents generally believed that 'Marriage is necessary for girls as one gets a partner with whom they can share their feelings'. Some also said that 'Marriage provides a partner for old age and a support in the absence of their parents'. A few had also internalized marriage as being one of the important events of life and did not think of any deviation. Respondents also opined that 'Marriage is necessary to continue with their progeny and often remaining unmarried is a taboo in the society'. Girls generally believed that marriage is more important for boys and they (men) would not be able to do without it. Apart from established views like 'It is the responsibility of the boys to carry forward the family name', some of the responses were in favour of marriage for boys. Quite a handful of women felt that 'Boys are mentally weak' and as a result 'They need someone to take

care of them especially in the old age'. Therefore, from the survey it reflected that substantial proportion of young single women does not think that marriage is an absolute necessity. Thus, at least a non-negligible portion of unmarried women were thinking along the lines of the SDT.

Ideal age of marriage

In Indian context the conjugal life is believed to be starting after marriage. So the ideal age of marriage will give a direction towards childbearing and family building. Respondents during the survey were asked in general what they feel is an ideal age of marriage. Separate questions were asked for ideal age of marriage for a boy and a girl. The question was asked for an exact age but many responses were in the form of a range. Hence in the analysis the ideal age had been discussed in terms of range. The age ranges used were 15-19 years, 20-24 years, 25-29 years and 30 years or above respectively.

The median had been calculated to get the middle value as mean was liable to get affected by extremes. The respondents were categorized into three age groups 15-19 years, 20-24 years and above 25 years. Among younger girls about half said that an ideal age of marriage for girls was between 25-29 years. As the age of the single women increased most (for about 84 per cent) of them stated that the ideal age of marriage should be between 25-29 years. About one-fifth of the respondents above 25 years opined that ideal age is 30 years and above (Table 3). Among younger respondents, half felt that the ideal age of marriage for boys is between 25-29 years and about one-fifth believed that it is above 30 years. Over half of the girls above 25 years of age considered that boys should ideally get married after 30 years of age. A large section considered that age above 30 years is ideal for boys to get married.

When the respondents were probed about the age at which they themselves were comfortable getting married, the range varied with age. About four-fifths of the younger girls said they wanted to marry between 25-29 years and of the girls 25 and above, one-third preferred marriage after 30th year of age (Table 3). There can be a post facto rationalization as women stated higher ideal age of marriage than their own age. There was also a section of girls above 25 years, about one-fifth, who were either not sure of marriage or do not want to get married in the future. Thus, there is some preference among the respondents to postpone the age at marriage and some women of higher age cohort even wanted to forego marriage altogether.

Fertility preferences

Sociologists and demographers have tried to explain fertility decline by change in attitude of the individual towards marriage and childbearing and preference for the number of

children (Hakim 2003). The set of preference in a population will bring about change in the fertility pattern only if the dynamics of the behavioral pattern changes. The respondents were asked "What do you think should be the ideal family size?" Four out of ten said that their ideal family size is one. About half of the girls preferred two as their ideal size. For less than four per cent the ideal family size was three or above. Thus, about half of the respondents considered two as the ideal family size. There were no respondents who preferred a childless family. This further points out to the fact that voluntary childlessness is still not acceptable in the society. Although, the survey results point to a shift in inclination towards one child family as women in Kolkata were keen to have small families.

The fertility preference of currently married women was also studied during the study (the details of the results have been dealt separately in another paper). A highlight of the result will help in understanding the purview from both the sides. Similar reflection was observed during the field investigations where 25 per cent of currently married women were inclined to have a one child family. The NFHS- III estimate also corroborated this as it showed that about 35 per cent of the currently married women in Kolkata and 27 per cent in urban West Bengal idealize a family with one child (IIPS and ORC Macro 2007). In recent estimates by NFHS-IV (2015-16) it showed that about 22 per cent of the women currently in union or living with a man idealize a family with one child.

The preference may also vary with socio-economic differentials and a chi-square analysis was done to see association of highly interlinked background variables. The result showed (Table 4) that the preference for a one child family was significantly higher among Bengali speaking women, who follow Hinduism and those with higher education. However, the phenomenon of voluntary childlessness which is one of the essential features of the SDT has found little support in the studied population.

Opinion of unmarried women on childbearing outside marriage

In the survey, girls were asked about their opinion on childbearing outside the institution of marriage. This was to find out how they feel about co-habitation and how much importance do they attach to marriage as a requirement for childbearing. About one-fifth of unmarried women said that they had no objections to 'Others' bearing children outside the wedlock but were reluctant to do the same themselves. About three-fourths (Table 5) said that 'The concept is still not acceptable in the society' and four per cent were not sure of the idea. Thus, sexual liberation does not seem to have caught up in the society and in this respect, the conditions of SDT have not developed to the extent seen in many European countries (Sobotka, Zemen & Kantorova 2003: 258).

When the responses were cross classified by socio-economic background it was found (Table 5) that age of the women and income of the household significantly affect the idea

of childbearing outside the institution of marriage. A chi-square analysis showed that the women from higher age cohort and who reside in a non poor locality were significantly more open to the idea of childbearing outside the institution of marriage. The progressive thinking may have developed because of education and more liberal family setup of the Bengali speaking population of the city. However, these attributes were associated and in the absence of a further rigorous multivariate analysis, it is difficult to pinpoint a specific one as the principal factor.

Conclusions

In this paper attitudes of singles towards marriage, fertility preferences, living arrangements and childbearing outside the ambit of marital institution in a sub-population experiencing low fertility were presented. The results indicated that almost everyone is adapted to urban lifestyle and hold views which are primarily liberating. It becomes imperative to understand the psyche of the people which has been framed over a long evolution of culture. This can be stretched long back in history when the phenomenon of having less number of children got a boost with renaissance in the eighteenth century, the change in socio-cultural milieu, and with the advent of modernization (McDonald 2008: 20).

Introduction of social customs, western education and education to girl child had a strong influence and gave rise to a new class popularly called as "*bhadrolok*". They were pioneers of modern thoughts and liberal outlook; thus infusing in the society a culture of liberal attitudes and social revolution. Eventually these liberal ideas were adapted by the larger non-elite classes and slowly the latter group adopted the idea (Hakim 2003). The status of women rose as a result and more and more emphasis was given to education. This was well translated in the size of the family; where importance was given to proper education and right nurturing of the child. This is also reflected in the present paper that education has fertility depressing effect. Education gives a woman basket of choices while taking decisions on life events like choosing a career, a life partner, and embracing motherhood. Apart from appreciating reproductive roles she also attaches importance to individual rights and accomplishments. The cultural factors like mother tongue and religion affiliation are more likely to influence the preferences and attitude of the respondents than the individual socio-economic factors.

It is logical that the various triggers had determined set of preferences in a population that changed marital norms and family building decisions. The study shows young girls continue to hold marriage as an important institution. It is seen that girls consider marriage as a natural progression though prefer to get married at relatively higher age. Respondents look for a partner from marriage and most of them have internalized the idea that marriage is part of life. At the same time, it is interesting to note that quite a few unmarried women

believed that marriage can be forgone if economic independence is achieved. In the study it was found that there is tendency to postpone age at marriage. But the proposition of large number of girls avoiding marriage has been found not to be true in the studied sub-population.

Overall there is an undercurrent of desire for small families; the preference for one child is emerging rapidly among single women. Additionally, it was found that belonging to a particular ethnicity (Bengalis) have bearing on decision of choosing a particular number of children. The phenomenon of voluntary childlessness found little support in the studied population. Large proportion of unmarried women want to have at least one child and not many prefer to forego childbearing altogether. Therefore, it can be argued that the cultural shift may have taken place but the shift in demographic behaviour has not happened from family centric model to an individual model as envisaged in SDT.

Also, there is some acceptance of childbearing outside the conventional wedlock. Though a vast majority does not favour this, it can be considered as an initial phase towards more liberating and innovative society. This can be said as an extension of post-modernism which started in Europe in the mid 1960s and heralded the beginning of the SDT. Also, the idea of sexual liberation is accepted in principle by a small section of population yet is not in practice by vast majority. Thus, it will be prudent to say that although the women of Kolkata have moved along some dimensions of the SDT, the low fertility in the region has been reached without actually following the path of the European, east and southeast Asian countries.

Declaration of Conflicting Interest:

The Author declares that there is no conflict of interest. This work has not been used on any other platform, digital or print and that it is an original research study.

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Table 1 : Opinion of unmarried women on necessity of marriage for women, Kolkata

Background Variables	Categories	Marriage necessary	Marriage not necessary	Do not knolw	Chi Square coefficient	Total
Total	53.6	42.7	3.6		110	
Age at survey	15-19	54.2	43.8	2.1	0.648	48
	20-24	55.3	36.8	7.9		38
	25+	50.0	50.0	0.0		24
Caste	SC/ST				0.552	11*
	Others	54.5	42.4	3.0		99
Education	No education/Primary	48.0	48.0	4.0	0.928	25
	Secondary/Higher secondary	53.7	42.6	3.8		54
	Graduation/Post graduation	58.1	38.7	3.2		31
Religion	Hindu	49.5	46.3	4.3	0.173	95
	Others					15*
Type of family	Nuclear	54.4	44.1	1.5	0.432	68
	Non Nuclear	52.4	40.5	7.2		42
Mother Tongue	Bengali	45.7	49.4	4.9	0.041	81
	Others	75.9	24.1	0.0		29
Income (Rs/ month)	< 10,000	55.6	44.4	0.0	0.266	36
	10,001-25,000	39.5	52.6	7.9		38
	> 25,000	64.7	32.4	2.9		34
Type of locality	Non-Poor	50.9	42.1	7.1	0.273	57
	Poor	56.6	43.4	0.0		53

Note: 1. Figures in parentheses are less than 20; 2.*: Distributions are not given if the total number of women in the category is less than 20.0

Source: Computed from primary data

Table 2 : Opinion of unmarried women on necessity of marriage for men, Kolkata

Background Variables	Categories	Marriage necessary	Marriage not necessary	Do not know	Chi Square coefficient	Total
Total		**54.5**	**20.0**	**25.4**		**110**
Age at survey	15-19	58.3	20.8	20.8	0.083	48
	20-24	44.7	13.2	42.1		38
	25+	62.5	29.2	8.3		24
Caste	SC/ST				0.619	11*
	Others	52.5	21.1	26.3		99
Education	No education/Primary	68.0	8.0	24.0	0.559	25
	Secondary/higher secondary	51.9	24.1	24.1		54
	Graduation/Post graduation	48.4	22.6	29.0		31
Religion	Hindu	51.6	21.1	27.4	0.465	95
	Others					15*
Type of family	Nuclear	52.9	20.6	26.5	0.572	68
	Non Nuclear	57.1	19.0	23.8		42
Mother Tongue	Bengali	50.6	23.5	25.9	0.382	81
	Others	65.5	10.3	24.1		29
Income (Rs/ month)	< 10,000	58.3	19.4	22.2	0.895	36
	10,001-25,000	50.0	21.1	28.9		38
	> 25,000	55.9	20.6	23.5		34
Type of locality	Non-Poor	49.1	21.1	29.9	0.526	57
	Poor	60.4	18.9	20.8		53

Note: 1. Figures in parentheses are less than 20.; 2.*: Distributions are not given if the total number of women in the category is less than 20.
Source: Computed from primary data.

Table 3: Ideal age of marriage for girls and boys (in general) and for respondents themselves, Kolkata

Ideal age of marriage	Age group of the respondents						
	15-19		20-24		25+		Total
	Per cent	N	Per cent	N	Per cent	N	
Marriage for girls							
15-19	10.4	5	0	0	4.2	1	6
20-24	37.5	18	13.2	5	12.5	3	26
25-29	47.9	23	84.2	32	66.7	16	71
30 or more	2.1	1	2.6	1	16.7	4	6
Don't know	2.1	1	0	0	0	0	1
Total	***100.0***	***48***	***100.0***	***38***	***100.0***	***24***	***110***
Median Age	**25.1**		**27.3**		**27.7**		
Marriage for boys							
15-19	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
20-24	12.5	6	0	1	4.2	1	7
25-29	50.0	24	50.0	19	37.5	9	52
30 or more	22.9	11	42.1	16	54.2	13	40
Don't know	14.6	7	7.9	3	4.2	1	11
Total	***100.0***	***48***	***100.0***	***38***	***100.0***	***24***	***110***
Median Age	**28.1**		**28.3**		**30.8**		
For respondents themselves							
< 20	12.5	6	0	0	0	0	6
20-24	31.2	15	13.2	5	0	0	20
25-29	39.6	19	78.9	30	50.0	12	61
30 or more	2.1	1	2.6	1	33.3	8	10
Don't know	8.3	4	0	0	0	0	7
Not decided	2.1	1	2.6	1	0	0	2
Don't want	4.2	2	2.6	1	16.7	4	7
Total	**100.0**	**48**	**100.0**	**38**	**100.0**	**24**	**110**
Median age	**24.8**		**27.2**		**29.7**		

Source : Computed from primary data.

Table 4 : Ideal family size expressed by unmarried women, Kolkata

Background Variables	Categories	Ideal Family Size			Chi Square coefficient	No. of women
		(Number of children)				
Variables		**1**	**2**	**>2**		
Total		**40.7**	**55.6**	**3.8**		**110**
Age	15-19	37.0	58.7	4.4	0.412	46
	20-24	36.8	63.2	0.0		38
	25+	54.2	37.5	8.4		24
Caste	SC/ST				0.289	11*
	Others	41.2	55.7	3.1		97
Education	No education/Primary	20.8	62.5	16.4	0.005	24
	Secondary/higher secondary	41.5	58.6	0.0		53
	Graduation/Post graduation	54.8	45.2	0.0		31
Religion	Hindu	45.2	53.8	1.1	0.000	93
	Muslim					15*
Type of family	Nuclear	40.9	59.1	0.0	0.083	66
	Non Nuclear	40.5	50.0	9.6		42
Mother Tongue	Bengali	48.1	50.6	1.3	0.011	79
	Others	20.7	69.0	10.3		29
Income (Rs/month)	< 10,000	27.8	61.1	11.2	0.065	36
	10,001-25,000	54.1	45.9	0.0		37
	> 25,000	39.4	60.6	0.0		33
Type of locality	Non-Poor	45.5	54.5	0.0	0.188	55
	Poor	35.8	56.6	7.6		53

Note: 1. *: Distributions are not given if the total number of women in the category is less than 20.

Source: Computed from primary data.

Table 5 : Opinion of unmarried women on acceptability of child bearing outside marriage, Kolkata

Background Variables	Categories	No.	Yes	Can't say	Chi Square coefficient	Total
Total		**73.6**	**21.8**	**4.5**		**110**
Age	15-19	87.5	8.3	4.2	0.004	48
	20-24	52.6	39.5	7.9		38
	25+	79.2	20.8	0.0		24
Caste	SC/ST				0.376	11*
	Others	71.7	23.2	5.1		99
Education	No education/Primary	96.0	0.0	4.0	0.023	25
	Secondary/higher secondary	72.2	24.1	3.7		54
	Graduation/Post graduation	58.1	35.5	6.5		31
Religion	Hindu	70.5	25.3	4.2	0.087	95
	Others					15*
Type of family	Nuclear	77.9	17.6	4.4	0.392	68
	Non Nuclear	66.7	28.6	4.8		42
Mother Tongue	Bengali	72.8	24.7	2.5	0.129	81
	Others	75.9	13.8	10.3		29
Household Income						
(Rs per month)	< 10,000	97.2	2.8	0.0	0.004	36
	10,001-25,000	60.5	34.5	5.3		38
	> 25,000	64.7	29.4	5.9		34
Type of locality	Non-Poor	61.4	31.6	7.0	0.010	57
	Poor	86.8	11.1	1.9		53

Source: Computed from primary data.

Note: 1. Percentages based on denominator below 20 are shown in parentheses.

2. *: Distributions are not given if the total number of women in the category is less than 20.

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Worlding Literature, Literary Cosmopolitanism and Tagore' *Visva Sahitya*

Sourav Kumar Nag

Abstract

The article contextualises Tagore's notion of Visva-Sahitya in the emerging field of World Literature. Rabindranath Tagore is perhaps the only Indian writer who came forward with a new gesture to World Literature at the beginning of the 20th century. In a lecture delivered by him at the Indian National Council for Education in 1907 in Calcutta Tagore ushered literary cosmopolitanism. David Damrosch in the Preface of *The Routledge Companion to World Literature* (2005) maintains that the term "World literature despite being some two centuries old has turned into an emerging field with the recent turn towards globalization cosmopolitanism and transnationalism" (Damrosch 2005: xviii). The uneasy coexistence of the World Literature and the Comparative Literature presupposes the notion of planetarily (Spivak 2005: 71) to move beyond the idea of globalization antra critic the disciplinary organization of the study of literature (D'haen 2013: 207). The primary argument on which the present article navigates is that Tagore's idea of Visva-Sahitya is markedly different from what we call World Literature today.

Keywords : *Tagore, Visva-Sahitya, Dissemination, Archival, Pilgrimage*

The article contextualises Tagore's notion of Visva-Sahitya in the emerging field of World Literature. Rabindranath Tagore is perhaps the only Indian writer who came forward with a new gesture to World Literature at the beginning of the 20th century. In a lecture delivered by him at the Indian National Council for Education in 1907 in Calcutta Tagore ushered literary cosmopolitanism. David Damrosch in the Preface of *The Routledge Companion to World Literature* (2005) maintains that the term "World literature despite being some two centuries old has turned into an emerging field with the recent turn towards globalization cosmopolitanism and transnationalism" (Damrosch 2005: xviii). The uneasy coexistence of the World Literature and the Comparative Literature presupposes the notion of planetarily (Spivak 2005: 71) to move beyond the idea of globalization antra critic the disciplinary organization of the study of literature (D'haen 2013: 207). The primary argument on which the present article navigates is that Tagore's idea of Visva-Sahitya is markedly different from what we call World Literature today.

The primary focus of the article is Tagore's notion of Visva-Sahitya and its significance in the contemporary debate on World Literature. With the emergence of transnational discourses, World Literature got its impetus in the current literary space. Said's theorisation of the world in terms of coloniser/colonised binary or Bhabha's notion of the third space evaporates with the embracing of transnational discourses that erase the partitionist propaganda and welcomes the formation of a global fraternity among all nations. The article has a tripartite structure. It begins by referring to the inception of the notion of World Literature in the early 19th century as Goethe put it as *Weltliteratur* and then moves on to offer a comprehensive reading of the emerging theories of World Literature and finally deals with Tagore's notion of Visva-Sahitya as an inclusive idea based on his spiritual faith on interpersonal relations and cosmopolitanism.

Johan Wolfgang von Goethe, the eminent German writer and critic of the 19th Century first gave the clarion call for the dissemination of literature across the globe. He famously wrote in a letter to Johann Eckermann in 1827: "National literature is now a rather unmeaning term; the epoch of world literature is at hand, and everyone must strive to hasten its approach" (Damrosch 2014:19). In this very letter, he used the newly minted term *Weltliteratur*. The epoch of the world literature that Goethe predicted almost two centuries before is the present epoch of globalness which we live in. What did Goethe mean by *Weltliteratur*? Did he mean a text must travel beyond the geography of its origin? Its culture? Or its language? Back in the 19th century, it could only mean an extensive collection of books written by hundreds of writers from hundreds of places in hundreds of different languages. Claudio Guillen, quoted by Damrosch, quips at the very possibility of such archival heterogeneity and abundance as it is possible only with "a deluded keeper of archives who is also a multimillionaire" (Damrosch 2003:01). Suffering from the anxiety of influence of the Great European Writers, Shakespeare included, Goethe advocated decanonisation long ago the inception of the postcolonial studies: "Late in his account, he records Goethe's remark that "the daemons, to tease and make sport with men, have placed among them single figures so alluring that everyone strives after them, and so great that nobody reaches themÖGoethe names Raphael, Mozart, Shakespeare, and Napoleon as examples" (Damrosch 2003: 02). Goethe's theorisation of World Literature as a transnational entity was implemented slightly modified in the university discipline of Comparative Literature that offers analogical interaction of literary texts while preserving their national, linguistic, and cultural originalities. The domain of Comparative Literature does offer comparative, intersectional reading of literary texts from different places of the world. World Literature, on the contrary, rubs out the dividing line between texts and welcomes a global fraternity of textuality and literariness. The methods for moulding a text into a World Literature are variegated. Generic themes, universal perspectives and translations are some of the possible means. Translation of a literary text meets challenges and ambiguities since the only available and 'global'

language we have is English. Translating texts into English, many assume, may generate linguistic hierarchy and discrimination.

In the 21st century, World Literature has gained an unprecedented impetus resting on the template of Anglophone Literature. World literature presupposes a double process for a literary work to acquire its global dimension; that the work must be 'literature' and that is it must be circulated beyond its linguistic and cultural origin. For formulating World Literature, the word 'literature' needs to be analysed etymologically and semantically. Etymologically the term 'literature' was derived from the Latin root *literature* or *litteratura* that means both 'learning' and 'writing.' Broadly applied the term 'literature' means any written document. In this sense, a legal document, an advertisement, or the writings on a packet of biscuits amount to literature as much as the novels of D.H. Lawrence. The epistemological aspect of the term defines its literariness. Now the literariness of literature may rest on several elements such as language, culture, formal intricacies and so on. Though not as customary as the formal literariness demanded by the Russian Formalists, literature embodies its literariness, its uniqueness achieved with the help of language.

A few 'globalectic' (Thiong'o 2012) attitudes emerge in the post-1950s scenario that catapulted the provincializing (Chakrabarty 2008) of Eurocentric literature. Nevertheless, the irony of the worlding of literature seems to be rooted in the language question. If a work has to be 'worldly' it needs to be either written in a global language such as English or be translated into one such language. The debates surrounding Anglophone Literature threaten the crystallisation of World Literature per se. While Chinua Achebe defended writing in English since he has "no other choice" (Achebe 1976:125), challenged Achebe's claim in *Decolonizing the Mind* (1986): "English, like French and Portuguese, was assumed to be the natural language of literary and even political mediation between African. people in the same nation and between nations in Africa and other continents. In some instances, these European languages were seen as having a capacity to unite African peoples against divisive tendencies inherent in the multiplicity of African languages within the same geographic state" (Thiong'o 1987: 6-7). In *Globalectics* (2012) Thiong'o advocates the idea of cultural globalisation without any global centre: "the shape of the globe. On its surface, there is no one centre; any point on the surface is equidistant to it-like the spokes of a bicycle wheel that meet at the hub. Globalectics combines the global and the dialectical to describe a mutually affecting dialogue, or multi-logueÖ." (Thiong'o 2012: 08). Aamir R. Mufti in *Forget English*! (2016) quips: "The nationalization of languages over the past two centuries all over the world has been accompanied by the globalization of English" (Mufti 2016:146). The issue of translating a text in English for its inclusion in World Literature has resulted in controversies. English is still considered to be the language of the elite and therefore worlding a text by translating it in English justifies that a text becomes global only when it acquires elitist authentication.

David Damrosch maintains a tripartite definition of World Literature that it must embody 1. oviform refraction of national literatures; 2. Literature that goes beyond the national boundaries through translation and 3. A mode of reading beyond time and place. When a literary work survives the weal and tear of time and acquires the dimension of 'classic' it crosses the boundaries of language, culture and continents and is presented to the world in translations. Now the obvious challenge of translating work in a different language is to preserve its original essence. It's difficult to retain the cultural nuances that a language embodies while translating a work. Raja Rao in the Foreword of Kanthapura reiterates the difficulty of writing a regional novel, a *sthalapurana* in English:

> The telling has not been easy. One has to convey in a language that is not one's own the spirit that is one's own. One has to convey the various shades and omissions of a certain thought-movement that looks maltreated in an alien language. I use the word 'alien,' yet English is not really an alien language to us. It is the language of our intellectual make-up—like Sanskrit or Persian was before—but not of our emotional make-up (Rao 1967: 31).

In Rao, the problem, though, is not that of translation, yet his level of difficulty in transcribing his thoughts into 'an alien language' is conceivable. On the other hand, Spivak in *Death of Discipline* (2005) uses the term "planetarity" to suggest alterity among human beings: "The globe is on our computers. No one lives there. It allows us to think that we can aim to control it. The planet is in the species of alterity, belonging to another system; and yet we inhabit it, on loan" (Spivak 2005:72). The notion of alterity moves beyond the threshold of the existing epistemological systems and embraces a broader spectrum of knowing beyond.

In a lecture on "The Literature of the Bengali People," delivered at the annual meeting of the Literary Council of Bengal in 1895, Rabindranath Tagore observed: "The word *sahitya* comes from *sahit*. Hence, Ö we find in the word *sahitya* the idea of union. It is not simply a union of idea and idea, language and language, book and book: nothing except sahitya or literature can establish deeply intimate ties between one person and another, between past and present, between far and near. The people of a country deficient in literature have no vital bonds to join them: they remain isolated" (Tagore 1919a: 179). Rabindranath Tagore spoke of Visva-Sahitya in a lecture he delivered at the Jatiya Sikhsa Parishad (the National Council for Education) in 1907 in Calcutta. Tagore used the word 'visva' to suggest a unitary body of all living organisms and the non-living objects integrally connected with the greater Consciousness (Brahman). Tagore's notion of collectiveness and inter-corporeality derived from the Upanishads and other religious and philosophical texts. Tagore named the educational institution Visva-Bharati that he founded on the tract of land given to him by Debendranath Tagore. In his "Visva-Sahitya," Tagore asserts that the only objective of man's intellect is to reach out to others. He categorises three types of interpersonal relations- 1. The connection of intellect 2. The connection of need and 3. The connection of joy. The

connection of intellect operates being confined to the ego. The connection of need is a connection of self-interest. It's the connection of joy that dissolves all differences: "...there remains no pride; we do not hesitate to give ourselves to the very small, to the weak. There the king of Mathura [Krishna] is at his wits' end trying to find a way to hide his royal dignity from the lowly milkmaid of Vrindavan where the connection is that of joy, we are not limited by the power of the intellect or the power of work: we only experience ourselves. There remains no cover or calculation in between" (Banerji et al. 2015: 278). Evidently, Tagore's theory of Visva-Sahitya is built upon the philosophical idea of spiritual cosmopolitanism. He observes that man can know himself easily in others. He can experience himself in others: "In this way, all that manifests itself so luminously on the outside, be that the Sun's bright rays or the brightness of a great character or the emotion of our hearts– whatever kindles our emotions from one moment to another, that, the heart entwines in a creation of its own and clings to as its own. In such instances it is the heart that expresses itself more and more concretely" (Banerji et al. 2015: 281).

The formulation of Tagore's spiritual cosmopolitanism is closely associated with his voyages. Tagore's travel diaries later published under titles *Europe Jatrir Diary* (*The Diary of a Wayfarer to Europe*), *Paschim Jatrir Diary* (*The Diary of a Wayfarer to the West*), and *Java Jatrir Patra* (*Letters of a Traveller to Java*) testify to his cosmopolitanism. Disenchanted with the nationalist discourse, Tagore set out to explore distant lands, foreign cultures as he never wanted the freedom movements of India to emulate European nationalism. In a letter to Nirmalakumari Mahalanobis on 15 July 1927, he wrote: "We have embarked on this pilgrimage to see the signs of the history of India and to establish a permanent arrangement for research in this field" (Bose 2011). In his *On the Edges of Time*, Rathindranath wrote: "Father was an inveterate traveller. Even in his early life, he would not stay at home for long. He had then to satisfy himself with moving about within the limits of India, with only two brief visits to England" (Bose 2009:109). In 1912 Tagore commenced his oceanic voyages under the shadow of the First World War. Beyond India, he set foot first in Burma and then voyaged to Japan. Next, he crossed the Pacific Ocean to reach North America. From North America, he journeyed towards the East and reached Japan. Between 1924 and 1925 he crossed the Indian Ocean to reach Latin America in response to an invitation from the Peruvian Government. He visited Java in 1927. He described his voice to Java as a pilgrimage in his travelogue *Java Jatrir Patra* (*Letters of a Traveller to Java*). In 1932 he visited Iraq and Iran. In 1933 he visited Sri Lanka. This was the final voyage I undertook beyond his country. The oceanic voyages that Tagore undertook beyond India expanded his vision and helped him to understand the essence of life. Besides, Tagore's extensive study of the Upanishads and Indian philosophical schools such as Buddhism, Jainism and so on helped him formulate his cosmopolitan wisdom. Sugata Bose commented on Tagore's voyage to Java: 'Tagore's westward voyage in 1924–1925 had kindled an emotion that was to circumnavigate the globe, transcending all boundaries despite the challenges of literary and cultural translation' (Bose 2009: 245).

One of the most crucial elements in Tagore's philosophy is the knowledge of altruism. It is through self-giving that one knows oneself fully though there are hindrances such as pride and selfishness obstructing such altruistic dissemination (Paranjape 2018: 33). The readiness to move beyond one's oneself, to leave the cocoon of cogito to get mingled with the flow of lives, the effusion of light and joy is the key to the ontological wisdom of Visva-Sahitya:

> To manifest the pride of her (of hriday-Lakshmi/heart goddess) reciprocal hospitality she fashions her tray of offerings with many ingredients, many languages, sounds, brushes, and blocks of stone [for carving]. In so doing, if any of her needs be served, well and good, but often, even at their expense, she is eager to express herself. She wants to display her lavishness even if the price is bankruptcy. Self-expression is that department in man's nature which is the chief site of incautious spending—it is here that the accountant of the intellect laments over his losses, striking his forehead in frustration (Banerji et al. 2015: 282).

Tagore's notion of Visva-Sahitya is quite different from what Goethe proposed as *Weltliteratur* or World Literature. Tagore's philosophy is neither confined to archival heterogeneity nor the global circulation of literature. In Tagore's philosophy, literature is the expression of the collective unconscious (Jung) or the feelings of Visva-Manav (the world man): "Therefore we see the similarity between this world-samsara and the human samsara (the macrocosm and the microcosm). God's truth and knowledge are manifest in the work of the world, and his joy is instantiated in the flavours of the world. It is difficult to grasp his wisdom through work, but there is no difficulty in experiencing his joy in the rasas. Because in these pleasures is He expressing himself" (Banerji et al. 2015:284). Tagore in his essay distinguishes between self-interest and self-expression. Literature is the ocean of self-expression that knows no limits or boundaries. It drowns the shores of self-interest with its rolling waves. Tagore's speech on Visva-Sahitya has already been pointed out before, advocates deliverance of self-expression beyond the precincts national cultural linguistic and personal boundaries. Tagore's visionary philosophy of Visva-Sahitya is quite different from the idea of world literature. Stefan Hoesel-Uhlig "The Directions of Goethe's Weltliterature" criticises the idea of literature in the following words: at a critical juncture, when readers look to the most compelling range of works, world literature presents no more than an extensive archive of dead letters (Uhlig 2004: 27). The amorphous nature of World Literature as we understand it today leads to ambiguities among critics. ReneÏ Wellek complains that World Literature is an unreliable guide because of its lexical ambiguity (Wellek 1970:15). World Literature is an offshoot of Comparative Literature. Visva-Sahitya rests on interpersonal, cosmopolitan relationships. The idea is to give away oneself to others, to disseminate one's feelings among others. His idea is spiritual and cosmopolitan:

> All I have wanted to say is that just as the world is not merely the sum of your plough field, plus my plough field, plus his plough field–because to know the world that way is only to know it with a yokel–like parochialism–similarly world literature is not merely the sum of your writings, plus my writing, plus his writings. We generally see literature in this limited, provincial manner. To free oneself of that regional narrowness and resolve to see the universal being in world literature, to apprehend such totality in every writer's work, and to see its interconnectedness with every man's attempt at self-expression–that is the objective we need to pledge ourselves to (Banerji et al. 2015: 288).

Tagore's theorisation does not encourage archival heterogeneity or the circulation of texts beyond the boundaries of language; instead, he views literature as a collective body, as an all-encompassing entity-a surplus that integrates the emotions of an individual with the generosity of the world. A text is a record of one man's integration with the world-the macrocosm beyond himself.

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Rural Governance in Assam and Tripura: A Study

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Abstract:

The rural self government is an age old concept having a long history in India. But the real effort to strengthen the rural self-government was noticed in the last decade of the twentieth century when the Union Government passed the famous Seventy Third Constitution Amendment Act, which facilitated decentralization of power across the states and given chance to the people to take part in the decision making process. It is true that despite the implementation of the rural self-government across the states of the country, the development is not significantly achieved. Situation is more critical in the Northeastern part of India as enormous diversities and disagreements exist in the entire region. It is in this context the present study made an attempt to examine both democratic as well as developmental aspect of the lowest unit of the rural self-government i.e. Gram Panchayats in a comparative perspective in the states of Assam and Tripura. For the purpose of the study respondents were selected from Gram Panchayats of both the states. The study observed that the rural local bodies are yet to emerge as true institution of service delivery in both the states. Acute constraints of trained manpower, meagre internal revenue mobilisation, lack of infrastructural facilities, party factionalism etc act as barriers to develop rural self-government a self-sufficient body in Assam and Tripura.

Key Words: *Panchayat, Rural self-government, Participation, Gram Sabha, Political Party, Development plan*

The rural self government is an age old concept having a long history in India. It had existed in India since time immemorial. It is found even in the Rig Veda, where the local bodies were the points of context with higher authorities on matters affecting the villages and residents (Kaushik, 2005). The existence of village 'sabhas' (councils) and 'gramins' (senior persons of the village) can be traced till 600 B.C. Later, these village bodies took the form of Panchayats (an assembly of five persons) which looked after the affairs of the village (Nunthara, 2015). The Vedic evidences reveal that village organizations of that period were more or less independent of external influence and this state of affairs continued in the post-Vedic period also. However, the concept of local self-government witnessed a number of changes during the British rule particularly during the tenure of Lord Ripon , who was instrumental in the structural evolution of local self-government in India.

In the post-independent period, the concept of local self government has further been expanded so as to strengthen the democratic culture in the country. It is realized that involvement of the people in the development activities is a means to fortify democratic institutions as well as building confidence among the people towards the system. To strengthen the process the Government of India introduced the participatory governance at the lowest level and it is evident during the first decade of Indian independence. The Union Government constituted various committees from time to time such as the Balwant Rai Mehta Committee (1957), the Diwakar Committee (1962), the Santhanam Committee (1965), the Ashoka Mehta Committee (1977), the Hanumanth Rao committee (1982), the G. V. K. Rao Committee (1985), the L. M. Singhvi Committee (1986), the Thoungon Committee (1988), and the 64th Constitutional Amendment Bill (1989) to review the working of democratic institutions at the grassroots level. However, the real effort to maximize people's participation including the marginalized sections was noticed in the last decade of the twentieth century when the Union Government passed the famous Seventy Third and Seventy Fourth Constitution Amendment Act, which facilitated decentralization of power across the states and given chance to the people to take part in the decision making process. Thus, the introduction of rural governance in the form of Panchayati Raj aims at providing a broad base to democracy, creating awareness and initiative among rural people towards — village development, proper utilisation of the available manpower and other rural resources which have mostly remained unutilized, planning and monitoring the development programmes, participation of marginalized sections in the decision making process, holding of regular elections, and above all working as a training ground for future leadership (Siddiqui, 2013). It is because of these initiatives from both Union and State Governments, India has achieved the spirit of 'multi-level federalism', which has extended the democratic base of the Indian polity (Mathew, 2007) with equal focus on both urban and rural governance.

The rural self-government has two broad aspects- democracy and development. Being a constituent of democratic process, rural self-government has created new opportunities for different social groups to take part in the decision making process as well as opened up new vistas for resolving social and economic problems faced by the varied communities. In the latter case also the rural bodies have been assigned with various development schemes to cause all round development in the rural areas and also to provide benefits of national growth to the weakest sections of the society. This raises a question as to what extent the rural governance is successful in India. It is evident that the success of rural governance vary from state to state and there are multitude of factors operate behind the success or failure of rural self-government in the country. Situation is more critical in the Northeastern part of India as enormous diversities exist in the entire region. Keeping this in view an attempt has been made here to examine both democratic as well as developmental aspect of the lowest unit of the rural self-government in the states of Assam and Tripura. The

study includes the working of Gram Panchayats (it is known as Gaon Panchayat in Assam) in both the states in a comparative perspective.

Review of related literature

There is plethora of literatures available on various dimensions of rural governance in the post-Seventy third amendment phase in India. Phukon (2004) examined the efficiency of the rural people regarding the exercise the powers given to them through the institution of Panchayat. He observed that the expansion of decentralization at the lowest level are nothing but lip services made for perpetuating and concentration of power at the centre controlled by the bureaucratic capitalism. Sarmah (2006) made an empirical investigation with the elected Panchayat functionaries of Kamrup, Golaghat and Goalpara districts of Assam. He pointed out that democratic decentralization, transparency, accountability and devolution have very little practical relevance. Though rural governance through Panchayats got constitutional status but still it survives at the mercy of the administrative machineries. Another study conducted by Ghosh (2008) highlighted the socio-economic and political background of women elected representatives in the rural bodies in the state of Tripura. Examining the rural administrative set up in the State of Tripura, he found that participation of women in the affairs of the rural governance has improved due to reservation facilities. Das (2009) made a comprehensive study of the rural local bodies of Assam and observed that the performance of the PRIs was not satisfactory as regard to the implementation of various schemes made for both individual benefit and common welfare. Brar (2014) observed the apathetic attitude of the State Government of Punjab in making rural self-bodies a self-sufficient body. Due to incomplete devolution, the role of PRIs has been limited. Panchayats are mere consultative bodies and the final authority regarding selection of beneficiaries lies with the line department and its functionaries.

These studies highlighted various aspects of rural governance but comparative assessment has not been given due importance. In the context of Northeast India comparative studies on the functioning of rural bodies are very much required as the region is full of diversities, which causes variations in the working of the rural self bodies.

Objectives of the study

i) To explore the extent of variations between the Gram/Gaon Panchayats (GPs) of Assam and Tripura.

ii) To understand the working of the Gram/Gaon Panchayats (GPs) in both Assam and Tripura.

Methodology

The study is conducted in the states of Assam and Tripura during the year 2016-17. For the purpose of the study two districts each from Tripura (North Tripura and South

Tripura) and Assam (Cachar and Dibrugarh) were selected randomly. In case of Assam, Cachar district was selected from the Barak Valley and Dibrugarh district was selected from the Brahmaputra Valley. In Tripura those areas falling under the TTAADC were excluded from the study. A total of 93 GPs (60 GPs from Cachar and 33 GPs from Dibrugarh district) from Assam and 83 GPs (36 GPs from North Tripura district and 47 GPs from West Tripura district) from Tripura were selected through simple random sampling. From all the sampled GPS, the elected representatives such as the President and two other members (one male and one female) were selected for collecting necessary information. Thus, a total of 528 elected representatives (279 respondents from Assam and 249 respondents from Tripura) were selected for the study. An interview schedule was administered to all the respondents and data collected were presented trough graphs and tables. Besides, Secretaries of GPs and party leaders were consulted to make an in-depth understanding of the working of GPs.

Results and Discussion

GP has been developed as an administrative unit to govern the lowest tier of rural governance in India. It is noticed that the Panchayat Acts of both Assam and Tripura entrusted multifarious functions and responsibilities to GPs, which include plan formulation for village development, preparation of annual budget, preparation of statistics of village, mobilize relief for emergency situation, organize voluntary labour and protection of public property etc. Despite these vast ranges of powers it is seen that GPs are unable to satisfy the needs of the people and, therefore, a thorough enquiry is required. The data collected from the field visit are analyzed as under.

Figure 1: Number of total members in GPs of Assam and Tripura

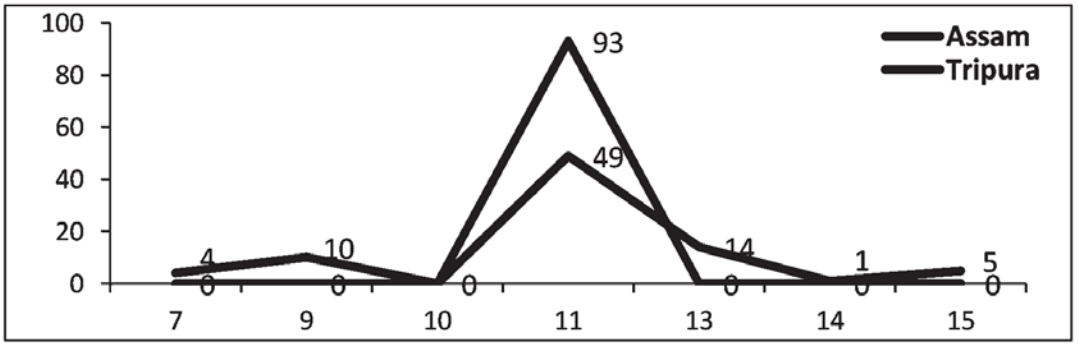


Figure 1 shows that there is a wide variation as regard to the number of total members in the GPs of Assam and Tripura. In Assam, each GP has ten (10) members and the President

is directly elected by the people. So each GP has strength of eleven (11) representatives. It is to be mentioned here that the Assam Panchayat Act, 1994 provided that each GP consists of population ranging from 6000 to 10000. But in actual practice, there are a number of GPs having population less than 6000. Thus, it will be appropriate to reconstitute the GPs through merger and reorganization so that the size became viable and conform to statutory provision. On the other hand, there is no uniformity in the number of members in the GPs of Tripura. It varies from seven (7) members to fifteen (15). It deserves mention here that the Pradhan (President) of GP is not directly elected by the people; rather he/she is selected by the members from among themselves in the first sitting.

Figure 2: Number of Staff in GPs of Assam and Tripura

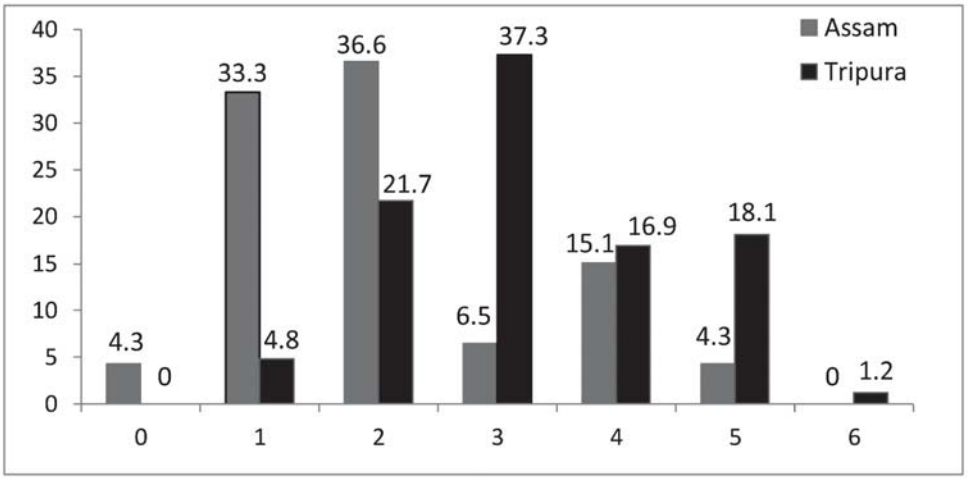
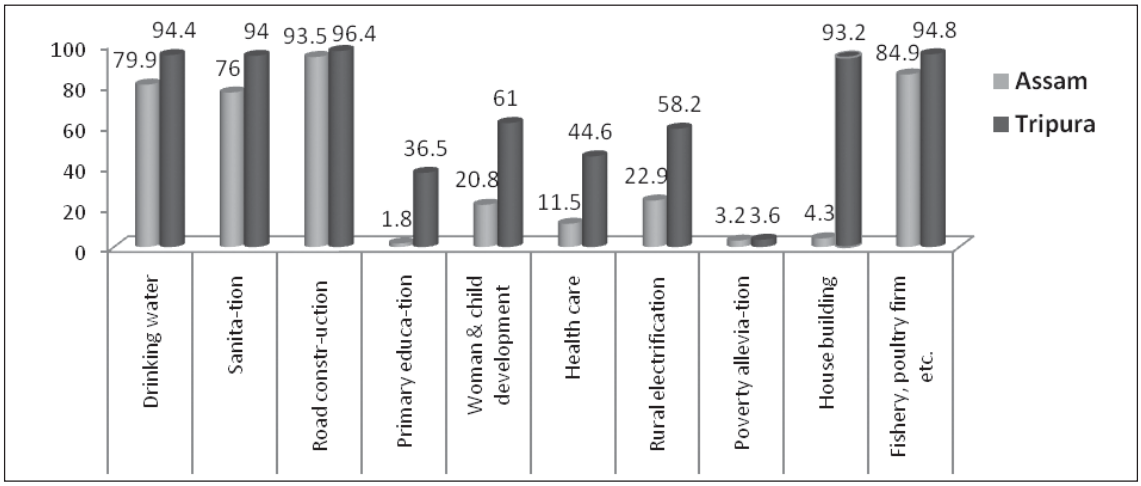


Figure 2 reveals that the number of staff in each GP is better in Tripura than Assam. In Assam, 4.3 percent of the GPs do not have any staff to carry out the day to day work of the GPs which makes it clear that there is apathetic attitude of the government to realize the goals of democratic decentralization. It is seen that 33.3 percent GPs have only 1 staff and 36.6 percent of the GPs is functional with 2 staff only. Further, 15.1 percent of the GPs are found to be well functional with 4 staff and 4.3 percent of the GPs are having 5 staff also. On the other hand, in Tripura all the GPs have their own staff. It is seen that in 4.8 percent of the GPs there is at least 1 staff available, who carries out the day to day work. A good number of GPs (37.3 percent) under study in Tripura have 3 staff, followed by 21.7 percent of the GPs with 2 staff, 18.1 percent of the GPs with 5 staff and 16.9 percent of the GPs with 4 staff. These data reveal that the management of the staff of the GPs in Tripura is better than Assam.

Figure 3: Total percentage showing the functions performed by GPs in Assam and Tripura



Functions Performed by GPC

The above figure shows that both in Assam and Tripura GPs perform some important functions. In Assam, the respondents stated that GPs execute works like construction of roads (93.5 percent), fishery, poultry, firm etc. (84.9 percent), drinking water (79.9 percent), sanitation (76 percent), rural electrification (22.9 percent), woman & child development (20.8 percent), health care (11.5 percent), house building (4.3 percent), poverty alleviation (3.2 percent), and primary education (1.8 percent). On the other hand, in Tripura respondents pointed out that GPs perform functions like providing assistance in opening and maintaining fishery, poultry firm etc (94.8 percent), road construction (96.4 percent), drinking water (94.4 percent), sanitation (94 percent), house building (93.2 percent), women and child development (61 percent), rural electrification (58.2 percent), health care (44.6 percent), primary education (36.5 percent), and poverty alleviation (3.6 percent). It can be seen that the Panchayats in Tripura are working much better on certain areas like house building, women and child development, rural electrification, health care and primary education. It is observed that as per the Panchayat Act of Tripura [Section 35 (2)] GPs have the responsibilities to give permission to the people to erect new structure or new building or make addition to any structure or building within its jurisdiction. But in case of Assam such provision is not given. Again, it is seen that the functions which are specifically delineated in the Panchayat Acts of both the states are not covered by any of the GPs. Looking at the functions carrying out by the GPs it can be said that they are performing only the agency functions and this is mainly because of the indifferent attitude of the government and the elected representatives at the state level. In course of interaction with some of the Political Party leaders/MLAs it is observed that they are reluctant to give more powers to the Panchayat representatives and believe that they should work under their guidance and execute the

decisions taken at the highest level. This sort of outlook is actually working against the emergence of rural bodies as a self-sufficient unit.

Table 1: Meetings of GP in a year

Respo-ndents	Assam										
	GP Meeting										
	No meeting	4 times	6 times	12 times	24 times	36 times	48 times	Not fixed	When-ever required	Don't know	Total
Male	1	1	8	18	20	2	12	33	75	0	171
Female	0	2	0	0	12	0	0	6	18	70	108
Total	1 (0.4)	3 (1.1)	8 (2.9)	18 (6.5)	32 (11.5)	2 (0.7)	12 (4.3)	39 (14.0)	93 (33.3)	70 (25.1)	279 (100)
Tripura											
Male	0	0	0	1	147	0	0	0	0	0	148
Female	0	0	0	10	52	0	0	0	0	38	101
Total	0	0	0	11 (4.4)	199 (79.9)	0	0	0	0	38 (15.7)	249 (100)

Source: *Field work*

From Table 1 it appears that there is irregularity in holding the meetings of GP in Assam. Though the Assam Panchayat Act has made provision for conducting the GP meeting at least once in two months, but in practice it is seen that meetings are not held as per the provisions laid down the Act. The above table evinces that respondents are divided on the issue of holding the meetings of GP. Majority of the respondents, i.e. 33.3 percent states that meetings are held whenever it is required, while 14 percent viewed that the meetings are not fixed. Only 6.5 percent of the respondents pointed out that GP meetings are held 12 times in a year (i.e. once in two months). Further, it is seen that 25.1 percent of the respondents (female) have no idea about the holding of GP meetings and this confirms their minimum involvement in the decision making process at the GP level. Conversely, in Tripura it is seen that GP meetings are conducted regularly. It can be seen from the above table that 79.9 percent of the respondents reported that in a year GP holds 24 meetings to discuss about the various issues pertaining to the GP. There is a provision in the Tripura Panchayat Act that every GP should hold a meeting at least once in a month in the office of the GP and the data shows that they are conducting more than what is mandated in the

Act. However, 15.9 percent of the respondents (Female) have no idea about the meetings and activities of the GPs.

Table 2: Matters on which GP actively participate

Respondents	Matters					
	Planning development activities for entire panchayat		Making budget for the planned activities		Implementation of development plan	
	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No
	Assam					
Male (148)	109 (39.1)	67 (24.0)	17 (6.1)	154 (55.2)	164 (58.8)	7 (2.5)
Female (101)	43 (15.4)	60 (21.5)	2 (4.3)	56 (20.1)	48 (17.2)	60 (21.5)
Total (249)	152 (54.5)	127 (45.5)	29 (10.4)	250 (89.6)	212 (76.0)	67 (24.0)
	Tripura					
Male (171)	143 (57.4)	5 (2.0)	60 (24.1)	88 (35.3)	142 (57.0)	6 (2.4)
Female (108)	54 (21.7)	47 (18.9)	25 (10.0)	76 (30.5)	56 (22.5)	45 (18.1)
Total (279)	197 (79.1)	52 (20.9)	85 (34.1)	164 (65.9)	198 (79.5)	51 (20.5)

Source: *Field work*

Table 2 depicts that in Assam all the GPs are not engaged in planning the development activities for entire Panchayat. It can be seen that only 54.5 percent of the respondents stated that GPs are engaged in planning the development activities for entire Panchayat. As regard to making budget for the planned activities it is found that 89.6 percent of the respondents are of the opinion that their GPs did not make any budget for the planned activities. However, 76 percent of the respondents reported that their GPs implement the development plans as framed by the government. On the other hand, in Tripura it is observed that 79.1 percent respondents stated that GPs are active in planning the development activities for entire Panchayat. Similarly, 79.5 percent of the respondents also reported that their GPs are engaged in implementing the development plans as framed by the government. But as regard to making budget for the planned activities a common pattern has been observed in both Assam and Tripura. This indicates that GPs in both the states are not sincerely involved in the planning process and whatever the planning they initiated are not well considered. They are satisfied to work as an implementing agency only.

Table 3: Problem countered by GPs in performing its responsibilities

Respon-dents	Problems countered by GP members in performing their responsibilities									
	Strict govt guidelines		Lack of unity among the GP members		Too much interference from district administration		Party interference		Dearth of fund	
	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No
	Assam									
Male (171)	127 (45.5)	44 (15.8)	55 (19.7)	107 (38.4)	25 (9.0)	146 (52.3)	70 (25.1)	101 (36.2)	171 (61.3)	0
	66 (23.7)	42 (15.1)	60 (21.5)	45 (16.1)	30 (10.8)	78 (28.0)	60 (21.5)	48 (17.2)	95 (34.1)	13 (4.7)
Total (279)	193 (69.2)	86 (30.8)	115 (41.2)	152 (54.5)	55 (19.7)	224 (80.3)	130 (46.6)	149 (53.4)	266 (95.3)	13 (4.7)
Female (108)	Tripura									
Male (148)	118 (47.4)	30 (12.0)	6 (2.4)	142 (57.0)	1 (0.4)	147 (59.0)	16 (6.4)	132 (53.0)	135 (54.2)	13 (5.2)
Female (101)	68 (27.3)	33 (13.3)	2 (0.8)	99 (39.8)	2 (0.8)	99 (39.8)	14 (5.6)	87 (34.9)	90 (36.1)	11 (4.4)
Total (249)	186 (74.7)	63 (25.3)	8 (3.2)	241 (96.8)	3 (1.2)	246 (98.8)	30 (12.0)	219 (88.0)	225 (90.4)	24 (9.6)

Source: *Field work*

Table 3 shows that there are certain similarities exist regarding the problems faced by GPs in performing its responsibilities in both Assam and Tripura. It is evident from the above table that issues like strict government guidelines (69.2 percent in Assam and 74.7 percent in Tripura) and dearth of fund (95.3 percent in Assam and 90.4 percent in Tripura) are the two major problems countered by the GPs of Assam and Tripura in performing their responsibilities. Interestingly, the respondents from both the states are divided on the issue of party interference in the functioning of GP. It is seen that in case of Assam 46.6 percent of the respondents reported that there is party interference in the functioning of GPs, while in Tripura 88 percent of the respondents stated that there is no party interference. The reason for such denial is mainly because of the fact that the ruling party (CPIM) is in majority position in most of the GPs in the state. Being members from the same party they are denying the involvement of party in the functioning of the GP. However, in course of interaction with the villagers and opposition members it is observed that the entire activities of the GPs are monitored and instructed by the Party. Conversely, in Assam such interference is minimal. As regard to the question of unity among the GP members it is seen that in Tripura

members are working in coordination under the guidance of the Party, while in Assam 41.2 percent of the respondents stated that there is lack of unity among the GP members and it is mainly because of the existence of the representatives from various political parties. Moreover, it is also observed particularly in the case of Assam that those GPs where the President work without taking members into confidence, the members irrespective of the political parties gets united against the GP President and it affects the functioning of the GPs significantly.

Findings and conclusion

On the basis of the analysis made above the following findings are drawn.

- The study observes a wide variation as regard to the number of members in the GPs of Assam and Tripura. In Assam, each GP consisted of eleven members including the President who is directly elected by the people. On the other hand, there is no uniformity in the number of members in the GPs of Tripura. It varies from seven members to fifteen members and the Pradhan (President) of GP is not directly elected by the people, rather he/she is selected by the members from among themselves in the first sitting.

- As regard to working of GPs the respondents of both Assam and Tripura reported that GPs perform some important functions like construction of roads; poverty alleviation programmes; providing assistance in opening and maintaining fishery, poultry firm; drinking water; women and child development etc. It can be seen that the Panchayats in Tripura are working much better on certain issues like house building, women and child development, rural electrification, health care and primary education. The major responsibility of the GPs in both the states is related to construction of road under MGNREGA. Both the GPs and the Block Development Offices are engaged in making plan estimate and executing the schemes. In course of the field study it is observed that the quality of roads constructed under MGNREGA is much better in Tripura than Assam. There are corruption charges against some of the GP Presidents in Assam particularly in Cachar district as regard to the execution of work under MGNREGA. In case of Tripura, as there is absolute control of the political party (CPIM) at the state level as well as at the GP level there is no voice raised against the party elected representatives. But due to recent changes in the political set up of Tripura (formation of government by BJP) the PRIs will witness transformation and role of opposition will be prominent at the lowest level.

- The study observes that the functions which are specifically outlined in the Panchayat Acts of Assam and Tripura are not executed by any of the GPs. It can be said that they are performing only the agency functions. This is because of the indifferent attitude of the government and the elected representatives at the state level. Interestingly, it is observed during the course of interaction with the Political Party leaders that they are reluctant to give more powers to the Panchayat representatives and believe that they should work under their guidance and execute the decision that has been taken at the highest level. This

sort of outlook is actually working against the emergence of Panchayats as a self-sufficient unit.

- In the course of the Study it is found that the GPs of both Assam and Tripura did not prepare any database of their locality. No representatives are well versed of the resources available in their locality. It is essential that a GP should maintain statistics of its villages as it is required to prepare development plan and budget estimate for the GP, but no such effort is seen in any of the GPs of the two states.

- As regard to GP meetings an irregularity is observed. In Assam, the Panchayati Raj Act has made provision for conducting GP meeting at least once in two (2) months but in practice it is seen that meetings are not held as per the provisions laid down in the Act. Conversely, in Tripura it is seen that GP meetings are held regularly. There is a provision in the Tripura Panchayati Raj Act that every GP should hold a meeting at least once in a month in the office of the GP and the data shows that they are conducting more than what is mandated in the Act.

- In both Assam and Tripura it is seen that GPs are not sincerely involved in the planning process and whatever the planning they initiated are not well considered. They are satisfied to work as an implementing agency only. In case of Assam it is noticed that there is lack of coordination among the three tiers of Panchayat and it is reflected in the preparation of development plan and execution of various schemes at the GP level. On the other hand, in Tripura it can be seen that there is coordination exist between upper two tiers and GP. The reason for such coordination lies in the fact that the majority of the elected representatives in all the three tiers are from the same political party (CPIM) and it is due to the strong influence of the party leaders that the elected representatives at all the three tiers work as a unit.

A thorough investigation into the working of PRIs of both Assam and Tripura evinces that the rural local bodies are yet to emerge as true institution of service delivery. Acute constraints of trained manpower, shortage of fund and functionaries, meagre internal revenue mobilisation, lack of infrastructural facilities, inability in budget preparation, low level of women empowerment and awareness of people, lackadaisical attitude of the government officials, party factionalism and above all geographical isolation act as barrier to develop PRIs a self-sufficient body in Assam and Tripura. It is unfortunate to note that even after twenty five years of institutionalisation of democracy at the grassroots level; the local bodies are unable to provide any core civic service to the rural people. Whatever Services provided by these institutions are just backed by the Union and State Government. To be precise, the rural local bodies in both Assam and Tripura have become dependent on the exogenous bodies and it is high time that the government must develop the PRIs taking into account its inherent problems. The problems and remedies mentioned above are required to be addressed so that PRIs become financially and functionally stable so as to accomplish the role envisaged for them in the

Constitution. It is expected that the findings and suggestions of the study will definitely help the policy makers at the time of initiating development schemes and formulating policies for the rural local bodies in Assam and Tripura.

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Dogra ascedency and integeration of ladakh with the state of Jammu and Kashmir (1834-1846)

Phunstog Angmo

Abstract

The bifurcation of the state of Jammu and Kashmir in 2019, has invited the world attention on the already existing Kashmir issue, albeit this time a part of focus expanded to incorporate a lesser known part of the erstwhile state i.e. Ladakh.

The discourse on the bifurcation of the state has raised many issues concerned with the formation of the state of Jammu and Kashmir. At this stage it becomes imperative to reflect on the historical events which led to the foundation of the state. Most of the historical text on this subject has focused on Kashmir centric studies, deliberating on the events leading to the establishment of the Dogra ascendency in Kashmir with the treaty of Amritsar (1846). The contextualization of this event in the history of India as the integration of only two region of Jammu and Kashmir has abated one important aspect of this event its due share of recognition. In doing so, we also tend to subvert the ambitious and the most daring expedition ever attempted by any Indian ruler (Gulab Singh) and his general (Zorawar Singh).

From the perspective of the regional history of Ladakh, the Dogra conquest was one of the most important events on its historical trajectory. This event transformed the political dynamics of the region with Ladakh losing its independent existence. Not only the peaceful existence of Ladakh was disturbed but for the first time it was also exposed to a bigger political platform where two great powers of Dogras and British were already contesting, contending and converging with each other. At this stage Ladakh also got involved in the ensuing political and commercial imbroglio between these two powers.

In this paper, I have investigated this important phase in the history of Ladakh, when it was subsumed under the larger domain of the Dogra Empire. The factors leading to the conquest of Ladakh assessed on the bases of the written primary sources on Dogras, and the travelogues of European explorer in the western Himalayas. The archival records also constitute the major part of the sources particularly relevant in understanding the political

scenario of Ladakh at the time of Dogra subjugation. Other sources collectively incorporating the translation of the local historical text have been used extensively in writing this paper.

Through this paper an attempt has been made to provide a holistic approach while studying the foundation of the state of Jammu and Kashmir, with details concerning the integration of Ladakh forming the main theme.

Key words: *Dogras, Ladakh, Tibet, Shawl wool, Kashmir, Western Tibet, Treaty of Amritsar, Sikhs, Dogra- Wazir, Baltistan*

Three years have now passed in the hope of assistance from the English Government, but I have received from it no answer good or bad. I am now in great distress, and if the English Government will now assist me, I beg that it (will) send seven or eight officers with troops in this direction.[1]

The above quote is from a letter that was sent in 1837, by the Ladakhi ruler addressed to the British agent at Sabathu (office of the British Political Agent at Shimla) in the wake of the Dogra invasion that had taken pace in 1834.[2] The letter showed desperation and at the same time hope for the assistance from the British government. The raja's desperate plea, however went unattended, although the letter was acknowledged, and sympathies were expressed regarding the 'melancholy' fate of the raja. In fact the British authorities at Sabathu were lauded by the government of India for refraining from entering into any correspondence with the raja of Ladakh.[3]

The raja in reference here was the crown prince *Chosprul* of Ladakh, who had fled to Spiti, hoping to gather assistance from the British even after his father king Tsepal Namgyal (1792-1834) had submitted to the Dogras and became a vassal subjected to an annual tribute of 20,000 rupees and a war indemnity of 50,000 rupees to the Dogra maharaja Gulab Singh.[4] The prince frantically sought the British assistance, ignorant of the friendly developments that had been established between the Dogras and the British. As both the powers were heading towards a friendly alliance and even before the conquest of Ladakh, Gulab Singh had made a confidential inquiry, whether the company would have any objection to such a campaign.[5]

Ladakh, is a region which is always encapsulated in the study of Tibet due to its close religious and cultural ties. It also earned the appellation of 'Little Tibet', 'Western Tibet' and 'Indian Tibet' as found in most of the academic literature. This shared cultural identity and territorial proximity with Tibet also caused ambiguity among the early travellers of the Trans Himalayas. When Jesuit priest Ippolito Disederi passed through Ladakh in 1715, while on his way to Tibet to reopen the missionary there, he had known only about 'Little Tibet' and the 'Great Tibet', and all the while he thought that 'Le' was the capital of 'Greatest Tibet' and hence the place where the Jesuit mission existed.[6] The conflated history between Ladakh and Tibet was also instrumental in shaping the historical identity of Ladakh. The

cultural and commercial connectivity that Ladakh provided to the Tibetan region was one of the most important phenomena that was capitalised by the external forces, when it came to devising policy towards Ladakh. In the domain of commercial ties, Ladakh provided the link between the wool producing region of the western Tibet and the shawl producing region of Kashmir. Ladakh remained an independent territorial entity as long as it succeeded in sustaining the flow of shawl wool to Kashmir. And this very independent status of the region was obliterated by the Dogras, for whom controlling the wool trade was a significant determinant in shaping their expansionist policy towards Ladakh.

The paper attempts to rescale an important event of the past which helps in constructing the historical identity of the region that now stands eroded. It seeks to invite the larger attention towards a region, which has become a focal point in the public discourse due to the recent political developments. Understanding such important events becomes relevant in order to comprehend the present situation.

Emergence of the Ladakhi Identity

The emergence of Ladakh as a regional identity is directly connected with the political developments of Tibet. The events that took place in Tibet in the ninth century CE had two very significant consequences on the history of Ladakh. On one hand, the breakup of Yarlung dynasty (sixth to ninth century CE) of Tibet in 842 CE led a Tibetan prince to flee his country from central Tibet and establish his rule in western Tibet. Western Tibet which was known as *Naris-Skor-Sum* in the traditional Tibetan literature, comprised of Guge, Purang, Rudhok (all in Tibet now) and Spiti (now in Himachal Pardesh) lies in the eastern part of Ladakh, that has become the centre of geo political conflict between India and China in the present time. Geographical contiguity has always played a very important role in building the historical identity of Ladakh. The very genesis of the Ladakhi kingdom and its cultural identity was due to its geographical juxtaposition with western Tibet. The political and regional identity of Ladakh was built up after the foundation of the Ladakhi kingdom in the tenth century. Prior to that, the entire region was ruled by several territorial chiefs from amongst the earliest inhabitants of the region. There was essentially an amalgamation, after a long period of association, of three groups of people, namely, the 'Dards'[7] from the lower reaches of Ladakh in the Indus belt comprising of Baltistan, 'Mons' from the plains (from the regions of Kashmir and beyond) of India and 'Mongoloid Tibetans' from Tibet.[8] A regional identity with these three communities, predominated by 'Mongoloid Tibetans' as a base was forged in the upper Ladakh region, which emerged as the centre of Ladakhi kingdom.

Spal-Ki-Gon,(930 CE) the founder of the first dynasty (Lhachen) of Ladakh, thus originated from the family of Strongstan Gampo (b.569-650) the first Buddhist king of Tibet.[9] The second important aspects of Ladakhi identity which is also connected with western Tibet

was the foundation of the its religious identity. Even though the introduction of Buddhism to Ladakh took place from Kashmir, other important region whose territory lies in contiguity to Ladakh.[10] But the consolidation of Buddhism was directly related to the cultural developments that took place in western Tibet around the same period. The period is coterminous with the coming of great Buddhist scholars like Rinchen Zangpo (tenth century) and Atisha (eleventh century) to Ladakh.[11] In the history of Buddhism, the period is associated with the second phase of dissemination (*phyidar* in Tibetan) beginning from the tenth century (The first phase refers to the dissemination of Buddhism that took place upon the accession of the first Buddhist Tibetan monarch in the eight century). The second phase started from western Tibet during the reign of king Yeshe-Od, who had sent twelve Tibetan monks to Kashmir and India to study Buddhism. Rinchen Zangpo was one among them who returned to Tibet in 978 CE along with some Indian scholars and thus began the second diffusion of Buddhism.[12] Ladakh came in the ambit of this religious expansion with Buddhism taking a strong roots in the region. The evidence of expansion of Buddhism during this period is found with the establishment of the earliest monasteries viz. Nyarma, Alchi, Mangue, Sumda, Likir and Tabo (now in Himachal Pradesh), all in Ladakh and built during the rule of the Lhachen dynasty.

Ladakh remained under the rule of Lhachen dynasty till the second half of the fifteenth century, during which nearly seventeen rulers ruled. In this period of six centuries, the kingdom witnessed a peaceful political era marked by the growth of religious and cultural identity. However this scenario was to change from the fifteenth century onwards, with the changes taking place in the neighbouring states, especially in Kashmir. It was the period during which the fortune of Ladakh was bound up with those of her neighbours.[13] According to Luciano Petech, the establishment of Sultanate in Kashmir (1339 CE) brought a new element of instability to the western Himalayan region because of the imperialistic trends of some of the Kashmir Sultans, some of them under the mantle of Holy war against the infidels.[14]

Direct and Indirect Invasions

Ladakh was a region surrounded by high mountain ranges ; Karakoram in the north, Kailash range on which Ladakh itself rests extending to the east, and the Zanskar range to the south. All these mountain ranges are among the highest in the world and beyond them lay Ladakh's neighbours, the various central Asian states in the north, Tibet in the east and Kashmir to its south-west. While Ladakh's natural boundaries gave it a seeming sense of isolation, but it was not a deterrent in the way of the movements of goods and people including invaders as well.

Pertinent to mention here, are the various forms of direct or indirect invasions that Ladakh had to face with the changing political dynamics of Kashmir. Beginning with sultan Shihab

ud din (1359-1378), whose invasion is believed to have extended from Baltistan to Tibet.[15] But the inconsequential results of the invasion, makes it an event of less importance, however, what can be concluded is that a strong threat perception regarding an invasion from Kashmir prevailed in the entire region of Ladakh. This was followed by comparatively an impactful invasion under sultan Sikander (1389-1413) particularly in the region of Baltistan.[16] Even though Ladakh did not directly face the brunt of this invasion, but Baltistan temporarily came under the Kashmir sultanate. The presence of a strong Muslim state in the neighbourhood was set to have an impact on the future course of Ladakh history.[17]And a more consequential invasion occurred during the reign of sultan Zainul Abididn (1420-1470), when Ladakh came to acknowledge a loose suzerainty of Kashmir.[18]

Thus, till the late sixteenth century, Ladakh was subjected to raids and invasions from Kashmir and incidents of such raids had a partial impact on Ladakh. An important consequence of these invasions was the boost it gave to the spread of Islam in Baltistan and the Purig area around Kargil comprising the Suru Valley, Pashkyum, Mulbeg, Bodh Kharbu and Shakar Chiktan, which consisted at that time a number of small principalities bound in loose quazi-feudal relationship to Ladakhi monarchy. On the other hand, central Ladakh did not come under the control of the invaders; neither was there any instance of conversion taking place under their influence. One common factor, which proved a great hindrance in the way of the invaders in all these expeditions was the harshness of the climate and the difficulty of the terrain. The rulers of Kashmir, even after a successful attack, never felt motivated to redeem their position of political as well as religious ascendancy over Ladakh.

A significant change in Ladakh's ties with Kashmir was witnessed after latter became a part of the Mughal empire in 1586. Ladakh now sensed a bigger threat of invasion from Kashmir and wasted no time in accepting the authority of the Mughals. As has been mentioned in the Akbarnama that during Akbar's visit to Kashmir in 1589, ambassadors namely M. Beg to the ruler of 'Little Tibet' (Baltistan), and Mulla Talib Isfahani and Mihtar Yari to the ruler of 'Great Tibet' (Ladakh) were sent, and both of them showed obedience and as per past practice continued sending presents to Kashmir.[19]

After submitting to the Mughals, the ruler of 'Little Tibet' Ali Mir also offered his daughter in marriage to prince Salim.[20] This alliance with the Mughals proved detrimental to Ladakh as with the support of the Mughals, Ali Mir carried a successful campaign against Ladakh, made its ruler Jamyang Namgyal (1595-1616) a prisoner, and proceeded to his country after gathering abundant booty.[21] The Mughal influence in Baltistan was a matter of great apprehension for Ladakh. The probability of Ladakh coming into conflict with the Mughals became more with their presence in Baltistan. It became a regular phenomenon, that Ladakh remained in a state of perpetual fear of an impending attack from the Mughal governors of Kashmir.

The Mughal political ascendency in Baltistan was established during the reign of Shahjahan under the command of Kashmir governor Zafar Khan in 1638.[22] Though Zafar Khan found it expedient to restore the authority to the ruler of Baltistan, but under the Mughal protection. This position of Baltistan caused an imbalance in its ties with Ladakh. Having emboldened, Baltistan sought the help of Mughals to invade Ladakh in wake of the expansion caused by the Namgyal dynasty ruler Singge Namgyal (1616-1642) in the Purig region. Leading to the first occasion of Ladakh's interface with the Mughals, who while assisting Baltistan, defeated the Ladakhi ruler and secured a tribute.[23] This contact with the Mughals did not leave any long-lasting consequences on Ladakh. Singge Namgyal's promise to pay the tribute was not seriously adhered to and he never honoured it, nor did the Mughals try to enforce it during his reign.[24]

However, later when Aurangzeb visited Kashmir in the summer of 1664, the presence of a Mughal emperor in the vicinity of Ladakh caused a fair amount of anxiety to the then ruler of Ladakh Deldan Namgyal (1640-1675) considering the fact that Ladakh had not been paying regular tribute to the Mughals.[25] Deldan Namgyal renewed the tribute and loyalty of Ladakh to the Mughal governor of Kashmir which again went into disarray once Aurangzeb left Kashmir. On this Saif Khan the governor of Kashmir, who has the reputation of coming down with a heavy hand on the rebels, took prompt action and sent a force to Ladakh to restore the compliance of the agreement entered with the Mughals. This time, in addition to the tribute, Ladakhi ruler was also asked to embrace Islam, read Khutba, and mint coins in the name of the Mughal emperor Aurangzeb. Deldan Namgyal even agreed to built a mosque at Leh.[26]

Among all the conditions imposed on the ruler of Ladakh only one seems to have brought a long-lasting impact. This was the foundation of the mosque in Ladakh, erected by Sheikh Muhi-ud-din in 1666-67, which stands as the evidence even today as the great Jama Masjid of Leh.[27] Besides this, many things reverted to as they were, as the king himself reverted back to Buddhism and the tribute being so nominal was discontinued. However, whatever reservations the Ladakh king may have had, the Mughals regarded him as their tributary.

The establishment of such close ties with Kashmir was later galvanised towards securing an alliance during the Tibeto- Mongol invasion (1679-1684).[28] It was due to the assistance and intervention provided by Kashmir that Ladakh could uphold its territorial integrity.

In the ensuing years Ladakh faced the greatest invasion from Tibet, in what is known as the historic Tibeto- Mongol invasion (1679-1684). Ladakh could turn the course of this war in their favour only due to the timely assistance provided by the Mughal governor of Kashmir. It is to be noted here that Kashmir was not motivated to provide assistance to Ladakh against the Tibeto-Mongol forces to establish political ascendency there. Rather it was the economic reasons that led to the involvement of Kashmir in the wars of Ladakh.

The Kashmiri officials realized that the Tibetan possession of Ladakh would adversely affect the flow of the shawl wool into Kashmir, which was deeply connected to the economy of the valley. The Mughal emperor was thus ready to protect their tributary from falling into the hands of Tibet. And what stands out among all other conditions imposed on Ladakh by Kashmir with the treaty of Timmisgang (1684) signed at the end of the war, was the effectiveness in maintaining the monopoly of Kashmiri traders in the wool trade.[29] And this postulate of the treaty later became one important determinant in the shaping the Dogra policy towards Ladakh.

Even after the decline of the Mughals and the subjugation of Kashmir by the Afghans in 1752, the relations between Ladakh and Kashmir remained the same. Ladakh readily recognised the suzerainty of the Afghan governors, who also never bothered to change the status quo as long as Kashmir enjoyed the monopoly of the wool trade. With the change of government in Kashmir and with its occupation by the Sikhs in 1819, things continued to remain the same vis-a-vis Ladakh. Ladakh again quickly acknowledged the Sikh authority and the wool trade continued on the same pattern.[30]

However, the recognition of the Sikh authority was accompanied with a great sense of uncertainty and apprehension, which Ladakh now came to register and confide with the external agency found in the British. As evident from the records of Moorcroft, who received a plea for seeking British protection, when he visited Leh in 1820.[31] This fear was found on the grounds, that the Sikh governors of Kashmir had been demanding tribute from Ladakh, but Ladakhi ruler had succeeded to avoid its acceptance owing to the distant location.[32] However, a subtle and continual apprehension of the invasion of the Sikh governors of Kashmir sustained among the Ladakhis in this period. Which in reality was quite unlikely to occur at this juncture as the governors of Kashmir province were so frequently changed and watched over by Gulab Singh and his brothers to be able to carry out such a design and Dhyan Singh, brother of Gulab Singh had resolved that no one but his brother should obtain the possession of Ladakh and Baltistan.[33]

In this anticipation, the grounds for a favourable condition was made in Lahore durbar with the collective efforts of all the three Dogra brothers (Gulab Singh, Dhyan Singh and Suchet Singh) which helped Gulab Singh not only to extend his authority over the brother Rajpoot but also eventually to Ladakh.[34] And as predicted, the greatest external invasion which was to transform the political dynamics of Ladakh took place under the Dogras and not the Sikhs in the coming decades of nineteenth century making it one of the most important periods in the history of Ladakh. It was the Dogras, who disturbed the peaceful and independent existence of Ladakh with its final subjugation in 1842 CE. Not only the peaceful existence of Ladakh was disturbed but for the first time Ladakh was also exposed to a bigger political platform where two great powers of Dogras and British India were already contesting and contending with each other in a diplomatic and judicious manner. At this

stage Ladakh also got involved in the ensuing political and commercial imbroglio between these two powers.

Collapse of Ladakhi kingdom and Dogra Ascendency

Gulab Singh had joined Ranjit Singh's army as an ordinary trooper in 1809, he soon rose in power and by 1820, succeeded in getting the whole province of Jammu as a Jagir and was even became the hereditary raja of Jammu.[35] Gulab Singh came in contact with the British, when they were involved in a war with the Afghans. The garrison at Jallalabad was being besieged and to relieve it a British force was equipped at Peshawar. At this, the British sought the cooperation of Sikhs, who agreed to provide protection to the British even though reluctantly, and deputed Gulab Singh who was at Hazara at that time working as one of the trusted commanders of Lahore durbar. 'Here he took the fullest advantage of his powerful position and the distress of the British and ingratiated himself with Henry Lawrence, in securing British help in acquiring independent status for his newly formed state of Jammu. Being a far-sighted politician, he visualized the early breakup of the Sikh state and its annexation by the British and rendered valuable services to the expedition for which he earned the gratitude of the British.'[36]

Gulab Singh was shrewd enough to realize the importance of the British cooperation at a time when the relation between the British and Sikh was deteriorating and at time when, there was a political turmoil at Sikh durbar after the death of Ranjit Singh in 1839. It was his desire to capitalise the opportunity and turn it to his own benefit, as has been stated by, P.N.K Bamzai in these words;

He realised the dark consequences of the war for the Sikhs and immediately entered into negotiations with the British Government with the view to securing as honorable a peace as possible before it became too lateÖ.. At the same time, the British realised the importance of conciliating Gulab Singh who had a fresh and disciplined force of Dogras under his command, which if brought into action against them would have proved disastrous to their interest.[37]

The British had been judicious in their undertaking, and by entering into an agreement with Gulab Singh envisaged on founding a rajpoot territory of the Hill district, to weaken the Sikh nation before its government gets re-established and considered their action as appropriate in view of the rajpoot dynasty acting as a counterpoise against the power of the Sikh chiefs.[38] And for Gulab Singh it seemed pertinent at this stage to ingratiate the confidence of both British and the Sikhs to support his ambitious overtures towards Ladakh and Tibet. When Gulab Singh decided to attack Ladakh in 1834, he made a confidential enquiry of the company and on being informed that the British government had no objection to his expedition, a well-equipped force was prepared under general Zorawar Singh to carry his most ambitious expedition.[39]

Though there was no sign to curtail Gulab Singh's overture in the Himalayas from the Sikh durbar, yet a bitter sense of ambiguity prevailed for leading such an arduous expedition to a difficult terrain extending up to Tibet. Ranjit Singh had already formed an opinion regarding the Tibetan terrain on the basis of the information provided by the French Botanist Victor Jaquemont during his visit to Lahore durbar in 1831 and had decided that he would never bother to conquer such a difficult and poor country.[40] But for Gulab Singh one of the most important sources of motivation for leading this expedition was to grasp the potentialities of shawl wool[41] trade of Ladakh.[42]

The routes connecting Ladakh from the eastern frontier was most significant from the commercial point of view as the trade taking place from this part of the country involved the shawl wool. This route connected Ladakh with *Naris-Skor-Sum* in the western Tibet, the region which was the main supplier of shawl wool to the industries of Kashmir, on which the economy of Kashmir depended. The commercial significance of the region developed as there was an increased proliferation of the demand of shawl wool in Kashmir and Punjab. As mentioned earlier the Kashmiri traders enjoyed monopoly in this trade since seventeenth century as per the treaty of Temmisgang (1684) concluded between Tibet, Ladakh and Mughal Kashmir. Gulab Singh wanted to divert the wool going for the shawl industries of Amritsar and Nurpur from Kashmir and wanted a direct route through Kishtwar.[43] His ambition was not only limited to Ladakh rather he wanted to conquer the entire wool producing region of western Tibet. This led to an emergence of a chink in the friendly alliance formed with the British and even Ranjit Singh seemed bit vary, when Zorawar Singh expressed his readiness to invade Tibet during his meeting after the first expedition of Ladakh in 1836. Ranjit Singh politely declined him from undertaking such an expedition.[44] And for the British greatest concern was caused, when Zorawar Singh went ahead and invaded Tibet in 1842 which was expected to cause decline in the supply of shawl wool to the industries of British India.[45] Concern also grew in Gharwal sector for British, from where the Bhutia traders were involved in the trade with western Tibet, as the Dogra movement in Tibet was expected to have a repercussion on this trade as well.[46]

However, the objections based on these concerns by the British surfaced only, after the Dogras had already invaded Ladakh and were making inroads in western Tibet. On the other hand, Sikhs governors pejorative attitude on Gulab Singh's movements in Ladakh was based on the grounds that it was an attempt to divert the flow of shawl wool to Kishtawar from Kashmir. Repeated complaints were sent to Ranjit Singh by the governor of Kashmir in 1834, but Raja Dhyan Singh, the brother of Gulab Singh at Lahore durbar, manipulated and ensured that such reports never reach the maharaja and even when, the matter was brought before the maharaja it was put to rest.[47]

Notwithstanding these concerns, Gulab Singh went ahead with his expedition and he could not have asked for a better opportunity, when he was invited to settle a dispute by the

Trambis *Cho,* a territorial chief in Ladakh. It so happened that since the olden times, the Kashmiri traders used to travel by traditional highway; Dras-Shimshi-Kharbu-Chanigund to Kargil. But in 1830, a delegation of Kashmiri traders crossed over to the Stagpa-la pass into the Suru valley in the jurisdiction of the Trambis *Cho*, who objected to this unauthorised passage and clash ensued resulting in casualties on both the sides. This matter was taken to the Leh court, where the Trambis *Cho* did not get a fair deal and was humiliated. So in order to wreak vengeance he approached Mohammed Tegh Singh of Kishtawar and conveyed news of the chaotic condition of Ladakh giving an opportune time to annex it. In July 1834, Wazir Zorawar Singh, the general of Gulab Singh after the approval from his master, quietly entered Suru Valley without any resistance.[48] The route taken by the Dogra force was not the traditional route through Kashmir, for the obvious reason of avoiding it on the grounds of hinderance expected to be caused by the Sikh governor of Kashmir, leading general Zorawar to enter Ladakh through Kishtawar.

The Dogra army descended on the province of Purig, Ladakh was taken by surprise, but they collected about 5000 men in haste and on 16th August attempted to stop the Dogras at Sanku. In this clash Ladakhi forces were badly defeated, Kartse the capital of Purig also fell in the hands of the Dogras, but Zorawar Singh followed a systematic policy of leaving small garrison in the forts with a sufficient supply of arms.[49] Though the Dogra army had to face many risk due to the severe cold climate and at times their capacity was weakened by these weather conditions, yet it was no match for the Ladakhi forces, the Dogras were far superior and experienced from their participation in several Indian wars and were also equipped with superior arms.[50] Zorawar Singh advanced unchecked and in the meanwhile he deputed emissaries to negotiate peace on the condition that a tribute of Rs. 10,000 is paid by the king of Ladakh, who was ready to accept the deal, but at that moment the queen insisted of defending the motherland, instead of surrendering.[51] This was followed by a battle in which Ladakhis were completely defeated and the king Tsepal Namgyal came down to Basgo[52] with presents to beg pardon. And the second round of negotiation took place at Leh, where Zorawar decides to restore the whole kingdom to the king. The raja Tsepal Namgyal was asked to pay an annual tribute of Rs. 20,000 and a war indemnity of Rs.50,000, out of which only Rs.37,000 were to be paid at once in cash and jewels, 6000 after one month and 7000 after four months.[53]

However, the raja readily accepted an opportunity of driving away the Dogras, when under the instigation of Mahan Singh the Sikh governor of Kashmir, the Ladakhis decides to throw away the Dogra authority and raised a revolt.[54] 'At this Zorawar Singh again marched towards Leh with his troops and deposed raja Tsepal Namgyal made him the Jagirdar of the village Stok and his minister Marup Stanzin was given the charge of the administration, Dogra official Magna Thanedar with 300 troops was left at Leh fort to strengthen Morup's authority. An annual Nazrana of Rs. 9000 was fixed and the internal collection of the revenue was left in the hands of Marup Stanzin.'[55]

After every event of negotiation, Zorawar Singh would retreat to Jammu to avoid the winter in Ladakh. This absence kept the fire of revolt alive in the heart of Ladakh raja and would start seeking support and assistance of rajas in his neighbourhood.[56] And also about this time in 1840, around the neighbouring country of Baltistan, an insurrection had been stirred up against the Dogras under the leadership of a person named Sukamir in the Purig province, in whose support the Ladakhi raja gathered a force, but before it could be brought to use, Zorawar Singh reached Ladakh and arrested Sukamir along with other Purig leaders.[57] What followed next was sending forces to the neighbouring regions of Ladakh, and in this attempt, the service of Ladakhis proved most advantageous to the Dogras.

Dogras while carrying the invasion of Baltistan, forced the vanquished Ladakhi ruler Tsepal Namgyal (1792-1834) and his ministers to accompany them to Skardo. It was considered as a great service by the Ladakhi ruler, who used his influence with the raja of Khapulu to facilitate passage of the Dogra arms to Skardu.[58] But during this campaign the Ladakhi king and his ministers came under the grip of small pox, as Baltistan was in the epidemic at that time and all of them lost their life.[59] The Dogra forces were not affected by this as they all had been vaccinated. Later when Zorawar Singh made a further inroad in Tibet, along with the Ladakh forces, he also forced, Ahmad Shah, the ruler of Skardo and his son Mohmmad Ali Khan to accompany them in their Tibetan campaign. Following the defeat of Dogras at the hand of Tibetans, the Skardo ruler was taken as prisoner to Tibet and he died there.

After this successful campaign in Baltistan Zorawar Singh returned to Leh and geared up to carry his expedition towards Tibet. As mentioned earlier, Ranjit Singh had discouraged Zorawar Singh from advancing in such a tough terrain, but after his death in 1839, he had a better luck with the maharaja's successor Sher Singh who agreed to his proposal.[60] Immediately after the conquest of Baltistan, Zorawar Singh gathered a huge force of around 6000-7000 soldiers comprising of Ladakhis, Baltis and Dogras and set on his Tibetan campaign in 1841. The Dogra forces entered western Tibet without much resistance, and succeeded in capturing the fort of Purang, where the Dogra commander Basti Ram held a garrison of about five hundred men. Before that, Zorawar had reached the villages around Mansarovar and had acquired these territories.[61] However, by this time the Tibetans had gathered a strong force under the command of general Pishi and gave a tough resistance to the Dogra forces, in this the approaching winter also worked in favour of the Tibetan, who succeeded in recapturing the provinces of Purang, Guge and Rudok and while resisting the Tibetans, Zorawar Singh lost his life on12th December.[62]

The disastrous defeat of the Dogras in the Tibet had its implications on Ladakh also. The Ladakhis again hoped to assert their independence, with the help of the Tibetans as the Tibetan army under general Pishi had even reached Leh.[63] The news of this disastrous

defeat was carried to the maharaja Gulab Singh, by Mehta Basti Ram, who managed to escape from Tibet, after which fresh troops were sent from Jammu under Pahlwan Singh, which was further strengthened by reinforcement sent under Diwan Hari Chand and wazir Ratnu.[64] As the two powers headed towards a clash, many of the Tibetan forces, including general Pishi along with some Ladakhi ministers fled towards east hearing about the reinforcement of Dogra forces. Arriving at Pangong at the western end of Tangtse, the fugitive party was joined by a Tibetan army under Kalon Raga Shah, Kalon Razchak and Chhakjot, who jointly decided to face the Dogra forces.[65] In the clash that followed the Tibetans were completely defeated, most of them were routed with some taken as prisoners along with their general Ragasha considered to be a great catch to revenge the death of their general Zorawar Singh.[66]

The Tibetans sued for peace and a treaty was signed between the Dogras and the Tibetans in 1842, an agreement of great significance, it had far reaching consequences on the political and commercial history of Ladakh. It was a peace treaty signed by Wazir Ratnu and Diwan Hari Chand from the Dogra side and Kalon from the Tibetan side. The treaty signed at Leh, determined the existing boundary between Ladakh and Tibet and to continue the peaceful relations between the two countries. It was a treaty which had both political and commercial connotation and in the domain of later, the ties between these two powers got more reinforced. In this regards the important clause of the treaty stressed that 'in conformity with the ancient ways, tea and Pashmina shawl wool shall be transmitted by the Ladakh road and the old conditions shall remain in force without interruption and whatever customs formally existed shall be renewed and continue to prevail.'[67]

From 1834 to 1846, Ladakh came ostensibly under the suzerainty of the Sikh maharaja but its actual administration was under the control of raja Gulab Singh.[68] As the case was after the submission, the first tribute from Ladakh was sent to the Sikh maharaja Ranjit Singh. The tribute was presented by Dogra officer Raja Dhyan Singh at the durbar of Sikh maharaja, consisting of Rs. 30,000 of Ladakh currency (each rupee averaging 4 or 5 ana of Indian Rupee), five ponies, 25 grams of 'Nirbasi' a precious drug brought from China and 25 pieces of Chinese silk.[69] The acceptance of this tribute by the Sikh maharaja confirmed the authority of Gulab Singh over Ladakh, but the Sikh regarded the country of Ladakh as a dependency of Kashmir and its ruler treated in that relation by the Sikh governors of Kashmir.

The treaty of Amritsar was signed between the Dogras and the British in 1846, granting independent possession of the territories lying between eastward of river Indus and westward of river Ravi.[70] The historic significance of the treaty as imbedded on the common understanding of the people lies in the fact that the region of Kashmir was ceded to maharaja Gulab Singh for a sum of rupees seventy-five lakhs. But the final submission of Kashmir was yet to be achieved and 'it was only a legal title transferred to him'[71], what lies in the possession of the Dogras at this juncture was the entire territory of Ladakh and Baltistan,

as the final restoration of the Dogra authority in the region had already taken place by 1842. And in context of Ladakh, the advent of the Dogras brought some important modification in the territorial structure of the region.

Ladakh and Baltistan shared close political and cultural ties since the beginning of the empire, however lately a state of uneasiness and mutual distrust had emerged between the two regions. And it was the Dogras, which succeeded in unifying Ladakh and Baltistan for the last time, it was the threat of the invasion which provided an opportunity for both the regions to come together to launch a resistance in which the combined forces of Ladakh and Baltistan were defeated by the Dogras.[72] In 1889, Baltistan, Ladakh and Gilgit were all conglomerated into a single border district by the Dogra administration. The decision for the amalgamation of all the three frontier districts of the state was taken after working out all the modalities involved in it. In this regards the feasibility report provided by Pt. Radha Kishan Kaul, the Dogra wazir of Ladakh expediated the amalgamation process with the advantage of making Skardo as the headquarter of the whole region for it being at equal distance from both Ladakh and Gilgit.[73] After two years, the Ladakh district was formed comprising Leh, Kargil and Skardo tehsil under the administration of the Skardo wazarat. Leh and Skardo were made the winter and summer headquarters of the wazir wazarat, who stayed from September to March at Skardo, followed by three months in Kargil and then three months at Leh.

At the same time, under the Dogra regime, there was a territorial delimitation of Ladakh. The kingdom of Ladakh whose border in the south till then included the district of Spiti had to lose them to British. Spiti was detached from Ladakh and added to the British possessions of Kangra, Kullu and Mandi.[74] Technically the sphere of administration and the domain of revenue collection from Ladakh under the Dogras were reduced. But in reality the Dogra authorities at Leh went on receiving the tribute from the Zamindars in Lahaul, even after it had been acceded to British. On this the British raised their objection and conveyed their resentment to the Dogra maharaja in 1867, the Dogras pleaded their innocence on the ground that they had been accepting the tribute as a matter of custom as existed during the rule of native kings.[75]

It took Dogras a period of eight years to complete the conquest of Ladakh. But the displacement of the government of native rulers (*Gyalpo)* with miniscule changes had started from the first invasion in 1834. The whole country of Ladakh was divided into five districts; Ladakh, Zanskar, Kargil, Dras and Nubra. These districts were placed under the command of a Thanedar, who exercised both military command and civil authority.[76] These Thanedars were independent of each other and were responsible to raja Gulab Singh. The most powerful Thanedar among them was the Thanedar of Leh. The first Thanedar was Magna, the brother-in-law of Zorawar Singh, who was left in charge of Ladakh after the first invasion of Ladakh and remained in office from 1841-1845.

Magna Thanedar was succeeded by Basti Ram; a native of Kishtawar, who was a petty officer of wazir Zorawar Singh at the time of his first invasion of Ladakh in 1834. Later he played an important role in the further Dogra conquest of Baltistan and he survived the disastrous defeat at the hands of Tibetan forces to bring the tragic news of wazir Zorawars death at Tibet to Maharaja Sahib Bahadur.[77] Basti Ram was succeeded by his son Mangalju, generally known as Mehter Mangal around 1860. Next in line came, Shibsaran as the Thanedar of Ladakh. He was succeeded by Sayyid Ali Akbar (1865-1868), first as the Wazir, because from him onwards, the designation of the chief Dogra administrator of Ladakh changed to Wazir, which remained till the independence.[78] Wazir Sayyid Ali was followed by two Englishmen Fredrick Drew (1868-1871) and Mr. Johnson (1871-1882) to the office of Wazir at Ladakh. Mr Johnson was succeeded by Pandit Radha Kishan Kaul, who remained in office till 1886.

Conclusion

Thus, the political unification of Jammu, Kashmir and Ladakh, was brought into effect with the treaty of Amritsar in 1846. This unification was limited to the territorial unification only. It becomes difficult to find uniformity in the administrative structure which came to be established under the Dogra rule in Ladakh and Kashmir. The circumstances and process by which both Kashmir and Ladakh was brought under the Dogras authority, were different, hence their methods of establishing the claim on the two territories also varied. The Dogras legitimised their claim over Kashmir for having bought it for 75 Lakhs rupees, hence they have the propriety rights of lands of Kashmir and the Dogra Maharaja was the sole owner of the lands, forest, mountains' etc. in the valley and the tillers of the land and agriculturist and Zamindars were only tenants at will.[79] However, Ladakh was brought under Dogras by using force, and the rule of native kings has been replaced by the maharaja, hence all the villages belonging to the kings were appropriated by the Maharaja.[80]

Ladakh provided a platform to the Dogras and the British to share their ties based on commerce and control of the frontier region, but also divided by complex calibrations of outdoing each other in establishing a stronger influence on the people and the place. While formulating the administrative structure in the newly acquired territory of Ladakh, it was considered expedient to maintain the old system of administration in a region, which was so distant and so distinct from the rest of the state. It was necessary for the efficient administration that the office of the old native state agencies are kept without any change, the office of the *Kalon* (prime minster) and the *Kharpon* (fort in charge) was kept intact and they discharged the administrative duties for the Dogras.[81]This view of the Dogras was also shared by the British, who also believed that; 'The purely traditional institutions and customs that can be retained the better, and no changes to foreign institutions should be made, unless absolutely necessary for the good of the majority.'[82]

Thus, having lost its independence, coming subservient to an external power and getting integrated within the domain of a larger state; Ladakh witnessed various forms of transition in the political system. But the Dogra policy, based on the perception of maintaining the traditional ways of life, without introducing any foreign institute, unless absolutely necessary for the good of the majority was upheld throughout its rule. And this policy was used as an instrument of sublimation having mutual advantages to the subject as well as to the state.

End Note :

1 National Archives of India (NAI) Delhi. File No. 8, *Translation from Persian of the original letter received from the prince of Ladakh from Spiti*. Foreign Dept. Political Section, Year 1837.

2 The raja mentioned in the letter was actually prince Chosprul, in whose favour his father king Tsepal Namgyal, the last ruler of Ladakh had abdicated the throne in 1830. Chosprul was addressed as king in the British records. After the Dogra invasion, ruler of Ladakh Tsepal Namgyal was reinstated on the throne of Ladakh but only as a vassal of the Dogra maharaja Gulab Singh. More on this, Luciano Petech, Kingdom of Ladakh, 1977, pp.135-140.

3 NAI, File No.9, *Letter from the British Agent Shimla*, Foreign Deptt. Political Sec. Year 1837.

4 Luciano Petech. 1977. *The Kingdom of Ladakh C.950-1842 A.D*, p. 140. Rome: Instituto Italiano Per Il Medio Ed Estremo Oriente.

5 A. H. Francke. 1995. (Reprint) *A History of Western Tibet*, pp.137-138. Delhi: Asian Educational services.

6 H. Hosten, 1998. (Reprint) *Missionary in Tibet; Letters and Other Papers of Ippolito Desideri*, p. 12. Delhi: Cosmo Publication.

7 The *Mons* and *Dards* were the earliest inhabitants. *Mons* migrated towards Ladakh from the Indian side (Kashmir) and *Dards* inhabited the areas around Baltistan, before the Tibetanization of Ladakh took place. More on this in Francke, *History of Western Tibet,* pp. 12-26.

8 Francke, *History of Western Tibet*, pp.19-37.

9 Luciano Petech, 1939 (Reprint) 1999. Study on the *Chronicles of Ladakh,* p. 47. Delhi: Low Price Publications.

10 Buddhism was the first evidence of close historical ties between Ladakh and Kashmir. It was during the reign of Ashoka, the Buddhist scholars from Kashmir disseminated to its neighbouring places including Ladakh. This was further strengthened during the Kushan period, when Kanishka's (78-101 CE), vast empire from Bihar in the east to Khoristan (Afghanistan) in west from Khotan (eastern Turkistan) in north to Konkan in the south, in all probability covered the territory of Ladakh also. Jyoteeshwar Pathik, 1997*, Glimpses of history of Jammu and Kashmir*, p. 89. Delhi: Anmol Publication.

11 Tashi Ragais. 2018. (Reprint) Trans. *The History of Maryul Ladakh*, pp.40-42. Delhi: Jayyed Press.

12 John Powers. 2007. *Introduction to Tibetan Buddhism*, pp.155-158. New York: Snowlion Publication.

13 Neil Howard, 1993. What happened between 1450 and 1550? And other question from the history of Ladakh. In: Osmaston and N. Tsering (eds.) *Recent Research On Ladakh 6,* p.135. Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass Publisher.

14 Petech, *Kingdom of Ladakh*, p.22.

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[17] Petech, *Study on the Chronicles*, p. 115.

[18] Neil Howard. 2011. 'Sulatn Zinul Abidin's raid into Ladakh,' In: John Bray (ed.) *Ladakhi Histories, Local and Regional Perspective*, pp.137-143.Dharamshala: Library of Tibetan Works and Archives.

[19] Abul Fazal. 1902. *Akbarnama*, tr. Beveridge .H, Vol. III, p.838. Calcutta: The Asiatic Society.

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[22] Abdul Hamid Lahori. 1875. *Shahjahanama* (ed.) H M Eliot, pp.67-68, Lahore.

[23] Lahori, *Shahjahanama,* pp.72-73.

[24] Jigar Mohammad. 2011. 'Mughal sources on Medieval Ladakh, Baltistan and Western Tibet', *Ladakhi Histories Local and Regional Perspectives*, p.157. Dharamsala: Library of Tibetan Works and Archives.

[25] Sufi. *Kashir*. p. 274. .

[26] Francios Bernier. 1891. *Travels in the Mughal Empire,* pp.422-424. London: Archibald Constable.

[27] Pascale Dolfuss. 1995. 'History of Muslims in Central Ladakh,' *Tibet Journal*, Vol.20. (37).

[28] It was the only occasion when Tibet followed an expansionist policy towards Ladakh in the Tibeto-Mongol war (1679-1684). The war was projected as a sectarian clash, in which the Tibetan army was commanded by a Mongolian leader Gursi Khan who was an ardent follower of the *Geylug pa* sect headed by the Fifth Dalai Lama. On the other hand, Ladakh was under the influence of the *Drug pa* sect. However, later study proved that the war cannot be termed as a purely sectarian clash, rather economic factors were also responsible for this war. More on this in Nawang Jenpa, 2015. 'Why Did Tibet and Ladakh Clash in the 17th Century? Rethinking the Background to the 'Mongol War' in Ngari (1679-1684)' *Tibet Journal* Special issue, *Ladakh historical perspective and social change.*

[29] Janet Rizvi. 1999. *Trans-Himalayan* Caravan, pp.53-55. Delhi: Oxford University Press.

[30] C.L Dutta. 1977. *Ladakh in Western Himalayan*, pp.81-82. Delhi: Munshiram Manoharlal.

[31] William Moorcroft was a British veterinarian working as the in charge of a stud. He was the first British official to visit Ladakh. He stayed in Ladakh for two years from 1820-1822, waiting for a permission from the Chinese government to carry out his further journey to Central Asia. But he was not permitted to continue his journey and had to return to Kashmir. Moorcroft records provide a detail description about Ladakh making it an important source on the 19th century Ladakh. W. Moorcroft & G Trebeck, 1898. *Travels in Himalayan Provinces of Hindustan and Punjab,* p.420. Delhi: Asian Educational Services.

[32] J.D Cunningham. 1849. *History of the Sikh,* p.213. London: John Murray.

[33] Alexander Cunningham, 1970. *Ladakh Statistical, Physical and Historical*, pp. 330-331. Delhi: Sagar Publication.

[34] Cunningham, *Sikhs*, p.190.

35 K. M. Pannikar. 1930. *Ghulab Singh (1792-1858) Founder of Kashmir*, p.29. London: Martin Hopkinson Ltd.

36 P.N.K Bamzai. 1973 "History of Kashmir", pp.651-652. Delhi: Metropolitian Book Company.

37 Ibid., pp.652-653

38 NAI, File No. 76-79, Foreign Deptt. Political A Branch, Year 1868.

39 Pannikar, *Gulab Singh*, pp. 76-77

40 Inderjeet Singh.. 2018. 'Revisiting Zorawar Singh's campaign in Tibet in 1842', p. 20, *Tibet Journal*.

41 The wool consisted of raw unprocessed wool called 'Pashmina' extracted from under fleece of the goats reared in the high-elevated areas of Western Tibet. It also included another material called 'Toosh' or 'Tus', often referred to as 'aasli' or genuine 'Tus', a fibre even softer then the ordinary Pashmina also had considerable commercial value. This is extracted primarily from the Chiru or Tibetan antelope

42 Dutta, *Ladakh in Western Himalaya*, p.93.

43 Ibid., p. 93.

44 Singh, *Zorawar Singh*, p.20

45 R. Huttenback. 1961. 'Gulab Singh and the creation of Dogra state of Jammu, Kashmir and Ladakh', *Journal of Asian Studies*, Vol.20, No.4, p.482.

46 NAI, File No. 19-20, Year 1841, Foreign Dept. Secret Section, Delhi.

47 Dutta, *Ladakh in Western Himalaya*, p. 94.

48 S.S Gergan. 1979. 'Critical Introduction' *In: (ed.)* Francke, *A History of Ladakh*, pp. 36-37. Delhi: Sterling Publications.

49 Pannikar, *Gulab Singh*, p.77.

50 Francke, *History of Western Tibet*, pp. 138-139

51 Gergan, 'Critical', p.36

52 Basgo lies at a distance of 40 kms from Leh, towards the southern direction became an important historical Centre, where a palace and a fort was built, it was at the fort of Basgo the Tibeto-Mongol war (1679-1684) was fought.

53 Francke, *History of Western Tibet*, p.147.

54 Diwan Kripa Ram. 1977. *Gulabnama*, (trans.), pp.209-210. Delhi: Light and Life publisher.

55 Jammu and Kashmir State Archives, Srinagar (JKSA-S): File No. 1875, Year 1908 Ladakh Settlement by Chaudhri Mohd, Settlement officer.

56 Diwan, *Gulabnama*, p.208.

57 Francke, *History of Western Tibet,* pp.154-155.

58 JKSA-S: File No.1875, Ladakh Settlement by Chaudhri Khushi Mohd. Settlement Officer Ladakh Printed at Ranbir Prakash Press, 1908.

59 Rabgias, *Maryul,* p.209.

60 Singh, *Zorawar Singh*, p.20.

61 Diwan, *Gulabnama*, pp. 241-215.

[62] Dutta, *Ladakh in Western Himalaya*, pp 137-139.

[63] Francke, *History of Western Tibet*, p.165.

[64] JKSA-S: File No. 1875, 1908.

[65] Diwan, Gulabnama, p. 221.

[66] Francke, *History of Western Tibet*, p.167

[67] NAI: File No. 61-63 "*Translation of treaty between the Chinese and Sikhs*" Foreign Section Secret C, 17TH Oct. 1842.

[68] Dutta, *Ladakh in Western Himalaya*, p. 38.

[69] NAI: File No. 28-29,Foreign Department, Political Section 1838.

[70] Pannikar, *Gulab Singh*, p.111.

[71] Ibid., p.117.

[72] Cunningham, *Ladakh*, pp. 343-344.

[73] District Archives Leh (DAL): File No.15, *Memo on the Amalgamation of the three frontier district of Ladakh, Baltistan and Gilgit for purpose of administration.* 1889, Ladakh.

[74] Dutta, *Ladakh in the Western Himalaya*, p.186.

[75] NAI: File No. 125-129, *Tribute of Lahaul remitted by the Maharaja of Jammu*. Foreign Department, Political A. 1867.

[76] Cunningham, *Ladakh*, pp.273-274.

[77] JKSA-S: Account No.1875, 1908.

[78] H.N. Kaul. 1992. Ladakh Through the Ages, p.103. Delhi: Indus Publications.

[79] Robert Thorp. 1980. (Reprint), *Kashmir Misgovernment*, (ed.) F.M Hassnain, p.26. Srinagar: Gulshan Publishers.

[80] Cunningham, *Ladakh*, p.270.

[81] NAI: File No. 67-70, Foreign Department, Secret Section, 1867.

[82] NAI: File No. 1-7, *Memorandum by Mr. Nay Elias, on the administration of Ladakh and Revenue Settlement*. Foreign Department, Secret F., 1886.

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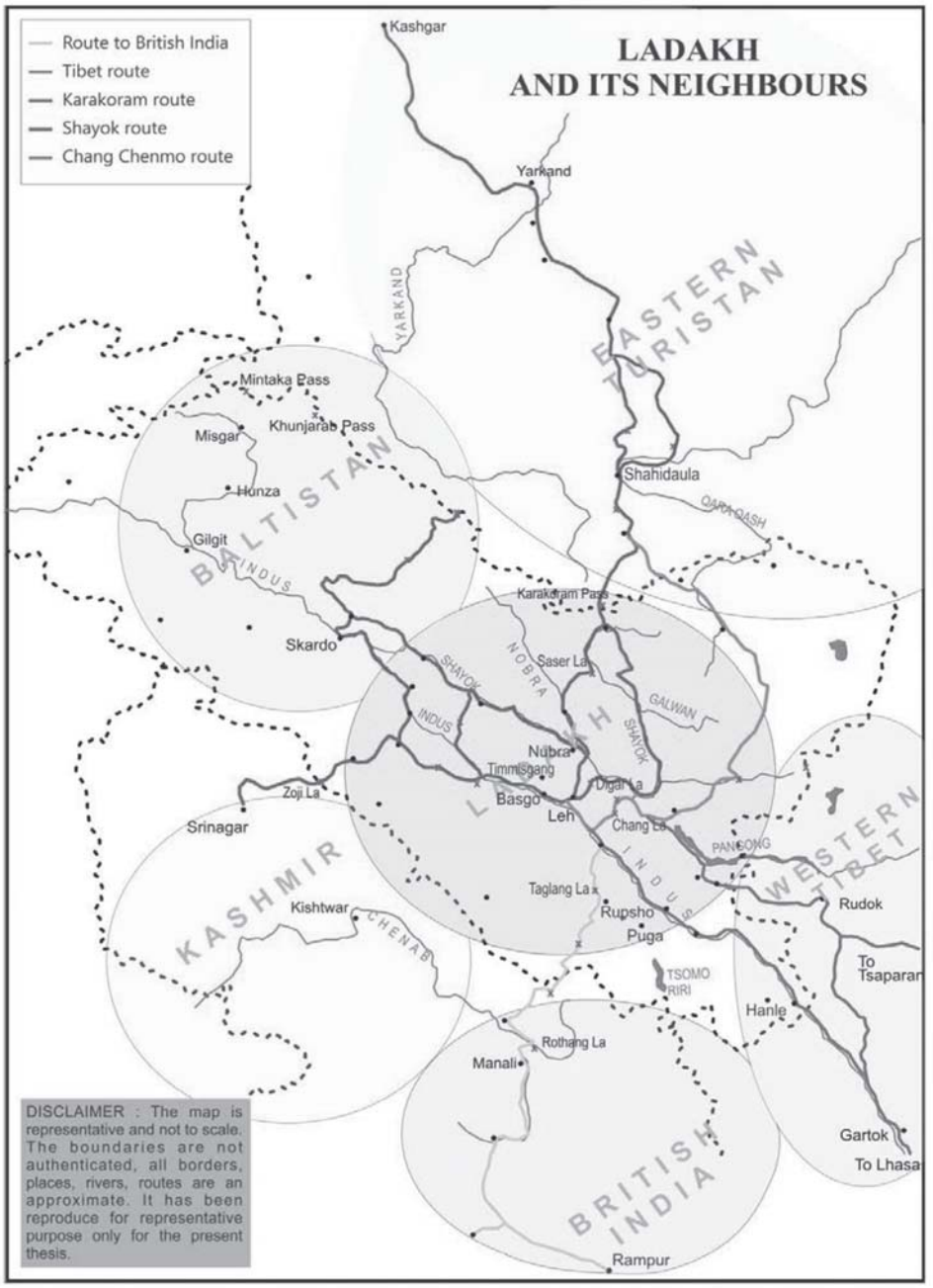
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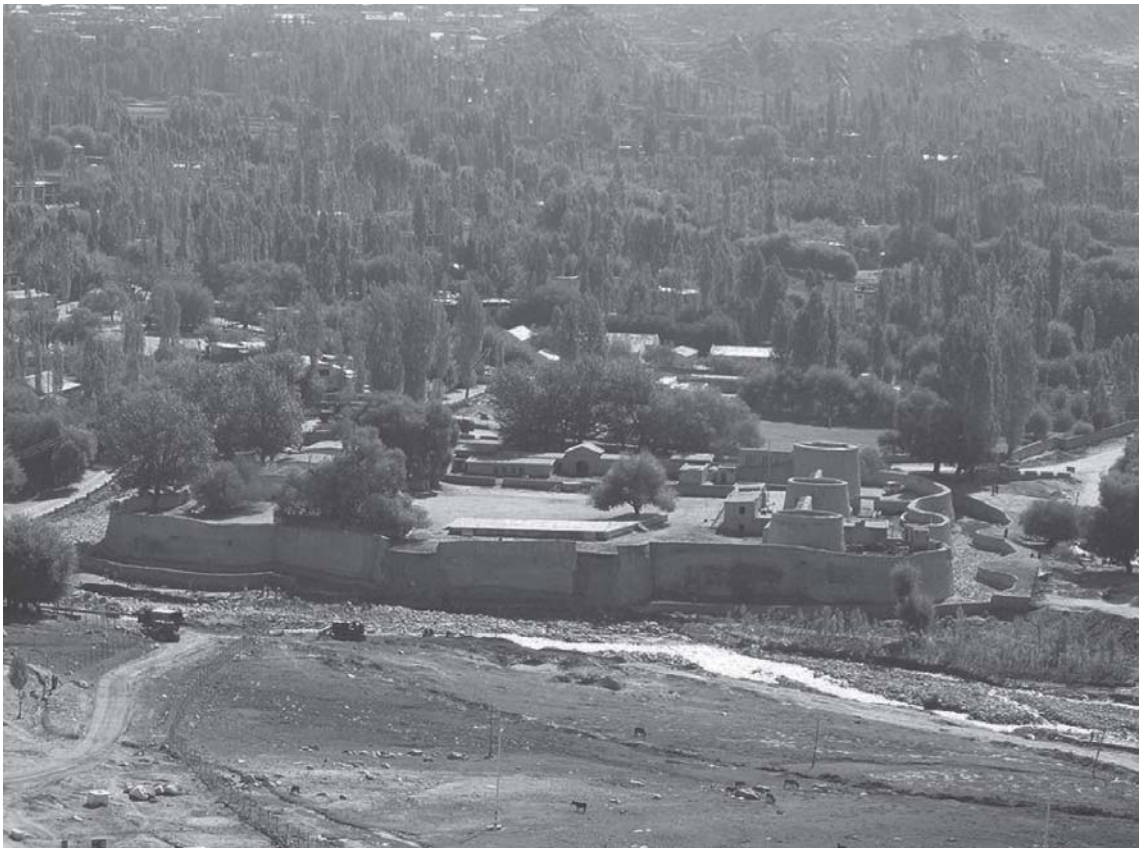
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Map 01. Ladakh and its Neighbours(19th Century), Map redrawn from Janet Rizvi's Trans Himalayan Caravan (1999)



Source: Wikipedia

Fig.01. Zorawar Fort, Leh

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Comparative Advantage of India in International Trade: A Quest for Emerging Manufacturing Hub

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Abstract:

The share of India in global manufacturing output was 3 per cent in 2018 which is very low against its biggest competitor China's share of 28.4 per cent (UNSD 2018). The share of its manufacturing value-added in GDP was only 14 per cent in 2019 much lower than China having this share equal to 27 per cent (World Bank 2020). India wants to transform its economy into a manufacturing hub. To boost the country's manufacturing sector, the Indian Government has initiated many programmes and schemes like- Skill India, Make in India, Startup India, ASPIRE, Atal Innovation Schemes, etc., before COVID 19 pandemic. The global value chain disruption due to the Covid-19 pandemic has reestablished the significance of self-reliance. Now India is exploring ways not only to reduce its dependence on China but also to take over China's place in the international market. 'Vocal for Local Campaign' and 'Self-Reliant India Programme' are some measures in this direction to make India a bigger and more significant part of the global economy. To achieve this goal, India should identify some key areas with a comparative advantage over other countries. An analysis of its international trade can give us an insight in this respect.

The present research paper explores India's competitive strength in the international market by computing the Revealed Comparative Advantage Index for the commodities exported by India and compared it with other leading exporter countries of the world. The research outcome will help understand whether India's trade structure is in the right direction and what are the potential commodities or services in which India should take the lead and frame policies to improve the production and productivity of those commodities. The paper also tried to explore whether the business environment in India is efficient enough to help it emerge as a manufacturing hub and what should be done to improve it.

Key Words: *Emerging Manufacturing Hub, Revealed Comparative Advantage, International Trade, India,*

1. Introduction

India is an agrarian economy with high dependence on the service sector for growth and Goss Domestic Product (GDP). India's manufacturing sector has not used its full potential,

and it needs to be promoted to transform India into a developed economy. India is the second largest market in the world according to demand, and it has the potential to become a manufacturing hub. Still, its share in global manufacturing output has been only 3 per cent in 2018 (UNSD 2019), and the share of its manufacturing value-added in GDP remained 13 per cent in 2020 (World Bank 2020a). These values are much lower than that of China which retains the share of 28.4 per cent in global manufacturing and its 27 per cent GDP is from manufacturing value-added. To boost the country's manufacturing sector, the Indian Government has initiated many programmes and schemes like- Skill India, Make in India, Startup India, ASPIRE, Atal Innovation Schemes, etc., before COVID 19 pandemic. The global value chain disruption due to the Covid-19 pandemic has reestablished the significance of self-reliance. Now India is exploring ways not only to reduce its dependence on China but also to take over China's place in the international market. 'Vocal for Local Campaign' and 'Self-Reliant India Programme' are some of the other measures implemented in this direction along with the schemes mentioned above to make India self-reliant and a large and more important part of the global economy. India can improve its position in the world market by boosting its production and exports. To achieve this goal, India should identify some key areas with a comparative advantage over other countries. An analysis of its international trade can give us an insight in this respect.

Salcedo and Grackin (2000) explained that a business could not perform independently and remain isolated amidst competitors, and competitiveness can be felt more in global markets. So the present research paper has tried to explore India's competitive strength in the global market by computing the Revealed Comparative Advantage Index (RCA) for the exports of India and compared it with other leading exporter countries of the world. The paper also explores whether India's business environment is efficient enough to help it in emerging as a manufacturing hub and what should be done to improve it.

This paper is divided into eight sections. The first section gives the introduction of the paper along with its objectives and structure. The second section is devoted to the review of the literature and elaborates on the research gap. The third section explains the methodology used for the research. The fourth section of the paper explains India's position in world trade. In the fifth section, the revealed comparative advantage of leading exporters of the world is analysed for the products in which India stands among the top ten exporters. The sixth section highlights the potential and challenges of India for becoming a manufacturing hub and the seventh section discusses the business environment of India. Lastly, the eighth section gives the conclusion and suggestions.

2. Review of literature

The decisive role of international trade in economic growth is apparent in economic theories started by Adam Smith (1776) and stimulated after the endogenous growth theories of

Romer (1986) and Lucas (1988) (Afonso 2001: 2). Since many developing countries adopted export-led foreign trade policy so the impact of exports on economic growth was the focus of several empirical studies (Tyler 1981:124; Fosu 1990:67; Salvatore and Hatcher 1991:7; Vohra 2001:345) and they confirmed its expansionary effect. Sabasat (2002:345) found that exports significantly affect the economic growth of a middle-income economy more rather than the low and high-income economy. So for India which is a middle-income developing economy exports are highly significant for economic growth. The share of exports of a country signifies its status in the global value chain (GVC). In this era of globalisation, countries are interconnected through GVC and are reaping benefits. Between 2000 and 2017 China's role has increased tremendously as both a supply and demand hub in a simple GVC network (WTO 2019a: 1). But studies reported that due to the disruptions in GVC after the outbreak of Covid 19 in China, US-China trade war and increasing labour cost in China, many firms and countries are searching an alternative to reorganise their value chain and change their trading partner (Bhardwaz 2020:10; Barua 2020: 17-25; Miroudot 2020: 410-413; Baldwin and Tomiura 2020:68-69). It can be a good opportunity for India but to take advantage of this opportunity, India has to explore its potential in global trade. The Revealed Comparative Advantage (RCA) Index developed by Balassa (1965) is one of the techniques used by many researchers to measure the comparative advantage of a country over others in global trade (Balassa and Noland 1989:9; Richardson and Zhang 1999:195; Serin and Civan 2008:28-29; Ishchukova and Smutka 2013:943). So the present study also uses the RCA index to measure the comparative advantage of India in all commodities where it stands in the top ten exporters of the world and compare it with other leading countries. Though few studies earlier try to measure the comparative advantage of India but none of the studies was found which has done this kind of multi-country analysis to explore the comparative advantage of India in world trade to identify its potential and challenges for the future. So this study fills this research gap and also gives policy suggestions to improve India's business environment so that it can emerge as a new manufacturing hub in the future.

2. Methodology

The type of present research is descriptive and it is based on secondary data. The data related to the international trade of India and other leading countries and their scores and rank according to the Ease of Doing Business Index, 2020 were used to analyse the strength of India in the world market and its business environmental conditions. The year 2019 is affected by COVID-19, so the trade data of the year 2018 are considered for this research taken from World Trade Statistical Review, 2019 (WTO 2019b). The Revealed Comparative Advantage (RCA) Index of selected countries was computed for the products in which India holds its position among the top 10 exporters to measure the competitive strength in

the international market. In this paper, the Revealed Comparative Advantage (RCA) Index is measured as defined by Balassa (1965). It is computed as the ratio of the proportion of a particular commodity's export in total exports of the country to the proportion of world exports of the commodity under consideration in total world exports. This index for country A of commodity i is calculated as follows:

$RCA_{Ai} = (X_{Ai}/X_A)/(X_{wi}/X_w)$

Here X_{Ai} = Export of the i^{th} commodity (or service) of A^{th} country,

X_{wi} = World's exports of the i^{th} commodity (or service),

X_A = Country A's total exports

X_w = World's total exports.

If this index is computed for commodity i, then X_A and X_w respectively refer to country A's and the world's total merchandise exports. Similarly, if it is calculated for any service i, then X_A and X_w would be the total services exports of country A and the world.

If the value exceeds unity, i.e. one, then the country will have revealed comparative advantage in that particular commodity. By further classifying the values of the index, four cases occur. If the value of the index for a commodity in a country is more than 2.5, it means that the country has extremely strong competitiveness in the international market for that particular commodity. Similarly, if it comes under the range of 1.25 to 2.5, it will indicate very strong global competitiveness, and its value in the range of 0.8 to 1.25 presents strong competitiveness in the global market. But less than the 0.8 value of the index indicates a revealed comparative disadvantage of the country globally (PHD Chamber of Commerce and Industry and DSE 2020: 40).

3. International trade and India amongst leading exporters

Table 1 shows India's position among the top 10 exporters of India in the year 2018. India is an agrarian economy, and it holds eighth and ninth rank respectively among agriculture and food-exporting countries. The European Union (EU), the United States of America (USA), Brazil, China, Canada, Indonesia, Thailand, Australia and Mexico are its major competitors. In textile, India held a strong position at fourth among leading exporters. The Asian nations China, Korea, Chinese Taipei, Viet Nam, Pakistan, and Hongkong are strong competitors of India in the textile market. Taiwan (Chinese Taipei) and Viet Nam are emerging markets of textile which are rapidly growing. India was the ninth among the world's top exporters of Iron and Steel and held the eighth rank for chemicals. Covid-19 has opened avenues for the pharmaceutical industry of India, and it is expected that its growth would register high value in the coming years. There is ample scope for the automobile

industry in India. In 2018, it was at the tenth position among leading exporters of the world. Korea and Thailand, two major Asian countries, are ahead of India in exports of automotive products (table 1).

In 2018, India was fourth among the leading exporters (excluding Intra-European Union Trade) of commercial services in the world and stood tenth among leading importers of services. The high growth of exports of other business services (around 9 per cent annually during 2016-18) and ICT services (Seven per cent in the year 2019) boosted India's performance in service exports. In ICT services, India stands second and ahead of China and the USA. India has high potential in the ICT sector. In financial services and insurance & pension services, India stood eighth among all. India held the fourth position in other business services, which includes services of Research and Development, consulting, technical, trade-related etc. All these sub-components of other commercial services have made India the fourth leading exporter of these services, while in transport and travel services' export India stood at the tenth and ninth position respectively among leading exporters in the world.

4. Revealed comparative advantage of leading exporters in world trade

Table 2 shows leading exporters in merchandise trade and their revealed comparative advantage (RCA). Among the products for which India stands in the top ten exporters of the world, India has an extremely strong competitive strength in textiles explained by its RCA (3.47), which is greater than 2.50. But in automotive products, it has a comparative disadvantage (RCA< 0.80). It has a very strong comparative advantage for other products like iron and steel, agricultural products, food and chemicals since the RCA Index is between 1.25 and 2.50. India stands eighth among the exporters of iron and steel, but its RCA (1.55) is higher than the top two exporters (European Union and China) of this product. It is also valid for agriculture and food exports. In iron and steel, the potential competitors for India are Turkey, Russian Federation and Brazil. In agricultural and food exports Brazil, Thailand, Indonesia and Argentina are the emerging economies that can give India strong competition in the international market. India is far better than its other competitors in the export of chemicals except for the EU (28) and Switzerland. In the market of chemicals and pharmaceuticals, India has a very bright future. The RCA of India in automotive products (0.60) is the least among all leading exporters except China. Though India is dreaming about becoming the top producer in the automobile sector, it has a long way to go. In textile exports, India has an extremely strong comparative advantage (RCA = 3.42) which is the third-highest after Pakistan and Turkey (Table 2).

Table 3 shows leading exporters in the trade of services and their RCA in the world market. India stood eighth among all exporters of total commercial services in 2018 with a very

strong comparative advantage (RCA=1.65). India's comparative advantage indices in exports of all components of commercial services are shown in table 3, which reveals that India has a comparative disadvantage for transport (RCA=0.53) and travel (RCA=0.53). Still, it has a very strong comparative advantage for other commercial services (RCA 1.40) which include construction, information and communication technology (ICT), financial services, insurance & pension and other services related to business. Out of these, India has an extremely strong competitive advantage for ICT (RCA = 2.72) and a very strong competitive advantage for other business services (RCA=2.41). In contrast, it has a comparative disadvantage in financial services and insurance and pension services.

5. Potential of india as a manufacturing hub and its challenges

The RCA indices of India (table 2) depict that it has a comparative advantage for all the commodities of merchandise exports except automotive products. It indicates that India has the full potential to become a manufacturing hub. Another vital piece of information revealed from RCA analyses is that its RCA indices are greater than China for all the commodities analysed here. It signals that if India uses its full strength and improves its economic and business environment, it can have the capacity to replace China. Very low RCA of the automotive industry does not give much hope for India's dream to lead the global market of automotive products, but continuously growing demand for Indian vehicles worldwide and the fact that India was fourth among the world's largest automobile markets in 2017 considering demand still indicate the large potential of this industry in India. This industry is shifting its focus to electric vehicles. India's electric vehicle market is estimated to be Us $ 7.09 billion market by 2025. To cope-up with the future demand and competition, manufacturers are now up-grading themselves through digitisation, automation and artificial intelligence. The Government has allowed a hundred per cent FDI and reduced taxes from 12 to 5 per cent under the new tax regime of GST to boost this sector. The auto firms in India are producing at low cost (at least 10 to 25 per cent) than their European and Latin American competitors. The factors which are making India an investment destination include an efficient workforce and a rapidly growing market along with the low cost of operations (Miglani 2019: 441). India has strong competitiveness in the textile market too. India is first in the production of jute and cotton and the second in silk. The high availability of raw materials and low cost of factors especially labour made textile significantly cheaper than many other competing countries. The Government is also making efforts to train the workers through skill enhancement programmes and to encourage the public and private investment in the industry.Õistortion of the supply chain due to the COVID-19 pandemic has brought new hope for the Indian textile industry and it can try to capture the market share of China in advanced economies (Thomas, 17 September 2020). India is rich in natural

resources to take the lead in agricultural products and minerals, including iron and steel.

The other low-cost neighbouring countries are also giving tough competition to the Indian textile industry having ease in doing business and easier trade routes. The competition from low-cost countries like Bangladesh, Vietnam, Indonesia, Chinese Taipei and Pakistan is hard to meet for the Indian textile industry. These countries have boosted their textile industry in recent years with the use of the latest technology. Viet Nam, Chinese Taipei, Indonesia, Thailand, Malaysia, Turkey, Mexico, and Brazil are a few emerging market economies presenting a strong challenge for India to become a manufacturing hub since they have similar promising factors as India has like, cheap labour and natural resources. Viet Nam and Bangladesh are the two Asian countries that have registered the highest growth among developing nations in merchandise exports from 2008 to 2018, with 14.6 and 9.8 per cent growth. In contrast, India stood fourth with low growth (5.3 per cent) in merchandise exports during this period. Due to the US-China trade war when investors were seeking to shift their production from China, India expected that they would move to India, but it did not happen. Vietnam, Mexico, Indonesia, Thailand and Malaysia were the highest benefitted countries at that time. The low cost of labour in Vietnam, Mexico, and Indonesia and the business-friendly environment in Thailand and Malaysia attract investors and make them strong alternatives for China compared to India.

The RCA indices (table 3) show that in services trade, India has a high advantage in the export of ICT services and other business services. Still, Israel, the Republic of Korea, Viet Nam, the Philippines and Thailand are posing a major challenge for India to lead the exports of these services. There are possibilities to increase the export of transport and travel services in India but need more investment and improvement in the efficiency of these services.

India is trying hard to make itself a new manufacturing hub in Asia, but the other competitors and its business environment pose a great challenge to it. The analysis of its business environment is explained with the help of the Ease of Doing Business Index in the next part of the paper.

6. Analysis of business environment in India

Ease of Doing Business Ranking, 2020 is analysed to compare India's business regulations and environment with other countries. According to the World Bank 17th annual report on 'Doing Business, 2020', India stands at 63rd position among 190 Economies of the world. India jumped 14 ranks from 77 in 2019 to 63 in 2020 (World Bank 2020b). Figure 1 shows the Ease of Doing Business (2020) Score and Rank for selected economies posing a challenge

to India in the world market. As depicted in Figure 1, the ease of doing business is higher in Singapore, the Republic of Korea, Thailand, Malaysia, the Russian Federation, China, Turkey, Mexico, and Saudi Arabia compared to India.

The Government of India aimed to improve its business environment and scored among the leading fifty economies under the 'Ease of Doing Business' ranking in 2015. The reforms initiated were majorly focused on improving the tax system, trading across borders, bankruptcy and insolvency mechanism, attracting FDI and encouraging the private sector in manufacturing through the 'Make in India' campaign. These efforts made India to improve its ranking in Ease of Doing Business ranking tremendously to 63 (in 2020) from 130 (in 2016). But still, more initiatives are required to improve the business environment in India as revealed in figure 2.

Figure 2 shows India's rank among 191 countries for various indicators of the Ease of Doing Business Index, 2020. Though India stands 63 in the overall ranking, figure 2 depicts that it is far behind other countries and needs improvement for some indicators. Starting a business mechanism, property registration, paying taxes and enforcing the contracts are some areas where India has to initiate reforms. Starting a business in India takes 17.5 man-days whereas in Singapore it takes 1.5 days, in China 9 days, in Mexico and the Republic of Korea 8 days, in Myanmar 7 days and Thailand 6 days. Registering a property takes 58 days in India, whereas it takes only one day in Qatar and 1.5 days in UAE, in Chinese Taipei (Taiwan) 4 days, in Turkey and Singapore 4.5 days, in China and Thailand 9 days. In paying taxes, India ranks at 115 due to its high total tax and contribution rate, the high number of payments and increased time in paying taxes per year. In India, the total tax and contribution rate is 49.7 per cent; it is only 21 per cent in Singapore, 21.9 per cent in Hongkong and 25.3 in Israel. The number of tax payments in a year in India is 11, in Singapore 5, in Hongkong 3 and in Viet Nam 6. Enforcing a contract in India takes a time of 1445 days which is the highest among all its competitors. It takes mere 164 days in Singapore, 290 days in the Republic of Korea, 385 days in Hong Kong, 400 days in Viet Nam and 496 days in China to enforce a contract.

India should take stringent steps to reduce the days and procedures involved in business-related activities to improve the business environment in the country.

7. Conclusion and suggestions

The comparative advantage analysis has revealed that India has a strong potential to take the lead in merchandised export of agricultural products, iron and steel, chemicals, textiles etc. and exports of ICT services and other business services. It has more educated human resources as compared to others; it has more natural resources and a large agricultural

sector. If it makes its bureaucratic system more transparent, corruption free and business-friendly, and its human resources more skilled, it can change the global economy's scenario and emerge as a new manufacturing hub in Asia. Indian organisations can be made more competitive by determining effective strategies for supply chain management to deliver quality goods and services at a reasonable cost and on time. They should involve appropriate business partners to increase competitiveness (Easton et al. 2002). It can be made possible by innovations for achieving efficiency to the best possible extent in their production and marketing operations, as suggested by Sahay (2000). They should also try to improve the skills of their employees. The automobile industry should move towards e-vehicles, and textile industries should work on designs. To combat the new challenges imposed by the information age competition, Indian industries should work on understanding customers, managing time compression, mastering mass *customisation and undertaking globalisation,* as suggested by Luftman (1996).

Along with Industries, the Indian government should also make the regulatory framework more business-friendly by reducing the number of days, procedures and costs of starting, running and winding up a business. There is a need to reduce the tax rates and simplify the filing and paying of taxes in India. The global value chain disruptions due to Covid 19 have driven the world to reset the global market networks. India should grab this opportunity to emerge as a new manufacturing hub in Asia and beat its Asian counterparts and other developing nations in international competition using its potential strength in commodity and service production.

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Table 1: India among Top 10 Leading Exporters (2018)

Product	India's Rank	Other Leading Exporters
Agricultural Products	India (8th)	EU, USA, Brazil, China, Canada, Indonesia, Thailand, Australia, Mexico
Food	India (9th)	EU, USA, Brazil, China, Canada, Indonesia, Argentina, Mexico, Thailand
Textiles	India (3rd)	China, EU, USA, Turkey, Korea, Chinese Taipei, Viet Nam, Pakistan, Hongkong
Iron and Steel	India (9th)	EU, China, Japan, Korea, Russian Fed, USA, Turkey, Brazil, Chinese Taipei
Chemicals	India (8th)	EU, USA, China, Switzerland, Korea, Japan, Singapore, Chinese Taipei, Canada
Automotive Products	India (10th)	EU, Japan, USA, Mexico, Korea, Canada, China, Thailand, Turkey
Commercial Services*	India (4th)	EU, USA, China, Japan, Singapore, Switzerland, Hong Kong, Korea, Canada
Transport	India (10th)	EU, USA, Singapore, China, Hong Kong, Japan, UAE, Korea, Russian Fed.
Travel Exporters and Tourist Arrivals	India (9th)	EU, USA, Thailand, Australia, Japan, Macao China, China, Hongkong, Turkey
Other Commercial Services	India (4th)	EU, USA, China, Japan, Singapore, Switzerland, Canada, Hongkong, Israel
Construction	India (7th)	EU, China, Japan, Korea, Russian Federation, UAE, USA, Chinese Taipei, Switzerland
ICT Services	India (2nd)	EU, China, USA, Israel, Singapore, Switzerland, Canada, UAE, Philippines
Financial Services	India (8th)	EU, USA, Singapore, Hongkong, Switzerland, Japan, Canada, China, Australia
Insurance & Pension Services	India (8th)	EU, USA, Switzerland, Singapore, Bahrain, China, Mexico, Japan, Canada
Other Business Services	India (4th)	EU, USA, China, Singapore, Japan, Canada, Korea, Switzerland, Brazil

Source: World Trade Statistical Review, 2019.
*Excluding Intra EU Trade

Table 2: Revealed Comparative Advantage (RCA) of Leading Ten Merchandise Exporters in the World Market (2018)

Iron and Steel		Agricultural Products		Chemicals	
Country	**RCA**	**Country**	**RCA**	**Country**	**RCA**
EU (28)	1.15	EU (28)	1.16	EU (28)	1.51
China	1.04	USA	1.12	USA	1.16
Japan	1.75	Brazil	4.20	China	0.58
Republic of Korea	1.92	China	0.36	Switzerland	3.00
Russian Federation	2.29	Canada	1.66	Republic of Korea	1.14
USA	0.38	Indonesia	2.76	Japan	0.93
Turkey	3.27	Thailand	1.87	Singapore	1.23
Brazil	2.18	India	1.30	India	1.34
India	1.55	Australia	1.60	Chinese Taipei	1.05
Chinese Taipei	1.44	Mexico	0.84	Canada	0.72
Automotive Products		**Food**		**Textile**	
Country	**RCA**	**Country**	**RCA**	**Country**	**RCA**
EU (28)	1.56	EU (28)	1.18	China	2.97
Japan	2.71	USA	1.06	EU (28)	0.73
USA	1.03	Brazil	4.28	India	3.47
Mexico	3.45	China	0.37	USA	0.52
Korea, Republic of	1.32	Canada	1.42	Turkey	4.41
Canada	1.70	Indonesia	2.60	Republic of Korea	1.01
China (1)	0.31	Argentina	7.01	Chinese Taipei	1.71
Thailand	1.53	Mexico	0.96	Viet Nam (2)	2.10
Turkey	1.97	India	1.32	Pakistan	21.31
India 1	0.60	Thailand	1.69	Hong Kong, China	0.81

Source: Computed with data of World Trade Statistical Review, 2019

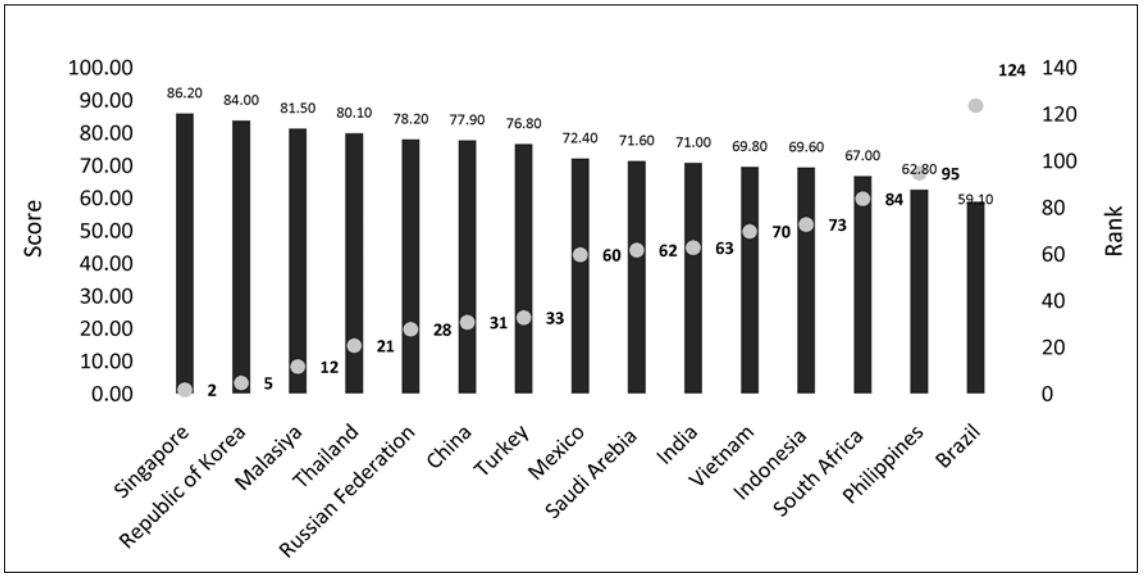
Table 3 : Revealed Comparative Advantage (RCA) of Leading Ten Exporters of Services in the World Market (2018)

Transport		Travel		Other Commercial Services		Construction	
Country	**RCA**	**Country**	**RCA**	**Country**	**RCA**	**Country**	**RCA**
EU (28)	0.96	EU (28))	0.76	EU (28)	1.04	EU (28)	0.65
USA	0.66	USA	1.11	USA	1.07	China	5.15
Singapore	1.60	Thailand	3.13	China	1.10	Japan	2.53
China	0.92	Australia	2.78	India	1.40	Republic of Korea	6.11
Hong Kong (China)	1.65	Japan	0.92	Japan	1.13	Russian Federation	4.50
Japan	0.89	Macao (China)	3.82	Singapore	1.04	UAE	1.93
UAE	2.29	China	0.62	Switzerland	1.29	India	0.80
Republic of Korea	1.66	Hong Kong (China)	1.34	Canada	1.08	USA*	0.11
Russian Federation	1.98	India	0.58	Republic of Korea	0.96	Chinese Taipei	1.09
India	0.53	Turkey	2.19	Hong Kong (China)	0.71	Switzerland	0.54

ICT		Financial Services		Insurance and Pension Services		Other Business Services	
Country	**RCA**	**Country**	**RCA**	**Country**	**RCA**	**Country**	**RCA**
EU (28)	1.19	EU (28)	1.06	EU (28))	1.19	EU (28)	1.06
India	2.72	USA	1.61	USA	0.99	USA	0.88
USA	0.52	Singapore	1.69	Switzerland	2.51	China	1.17
China	1.69	Hong Kong (China)	2.39	Singapore	1.58	India	1.41
Switzerland	0.96	Switzerland	2.03	Bahrain, Kingdom of	19.20	Singapore	1.15
Singapore	0.68	Japan	0.70	China	0.77	Japan	0.99
Israel	2.75	Canada	1.04	Mexico	4.62	Canada	1.33
Canada	0.93	India	0.31	India	0.53	Republic of Korea	1.00
UAE	0.90	China	0.15	Japan	0.54	Switzerland	0.69
Philippines	1.53	Australia	0.61	Canada	0.76	Brazil	2.16

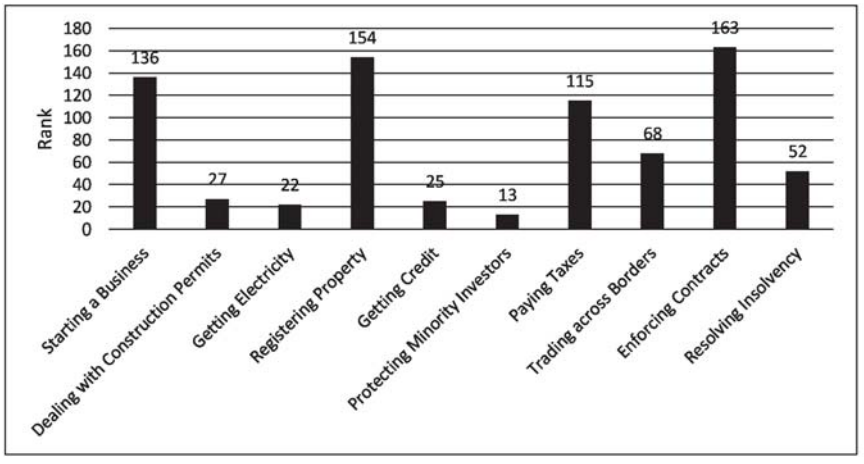
Source : Computed based on International trade data of 2018 collected from World Trade Statistical review, 2019.
*2017 data

Figure 1: Ease of Doing Business (Score and Rank), 2020



Source: World Bank 2020b

Figure 2: India's Ranks for Various Indicators of Ease of Doing Business Index, 2020



Source: World Bank 2020b

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Poverty and Epidemic : District Birbhum in the Colonial Period

Nilotpala Ghosh

Abstract:

Epidemics have affected much of human history. The intensity of the epidemics can be measured through the mortality rate. But there were other factors that also stimulated mortality and morbidity among the population in colonial Bengal. The economic condition of the people aggravated the effects of epidemics. It was the poverty that made the people so fragile that when different kinds of epidemics occurred, it became very hard for them to resist. The gloomy picture of British colonialism was disclosed to it. A case study of a small district, Birbhum, in the colonial period reveals those factors which seem responsible for poverty. And for the people who were already afflicted by poverty, the epidemic came as a double blow.

Keywords: *Birbhum, Epidemic, Rural indebtedness, Famine, Malnutrition, Rice, Irrigation, Colonialism*

Introduction:

Epidemics are part of human history throughout all ages. In the colonial period, India as well as the Bengal presidency suffered tremendously from various epidemics. Birbhum, a small district in the Bengal presidency situated in the western part of Bengal bordering the then Santhal Pargana, was no exception to it, though known for its "salubrity" even in the first phase of colonial rule (O'Malley 1910:48). Its healthiness is because of its favourable geographical condition. Its soil is porous; it has good facilities for drainage through its rivers and streams. But from the 2nd half of the 19th century, the condition of public health in Birbhum deteriorated gradually. In this region diseases like cholera, smallpox, malaria, and influenza regularly took the form of endemics and epidemics in the colonial period. From the 1870s onwards, malaria took the maximum toll on lives (based on: Sanitary Commissioner Reports and Public Health Reports for Bengal, 1868–1946). The direct effects of those epidemics and endemics were felt on demography. The Census Reports of Bengal from 1872 to 1951 show very marginal population increases and even a decrease in the district, in spite of high birth rates. Moreover, the British Government did not take adequate measures for rural Bengal; whatever developments in public health during the colonial period happened only for the metropolitans, not extended to rural areas. But there was another factor that had intensified

the mortality and morbidity due to epidemics in the population. That was poverty. Like other parts of India, rural Bengal was also affected economically by colonial rule. The adverse effects of Permanent Settlement (1793) were acute. There were total absence of minimum necessities for livelihood like pure drinking water, irrigation, education, and on the other hand poverty and backwardness were evident. Though Birbhum was as regards natural resources, the richest and most productive, as well as the healthiest district of Bengal, when such factors as famine, scarcity, labour shortages and wages are taken cognisance of, it is at once seen that the natural capability of an area to support its inhabitants can be a taste of the well-being of the people.

Objective:

It is impossible to know the entire history of epidemics without knowing the condition of the people who were affected by the epidemics. An attempt has been made here, using economic perspectives, to identify the factors that exacerbated the catastrophic effect of epidemics on the people of Birbhum who were unable to fight back during the colonial period. In the socio-economic condition based on agriculture, poverty led the people to the verge of economic under-development, the most immediate impact of which was felt on the health of the people. The population suffered from malnutrition and ailments, and because of poverty became easy victims of epidemics and endemics. Here an attempt has been made to find the causes of poverty, which ultimately made people so weak that they lost physical and to some extent, mental strength for any kind of resistance.

Methodology:

This paper is a case study of District Birbhum in the colonial period. Both primary and secondary sources have been used for this study.

Causes of poverty:

There were several causes of poverty; those were Permanent Settlement, price and wage, rural indebtedness, lack of variety of production, natural calamities, scarcity and famine, which ultimately caused malnutrition and under-nutrition and also intensified mortality and morbidity due to epidemics.

Permanent settlement: The Permanent Settlement was effective from March 22, 1793, which is considered a landmark in Bengal history. It was a demarcation between two ages, i.e., particularly regarding production, it was the period of transition from the mediaeval "mode of production" and on the other hand, the colonial "mode of production" in Bengal. The British government claimed that the Permanent Settlement in Bengal was the solution to Bengal's poverty, but ultimately it showed its destructive power in the famine of 1770. Meanwhile, in most instances, it also became quite impossible to use the *zamindars* as administrative instruments.[1] "It has been said that in Bengal the rich and powerful have been

less restrained, and the poor less protected, than in other provinces, and up to that time this was so in the most literal sense of the word".[2] Most of the original *zamindars* failed to pay the revenue, and their estates were sold out and split up. Through the operation of Hindu and Muslim laws of inheritance and a vast system of sub-infuedation, the rights to the land had come to be held by many sharers and in many gradations of over and under-holders. Speculators, women, children and others possessed those divided rights as mere property, and no administrative assistance was expected from them. "The idea of property has become stronger and stronger and the idea of obligation attached to the functions of landholders has become weaker and weaker. It may be said that very point about which there could be any doubt has been allowed to settle itself in favour of the landholders and against the public."[3] Subsequently, the division of *zamindari* into several estates started. By 1799, a single *zamindari* of Birbhum was fragmented into as many as 222 *mahals* spread over 42 *parganas*. By 1800, the number of registered proprietors went up to 233, and in 1809 it was 321. In the next 40 years, the number almost doubled, reaching 650. In 1856, a large part of the district came under the Santhal Parganas, the number of *zamindars* being 1,884 (eight times the figure in 1800) spread over 24 parganas.[4]

The report shows that in Western Bengal, including Birbhum, the landlords received much more than a 25% share of the value of the gross produce, even as much as 50%.[5] On the other hand, various dues and charges or *abwabs* levied on the *ryats* in addition to this regular rent reduced them to mere sustainability. It was reported that "It has been the ryats's immemorial practice to pay these abwabs and they pay accordingly; they pay because they have always paid, and because in the long run it involves less trouble to pay than to refuse."[6] As a result, the settlement favoured a small number of landowners while completely ignoring the concerns of the vast majority of oppressed and destitute cultivators.

Price and wage: The high price of food grains, caused by scarcity, was evident throughout the British period. The Administration Report shows that the price was comparatively higher in Birbhum than in Burdwan district.[7] On the other hand, the agricultural wage was not increased compared to the price. Even in the 20th century circumstances did not improve. Shantipriya Bose and P.C. Mahalanobis show that in 1933-1934 the agricultural wage in Bolpur varied from 2 *anna* 6 *pice* to 5 *anna* 6 *pice* per day and the price of rice was rupees 2.11 *anna* to rupees 3.14 *anna* per *mon*.[8] In 1939, according to the survey report of Sriniketan Agricultural Department, when labour wage was Rs. 4 *anna* per day, one could easily buy 2 *seer* of rice at per *seer* and retain 1 *anna* for buying other necessary things. But in 1939, whereas he was earning 12 *anna,* he had to spend the whole amount on buying only one *seer*- of rice.[9] The condition became awful in the period of 1941–1943, the Great Famine. The condition was as follows:

Amount of rice per Rupees:

Year	Price of rice per Rupees	Amount of Rice
1941	Rs. 1	8 *seer*
1942	Rs. 1	7 *seer*
1943	Rs. 1	4 *seer*
1944	Rs. 1	3 *seer*

Based on: (Sinha 2010:147)

There were two types of labour systems that existed in Birbhum called the *mahindar* and the *begar*. They worked in the village agricultural family with a minimum subsidy. Their wages were only Rupees 2 to 4 per month in the year 1944 in the village near Bolpur. There was another tendency, i.e., free labour called *begar* with only food and clothes and a minimum of stationary.[10]

Rural Indebtedness: Rural indebtedness affected most of the population in Birbhum during the colonial period. Most of the money lending investments involved land and agriculture. The money lending business was termed as *mahajani karbar* and *bandaki karbar* in Birbhum. The person related to it was called *mahajan*. Most of the landowners and business classes big, medium and small and even the government *amlas* to some extent, invested their capital in money lending. Because it was the easiest capital investment process, even those who had little capital could earn a fortune through it. Opportunities were also there, as poverty-stricken poor peasants were always in need. W. W. Hunter observed in 1876 that in different loan transactions, the borrowers pledged as security some articles such as ornaments or household articles. The rate of interest was 2 *pice* every month on a rupee, or $37\frac{1}{2}$ % per annum. In lump sum transactions where houses or land were mortgaged, the rate of interest varied from 18% to 20% annually. In the district of Birbhum, cases of mortgages on movable property were very rare, and in such cases the rate of interest went up to 25% per annum. The cultivators received advances in the form of food grains, but such advances were granted for three to four months till harvesting. At harvest time, the lender restored his advance with a 25% interest charge upon the investment. A person buying an estate would consider a fair return of 5% to 6% per annum for the money invested. There were no large banking establishments in the district and loans were chiefly conducted by village shopkeepers who combined rice dealing with money lending (Hunter 1876:381). Although the standard government rate of interest was 12% per annum, the *zamindars* and the other officials associated with *zamindari* like *nayebs*

and *gomastas* carried on money-lending business at a rate of even 30% per annum (Gupta 1984:76).

Hasim Amir Ali and T. Basu found that most of the villagers were hardly free from debt. It was not only agricultural production that was affected; land tenure too seems to have been affected. The district had a high percentage of people who were indebted. However, in times of crisis, the poor had few material resources to fall back on. The economic crisis caused by diseases disproportionately impacted middle-class families. These families had a high amount of debt. At Ballavpur village near Bolpur, at the time of the survey in 1925, it was found that only 6 out of 24 existing families were free from any debt. Taking the land ownership as an index, Kalimohan Ghosh calculated that the village had a debt (1926) of Rupees 16 per *bigha*. At Raipur village near Bolpur, it was as high as Rupees 28.50 per *bigha* at the time of the survey in 1927. Ali, who resurveyed the villagers served by him in 1933, found in 1956 that agricultural land owned by low castes and Muslim landowners was slowly passing out to the middle and high castes.[11]

During the time of *Swadeshi,* the people responded to some extent with their limited resources to the misery of the peasants due to indebtedness. In 1902, under the sub-division of Rampurhat, Kulmar and Fatehpur (now in Mallarpur Bazar), an agricultural co-operative society was established. Later, it was registered under the Co-operative Law of 1909. In the pre-independence period, four important central co-operative banks for village agricultural loans were established. At Suri, the Central Co-operative Bank was established. Its working areas were the Suri and the *Sadar Mahakuma* areas. In Rampurhat, the Rampurhat Central Co-operative Bank Ltd. was established in the same period. In 1927, the Rampurhat Central Co-operative Bank was divided into Nalhati and Muraroi Thana, and the Nalhati Central Co-operative Bank Ltd. was established. On November 22, 1927, at Sriniketan, under Visva-Bharati, the Visva-Bharati Central Co-operative Bank Ltd. was established by Tagore's energetic initiative. Bolpur, Nanur and Ilarmbazar thana were detached from the Suri Central Co-operative Bank and attached to the Visva-Bharati Central Co-operative Bank (Ghosh 2006:103-104).

On the basis of the Bengal Provincial Banking Inquiry Committee (1923–1930), it can be said that the agricultural classes in Birbhum were dependent on i) professional *mahajans*, ii) non-agriculturalists and other professionals, iii) businessmen, iv) *zamindars*, v) co-operative societies, and vi) agricultural loans approved by the government under the Agricultural Loan Act. This report of the Committee also mentioned that most of the agricultural investments came as a *dadan* from the *mahajans* and very little from the co-operative banks and government approval (Sarkar 2004:212). Thus, the indebtedness condition of the people in the colonial period was responsible for the economic and social backwardness in Birbhum. Banking did not allow for proper investment to boost agriculture and people's livelihoods.

Rice, the cause of poverty: The district once was in good economic condition as a variety of cash crops like sugarcane, cotton, mulberry, indigo, etc. were produced in good quantities. Industries and trade also developed along with these agricultural products, like the sugar industries, cotton weaving, silk weaving and indigo. European companies infiltrated this land to trade in these products. Apart from this, the *luc* industry in Illambazar and mine based industries like the iron industry in 'Loha Mahal' were the most important. For cash crop production and for weaving the European companies gave the *dadan* to the cultivators and weavers. They appointed *gomastas* and *dalal* to organise their trade in this region. But from the beginning of the 19th century cotton and sugarcane cultivation declined and with it cotton weaving and sugar manufacturing also declined. Cheap British cloth and cheap international sugar captured the local market. The British colonial policy of spreading the market for British goods was also the cause of the decay of the *luc* and native iron industries in Birbhum. But silk and indigo production continued up to the first half of the 20th century. The British capitalist policy, structured by colonialism, was the cause of deindustrialisation. Its effect also fell upon the mulberry cultivation and on silk industries (at Gunutia, Tantipara) and Birbhum became merely a rice cultivating land. Indigo cultivation became extinct after the invention of chemical dye. Other products were cultivated on a small scale for local consumption only, and had no economic value.

The revenue survey of the district was adopted between 1849 and 1852. In 1871, the collector returned the area of the district to 1,997 square miles, of which at the time of the revenue survey (1849–1852), 1,362 square miles were under cultivation. Hunter said that "the rice monopolies almost all the cultivated area. No statistics exist, showing the acreage under the different crops; but the collector is of opinion, and speaking at a guess that $\frac{15}{16}$ of the tilled land is under rice." "The collector reported that no improvements have taken place of late years in the quality of rice grown in the district, but that the area under rice cultivation has greatly increased in the last 20 years, large tracts of land formerly covered by jungle having been reclaimed and brought under rice." It was also recorded in the Imperial Gazetteer of 1885 that, "The principal crop in Birbhum as throughout the rest of Bengal is rice." The statistics from the 1910 District Gazetteers also showed the same thing. From the settlement operation of 1924–1932, it is known that in the district as a whole, 68.11% of the total area was cultivated and 31.89% was uncultivated. Of this again, 2.12% was fallow. This was so not because of any systematic fallowing that was observed but for some reason or other for which the land was not cultivated (Mitra 1954: Appendix-II). H. A. Ali and T. Basu linked the underdeveloped condition of the rural areas of Birbhum with the overdependence on rice production: "Rice provides easy means of livelihood but prevents the standard of living much above the bare minimum. It is the rice which feed out peasant and its rice that keep them poor."[12]

Between 1915 and 1928, at Bolpur, 28 rice mills were established, as well as at Sainthia and Ahmedpur. According to the field survey of Prashant Chandra Mahalanobis and Shantipriya

Basu, in Bolpur, it was noticed that the surplus was exported and the peasants got only 3 *pice* per *mon* as profit. Most of the profit goes into the hands of millers, *aratdars* and *forias*.[13]

Natural calamity, Scarcity and Famine: Scarcities were a regular phenomenon in Birbhum during the colonial period. The cause of scarcity here was directly related to the natural calamities. Natural disasters were sometimes to blame for famine. The following data is the proof of it:

1770 famine (disastrous)
1789 drought (severe)
1800 draught (severe)
1806 flood (Ajay)
1813 draught (severe)
1829 distress
1837 distress
1865 scarcity
1867 scarcity
1874 scarcity (severe)
1885 scarcity (amounting to famine)
1902 flood (Ajay)
1911 flood
1912 flood
1913 flood
1934 drought
1939 flood
1940 drought
1943 famine condition
1946 heavy flood
1949 heavy flood

Based on: (Mitra 1954: xxxvi)

Keeping in mind the quality and nature of the soil and also the topography of the district of Birbhum, a well-developed mechanism of irrigation was very essential. There had been very scanty rainfall for years together. Except for the rivers Mor and Ajay, all other streams

remained dry, and they only carried water from the hilly areas down to the planes during the rainy season. The floods caused by the rivers Ajay and Mor brought about a serious plight for the peasants. Apart from causing severe damage to life and property, the heavy layers of sand carried forth by the flood water caused serious damage to the agricultural lands (Gupta 1984:114-115). These calamities were caused by nature, but men were no less responsible for this. In 1863, J. E. Gastrell, writing a report on the district of Bankura and Birbhum, wrote, "There can be no doubt that the jungle has had great influence in decreasing the annual amount of rain and impoverishing the country." (Mitra 1954: iv).

On the other hand, the government did not take adequate steps to improve embankments for the flood-affected areas or irrigation for the drought-affected areas. The devastating floods caused by the rivers Ajay and Mor created an emergent need for regular maintenance of old embankments and also necessitated the construction of new banks, both as a safeguard to the people against inundation and for irrigation in the entire area. As long as the Raja of Birbhum was the only authority in the district, he took all steps for the protection of the embankment, popularly known as *Palbandi*. The proprietors coming to power after the fragmentation of the district into *mahals* and *parganas* were also bound, as per the *kubliats*, to construct new embankments and repair the existing ones. They were responsible for any loss or damage to the embankments. The government, at its end, did not shoulder any financial or administrative responsibility for running *Palbandi*. Consequently, there was not a single embankment in the district. This sorry state of affairs aggravated the plight of the peasants in the district (Gupta 1984:116). A Bill to provide for embankments and drainage by V.H. Schalch, to amalgamate and amend the law regarding embankments, and to issue payment for embankment works (17th December 1870), was passed by the Bengal Legislative Council on the 29th November 1873, and received the Viceroy's assent on the 20th December1873.[14] But in the case of Birbhum, the report said that, ''The effect of the floods within the spill area of the breaches was the beneficial, as the whole of the area was irrigated, and the villagers reaped a good harvest. The low floods also tended to silt up the breaches. The repairs of the Adjai river embankments were of an ordinary nature and call for no remarks."[15]

Natural disasters and famine had a wide-ranging impact on people's livelihoods. In 1770, five years after the grant of the *Diwani* to the East India Company, the district was devastated by famine. More than $\frac{1}{3}$ of the cultivable land was returned as deserted in 1771 (O'Malley 1910:64). After the Permanent Settlement, being faced with the taste of paying revenue up to 10/11 of their *hastabund* for the total area, they were compelled to import cultivators so that they might raise crops and deliver the money. "It is not difficult to imagine how the sculpting of the earth took place, encouraging further thriftless denunciation." (Mitra 1954: vi). The land was progressively losing its fertility, as can be seen by the following data:

Yield of paddy per acre:

Year	Yield of paddy per acre
1871	28 *maund*
1885	22 *maund*
1924-32	18 *maund*
1946-47	16 *maund*

Based on: (Mitra 1954: vi)

In spite of this, the area demarcated for the cultivation of *aman* has largely increased, and the unproductive lands have been left out. The fearful march of soil erosion is very evident (Mitra 1954: vi).

Some grants for famine relief were sometimes arranged by the government but were not sufficient. For the orphans left destitute by the famine, an expenditure of Rupees 2 per month for each, in addition to what could be contributed by the Famine Committee was sanctioned until a permanent arrangement could be made for their support. But the number was too inadequate, as in the Report of 1867-1868, in 22 districts, including Birbhum in the Bengal presidency; only 450 orphans got the allowance.[16] After the Famine Commissioner's Report (1871), the Bengal government proposed to take advantage of the system prescribed by the Road Cess Act, under which the roads and other works to be undertaken were systematically registered. In the event of famine or extreme distress, these works may be undertaken to provide employment for the people. It was proposed that in times of prosperity, a portion of the income should be saved and gradually accumulated so as to be available in times of distress. If the local governments were successful in finding useful work for those who were able to work; the government and the charitable public, including, it was hoped, landholders would be obligated to support them during times of famine and when they became old, weak and helpless.[17] Later, the responsibility passed into the hands of the Union Boards. The Union Boards of Birbhum organised relief programmes for the famine stricken people. A glimpse of the British mentality can be seen from the record: "....in western Bengal the landlords are less prosperous. The fiscal advantages of the settlement were most severely tested during the famine of 1874, when the revenue was collected without any postponement or remission of default, or any failure whatever. Without the relief afforded by Government to the famishing people, there must have been some serious failures in the land revenue and some extensive transfer of landed property and ruin of old families."[18]

On account of the scarcity of food, massive famine and spread of the epidemic, there was

tremendous pressure from the political wings upon the government. As a result, the government passed the Agricultural and Sanitary Improvement Act in 1920 during the reign of the Lieutenant Governor, Lord Ronaldshey. It amended the law relating to the agriculture and sanitation systems prevailing at that time.[19] Till 1947, only one major and one minor irrigation work were undertaken in the district, the major being the Bakreswar Canal. The construction of the Bakreswar Irrigation Scheme in the district was sanctioned in 1927 at an estimated cost of Rupees 4, 90,596. The scheme estimated the irrigation of 10,000 acres of paddy in an area subject to scarcity. The project was completed in 1934-35 for a total cost of Rs. 3, 88,000, excluding establishment, tools and plant charges (Mitra 154: xxxvi). The minor irrigation work was known as the Kashinala Irrigation Scheme. This scheme in the district of Birbhum was completed in 1928 at a total cost of Rupees 9,624 for work only. The work was carried out under the provisions of the Bengal Agricultural and Sanitary Improvement Act VI of 1920. The whole cost was advanced by the government. This was maintained by the government at the cost of the benefit parties. [20] In 1928, a special investigation was started to provide irrigation facilities in the Birbhum district, which had a sad record of periodic crop failures. Thus, demand for an expansion of irrigation from streams flowing through the districts of Bankura, Birbhum, and Midnapore necessitated certain changes in the constitution of the irrigation department. A new division called the Bankura Division was formed with headquarter at Bankura with three subdivisions at Bankura, Suri and Midnapore. The division was placed under the superintending engineer, South Western circle.[21] And for Mor, Brahmi, Bakreswar, Kopai and Dwarka, draining started in 1928.[22]

The Orissa famine of 1866 affected Birbhum. The Bihar famine of 1874 also affected Birbhum. The famine of 1896–1897 was the last famine of the 19th century of any severity in Birbhum. Since 1901, whenever famine raised its ugly head, it was quickly localised and suppressed, but it seems that W.H. Thompson, writing in 1921, was a little too hasty when he remarked that famine over an entire province was a thing of the past. This was belied in 1943, when the great man-made famine in the famine history of British India.[23]

Because of the famine that hit Bengal in 1943, and again because of the cyclone, flood, fungal disease of crops, War and the unavailability of the Burma rice, there was a serious shortage of food grains available for consumption.[24] (Sen 1981:53). The high price of the rice was the proof of the scarcity.

The price of rice due to famine condition:

December 1942	Rs. 13 to 14 per *maund*
March 1943	Rs. 21 per *maund*
May 1943	Rs. 30 per *maund*
August 1943	Rs. 37 per *maund*

Based on: (Sen 1981:55)

People who were affected most in the Great Famine of 1943 were the fishermen, the transport workers, agricultural workers, huskers, and even craftsmen and non-agricultural labourers, whereas the share-croppers were least affected (Sen 1981:72-73). "The inadequacy of official policy in tackling the Bengal famine has been widely noted and criticized. The Famine Inquiry Commission (1945) provided a detailed analysis of the policy failures both of the Bengal Government as well as of the Indian Government. The famine became a focal point of nationalist criticism of British Imperial policy in India, and official complacency came under particular attack." (Sen 1981:78). According to Amartya Sen, "While it is not possible to say at all precisely how many people were killed by the Bengal famine of 1943, there is evidence that an estimate of around 3 million would be closer to the mark than the 1.5 million arrived at by the official famine enquiry commission." "The difference is largely due to:

1. Conntinued high 'excess mortality' for several years after the famine caused by famine-induced epidemics the impact of which the commission considered only for 1943 and the first half of 1944.
2. Underestimation by the Commission of the actual extent of under-registration of death in official records." (Sen 1981:215).

The district of Birbhum, which earlier enjoyed the privilege of being the "purchase area" by the Bengal government and where the mortality rate was as low as 60.5%, in 1944 the rate went up to 90% because of the severe food-crisis and outbreak of diseases.[25] ''The death rate reached its peak only in phase III (No. 1943 to 1944), but the most acute period of starvation had by then passed; epidemics were raging in a famine devastated country. Mortality reached its peak only in December 1943 and stayed up for quite a while longer, but this was mostly the result of famine- induced epidemics, e.g. of cholera, malaria and smallpox. Death directly from starvation and 'famine diarrhoea' had passed its peak in the late summer and autumn of 1943." (Sen 1981:54-56). Professor Sen also opined that, "Regarding the diseases that took most of the toll, they had dual characteristics of both (1) epidemic disease in the region and (2) epidemic diseases in past famine. Gigantic as the famine was, it killed mostly by adding fuel to the fire of disease and mortality normally present in the region." (Sen 1981:216).

Poverty and Malnutrition:

"Malnutrition is the closed and constant companion of poverty."[26] Under-nutrition means insufficient food, while malnutrition implies wrong kinds of food. Both were prevalent in the district. Among the poor sections of the community, there was an existence of much under-nutrition as well as malnutrition.[27] The negative consequences of a poor and insufficient diet were numerous. The infant, maternal and general mortality rates in India were high, and the expectation of life was low, as also in the case of Birbhum. Among the causes of ill health, disease and death were contaminated water supplies, lack of sanitation, bad housing,

mosquitoes and flies, which carry disease and malnutrition. According to the Famine Commission of 1945, "There is no doubt that malnutrition occupies a very prominent position in the group of evil and lethal agents." [28] Various forms of blood-destroying diseases such as malaria and hookworm were frequently seen among ill-nutritioned child and adults.[29] "Malnutrition produces states of ill-health and lowered physical efficiency, short of actual disease which are perhaps more widespread than disease itself."[30] Where people have been eating between one-third and one-half of their normal food, deficiency diseases such as painless diarrhoea, dropsy and general waste, the loss of muscles and weight and retardation of puberty in females may be prevalent (Mukherjee 1938:157). The Report of the Famine Commissioner of 1901 abundantly shows that mortality due to privation was followed by a further rise in mortality due to cholera, diarrhoea and fever because of lack of immunity among people (Mukherjee 1938:36). Diet deficiency and poverty were the primary causes of a large proportion of disease and inefficiency in India. Malnutrition increases morbidity, as Radhakamal Mukherjee, opined that "among the cultivators it increases the predisposition of diseases, raises mortality, especially infant mortality, and leads to agricultural idleness, indebtedness and poverty, which pursues its heartless course in an ever-widening vicious circle." (Mukherjee 1938:ix).

Lt. Col. D. McCay wrote: "As we pass from the north-west regions of the Punjab down to the Gangetic plain to the coast of Bengal, there is a gradual fall in structure, body weight, stamina and efficiency of the people. In accordance with this decline in mainly characteristics it is of the utmost significance that there is an accompanying gradual fall in the nutritive value of the dietaries, and more especially in the average level of protein metabolism attained by people of Punjab, United province, Bihar and Bengal." (Mukherjee 1938:167). Inadequacy of nutritious food and lack of a balanced diet affected the poverty-stricken people largely in the district. In addition to the insufficiency of food, there were social and religious prejudices against animal slaughtering for food, and all these things affected the mortality rate in the district (Mukherjee 1938:66). In Bengali diets, *ghee*, milk and sugar did not occur at all. The peasants' diets appeared to contain a relatively larger amount of carbohydrates (Mukherjee 1938:65). In Birbhum, the ordinary food of the people consisted principally of rice, pulses (*dal*), vegetables, fish and milk (Hunter 1876:344; O'Malley 1910:46). Fish and meat form such a small portion of the daily diet of the people in the district that, except for the upper few, the majority practically go without them.[31] A sad scenario was described in the local paper of Birbhum: the quinine was available cheap or free, but how could the strong dose of quinine work on an empty stomach when, for the poor people of Birbhum, even milk was not available at all? [32]

With land per head so small, with the lack of variety and number of crops grown and with so few additions to the subsidiary occupations, the condition of the people in the bulk was really poor. Their houses, their diet, their dress, their daily routine of life convinced them

that the standard of life was quite low indeed. With the growth of the population and the restriction of other occupations, the income was inelastic and really small. In addition to expenditure in the changed conditions, the average individual was getting poorer in spite of the high price of paddy at times. And their distress was immediately reflected in their impoverished diet.[33] Scarcity and famine always exacerbated starvation, resulting in acute malnutrition. After the great famine, Birbhum took the longest time to recover from the excess of deaths over births that continued till the end of 1947. On the other hand, the birth rate decreased sharply because of abortions, miscarriages and stillbirths, all of which resulted from acute poverty and malnutrition in the district. The disruption of family life during the Great Famine also affected this birth rate.[34]

Poverty and Health:

Though the health and wealth of the population were closely connected, the rich and poor suffered alike, but medicine, proper clothing and a better change of air were within the reach of the former, they succumbed to the disease.[35] The people of Birbhum were generally unhealthy looking and for the most part, anaemic and attenuated in appearance, and were unequal to much-prolonged labour or hard work. They were, moreover, very poor and generally very idle.[36] In the Sanitary Report of 1889, it was remarked that many districts of Bengal province, including Birbhum, were unhealthy, and it was observed that the outturn of crops was below the average label and the price of food grain was consequently higher than the average.[37] According to British accountability, overpopulation, overcrowding, and population density were the primary causes of poverty and epidemic mortality rates. The Report of the Leprosy Commissioner mentioned that "The whole empire being, generally speaking, overcrowded and the areas of cultivable land insufficient for the large masses of an agricultural population, shows everywhere the most unmistakable sign of poverty, as the term would be understood by western nations."[38] India could not be called a rich and prosperous country. The land-tax forms the mainstay of the imperial revenue, so the *ryat*, or cultivator, constitutes the unit of the social system. According to the Census of 1881, 72% of the population of India was directly supported by cultivation, and in Birbhum the percentage was even higher. According to the Imperial Gazetteer, 90% of the rural population lives more or less on the tillage of the soil (Imperial Gazetteer of India 1908:482).

The colonial government thoroughly failed to eradicate poverty as a whole. Initiatives like irrigation, banking and famine relief were utterly insufficient. It was a characteristic of colonialism that whatever developments were made for their own colonial benefit i.e., to accumulate more revenue or to spread the market for British goods. The government never took adequate measures to suppress malnutrition and under-nutrition. Moreover, it was colonialism that dragged poverty-stricken India into the War and showed its ugly image

when the great man-made famine of 1943 in the famine history took place in Bengal. According to contemporary periodicals, due to a lack of purified water supply and lack of proper sanitation, it was impossible to eliminate cholera and malaria in Birbhum. And when influenza (1918-1919) affected the district, the total failure of the colonial medical intervention was exposed. The Census of 1921 shows a decrease in population in the district. The parallel co-existence of poverty and epidemics were a feature of colonial rule. When the epidemics affected the poverty-stricken area, the result was a maximum mortality and morbidity rate. This mortality and morbidity were higher among those sections of the people who were the main force for agricultural production, ultimately resulting in a low yield of production. Contemporary periodicals estimated that, because of malaria the production of paddy in Bengal was reduced by half.[39] The number of agricultural labourers either perished because of malaria or chronic suffering put them in a state where they were no longer able to produce much with their full physical strength. Poverty and epidemics had reciprocal effects on the people of Birbhum during the colonial period. As Timbres (1930) observed, poverty followed the disease: "The economic conditions in these places are appallingly bad. The two conditions of poverty and diseases go together. The peasants say the disease come first and caused poverty, but I cannot help but feel the each follows the other in a vicious circle."[40]

Conclusion:

Under the colonial rule the process of development was too slow and insufficient. The most woeful effect of British rule was their selfish policy of economic extortion. The people of Birbhum were destined to fulfil the needs of the state; they became helpless against the distress and diseases that came more intensively with colonialism. The state exploited much but gave minimum welfare to the rural people. The result of the deterioration of health was generated a prolonged mental and physical impact among the rural people of Birbhum. People lost confidence to fight against natural calamities and diseases; they believed that all of these were their misfortunes. As a consequence, obscurity in every phase of their lives became conspicuous. The loss of determination and confidence caused the people to accept the foreign rule for a long period without complaining or questioning state's responsibilities; on the other hand, the state established its hegemony over this dilapidated rural society for a longer period of time. Flood, drought, famine, malnutrition and epidemics were very frequent. As far as public health was concerned, the condition of Birbhum district deteriorated gradually from the 1850s and though causes of it were various but poverty intensified it. Once prosperous in its resources like agriculture and forest, it became an economically backward and malaria-ridden district. The standard of life and comfort were very low and people aimed simply at subsistence, in contradiction to maintenance, which caused malnutrition and under-nutrition for most of the population. The ruined condition

of rural Birbhum was manifested in every aspect of its socio-economic structure. As wealth and the well-being of the population are closely connected, the people of Birbhum were deprived of both throughout the Colonial period.

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[25] Mitra, A. 1953. Census on India 1951.vol.-VI. pp-81-83.

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Hindu College and "Performance": 1817-1867

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Abstract

The entire Renaissance in Bengal (19th century) witnessed what we could call a "performance" of the social energies of the time, manifesting themselves in educational reform, desire to uplift the condition of women, introduce Western models of education and generally spread awareness of rationalist principles of thought.

One of the key nodes of this process of transformation through "performance" was Hindu College established in 1817 with the objective of promoting Western style education, curricula, methodologies of thinking and learning and imbibing a scientific attitude or spirit towards the organization of personal and public life.

One of the key figures in this dramatic "performance" of ideas and activism was Henry Louis Derozio. Derozio was a product of the Latin Grammar School model initiated by David Drummond in his Dharmatollah Academy. Debate was central to pedagogical practices at this academy and Derozio distinguished himself in debate.

Later Derozio made debate central to academic practice at Hindu College, during the five or so odd years that he was a teacher there. In debate, I see a "performance" oriented educational model.

Another vital aspect of "performance" as an active ingredient of learning and education at Hindu College during its initial period was play acting as part of the examination procedure. Eventually, the idea of "performance" at Hindu College could be seen to encompass significant translation enterprises, poetry writing in English initiatives, science advocacy, and advocacy for women's education, establishing schools, advocacy of learning writing of text books and the founding of newspapers. Some of Derozio's students who were actively involved in such activities were Radhanath Sikdar, Peary Chand Mitra, Ramgopal Ghosh, Tarachand Chakrabarty, Shivachandra Deb, Harachandra Ghosh and others.

Keywords: *Hindu College, "Restoration of behaviour", event, performance, debate, literature, history, social reform, nation, Derozio and the Derozions*

Performance traditions resonate deeply within contexts of Hindu College/ Presidency College and Presidency University, and encompass many diverse connotations of the term 'performance'. However, before I explore the major focus of my essay I would like to do a quick review of certain signal changes and shifts that take place in Europe in theatre

philosophy and dramaturgy, in the 1960's, principally initiated by Polish director and theatre philosopher Jerzy Grotowski (1933-99), who reimagined the performance space of theatre as being directly in the midst of the audience (Jerzy Grotowski 1968: 19). He removed the spatial hierarchy of performance space and audience space typical in proscenium arch theatre current from the 16th century, right up to current times within conventional modes of theatre production. This brought theatre very close to its anthropological roots, with the immediacy of the audience around the actors, which is how it still is in some African tribal communities, where the *griotte* tells her stories of tribal ancestry and heroism, sitting in the midst of her audience.[1]

The role of the spectator in making performance 'happen' is vitally true of Indian folk performance traditions too, and even within contexts of Indian classical drama. *Rasa* becomes effective only when the *sahrdaya* (ideal receptor) participates in it and completes the magic circle in which lies aesthetic production and reception. Grotowski's 'poor theatre' as he called it created resonances world- wide. In *Between Theater and Anthropology,* American theatre director and philosopher, Richard Schechner, speaks of how Jerzy Grotowski, Eugenio Barba (1936), Peter Brook (1925-), Jerry Turner (1927-2004), Keith Turnbull (1944), were all using methods that were "intercultural" and "interdisciplinary" and seeking to converge "anthropological" with "theatrical" models (Schechner 1985:26). Schechner was himself deeply influenced by the work of the anthropologist Victor Turner, who posited the need to relate cultures, aesthetics and social theory (Schechner 1985:14)

This thesis about how "theatre" and "ordinary" life inhered (Schechner 1985:14) in each other certainly goes as far back as Shakespeare in *As You Like It* with Jacques telling the Senior Duke in Act II scene vii, "all the world's a stage/ and all the men and women merely players"[2]. However, this theoretical and practical and aesthetic need to relate the 'practice of everday life' to theatre is something that develops in the 60's. [3] In an interview published in *Perspecta*, Volume 26, and entitled 'Behaviour, Performance, and Performance Space' Schechner says, 'theatre can take something and play with it, either mimetically or through repetition. The very act of recuperation of twice behaving distinguishes theater' (98). "Twice behaving" in the context of theatre is Schechner's way of reading Aristotle's principle of 'mimesis' or 'imitation' that lies at the heart of dramatic action or specifically tragedy. Aristotle defines tragedy as the 'imitation of an action that is serious, complete and of a certain magnitude....' (Aristotle 1970:51).

However, Schechner does not limit his theoretical exploration only to theatre. As he states in his *Performance Studies Textbook*, (2nd draft, July 95)

> The categories of performance are not fixed or static. For example, there are both sacred and secular rituals; certain dramas have the qualities of sports. Take a large-scale event like the Olympic Games. Viewed from one perspective, spectator sports

> are popular entertainments; from another view, they are secular rituals. The same can be said for certain popular music concerts, street demonstrations, and political campaigns. The neat categories teachers admire are not obeyed by people and events. [4]

Looking at questions of the multiple dimensions of theatre at the level of 'everyday life' rather than its strict placement in a consigned theatre space started the Performance Studies Program at TISH in New York University in 1979-80. The co-founders were Richard Schechner, Michael Kirby, Robert Mcnamara. Through the ever expanding range of meanings of the word "performance", finally culture, politics, practice, economics, globalization, pedagogy, international relations as well as pure forms of performance like dance, theatre and music, are all imbricated. Some of Schechner's ideas that I am going to use in this essay are that performances are "rehearsed behaviours", "are heightened, marked and framed", are "learned, coded, tailor-made for the event, or class of events" and that "each of these performances enact specific sequences of events".

I find these critical paradigms very useful for my analysis of performance traditions at Hindu college which I feel were "rehearsed behaviors" in that all the actions and ideologies that led to the creation of Hindu College, came out of a culture of advocacy, rationalistic thinking, high social awareness and social philanthropy. The founding of the college was not a random, arbitrary gesture. They were "heightened, marked and framed", "learned, coded, tailor made for the event" and "enact [ed] specific sequences of events". The time period that this essay will address will be I would like to look at performance the first fifty years of the existence/performance (1817-1867) of Hindu College.

A survey of these fifty years is enough to provide a rich survey of the various forms of "performance" that created in Hindu College a tradition and a continuum that gave birth to some of the most outstanding men and women who became the leaders of Indian society over two centuries. The essay would like to look at the various kinds of energies that came together to create an educational institution that was so unique and empowered in its time, that it could even be considered, as it is by many, to be one of the major factors that led to the creation/formation of modern India. It required as I have mentioned above the "rehearsed behaviours" of advocacy, power to envision new modes of thought practice, social philanthropy, reformist zeal, and nationalist fervour of persons like Raja Rammohun Roy, David Hare, Edward Hyde East, Baidyanath Mukhopadhay, Prasanna Kumar Tagore, Gopee Mohun Tagore, Maharaja Tej Bahadur of Burdwan, Rasamoy Dutta and others. It is my contention that Hindu College was created by what one could call a marvellous and extraordinary "performance" of the social energies of the time.

Perhaps the great "event" leading to the founding of Hindu College and its consolidation started with Raja Rammohun Roy settling in Calcutta in 1814. Rammohun Roy was a man of prodigious intellect, vast learning, astonishing linguistic abilities and broad comparative

interests in culture and religion. He was a firm believer in Reason as a guide to truth, driven by egalitarian principles and deeply committed to the upliftment of the downtrodden and marginalized of society. Among the downtrodden and marginalized with whom he had strong empathy were women (Sushobhan Sarkar 1970:9). He was outraged by the practice of Sati that was endorsed by Hindu Brahmanical culture and wrote three tracts against it between 1818-1829. Sati was ultimately legally abolished by Bentinck in 1829.

Rammohun also read deeply in Vedanta, Islam and Christianity and tried to imbibe what was best in both cultures, East and West (Sushobhan Sarkar 1970: 5) He felt that Hindu society was in a state of extreme and abject stagnation and efforts needed to be made to align it to higher progressive and civic ideals. To this end he began a society called the *Atmiya Sabha* (1815), in which many of these progressive ideas were discussed, and eventually on August 20th, 1828, he founded the Brahmo Samaj in 1828 (Sushobhan Sarkar 1970: 8-9). Education was also a field that Rammohun Roy was deeply interested in, feeling that it was a western style education, with emphasis on science, rationality, and a core component of English literature that would provide the proper or ideal curricula for a new generation of Bengali youth. When he found out that the government was going to set up a Sanskrit College with the funds that had been sanctioned by the British Parliament for promoting education among Indians, he wrote a letter of strong protest to Lord Amherst, who was Governor General (1823-1828) at that time:

> We find that the government are establishing a Sanskrit School under Hindu Pandits to impart such knowledge as is already current in India (Rajnarayan Basu1876 :31)

He points out that this would only,

> ... load the minds of the youth with grammatical niceties and metaphysical distinctions of little or no practical use to the possessors or to society (Rajnarayan Basu 1876 :31)

Rammohun Roy pointed out that instead of learning the 'niceties' of Sanskrit grammar it was important that the youth of Bengal learn subjects that Europe had taken to such a point of excellence and which had given them the intellectual and economic ascendancy that they enjoyed. He stressed that it was necessary that they study "mathematics, natural philosophy, chemistry, anatomy, and other useful sciences." (Rajnarayan Basu 1876 :31).

In Rammohun's work thus, we find all that is "learned", "heightened", "practiced" and eventful. He was one of the major movers of the time. He had contact with many of the leading liberal thinkers of England like Bentham and Owen (Ghulam Murshid 10-11) and had been deeply influenced by the ideals of the French Revolution which spoke for greater

equality, liberty and fraternity. He helped to initiate and consolidate these large changes and events in education, legislation and women's rights His thought, work, creation of social bodies and advocacy through them, caused in short, what we would call a dramatic and epistemological shift. Texts that were very popular during this time were Tom Paine's *Age of Reason* (1791), Mary Wollstonecraft's *A Vindication of the Rights of Woman* 1792 James Mill's *History of British India (1818)* Richard Carlile's *Every Woman's Book* (1826) and William Thompson's 1825 text *An Appeal of One Half of the Human Race Women against the Pretensions of the other Half Men* (Ghulam Murshid 1983: 10—11)

In this paper I argue that all radical and dramatic shifts of culture and epistemology that took place at this pivotal time be read as "performance". Calcutta was "in an extraordinary state of flux at this time" (Rosinka Chaudhuri 2002: 22) which made this "event" and "performance" possible. "Performance" would include the creation of new syllabi as "performance", pedagogy which included debate and drama as "performance", creation of new modes of cultural analysis, epistemologies and historiographies as "performance", and East-West encounters as "dramatic" since they led to creative fusions, negotiations and dialectics. It is my contention that in the creation of learned traditions in Bengal there were rehearsals in Europe, through the academies of ancient Greece which stressed Logic, Rhetoric, Music and Mathematics. The same model followed into Renaissance Europe with the creation of Latin Grammar Schools, which still remain centres of excellence in America today. The influence of the Latin Grammar Schools cannot be denied in the Renaissance of Bengal through Drummond and his pupil, Derozio who were both trained in debate and oratory.[5] From Nikhil Sarkar's "Printing and the spirit of Calcutta" one learns that at time the volume of publishing in Calcutta was greater than anywhere else in the world, except London (Nikhil Sarkar 1990: 128). Thus one can posit that the rehearsals of performative events in Europe partially led the way for such an event in Calcutta.

Of course, this rehearsal was in tune with the social contexts of the time. The founding of Hindu College in 1817, for the purpose of dissemination of knowledge that was secular and aimed at developing rational principles of understanding, moral character, and helping students achieve enough understanding of western science and literature, which they could enrich on their own, led the way to Hindu college being the centre of this transformation of the nation, leading almost to a rebirth and the creation of new standards of excellence, rich traditions of thought and practice. As Rosinka Chaudhuri posits it became " a locus which saw the regeneration of Science, Bengali Literature and the creation of Indian Writing in English" (Chaudhuri 2002: 29). A great tradition was created which continued based on ritual, practice and recuperation leading to the moulding of leaders of the nation.

Regarding the crucial role of David Hare in this context, Sushobhan Sarkar writes in the *Bengal Renaissance and Other Essays*,

> ... David Hare who came out in 1800 as a watchmaker but made it his life's mission to spread modern education in the country where he lived on till his death, four decades later..(Sushobhan Sarkar 1970: 15).

From Monotosh Chakravarty's *Hindu College O Unish Shataker Bangla Samaj* (1979) one learns that those who were against education in English were initially successful in stalling a quick movement towards change. There were company directors who felt that way and of course there were conservative Hindu leaders. However through Rammohun's *Atmiya Sabha* through which he had effected other changes, a building up of positive opinion for the introduction of western education took place. In one of the discussion sessions Rammohun and Hare spoke about how important it was to open an educational institution where young people could be taught to stay away from the excesses of Hindu ways. Rammohun had suggested a *Vedanta Vidyalaya.* However Hare advocated the setting up of an institution that would impart western education (Monotosh Chakrabarty 1979: 23). Missionary activity also had its impact in establishing ideas of monotheism and the need to stay away from superstitions.

Hare (1775-1842) managed to convince Dewan Baidyanath Mukhopadhyay who in turn convinced many prominent Hindus of the time and also westerners who had the advancement of India in mind. Eventually, under the chairmanship of Edward Hyde East, judge of the Supreme Court, a meeting was held at the Judge's house on 14. 5. 1816 and the cause of an educational institution for the dissemination of western forms of knowledge won wide support from the assembled group of almost 50 members and a sum of 50000 was raised and many others promised to donate money to the cause. The deliberations ended on 21.5.1816 and a committee was set up to facilitate the process of the establishment of this institution. Edward East also made it clear that he had embarked on this project after having consulted with the Governor General Moira and his cabinet (Monotosh Chakrabarty 1979: 23).

A committee was formed with Sir Edward Hyde East as Chairman and Joseph Baretto as Treasurer (175th Anniversary Commemorative Volume, 1). An amount of 1, 13,179 was raised and the principal donors were the Maharaja (Tejchand Bahadur) of Burdwan, Babu Gopee Mohun Tagore, Babu Joy Kissen Singh, Babu Gopee Mohun Deb and Babu Ganga Narain Deb. The Maharajah of Burdwan and Babu Gopee Mohun Tagore each contributed 10,000. The stone and marble plaque that commemorates this occasion praises the "liberality and public spirit" of these donors. Hindu College was formally opened on 20th January, 1817, in a rented house in Garanhatta which later became 304, Chitpore Road. Dewan Baidyanath Mukherjee who had taken a leading role in this effort to establish a secular

institution modelled on humanistic principles of learning prophetically declared on this occasion:

> which yet was but a seedling, would many years hence resemble the *bur* tree, which when fully grown was the largest tree in India, cooling and refreshing all those who came under its shade' (175th Anniversary Commemorative Volume 1992: 1).

In *Masks of Conquest*, Gauri Viswanathan offers a strong critique of this moment by writing that " the movement for English education" led by Rammohun Roy and David Hare, was "...sparked by a need for translations of English Literature into the vernaculars" and "not for a wholesale transfusion of Western thought". Certainly no one had quite envisaged the entire range of secular literature and science that were finally introduced (Gauri Viswanathan 1989: 43). Vishwanathan adds that " Sir Edward Hyde was not unappreciative of the irony of a situation where he found himself visited by a group of Calcutta citizens deploring the "national deficiency in morals" and requesting him for a college offering European education and imparting an English system of morals" (Gauri Viswanathan 1989: 43).

The greatest impetus to Hindu College was given after Henry Louis Vivian Derozio, an Eurasian joined Hindu College Derozio joined in 1826 (Monotosh Chakrabarty 1979: 47 - 48). Derozio was himself a product of Drummond's Dharmatollah Academy. Drummond was Scottish by descent and had come to India to seek his fortune and had been strongly influenced by the rationalist philosophies of Hume (Prasad Sengupta 2015: 45). From Prasad Sengupta's essay, "David Drummond" we learn that the examination and prize distribution ceremony (held simultaneously) at his school were elaborate affairs, which involved oral examinations primarily, and were conducted in the presence of distinguished people of Kolkata at that time (Prasad Sengupta 2015: 49). From *Hindu College O Unish Shataker Bangla Samaj* (Monotosh Chakravarty 79 : 52) we learn that the editor of *India Gazette*, John Grant, was present in one of Drummond's examinations and was deeply impressed by Derozio's oral skills and learning (Monotosh Chakravarty 79 : 52). This strong oral tradition, passed from Derozio to his students at Hindu College, because we know about the great emphasis that Derozio placed on debate as a tool for arriving at the truth about matters both social and philosophical. Thus in the "learned', "coded", "sequences of events" that led to Hindu College, Drummond also plays an integral role in shaping the ethos of Hindu College.

In his *Bengal Renaissance and Other Essays,* Sushobhan Sarkar writes about Derozio:

> Derozio was something of a prodigy. He was educated at one of the private schools of his day run by a Scotsman, Drummond, who had something of the reputation of a poet, scholar and notorious freethinker. From him apparently the young Derozio got steeped in the intoxicating freedom urge of the French Revolution, and a passion for the freedom of thought and liberation from the deadweight of all tradition possessed his soul (19)

Sarkar informs us that Derozio was appointed as a teacher at Hindu College in May 1826 and he immediately attracted some of the best minds at the institution who were deeply drawn to the principle of free thought for which he stood (Sarkar 19). Sarkar further writes that "Derozio encouraged them to debate freely and question all authority" (Sarkar 19-20).

His ideals of education involved free and rational thinking, the right of the individual to ascertain the truth by herself/ himself through the exercise of reason and intelligence. Derozio introduced students to Hume's *Essays*, to Lord Bacon's *Essays* and Tom Paine's, *Age of Reason*. All such texts emphasized the need to apply rational modes of understanding for arriving at the truth. Alexander Duff wrote disapprovingly that 'their great authorities were Hume's *Essays* and Paine's *Age of Reason* **(**Rosinka Chaudhuri 2002: 23). As much as this led to the testing of the boundaries of knowledge, the creation of new epistemological grounds, leading to progressive ideals for social change and progress, it also brought certain excesses. Rasik Krishna Mullick openly denied the "sanctity of the Ganges"(Rosinka Chaudhuri 2002: 25), Ramgopul Ghosh refused to perform his father's *sraddha* ceremony and Krishna Mohun Banerjee, one of the earliest converts to Christianity, had declared that 'Pope and Dryden were to be held in higher esteem than the Hindu shastras' Rosinka Chaudhuri 2002: 25). Chaudhuri also posits that "their reading Tom Paine, meant that they were aware of the major issues being debated in the West and the rights of the common man was allied to the cause of liberty and equality" (Rosinka Chaudhuri 2002: 34**).**

Derozio was deeply influenced by the French Revolution and dreamt of the freedom of India along those lines. Fired by his nationalist fervour and the need to be free of political control from above, his students also started thinking along familiar lines and it is here that we first find the first beginnings of an anticolonial critique. In 1833 (although Derozio had left Hindu College by then) when the charter of the East India Company was extended by Parliament by another twenty years and the Company passed from being a trading company to fully being an administrative body, the Act was trenchantly critiqued by Derozions like Rasik Krishna Mallik, Pyarichand Mitra, Dakhsinaranjan Mukhopadhyay, Tarachand Chakrvarty (Monotosh Chakravarty 79 :55). This is how the Derozion legacy perpetuated itself.

Pyarichand writes about Derozio in *A Biographical Sketch of David Hare:*

> He often used history to cite examples of justice, patriotism, working towards human welfare (humanitarian acts) and sacrifice. All this used to be deeply imprinted on the minds of his students. Someone would be inspired by the example of justice that history provided, someone by adherence to truth (27-33).

A clerk named Haramohan Chattopadhyay bears witness to the debating sessions that Derozio had with his students:

> Almost every day before the college started and after official hours, there used to be debating and discussion sessions. These sessions took place without the knowledge of the authorities. However, Derozio exerted himself tirelessly to make his students highly competent in philosophy [western] and literature (Monotosh Chakrabarty 1979: 54).

Although later Derozio had to leave Hindu College because he was accused of spreading heretical views amongst the students, He asks whether 'entrusted with the education of youth' that he was, should he have made them "pert and ignorant dogmatists by permitting them to know only what could be said upon only one side of grave questions. I can vindicate my procedure by quoting no less orthodox an authority than Lord Bacon. "...if a man", says this philosopher will begins with certainties, he shall end in doubts." (Rajnarayan Basu 1876: 43)

Before entering the subject of Debate as "performance" I would like to highlight another richly performative dimension of pedagogy at Hindu College in its initial years. As in Drummond's Academy, speeches, play enactment, recitation and reading compositions, were all part of the examination procedure at Hindu College **(**Monotosh Chakrabarty 1979: 44). Since Shakespeare was in the syllabus, it would not be wrong to surmise that students enacted parts of Shakespeare's plays for the examinations. However, in *Masks of Conquest*, Gauri Viswanathan mounts a powerful critique against English literature in particular, and the "humane" education it was supposed to provide. She posits that by convincing natives of the superiority of English literature and culture, they were transformed into compliant intellectual subjects of the empire and 'strengthen western cultural hegemony in enormously complex ways' (Gauri Viswanathan 1989: 2). She further argues that,

> ...values assigned to literature— like the proper development of character or the shaping of critical thought or the formation of aesthetic judgement...are located [in] the dynamic of power relations between educator and those to be educated (Gauri Viswanathan 1989: 4).

She further posits that this English education was aimed at creating a 'single identity' (167) that would lead to "internal schisms" (168) between those who chose this identity and those who did not. The force of her contention cannot be denied because over time the English educated intellectual has often become an alienated person in her/his own society, a hybrid being who may belong to neither world and is divorced from living contexts and issues in her/his own country.

Debate topics that provided keen interest at that time were:

Fate versus Free-will

Arguments for and contra the existence of God

The irrelevance of both idol worship and its priests

Hindu Society and Sati

The Absence of Women's Education

The abject state of widows

Caste System

In 1834 Reverend Lal Behari Dey, who had begged David Hare for admission into Hindu College, but refused because he was Christian, located in debate and argumentation one of the finest loci of Hindu College excellence. He writes words to this effect that students of Hindu College were so used to argumentation that it greatly sharpened their intellects and made them re-examine all established truths in a new light **(**Monotosh Chakrabarty 1979: 42**).** In his book *Ekaal Sekaal* Rajnarayan Basu, Derozion and educationist, also strongly supports the culture of debate that had existed at Hindu college during the time of Derozio. In 1890 he remarked on the changing fashions of education where in the style of London university today students are just passive listeners, and do not participate in a mutual question answer format which had existed during his time. He writes, "I hate this system. I had established a debating society for my students" (Rajnarayan Basu 1885: 71)

Monotosh Chakravarty also posits that through the influence of Derozio the students of Hindu College became influenced in having pride in their nation, of adhering to the principles of truth, of aspiring continually towards knowledge and self- development, of being rational and independent in one's thinking, to work for the spread of women's education, to follow the examples set by the best of western literature and mould Indian/Bengali language and literature to achieve that excellence (Monotosh Chakrabarty 1979: 50). As Haramohan Chatterjee, clerk at Hindu College writes, 'Indeed, it was a general belief and saying amongst our countrymen, which those that remember the time must acknowledge, that "such and such a boy is incapable of falsehood, because he is a Hindu College boy" (Sivanath Shastri 2018: 80)[6]

The consequence has surpassed expectation. A command of the English language and familiarity with its Literature and Science have been acquired to an extent rarely equalled by any schools in Europe. Another generation will probably witness a very material alteration in the notions and feelings of the educated classes of the Hindoo community of Calcutta (Prasad Sengupta A look at the syllabus that was in force at that time shows a rich component of English Literature including *Bacon's Essays*, Shakespeare's *Hamlet, Macbeth, King Lear*, *Othello* and the Sonnets. It also included Milton's *Paradise Lost* Book 1, "Lycidas", "L'Allegro" and "Il Penseroso". In the syllabus of History was included Hume and Gibbon. Philosophy included Locke, Berkeley and Hume; Mathematics contained Euclid (first 6 books and 11th book) and also Algebra, Trigonometry and Differential Calculus (Monotosh Chakrabarty

1979: 42-43. In *Gentlemen Poets in Colonial Bengal: Emergent Nationalism and the Orientalist Project* Rosinka Chaudhuri states that 'literature dominated the age, as did also western philosophy, religion, history and science, all bracketed under the aegis of 'an English education' (Rosinka Chaudhuri 2002: 26). It was an education with "high seriousness' and the 'resonance of the Old Testament and Milton" (Rosinka Chaudhuri 2002: 26**).** Macaulay whose landmark *Minutes* of 1835, emphatically urged the legalization of English as the medium of instruction in Higher Education in India, was hailed by Derozions like Ramtanu Lahiri and Krishnamohun Banerjee, as an "harbinger of light" (Shivnath Shastri 1907:93). Macaulay's recommendations eventually translated into Lord William Bentinck's English Education Act of 1835 which made 'English the medium of instruction in Indian education' (Gauri Viswanathan 1989: 44).

Derozio was well aware of the impact he had upon his students. He was convinced that they would be able to take his work forward and make a difference to the world. He wrote the following sonnet on them. The poem also becomes an instance of Indian Writing in English which emerged at that time or of Indian English Poetry. The incredible commitment that Derozio had towards his students speaks through these lines, even if though it is in the style of decadent Romanticism, ornate and flowery:

> Expanding like the petals of young flowers
> I watch the gentle opening of your minds,
> And the sweet loosening of the spell that binds
> Your intellectual energies and powers.
> ... ...
> What joyance rains upon me , when I see
> Fame in the mirror of futurity,
> Wearing the chaplets you are yet to gain,
> And then I feel I have not lived in vain. (Rosinka Chaudhuri 2002:89)

Rosinka Chaudhuri posits that this period witnessed "the emergence of a passionate literature in English generated through contact with the Anglo Indian poet, artist, academic, patriot, Henry Louis Derozio**"** (Rosinka Chaudhuri 2002: 31). This becomes an instance of poetry as "performance" and teaching too, as 'performance', applicable also in the case of Captain David Lester Richardson, who joined Hindu College in1835, taught Shakespeare at a superlative level was deeply loved by Michael Madhusudan Dutta and also became Principal of the college in 1839. Regarding Richardson, Rosinka Chaudhuri writes, "RichardsonÖ published many literary volumes of prose and poetry written in India, and was editor of the *Bengal Annual*—a yearly collection of poetry and prose published on seven occasions between the years 1830 to 1836" (Rosinka Chaudhuri 2002 :31)

Derozio is also considered to be the first national poet of India because of the deeply patriotic fervour that speaks through the lines of his poem "Harp of India". In Derozio there was pride and nostalgia for India's glorious past and part of it was derived in part from his association with Orientalists like Horace Hayman Wilson, who as a government representative became a Visitor to Hindu College in 1824.[7] This leads to 'performance' of nationalism which is recuperated and repeated in the poetry written by his direct student, Kasiprasad Ghosh and later by Michael Madhusudan Dutt. Dutt carried forward the Derozion hallmark of questioning and interrogating tradition through his brilliant re-visioning in *Meghnad Badh Kavya* (1861) of an alternative hero to Ram in Meghnad, Ravana's son, in the *Ramayana*.

As Rosinka Chaudhuri posits, 'Modern Bengali poetry was invented quite self- consciously, in the 1850's and 1860's by Rangalal Banerjee, Hemchandra Bandyopadhyay, Nabindchandra Sen and, most famously of all, by Madhusudan Dutt (Rosinka Chaudhuri 2002: 61-62) However, Madhusudan who declared of English, 'Yes—I love the language—the glorious language of the Anglo-Saxon'(Rosinka Chaudhuri 2002: 88) also wrote in English, and his indebtedness to Derozio in terms of theme and language is something this essay will shortly address.

In "Harp of India" Derozio addressing the "harp" cries out,

> Why hang'st thou lonely on yon withered bough?
> Unstrung for ever, must thou there remain;
> Thy music once was sweet—who hears it now?
> Why doth the breeze sigh over thee in vain? (Rosinka Chaudhuri 2002: 28)

This patriotic strain echoes in his student Kasiprasad Ghosh's poem is "The Shair", also strong in nationalist feeling and sentiment:

> Harp of my country! Pride of yore!
> Whose sweetest notes are heard no more (Rosinka Chaudhuri 2002:68)

Michael Madhusudan Dutt's sonnet 'Written at the Hindu College by a native student' fifteen years after Derozio's sonnet to his students, carries the same fervent belief in the grand potential of those who studied at Hindu College:

> Oh, how my heart exulteth while I see
> These future flowers to deck my country's brow... (Rosinka Chaudhuri 2002: 89)

As Rosinka Chaudhuri observes, the voice of the "native beneficiaries of an English education writing on education", may be heard in the above lines. The ground had been laid for many such rituals of fine learning and reproduction, leading to the enhancement and uplifting of the country. Chaudhuri continues:

> A reverence for education forms the foundation for these poems; meanwhile, the writers are self- consciously aware of belonging to the premier institution for the dissemination of western education in India. The great deeds of the students, it is implied, will add lustre not only to the reputation of the college, but also to the country they shall represent (Rosinka Chaudhuri 2002: 89).

Another fine example of bold and intrepid thinking, which uses the "master's tools" to dismantle the Master's house' (Audre Lorde 1979) is Kasiprosad Ghosh's essay "Critical remarks on the first four chapters of Mr Mill's History of British India", which was presented at the Hindu College Prize distribution and subsequently published in the government gazette of 14th February, 1828 and later in the Asiatic Journal. Kasiprasad had written this on the request of Horace Hayman Wilson, his teacher, who had asked him to write a review of a book for the approaching examination. (Rosinka Chaudhuri, 64-65). Mill's influential history had in Section II of his book, summarily dismissed in 350 pages all facets of Hindu culture. Mill had never been to India and knew no Indian languages (Rosinka Chaudhuri 2002: 65). In his critique Kasiprosad defends the golden age of the Hindus and does it at a time when many of his classmates were ridiculing Hinduism (Rosinka Chaudhuri 2002: 65). In Kasiprosad's critique we can see a "performance" of the earliest stages of the Hindu nationalist revival. The *Calcutta Gazette* praised Ghosh's achievement:

> When Mr Mill wrote his *History of British India*, he, very probably, never suspected that the pages of his work would be critically examined by a Hindoo, distinguished for his acquirements of the English language , and familiar with the classical and recondite learning of the West (Rosinka Chaudhuri 2002: 65).

This paper will not be complete without reference to the achievements and contributions of some of the leading and most exemplary of Derozions who played a very significant role in helping to take the society of Bengal and indirectly that of India, forward during the latter half of the 19th century. Radhanath Sikdar (1813-1878), brilliant mathematician translated along with Tarachand Chakrabarty, scientific books in English to Bengali and Sanskrit (Monotosh Chakrabarty 1979: 85). This is translation as "performance". Translations were also crucial during the Renaissance in Europe. He also started a monthly paper in which social and other issues were written about in very simple language that all could access. The purpose was to raise the level of general education and knowledge. With his childhood friend Peary Chand Mitra he also started *Masik Patrika* in 1861 where social issues like widow remarriage, child marriage and polygamy were raised. He was emphatic in making the language as accessible as possible to a wide readership (Monotosh Chakrabarty 1979:86). He also started a school for poorer sections of society. We can thus see how powerful advocacy was in this age.

Debendranath Thakur, who had also studied at Hindu College till the second class, was not a direct student of Derozio but was influenced by his principles of freedom of thought and individual liberty (Monotosh Chakrabarty 1979: 86**).** From Peary Chand Mitra's younger brother's diary we come to know that in a meeting held under the aegis of the *Suhrit Society* on 15.12.1854, Debendranath presided in the presence of Sikdar and the Mitra brothers and they decided that they needed to do something effective about the above cited issues (Monotosh Chakrabarty 1979: 86).

Pyarichand Mitra (1814-1883) is another Derozion luminary who spent his entire life furthering the cause of education and in advocating valuable ideas in the many journals and newspapers he was associated with. He is the author of *Alaler Ghare Dulal* which may be considered the first Bengali novel. He wrote in the *Masik Patrika, Gyananweshan*, *Bengal Spectator*, *Bengal Harakura, Englishman*, and *Calcutta Review* (Shivanath Shastri 2018: 141). Both he and his brother Kishori Chand Mitra were Hindu College students of outstanding merit. He worked tirelessly to impart education to those who needed it, and also worked for the cause of women's education. In 1835 he became Assistant Librarian in the Calcutta Public Library he eventually rose to the position of curator (Monotosh Chakrabarty 1979**:** 90). He was a member of several societies including the School Book Society, Social Science Association and Agri Horticultural Society (Monotosh Chakrabarty 1979: 90-91).

Other significant Derozions include Ram Gopul Ghosh (1815-1868) a successful businessman who contributed liberally to the development of medical science education in Calcutta (Monotosh Chakrabarty 1979: 78), Harachandra Ghosh (1808-1868) who distinguished himself as an administrator (Monotosh Chakrabarty 1979:94-95), Shivachandra Dev (1811-1890) who worked towards raising social infrastructure by being the prime mover behind the establishment of a railway station and a post office at Konnagar, some distance away from Kolkata (Monotosh Chakrabarty 1979: 97) and Rajnarayan Basu (1826-1899), educator and writer. The group also includes Dakshinanranjan Mukherjee (1814-1878), Krishnamohan Bandyopadhyay (1813-1888) and Tarachand Chakrabarty (1805-1855).

Other remarkable and distinguished alumni of Hindu College/ Presidency College in and around this time, whose contributions to Indian society had far reaching and signal implications are Keshav Chandra Sen (Brahmo reformer), Bankim Chandra Chattopadhyay (first modern Bengali novelist), Dinabandhu Mitra (pioneering Bengali dramatist) Satyendranath Tagore and Dr Mahendralal Sarkar. Satyendranath Tagore was the first Indian to compete and pass the Indian Civil Service Examination, then held in London, in 1863. He joined the Indian Civil Services in 1863. In the same year Mahendralal Sarkar, a student at Hindu College between 1849-1854, took his MD examination, becoming the second MD from the Calcutta Medical College along with Jagabandhu Bose. Dr Sarkar had been Sri Ramakrishna's physician in the last phase of his life as he had battled cancer.

Thus the rituals, enactments, rehearsals and events that led to Hindu college, created many rehearsals and events of excellence in the future. This is how a great tradition was 'performed' and continued to perform and create events through some of the greatest teachers and students who have created a venerable tradition which belongs to Hindu College/Presidency College and also Presidency University. The practices and rituals were not without their flaws, leading as Viswanathan implied to a fractured Indian society, divided along the lines of those who were educated in English and those who were not. The beginning of this process may be traced to the syllabi and teaching methodologies (especially in the Humanities, with its stress on English Literature) at Hindu College, which were taken up and replicated in other parts of India. Swapan Chakravarty quotes A.J. Arbuthnot, who in his convocation address at Madras University in 1868, says:

> It is sometimes said that a wide separation has taken place between the comparatively small section of the native community who have been educated through the medium of the English language and the masses of their countrymen, that the former have become denationalized (Swapan Chakravarty 2011: 31)[7]

Criticism apart, one cannot ignore the splendid output of this hallowed institution whose alumni and teachers have provided standards of excellence that have helped to mould some of the most important cultural, literary, scientific, teaching, administrative, legal and political traditions of modern India from before the time of Independence to current times. The legacy of teaching traditions at Hindu College/Presidency College is something to marvel at and the last four decades of the 19th century, are especially remarkable in this regard. From Rajat Kanta Ray's essay on the Department of History for the 175th Year Presidency College Commemorative Volume (1992) one learns that '...the famous orientalist Dr E.B. Cowell (1858-64) was Professor of History, Political Economy and English (and at the same time, Principal of Sanskrit College). [8] Another legendary teacher is C.E. Cullis, mathematician, whose internationally renowned work on 'matrices and determinants' was completed and published while teaching at Presidency College (Subodh Chandra Sengupta 1992:34).[9] From Subodh Chandra Sengupta's essay we also learn that H.M. Percival joined in 1880, Bipin Behary Gupta in 1883, Jagadish Chandra Bose, later Emeritus Professor and F.R.S. in 1885, P.K. Ray in 1886 and Prafulla Chandra Ray in 1889. Binayendranath Sen joined in 1893 and Monmohan Ghosh in 1896 (Subodh Chandra Sengupta 1992: 23). From Parimal Krishna Sen's report on the Department of Chemistry in the 175th Presidency College Commemorative Volume, 1992, we learn that the '...pre-eminence of the Chemistry department at Presidency College is due to Sir Alexander Pedler'. [10] Alexander Pedler was Principal in 1887 and it is his lectures in the F.A. at the University of Calcutta that attracted P.C. Ray to Chemistry.

An essay on Hindu College/Presidency College 'high' traditions of academic performance would not be complete without reference to those whose records have legendary resonance. The Premchand Roychand Studentship, for instance, was awarded by the University of Calcutta, after a long and rigorous examination and was its most prestigious award (Subodh Chandra Sengupta 1992:23). Between 1868 (the year of its institution) and 1900, it was conferred on 32 scholars and 25 of them were from Presidency College (Subodh Chandra Sengupta 1992:23). Among the recipients were Ananda Mohan Basu, Gouri Shankar Dey, Sarada Charan Mitra, Prasanna Kumar Lahiri, Surjya Kumar Agasti, Asutosh Mookerjee, Ramendra Sundar Trivedi, Hirendranath Dutta, Jadunath Sarkar and Priyanath Sen (Subodh Chandra Sengupta 1992:23).

As Subhodh Chandra Sengupta writes,

> In 1896, Atul Chandra Chatterjee stood first in the Civil Service Examination held in London and in 1900 Harinath De; the celebrated linguist passed the Classical Tripos Examination at Cambridge in the First Class. Many alumni of the Presidency College occupied high positions in different walks of life during this period. Surjya Kumar Agasti, Ashutosh Gupta and Barada Charan Mitra passed the Statutory Civil Service Examination, Chunder Madhub Ghose and Ramesh Chandra Mitra officiated as Chief Justices of the High Court of Calcutta and Gooroodas Banerjee became Vice Chancellor or the University of Calcutta in 1884 (Subodh Chandra Sengupta 1992:23).

Among other exemplary students of the same period were Nagendranath Ghosh, Bhupendranath Basu, Satyendra Prasanna Sinha (later Lord Sinha), H.C Mookherjee, later Governor of West Bengal, Abul Kasem Fazlul Huq, Akshay Kumar Maitra (historian), Harasprasad Bhattacharyya Sastri (the Orientalist), Heramba Chandra Mitra (educationist and Brahmo leader), Krishna Chandra Bhattacharya (philosopher), Pramatha Choudhuri (Birbal), Raj Shekhar Basu (Parasuram), Dwijendralal Ray (poet and dramatist) and Deshbandhu Chittaranjan Das (Subodh Chandra Sengupta 1992:24). Belonging to this hallowed tradition are also two of the greatest national leaders of India, namely Subhas Chandra Bose, and Dr. Rajendra Prasad.

Some great teachers of the 20th century (and it will not be possible to include all) were Haraprasad Mitra, Janardan Chakrabarty, Hirendra Chandra Ganguly, Jatis Chandra Sengupta, Pratul Chandra Rakshit, Nirmal kumar Basu, Suresh Chandra Sengupta, Bhabatosh Dutta, Sukhamoy Chakrabarty, Mihir Kanti Rakshit, Ajit Kumar Bandyopadhyay, Bhupatimohan Sen, Gopinath Bhattacharya, Prabhashjiban Choudhuri, Amalkumar Raychoudhuri, Satyen Bose, Prasanta Kumar Mahalanobis, Kulesh Chandra Kar, Amiya Bhushan Chatterjee, Achintya Kumar Mukherjee, Nirmal Chandra Basu Choudhury, Anil Kumar Bhattacharya, Jitendranath Rudra, Sibatosh Mukherjee, Sushobhan Sarkar, Amalesh

Tripathi, Taraknath Sen, Tarapada Mukherjee, P.C. Ghosh, Subodh Chandra Sengupta, Arukumar Dasgupta, Kajal Sengupta and Rajat Kanta Roy.

Presidency alumni of the 20th century (the 21st is truly beyond my reach within the purview of my essay) whose work has led to the creation of significant institutions and paradigms of Science, Technology, Governance, Finance, Culture, Social Theory, Literature and Teaching, include names such as Nilratan Sarkar, Meghnand Saha, Satyajit Roy, Amartya Sen, Pranab Bardhan, Gayatri Chakravarty Spivak, Ranajit Guha Partha Chatterjee, Amiya Bagchi, Humayun Kabir, Bimal Jalan, Sumit Sarkar, Tanika Sarkar, Altamas Kabir, Sugata Bose, Supriya and Sukanta Chaudhuri. Swapan Chakrabarty, who is a Distinguished Professor of the Humanities at Presidency University today and is also Presidency alumni, is one of the greatest scholars and teachers that I know.

End Notes

1. Trinh T Minh-ha *Woman Native Other*. Bloomington: Indiana Universiy Press. 1989.
2. https://www.poets.org/poetsorg/poem/you-it-act-ii-scene-vii-all-worlds-stageAs you like it
3. The terms 'Practice of everyday Life,' are borrowed from Michel de Certeau's book bearing the same name. Michel de Certeau. *The Practice of Everyday Life.* Translated by Steven Rendall. Berkeley: University of California Press. 1984.
4. http://www.nyu.edu/classes/bkg/schechner.
5. I owe this information to Professor Swapan Chakravarty , currently Kabiguru Rabindranath Tagore Distinguished Chair Professor of Presidency University. Professor Chakravarty pointed out to me that David Drummond was himself trained within the Latin Grammar School tradition and it was this tradition that Derozio himself imbibed. I also owe Professor Chakraborty the reference to Prasad Sengupta's work.
6. Pandit Sivanath Shastri's book *Ramtanu Lahiri O Tatkaleen Banga Samaj* (1903) was translated and edited by Sir Roper Lethbridge as *Ramtanu Lahiri: Brahman and Reformer. A History of the Renaissance in Bengal.* It was published by Swan Sonnenschein & Co. Ltd of London in 1907. Reprinted by Forgotten Books. London: FB & co. Ltd.2018. 80. This comment was first published in the *Bengal Spectator* on 1.9.1843.
7. S Nagarajan. "Children of Macaulay" JSL. Vol. 8. 1981. 6.
8. Rajat Kanta Roy. "History". *175th Anniversary Commemorative Volume*. Presidency College, Calcutta. 1992. 93.
9. Subodh Chandra Sengupta. 175th Anniversary Commemorative Volume. Presidency College, Calcutta. 1992. 34. This entire essay has been reprinted from Subodh Chandra Sengupta's essay 'History of the College' in the *Presidency College Centenary Volume*, as the introduction to the 175th Anniversary Commemorative Volume.
10. Parimal Krishna Sen. "Chemistry". *175th Anniversary Commemorative Volume*. Presidency College, Calcutta. 1992. 62.

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Impact of Interpretation Construction (ICON) Model on problem solving and decision-making abilities

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Abstract

The objective of the present study was to find out the impact of interpretation construction model on developing problem solving and decision making abilities among secondary school students through teaching of political science subject. For this, the *non-equivalent control group quasi-experimental research design* was used over a sample of 72 students; 36 each in experimental and control group. The students of experimental group were taught through interpretation construction model whereas the students of control group were taught through Herbartian method of teaching for eight weeks. The findings revealed that though both the instructional designs have significant impact on developing problem solving and decision-making abilities of secondary school students in political science subject but the impact of interpretation construction model is relatively more than Herbartian method. With respect to relative changes in these abilities, it was found out that increase in problem solving ability was more than decision- making ability by both the designs. The present study will help various stakeholders such as secondary school students, teachers, teacher educators, teacher training institutions, parents, administrators and policy makers for improving quality education of the country in particular and world in general.

Key Words: *Constructivist learning strategy, Experimental research, Higher order cognitive abilities, Learner centric approach, Traditional method of teaching*

Introduction

Development of problem solving and decision making abilities among the students is time relevant educational goal realised by the institutions. In connection to development of these abilities within curricular frameworks, multiple pathways or strategies have been claimed by the researchers (Senan, 2013). Traditionally, teachers were using Behaviorism guided instructional strategy like Herbartian method for developing these abilities. At present, researchers have claimed about effectiveness of constructivist guided instructional designs like interpretation construction (ICON) model (Zulkarnaen, 2018; Sahu, 2013; Tsai, 2001). Though effectiveness of ICON model have been claimed and substantiated by empirical

findings but it has a contextual validity on science and mathematics related subjects (Bharati, 2014; Barik, 2009). Therefore, the present study aimed as to find out the relative impact of ICON model and Herbartian method of instruction on problem solving and decision-making abilities.

Importance of problem solving and decision-making abilities in the present time have been universally realised which leads to a priority for development of these skills within school students especially during secondary level as this is the foundation stage to face real complex world. It is documented in the literature that there are primarily two approaches for developing these abilities (Yen & Halili, 2015). The first approach is externally arranging special training programme and second one is integrating this target curriculum with pedagogical/ instructional designs. The first one has the limitation for lack of immediate meaningful cognitive environment for application context but second approach is more effective from economic and application point of view. In this connection, researchers have claimed effectiveness of various instructional designs and curriculum practitioners have used these while transaction of different contents having different type of subjects. Some designs have been claimed as effective irrespective of nature of academic discipline; effectiveness of some designs have been tested upon some specific type of knowledge domains. Therefore, it leads to conflicting situation on the part of teachers to opt and utilise subject specific designs for development of these abilities due to non-availability of results about instructional designs.

Theoretical Background

Problem solving skills are series of actions an individual takes to find out solutions to the problems encountered in day to day life situations found either through prior experiences, introspection and experimentation (Wartono et al., 2019). On the other hand, decision-making is a process by which an individual or group of individuals evaluate solutions and alternatives to select the most appropriate or rational option. The cognitive skills used in problem solving and decision-making abilities are analysis and synthesis skills, critical and creative thinking, reasoning ability, logical deduction, personal and social experiences followed by information available to an individual (Chusinkunawut et al., 2018; Reeve, 2013; Schunk, 2004; Chi & Glaser, 1985). According to Chusinkunawut et al., 2018, each individual encounter multiple problems in day to day activities and try to solve these problems actively by collecting information about objects, events, phenomena and organise them into a structure of knowledge for reaching to an appropriate decision. Thus, it is natural to develop problem solving and decision-making abilities for smooth functioning of life in this multifaceted and complex society. But, a big question arises here is how to develop these abilities?; Can these abilities develop in vacuum?; If no, what are the strategies that can be used?.

A considerable number of studies have proposed that there are two approaches that can be used for teaching higher order cognitive thinking like problem solving and decision-making abilities (Yen & Halili, 2015; Zohar, 2013; Zohar & Schwartzer, 2005; Rajendran, 2001, 2002). The first approach is Infusion approach (Fisher, 1999) where teaching of higher order cognitive thinking occurs in a content-specific setting. In this approach, teachers integrate higher order cognitive thinking explicitly with content specific teaching. The second approach is Separate-subject approach where a teacher does not integrate higher order cognitive thinking explicitly with content rather teachers use general strategies across the subject domains. In this approach, a set of skills or strategies are used by teachers to acquire higher order cognitive abilities. For example, associating sensory information with mental content through non-explicit, intuitive and associative processes (Gupta & Mishra, 2021); effective teaching and learning by engaging students in constructive thinking (Yen & Halili, 2015) are used in teaching these abilities. In this context, instructional designs and nature of subject or discipline have significant importance. Each design may not be appropriate for all type of academic discipline. The term "instructional design is defined as the entire process of instructional planning and implementation. It refers to the principles and procedures by which instructional materials, lessons, and whole educational systems can be developed in a consistent and reliable fashion" (Zierer & Seel, 2012). Do, all the instructional designs are equally effective for increasing these abilities?

The effectiveness of instructional designs for developing these abilities required a clear conception contextual application from evolutionary perspective. In fact the development of various instructional designs is not new rather it trace back to ancient time and have a long history. John Dewey along with some European pedagogues such as Jaen Piaget, Lev Vygotsky are known as father of modern instructional designs. The systematic planning of modern instructional designs started in 1920s. From the third decade to till date, a series of instructional designs have been emerged to meet the changing requirements of educational system across the world. From the 1950s to 1980s, three approaches of instructional movements such as i) "Skinner's theory of operant conditioning"; ii) "Bloom's taxonomy of cognitive domain"; iii) "Herbartian method of teaching" and iv) "the cybernetic approach of systems theory" were heavily influential (Seel & Hanke, 2011). The *Operant conditioning* of B.F Skinner was a behaviouristic learning theory rooted in Thorndike's learning "law of effect". It assumes the activeness of the organism can be conditioned for behaviour shaping by the use of reinforcement in proper sequence and time. As a result, educational practitioner have interrelated this psychological proposition while designing their pedagogical practices for better learning outcomes and cognitive behavioural modification among students. *Bloom's taxonomy* of Benjamin Bloom was a behaviouristic learning theory that believes on the process of learning proceeds from lower cognitive abilities to higher cognitive abilities. For example, before understanding any concept, a student has to remember and before applying that

concept, he/she has to understand that concept properly. *Herbartian methods* of teaching is framework based on behaviourism and system approach. Due to its established effectiveness in terms of achievement of behavioural objective, it has been widely applied by educational practitioner throughout the globe. Herbartian method is scientifically designed instructional plan of action. As par this pedagogical method before presenting the learning experience, the instructional objectives would be written in behavioural terms and this behavioural objectives should be based on Bloom's taxonomy of the instructional design. As par the objective, the instructor scientifically proposes the way of transmitting the experience to the students. This method constitute five steps for lesson delivery such as introduction, presentation, association/comparison, generalization and application. Finally, the instructor uses some techniques to access how much behavioural changes has been happened among students and how much he/she is successful in achieving the target. Due to its scientific base and supportive empirical finding for bringing desirable changes among the students, this model is popularised and accepted by educational practitioner as a common method of teaching. Along with these behaviouristic approach of instructional designs, some other instructional designs were also played prominent role in 1960s and 1970s. For example, the prescriptive model of instructional design developed by Gagne and Briggs (1976), model developed by Dick and Carey (1978, 2005), instructional model of Merrill (1983) and others. All these instructional models were based on the assumptions of cognitive operations and processes (Seel & Hanke, 2011).

In response to the paradigm shift in psycho-pedagogical orientation, some educational psychologist such as Piaget, Bruner, Bandura, Ausubel, Cronbach and others realised the requirements of "cognitive revolution" in psychology (Bruner 1990). To a great extent, the Piaget's theory of cognitive development has inspired many cognitive psychologist to replace behaviourist approach and develop new learning theory called as "educational learning theory" (Bereiter, 1990). As a result, the constructivist instructional designs have been emerged in the late 1960s of the 20th century. In constructivist based instructional designs, the free learning environment and opportunities for critical and reflective thinking is encouraged (Farnham-Diggory 1972).

Based upon constructivist based principles, some instructional designs and models have been developed. Among all the instructional models based upon constructivist approach of teaching, the Interpretation construction design model (ICON design model) is one. This model was designed by Black and McClintock in 1995 and centred on the principles of "observation, contextualization, cognitive apprenticeship, collaboration, interpretation construction, multiple interpretations and multiple manifestations". Along with Black & McClintock (1995), a significant number of researches have subjected that there exists significant effect of ICON design model on higher order cognitive abilities (Zulkarnaen, 2018;

Mahapatra, 2013; Sahu, 2013; Barik, 2009 and Tsai, 2001). Among the higher order cognitive abilities, problem solving and decision-making are two of them (Tsai et al. 2015).

But, which instructional strategy is more effective for developing problem solving and decision-making abilities have been conceptualised from their individual focused behavioural objectives. Herbartian method of teaching primarily based upon system theory and its focus is on development of objectives as per Blooms instructional objectives, i.e. knowledge or memory, comprehension or understanding, application, analysis, synthesis and evaluation. As a result, the objectives like problem solving or decision-making are less focused. On the other hand ICON model based on constructivist pedagogy gives importance on active involvement of students as creator of learning experience and their supportive explanation. Some researchers are of the opinion that ICON model is primarily problem solving oriented and students use their logical stance in support of their created outcomes (Tsai et al. 2015).

Although majority of research findings support positive impact of ICON design model on higher order cognitive abilities but results have been validated on mathematics and science related subject (Enoch et al. 2019; Obrero & Obrero, 2019; Lkama, 2019; Osondu, 2018; Adak, 2017). Also some researchers have tested its effectiveness in some social science subjects like geography and economics. But a dearth number of studies are available where the effectiveness of ICON design model in political science subject were carried out (Kauts & Sikand, 2019; Parasurama, 2017; Alt, 2015; Kwan & Wong, 2015; Mahesha, 2014). Political science is an important subject taught in the general education under school education in India. Do, ICON design model has significant effect on problem solving and decision-making abilities of secondary school students in political science is an important question to be answered in the present study. Although there exists significant effect of ICON design model in science and mathematics subjects, the effect of this model in political science subject may or may not be similar. Because the essence of science and mathematics subjects are based on objective principle whereas the political science subject is subjective in nature. The political phenomena are contextual, complex, multifaceted and rapidly changing whereas science and mathematical phenomena are systematic, scientific, logical and rational. The political thoughts, ideologies, theories takes multiple shapes in multiple interpretations. Thus, the relative impact of ICON model and Herbartian methods of instruction on problem solving and decision-making abilities in political science of secondary school students was investigated in the present study.

Objectives

1) To find out the impact of ICON model on problem solving and decision-making abilities of secondary school students in political science and 2) To find out the relative changes between problem solving and decision making abilities of students of experimental group taught through ICON model and students of control group taught through Herbartian method.

Hypothesis

With reference to theoretical perspectives and its effectiveness in social science subjects, we hypothesise that ICON design model will be more effective than Herbartian method of teaching in developing both problem solving and decision-making abilities in political science.

Materials and Methods

***Study Design and Participants*:** To meet these objectives, the non-equivalent control group quasi-experimental design was used. One secondary co-education school in western Odisha named as Balika Vidayalaya, Sambalpur, Odisha, India was selected purposively for conducting the experimentation over a sample 72 students, 36 each in experimental group and control group. The sample size of the present study was calculated through Apriori power analysis based on ANCOVA using G*Power software suggested a range of N=41-83 to detect the medium effect size (d=0.4) having numerator df=1, number of groups=2, Number of covariates=2 with 70%-95% power (í error probability 0.05). The researchers followed all the ethical procedures of sample selection and treatment recommended by Institutional Ethics Committee for Human Research (IECHR) of the University where research work was carried out. The consent of the school authority was taken before sample selection. After testing equivalency through pre-test and general mental ability test of students studying in section-A and section-B of class IX of that school, the section-A and section-B were assigned as experimental and control group respectively through lottery method.

***Establishing Validity of the Experimental Design*:** Since it was a non-equivalent control group quasi-experimental research, some threats like history, maturation, instrumentation and selection were controlled automatically (Gay et al. 2015) whereas other threats were controlled in the following ways. The Analysis of Co-variance was used to control the statistical regression; data of participants who were having 95% and more attendance during the experimentation were only used for analysis and controlled mortality threat; as the experiment was conducted over same time, place and situation, the threat of history was controlled; the Hawthorne effect was controlled as the participants were not informed that this teaching is a part of experimentation; as there was no chance of losing marks, grades or credits, the John Henry effect was controlled. In addition to control these threats, though the influence of differential teachers' personality traits and knowledge level in students' behavioural changes cannot be undermined but in this context, total experiment in the form of teaching has been done by the same teacher.

Instruments: In the present experiment, 100 instructional materials in the form of 50 lesson plans based on ICON model and 50 lesson plans based on Herbartian method of teaching were developed by the investigator for use in experimental group and control group

respectively. Since experimental school was an English medium school, all lesson plans were developed in English. All lesson plans were developed by the investigator and validated by the suggestions of experts comprising of five subject teachers, five educationists proficient in constructivist learning strategy and interpretation and construction model and two language experts. For measuring problem solving and decision-making abilities, a self-developed multiple choice type test (consisted 12 items) in the subject of political science was used. The construction of test items based on problem solving and decision-making abilities followed such principles as i) each item was meaningful by itself and presented a definite problem in political science; ii) the items were free from irrelevant material; iii) the negatively stated items were mostly avoided; iv) all of the alternatives were grammatically consistent; v) each item consisted only one clear and correct answer; vi) All the distracters in each item were plausible; vii) the relative length of the alternatives was not providing any clue to the answer, and viii) the alternatives such as "all of the above" and "none of the above" were used sparingly. For the items under problem solving ability, the action verbs like identify steps to solve problems and choose best possible solutions for a problem were used whereas for the items under decision-making ability, the action verb decide an action in a specific situation. The items of the test were evaluated through the procedure of criterion reference test recommended by Gronlund in 1981. The item answered correctly was awarded with one mark numerically whereas the item answered wrongly was awarded with zero mark. The content validity of the test was ascertained by the experts' judgement. The reliability coefficient calculated by Pearson's product-moment method was 0.89 which showed the test having high test-retest reliability. Specifically, the reliability coefficients calculated for sub – tests such as problem solving and decision making were 0.81 and 0.83 respectively. Besides the problem solving and decision-making test, Raven's Standard Progressive Matrices was used to measure general mental ability of students as intelligence has been taken as a covariate.

Experimental set up: Students of section-A (36 students of both boys and girls) were taught for eight weeks by ICON model of instruction and students of section-B (36 students of both boys and girls) were taught same units of political science by Herbartian method for same period in separate class rooms every day for one hour. While transacting content to both students of experimental group and control group, information and communication technology (ICT) and audio-visual aids were used by the investigator. Before the intervention both groups were pre-tested in their general mental ability and problem solving and decision making abilities. After intervention, students of both the groups were post-tested and the data collected from pre-test and post-test were used for data analysis.

Results

Variability between Experimental and Control group before and after intervention

It is evident from Table 1 that the means of problem solving ability of the experimental and control groups in pre-test were 1.08 and 1.33 respectively and the standard deviation of two groups were 1.18 and 1.17 respectively. It is found out that the calculated 't' value for problem solving (t=0.90; df= 70; p>0.05) is less than the tabulated value at 0.05 level of significance. Hence, there was no significance of difference between these two groups relating to their problem solving ability in political science before the treatment. In other words, both the groups were almost same as far as their previous problem solving ability is concerned. However, the means of problem solving ability in political science of the experimental and control groups in post-test were 3.81 and 2.28 respectively and the standard deviation for two groups were 1.28 and 1.52 respectively. The calculated't' value for problem solving (t=4.60; df= 70; p>0.01) is greater than the probability value at 0.01 level of significance. Hence, there exists significant difference between these two groups relating to their problem solving ability in political science after the treatment. In other words, both the groups are different after the treatment.

Table 1 Summary of 't' values for variability analysis between experimental and control group before and after intervention relating to their problem solving and decision-making abilities

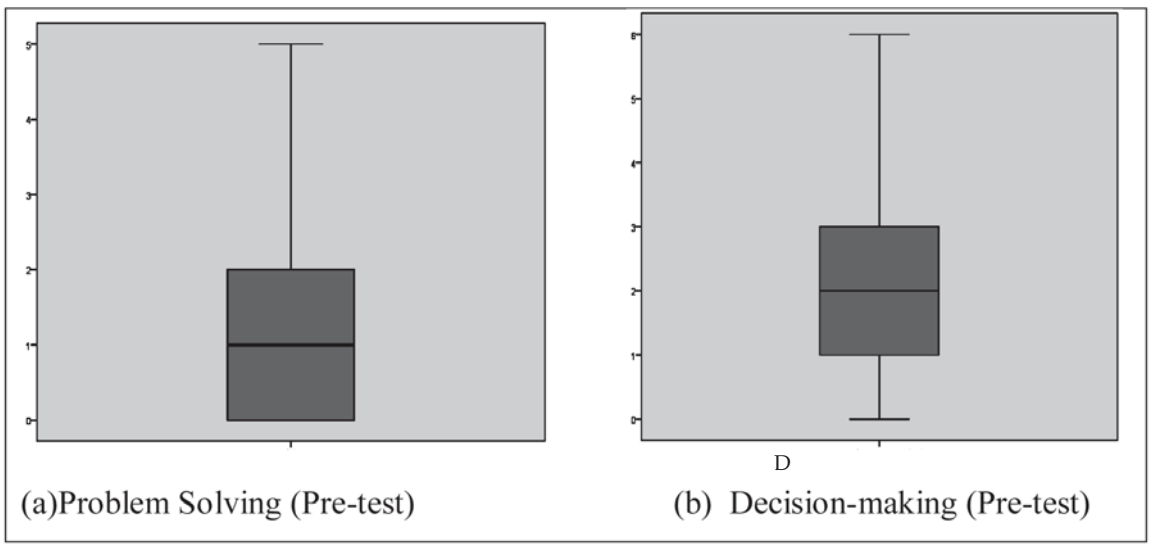
Ability	Test	Experimental Group (36)		Control Group (36)		df	't'	Remarks
		Mean	SD	Mean	SD		Value	
Problem	Pre-test	1.08	1.18	1.33	1.17	70	0.90	NS
Solving	Post-test	3.81	1.28	2.28	1.52	70	4.60**	S
Decision	Pre-test	2.44	1.52	1.86	1.62	70	1.57	NS
Making	Post-test	4.33	1.07	2.83	1.38	70	5.15**	S

NS-Not Significant; **Significant at 0.01 level (S)

Further, with respect to decision-making ability, the mean scores of the experimental and control groups were 2.44 and 1.86 respectively and the standard deviation of two groups were 1.52 and 1.62 respectively. It is found that the calculated 't' value (t=1.57; df= 70; p>0.05) is less than the tabulated value at 0.05 level of significance. Hence, there was no significance of difference between these two groups relating to their decision-making ability in political science before the treatment. In other words, both the groups were almost same as far as

their previous decision making ability is concerned. However, the means of decision-making ability in political science of the experimental and control groups were 4.33 and 2.83 respectively and the standard deviation of two groups were 1.07 and 1.38 respectively. It was found that the calculated 't' value (t=5.15; df= 70; p>0.01) is greater than the probability value at 0.01 level of significance. Hence, there exists significant difference between these two groups relating to their decision-making ability in political science after the treatment. In other words, both the groups are different as far as their post decision-making ability is concerned. It is evident from Figure 1 (a & b) that there exists no outlier or extremes scores in problem solving and decision-making abilities at pre-test level.

Figure 1 Outlier effect of descriptive data in problem solving and decision-making in pre-test



Impact of ICON model on Problem Solving Ability of secondary school students in political science

As can be seen from Table 2 that after controlling the effect of pre-test score in problem solving ability and general mental ability scores, it is found that means of experimental and control group became 3.91 and 2.17 respectively in problem solving ability. It is evident from Table 3 that both the experimental and control groups are significantly differ as the calculated 'F' Value is greater than the probability value at 0.01 level of significance (29.668> p=0.01) in favour of experimental group because the adjusted mean of experimental group is greater than the adjusted mean of control group (adjusted M=3.91>adjusted M=2.17). Thus, from the above interpretation, it is concluded that teaching learning through ICON design model has

substantially improved the students' problem solving ability in political science as compared to teaching learning through Herbartian method. Thus, the null hypothesis is rejected in favour of alternative hypothesis. Therefore, the directional hypothesis stating "there exists significant impact of ICON design model on problem solving ability in political science" was retained.

Table 2 Mean and adjusted mean values of experimental group and control group in problem solving ability after controlling general mental ability and pre-test score in problem solving ability

Ability	Groups	Mean	AdjustedMean
Problem SolvingAbility	Experimental Group	3.81	3.91
	Control Group	2.28	2.17

Table 3 Summary of 'F' values for impact of ICON model on problem solving ability of secondary school students in political science when general mental ability and pre-test score in problem solving were controlled

Source	Sum of squares	df	Mean square	'F' Values
Corrected Model	61.472	3	20.491	11.669
Intercept	1.888	1	1.888	1.075
Covariate(Pre-test score in problem solving ability)	13.648	1	13.648	7.772
Covariate(General Mental Ability score)	8.031	1	8.031	4.574
Treatment	52.094	1	52.094	29.668**
Error	119.403	68	1.756	
Total	847.000	72		
Corrected Total	180.875	71		

****Significant at 0.01 level**

Impact of ICON model on Decision-Making Ability of secondary school students in political science.

As can be seen from Table 4 that after controlling the effect of pre-test score and general mental ability score, it is found that means of experimental and control group became 4.31 and 2.86 respectively in decision-making ability. It is evident from Table 5 that both the groups are significantly differ as the calculated 'F' Value is greater than probability value at

0.01 level of significance (27.090 > p=0.01) in favour of experimental group because the adjusted mean of experimental group is greater than the adjusted mean of control group (adjusted M=4.31>adjusted M=2.86). Thus, from the above interpretation it is concluded that teaching learning through ICON design model has substantially improved the students' decision-making ability in political science as compared to teaching learning through traditional teaching. Thus, the null hypothesis is rejected in favour of alternative hypothesis. Therefore, the directional hypothesis stating "there exists significant impact of ICON design model on decision-making ability in political science" was retained.

Table 4 Mean and adjusted mean values of experimental group and control group in decision-making after controlling general mental ability and pre-test score in decision-making ability

Ability	Groups	Mean	AdjustedMean
DecisionMakingAbility	Experimental Group	4.33	4.31
	Control Group	2.83	2.86

Table 5 Summary of 'F' values for impact of ICON model on decision-making ability of secondary school students in political science when general mental ability and pre-test score in decision-making were controlled

Source	Sum of squares	df	Mean square	'F' Values
Corrected Model	58.713	3	19.571	14.989
Intercept	5.862	1	5.862	4.489
Covariate (Pre-test score in decision making ability)	12.401	1	12.401	9.497
Covariate(General Mental Ability score)	6.084	1	6.084	4.659
Treatment	35.372	1	35.372	27.090**
Error	88.787	68	1.306	
Total	1072.000	72		
Corrected Total	147.500	71		

**Significant at 0.01 level

Relative impact of Interpretation construction model and Herbartian methods of instructional designs on Problem Solving and Decision-Making Abilities.

Table 6 Summary of 't' values and percentage of changes happened in experimental and control groups from pre-test level to post-test level in problem solving ability and decision making

Ability	Group	Pre-test		Post-test		Changes in	't' Values
		Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Mean	(df=70)
Problem Solving	Experimental (N=36)	1.08	1.18	3.81	1.28	2.73 (253 %)	9.41**
	Control (N=36)	1.33	1.17	2.28	1.52	0.95 (71 %)	2.97**
Decision Making	Experimental (N=36)	2.44	1.52	4.33	1.07	1.89 (77%)	6.10**
	Control (N=36)	1.86	1.62	2.83	1.38	0.67 (36%)	2.73**

****Significant at 0.01 level**

It is evident from Table 6 that the means of the experimental group in pre-test and post-test in problem solving ability were 1.08 and 3.81 respectively. So, 253% changes happened in problem solving ability of the students within experimental group who were taught through interpretation construction model and this difference is significant as the calculated 't' value is greater than the probability value at 0.01 level of significance (t=9.41>p.01). But in case of control group, the means of pre-test and post-test were 1.33 and 2.28 respectively. So , 71% changes happened in problem solving ability of the students within control group who were taught through Herbartian method and this difference is also significant as the calculated 't' value is greater than the probability value at 0.01 level of significance (t=2.97>p.01). Thus, it was found out that both the instructional strategies i.e interpretation construction model and Herbartian method of teaching were found significant in enhancing problem solving ability of secondary school students but the magnitude of effect of interpretation construction model is higher than the Herbartian method of teaching.

Further, the means of the experimental group in pre-test and post-test in decision-making ability were 2.44 and 4.33 respectively. So, 77 % changes happened in decision making ability within experimental group who were taught through ICON method and this difference is significant as the calculated 't' value is greater than the probability value at 0.01 level of significance (t=6.10>p.01). But in case of control group, the means of pre-test and post-test scores were 1.86 and 2.83 respectively. So, 36 % changes happened in decision-making ability of students within control group who were taught through Herbartian method of teaching and this difference is significant as the calculated 't' value is greater than the probability

value at 0.01 level of significance (t= 2.73>p.01). Thus, it was found out that both the instructional strategies i.e interpretation construction model and Herbartian method of teaching were found significant in enhancing decision-making ability of secondary school students but the magnitude of effect of interpretation construction model is higher than the Herbartian method of teaching.

Impact of Interpretation construction model on Problem Solving Ability as compare to Decision-Making Ability

It is evident from Table 6 that the students of experimental group taught through ICON model have increased their problem solving ability to 253% from pre-test level to post-test level whereas their decision-making ability has been increased up to 77% only. Thus, the ICON design model has brought greater impact on problem solving ability than decision-making ability.

Impact of Herbartian method on Problem Solving Ability as compare to Decision-Making Ability

It is evident from Table 6 that the students of control group taught through Herbartian method of teaching have increased their problem solving ability from pre-test to post test is 71% whereas their decision-making ability has been increased up to 36 % only. Thus, the Herbartian method of teaching has brought relatively more impact on problem solving ability than decision-making ability.

Thus, the present result study emerged with following findings such as 1) there was no significance of difference between the students of experimental group and control group relating to their problem solving and decision-making abilities prior to the experimentation; 2) there exists significance of difference between the students of experimental group and control group relating to their problem solving and decision-making abilities after the experimentation when the covariates were not controlled; 3) the students of experimental group taught through Interpretation construction model was found significantly better than the students of control group taught through Herbartian method of teaching in problem solving ability when the covariates were controlled; 4) the students of experimental group taught through Interpretation construction model was found significantly better than the students of control group taught through Herbartian method of teaching in decision-making ability when the covariates were controlled; 5) both Interpretation construction model and Herbartian method of teaching have significantly positive impact on problem solving ability of the students in political science but magnitude of effect in case of Interpretation construction model was higher than the Herbartian method of teaching; 6) both Interpretation construction model and Herbartian method of teaching have significantly positive impact on decision-making

ability of the students in political science but magnitude of effect in case of interpretation construction model was higher than the Herbartian method of teaching; 7) the Interpretation construction model used to teach the students of experimental group has brought greater impact on problem solving ability than decision-making ability and 8) the Herbartian method of teaching used to teach the students of control group has brought greater impact on problem solving ability than decision-making ability.

Discussion

Development of students' higher order cognitive abilities like problem solving and decision-making have been acknowledged to assess the quality of education at every level throughout the world. Problem solving and decision-making abilities are two important skills in sustaining socio-cultural, economic and political lives of every human being in the 21st century (Kivunja, 2014). The learner centric instructional designs are instrumental for developing higher order cognitive abilities of the students (National Curriculum Framework, 2005). Among all learner centric approaches of learning, the interpretation construction model is positively correlated with development of higher order cognitive abilities (Kwan & Wong, 2015; Lunenburg, 2011; Tsai, 2001).

From the finding, it is revealed that there exists significant impact of Interpretation construction model of teaching and learning in enhancing two higher order cognitive abilities like problem solving and decision-making abilities of secondary school students in political science subject. The result concurs to the findings of Dokmecioglu et al. 2020; Becirovic et al. 2019; Zulkarnaen, 2018; Topolovcan & Matijevic, 2017; Sheela, 2016; Kwan & Wong, 2015; Sahoo, 2013; Peter et al. 2010; Allen, 2008; Qarareh, 2016; Bardsley & Bardsley, 2007 and Tyanjakla, 1999. Further, significant positive impact of interpretation construction model on problem solving and decision-making is not linear rather mediated through multiple variables like cognitive and motivational strategies of learning (Kwan & Wong, 2015); open ended learning (Aqda et al. 2011); co-operative work, concept mapping and cognitive apprenticeship (Peter, 2010); blending of ICT with ICON model (Tsai, 2001); diversity in approach of teaching (Tyanjakla, 1999) and higher meta-cognitive regulating strategies (Dokmecioglu, et al. 2020).

Another finding of the present study revealed that the magnitude of changes occurred in both the dependent variables such as problem solving and decision-making abilities in both experimental and control groups are positive and significantly greater from pre-test level to post-test level. Therefore, both the instructional strategies i.e Interpretation construction model and Herbartian method of teaching have significantly positive impact in enhancing students' problem solving and decision-making abilities but the magnitude of Interpretation construction model as compare to Herbartian method in enhancing students' problem solving and decision-making abilities is higher. Further, the findings revealed that both the instructional strategies i.e Interpretation construction model and Herbartian method were

more effective in enhancing problem solving ability than the decision-making ability used to teach experimental and control group respectively. Thus, the result has made clear that along with Interpretation construction model, the Herbartian method as an instructional strategy should be equally promoted in teaching school subjects in all levels of education throughout the globe. According to Becirovic et al. 2019 when there was higher the level of development there was higher the effect of instructional designs on higher order cognitive abilities.

Conclusion

The result of the present study supports for comparatively better effectiveness of instruction based on ICON model than Herbartian method for increasing problem solving and decision making abilities in political science subject like other science and social science subjects. The teachers who are primarily considered as curriculum designer and implementer may design the syllabus of political science subject on the line of principles of ICON model and apply it during instructional transaction process. Along with this, direct implication of other two aspects are proposed for accelerating the outcomes. First one is having cognitively enriched class room environment in the form of maps, charts, newspaper cuttings which may act as supporting resource during ICON model based teaching. Second one is the personality of teacher. The ability to have patience for unconventional response or sometimes irrelevant answers by student and encourage for more participation have positive implications in this context. The result of this study is not free from limitations as it was found from an experimental design where both the groups were taken from the same school. There may be a chance of diffusion and transfer of treatment effect to the control group. Secondly, there may be some other variables apart from general mental ability closely associated with problem solving and decision-making and influences the result.

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ঔপনিবেশিক বাংলায় টোলকেন্দ্রিক শিক্ষাব্যবস্থার বিবর্তন ঃ সংস্কৃতচর্চার বহুমাত্রিকতা এবং 'আধুনিক' বাঙালী মনন

প্রীতম গোস্বামী

সারসংক্ষেপ

বাংলার ইতিহাসের মধ্যযুগ থেকে আদি আধুনিক ও আধুনিক যুগ পর্যন্ত দেশজ সংস্কৃত শিক্ষাপদ্ধতির অঙ্গাঙ্গী অংশ হিসাবে টোল শব্দটির উল্লেখ আমরা পাই। টোল যা চতুষ্পাঠী বা সংস্কৃত শিক্ষাকেন্দ্রের সমার্থক শব্দ তা বাংলায় দীর্ঘকালব্যাপী বিশুদ্ধ জ্ঞানবাদী শিক্ষাধারার প্রধান বাহক ছিল। সাধারণ কর্মক্ষেত্রে ফার্সী বা আরবীর ভূমিকা থাকলেও প্রাক ঔপনিবেশিক বা আদি ঔপনিবেশিক যুগে বাংলার গ্রামগুলিতে (এবং ছোট শহরগুলিতেও) টোলশিক্ষার যে ধারা ছিল এবং সেই টোলে শিক্ষার পরবর্তী কালে নবদ্বীপ, মিথিলা, ত্রিহুত এবং বারানসীতে উচ্চশিক্ষা গ্রহণের যে ব্যবস্থা ছিল তাই ছিল বাংলাদেশে প্রাচ্য জ্ঞানবাদী ক্ষেত্রটির চর্চার মেরুদণ্ড স্বরূপ। বিশেষীকরণ এবং অধ্যাপকের বিশেষজ্ঞতার তারতম্যের ভিত্তিতে এই টোলগুলিতে ব্যাকরণ, কাব্য,অলঙ্কার, পুরাণ, ষড়দর্শণ, স্মৃতিশাস্ত্র, ভক্তিশাস্ত্র, তন্ত্রশাস্ত্র, বৈদ্যক শাস্ত্র,গণিত-জ্যোতিষ এমনকি বৌদ্ধ ও জৈন দর্শনেরও চর্চা হত। যদিও বেদের কর্মকাণ্ড শাখার চর্চা প্রায় ছিল না এবং বেশীরভাগ টোলই ব্যাকরণ, ন্যায়শাস্ত্র এবং স্মৃতিশাস্ত্র চর্চাতেই আবদ্ধ ছিল তৎসত্ত্বেও পাঠগত বিষয়ের অভিনবত্ব কম ছিল না। ঔপনিবেশিক যুগে mercantile capitalism এর পরোক্ষ উপহার আধুনিক পাশ্চাত্য এবং 'secular bourgeois'(?) শিক্ষারফলশ্রুতিতে bourgeois morale (অবশ্যই খণ্ডিত ও সংশয়দীর্ণ) ঋদ্ধ এক মধ্যবিত্ত শ্রেণীর সৃষ্টি হয় যাদের জাগতিক ও জ্ঞানমার্গী প্রয়োজন মেটাতে টোলব্যবস্থা অক্ষম ছিল। সাধারণ সিদ্ধান্ত এই যে একাধারে এই ঔপনিবেশিক অর্থনীতির ধাক্কা যার ফলে অর্থনৈতিক জীবন ও জীবিকার পরিবর্তিত সম্পর্ক ও অন্যদিকে নূতন জ্ঞান ও চিন্তনজগতের বিস্তার এরই দ্বিমুখী ফলশ্রুতিতে টোলব্যবস্থা ভেঙ্গে পড়ে। এই প্রবন্ধে আমরা টোলকেন্দ্রিক বিদ্যাচর্চার বিভিন্ন ধারাগুলির বিশ্লেষণের পাশাপাশি দেখাতে চেয়েছি যে পরিসংখ্যানগত ঐতিহাসিক উপকরণে টোলব্যবস্থার অবস্থান এবং প্রভাব অনুধাবন সম্ভব নয়। ঊনিশ শতকের প্রথমার্ধ পর্যন্তও টোলের প্রভাব ছিল যথেষ্ট এবং তা গুণগত দিক থেকে প্রভূত প্রভাব এবং ঔপনিবেশিক শিক্ষাগত বাস্তবতার বিকল্প নির্মাণে সহায়তা করেছিল। উনিশ শতকের দ্বিতীয়ার্ধে Charles Wood-এর dispatch অনুসারে শিক্ষার infiltration পদ্ধতিতে গ্রাম ও মফঃস্বল অঞ্চলে ইংরাজী প্রাইমারী স্কুল, নর্ম্যাল স্কুল, বেঙ্গলী স্কুল এবং অ্যাংলো-ভার্নাকুলার স্কুলগুলি বিস্তার লাভ করায় টোলশিক্ষার শিকড়গত ক্ষেত্রে টান পড়ে ও যে পদ্ধতির হোতা ছিলেন ঈশ্বরচন্দ্র বিদ্যাসাগর, দ্বারকানাথ বিদ্যাভূষণ, শিবনাথ শাস্ত্রী প্রমুখ কিছু সংস্কৃত পণ্ডিতরাই যা সংস্কৃত শিক্ষার 'ভিতর থেকে পরিবর্তনের' ইঙ্গিত দেয়। এই প্রবন্ধে আমরা এই জটিল মিথস্ক্রিয়ারই আলোচনার চেষ্টা করেছি। টোলধারী পণ্ডিতদের নিজেদের অস্তিত্ব সঙ্কট এবং টোল এবং পাঠশালার পারস্পরিক

নির্ভরশীল আবার সময়বিশেষে বিপরীতমুখী সম্পর্কেরও আলোচনা করা হয়েছে। ঔপনিবেশিক জটিলতা এবং খণ্ডিত আধুনিকতার প্রেক্ষাপটে টোল ব্যবস্থার এই প্রভাব, ভাঙন ও বিবর্তনের চর্চাই বর্তমান প্রবন্ধ লেখকের উপজীব্য।

সূচকশব্দ ঃ *টোল, সংস্কৃতচর্চা, বানিজ্যিক পুঁজিবাদ, মেকলে মিনিট, অ্যাংলো-ভার্নাকুলার স্কুল, ঈশ্বরচন্দ্র বিদ্যাসাগর।*

বাংলাদেশে প্রাক ঔপনিবেশিক যুগ থেকে বর্তমান শতাব্দী পর্যন্ত দেশজ শিক্ষা বিশেষতঃ সংস্কৃতাধ্যয়নের সঙ্গে 'টোল' শব্দটি অবিচ্ছেদ্য ভাবে জড়িত। এখনও গ্রামবাংলার বহু পরিত্যক্ত জমি 'টোলবাড়ীর ভিটা' নামে পরিচিত। হরিচরণ বন্দ্যোপাধ্যায় কৃত বঙ্গীয় শব্দকোষে টোল শব্দটির অর্থ দেওয়া হয়েছে 'সংস্কৃতপাঠশালা, চতুষ্পাঠী'(বন্দ্যোপাধ্যায় ১৩৪৪ বঙ্গাব্দঃ১৩৬২)। বৈদিকযুগে এবং পরবর্তীকালে চতুর্বেদ সুদীর্ঘকাল ধরেই সংস্কৃতচর্চার প্রধান বিষয়বস্তু হওয়ায় বিদ্যাকেন্দ্রগুলি চতুষ্পাঠী নামেই পরিচিত হয়। বাংলায় আদি মধ্য যুগ থেকেই বেদের চর্চা খুব বেশী না হলেও টোল এবং চতুষ্পাঠী অভিন্নার্থে ব্যবহৃত হত। এই টোলবাটীগুলিতে জ্ঞানচর্চার বিষয়গুলির মধ্যে টোলধারী অধ্যাপক ভট্টাচার্য্যরা মূলতঃ ব্যাকরণ, কাব্য, অলঙ্কার ও ন্যায় এবং এছাড়াও পুরাণ,জ্যোতিষ, বেদান্ত (যদিও তার সংখ্যা খুবই নগণ্য), স্মৃতি ও তন্ত্র শিক্ষা দিতেন। এই পণ্ডিতরা তাঁদের বিষয়ভিত্তিক বিশেষজ্ঞতার ভিত্তিতে নিজস্ব উপাধি গ্রহণ করতেন। প্রাক-ঔপনিবেশিক যুগে এই টোলগুলি যে বাংলার স্বাভাবিক জ্ঞানচর্চার ও শাস্ত্রালোচনার কেন্দ্ররূপে স্বকীয় ভূমিকা পালন করছিল সেগুলি ব্রিটিশ শাসনপর্বে উপনিবেশিক শিক্ষার বিস্তারে ও অর্থনৈতিক জ্ঞানচর্চাগত মূল্যমান পরিবর্তনের ফলে বৃহৎমাত্রায় ভাঙনের শিকার হয়। এই পরিবর্তন ও ভাঙনের বিবরণ ও কারণকেই আমরা বিশ্লেষণ করব এই প্রবন্ধে।

টোলব্যবস্থার বিদ্যাচর্চার ধারা ও তার সীমাবদ্ধতার ব্যাখ্যার জন্য এই প্রবন্ধে একদিকে যেমন ঔপনিবেশিক বাংলায় পাশ্চাত্য secular বিদ্যাচর্চার কথা আলোচিত হয়েছে। তেমনই টোলের সংস্কৃত শিক্ষার পাশাপাশি ঔপনিবেশিক প্রতিষ্ঠানে (সংস্কৃত কলেজ ও এশিয়াটিক সোসাইটি) এবং কাশীর সংস্কৃতচর্চার বিভিন্নতার কথা আলোচিত হয়েছে। বাংলার টোলকেন্দ্রিক শিক্ষাব্যবস্থা কেবলমাত্র বৃত্তি-নিমন্ত্রণলোভী পুরোহিত ও অধ্যাপক শ্রেণীর উৎপাদনের যন্ত্র ছিল না। সংস্কৃত ভাষা ও সেই ভাষায় রচিত সাহিত্য, ব্যাকরণ,অলঙ্কার, ষড়দর্শন, গণিত,জ্যোতিষ ,চিকিৎসাশাস্ত্র, আইন (স্মৃতিশাস্ত্র) ভক্তিশাস্ত্র এমনকি বৌদ্ধ ও জৈন দর্শনচর্চার দেশজ মাধ্যম এবং দেশজ প্রতিষ্ঠান ছিল এই টোলগুলি। ঔপনিবেশিক যুগে একদিকে পাশ্চাত্য secular বিদ্যাচর্চার অভিঘাতে প্রাচীন টোলধারী শিক্ষা তার গুরুত্ব হারায় এবং পাশ্চাত্য indology-র ধারায় আধুনিক পাশ্চাত্য শিক্ষিতরা নূতন জ্ঞানার্জনী (cognitive) পদ্ধতিতে সংস্কৃতবিদ্যার ব্যাখ্যা করতে থাকেন। এশিয়াটিক সোসাইটিতে indology-র নির্মাণে পণ্ডিতদের শুধু অনুবাদক ছাড়া কিছু ভাবা হয় না। (Hatcher ২০০৫: ৬৮৩-৭২৩).বঙ্কিমচন্দ্র চট্টোপাধ্যায়ের মত উনিশ শতকের দ্বিতীয়ভাগে বাঙালী হিন্দুধর্ম ও সমাজের নবব্যাখ্যাকাররা টোলের 'ব্রাহ্মণ-পণ্ডিত'দের সম্পর্কে কঠোর উক্তি করেন। ঈশ্বরচন্দ্র বিদ্যাসাগর স্পষ্টতই বলেন ব্রাহ্মণ-পণ্ডিত আখ্যা তিনি অপমানকর জ্ঞান করেন (বিদ্যাসাগর ১২৯১ বঙ্গাব্দঃ ১৩)। অপরদিকে mercantile capitalism-এর যে আঘাত পেশাগত এবং উপার্জন ক্ষেত্রের এক সুবিপুল পরিবর্তন ও তারই ফলে ক্রমাগত রাজধানী-অভিমুখী bourgeois morale (অবশ্যই খণ্ডিত ও সংশয়দীর্ণ) ঋদ্ধ এক মধ্যবিত্ত শ্রেণীর সৃষ্টি হয় যাদের বিদ্যাচর্চার ক্ষেত্রে টোলের ভূমিকা কার্য্যকরী ক্ষেত্রে খুবই অপ্রয়োজনীয়

ছিল (Mcguire ১৯৮৩:৪২-৫৭)। টোলব্যবস্থাও এই দ্বিঘাত পরিবর্তন ও আগ্রাসনের সম্মুখে নিজেদের আদি অবস্থান পরিবর্তনে অসমর্থ হয় এবং বিংশ শতকে এসে ক্রমশই এক মুমূর্ষু ব্যবস্থায় পরিণত হয়। এই প্রবন্ধে টোল ব্যবস্থার সেই অবস্থান ও ভাঙন এবং তার সাথে জড়িত ঔপনিবেশিকতার উপহার আর্থিক পুঁজিবাদী ব্যবস্থা ও তারই পরোক্ষ ফল বুর্জোয়া শিক্ষা এবং জ্ঞানমার্গগুলির সম্পর্ক বিশ্লেষণের চেষ্টা হয়েছে।

ঔপনিবেশিক যুগে টোল ব্যবস্থার গৌরবময় ধারাঃ ঊনবিংশ শতকের আদি থেকে মধ্যভাগ

অষ্টাদশ শতকের অন্তভাগ থেকে বাংলার চিরাচরিত অর্থনৈতিক ব্যবস্থায় যে বিপুল ও ভাঙনমুখী পরিবর্তন দেখা যায় তার ফলেই টোল ব্যবস্থার মৌল পৃষ্ঠপোষকতার ক্ষেত্রটি ভাঙনের সম্মুখীন হয়। ১৭৫৭-১৭৮৪ খ্রীষ্টাব্দের মধ্যেই বাংলায় ইস্ট ইণ্ডিয়া কোম্পানীর রাজস্বনীতির ফলাফলে পেরাক ঔপনিবেশিক গ্রামীণ রাজন্যধারাগুলি (যারা টোলগুলির পৃষ্ঠপোষক ছিল) ভাঙনের সম্মুখীন হয়। বাংলার সংস্কৃত পরিবারের দুই প্রধান পৃষ্ঠপোষক অর্থাৎ কৃষ্ণনগর রাজ পরিবার এবং নাটোর জমিদারী অপরিশোধ্য ঋণজালে জড়িয়ে পড়ে। ১৭৮৪র পর চিরস্থায়ী বন্দোবস্তের আশীর্বাদে বাংলায় যে absentee landlord শ্রেণীর আবির্ভাব ঘটে তাঁদের সংস্কৃতিচর্চা মূলতঃ ঔপনিবেশিক রাজধানীতেই সীমাবদ্ধ ছিল এবং তাঁদের মধ্যে উল্লেখযোগ্য শোভাবাজার রাজপরিবার সংস্কৃতচর্চায় বিশেষ আগ্রহী থাকলেও তাঁরা এই উদ্যম দেখিয়েছিলেন সংস্কৃত কলেজের পৃষ্ঠপোষণায়। গিরিশচন্দ্র বিদ্যারত্নের জীবনী থেকে পাই যে রাজা নবকৃষ্ণ রাজপুর গ্রামের বিখ্যাত বৈদিক ব্রাহ্মণ পণ্ডিত শ্যামসুন্দর তর্কভূষণকে পণ্ডিত জগন্নাথ তর্কপঞ্চাননের (ত্রিবেণী) সঙ্গে তর্কযুদ্ধে বিজয়ী হওয়ায় রাজপুরে অনেক ভূসম্পত্তি দিলেও তাঁর টোল চালানোর কোন ব্যবস্থা করেন নি। যে শ্যামসুন্দরের একক পাণ্ডিত্যে রাজপুর 'দক্ষিণ নবদ্বীপ' নামে পরিচিত হয়েছিল তাঁর পৌত্র রামধন বিদ্যাবাচস্পতিকে গ্রামস্থ জমিদার দুর্গারাম করের অবস্থাবৈগুণ্য ঘটলে চতুষ্পাঠী বন্ধ করে দিতে হয় (বিদ্যারত্ন ১৯০৯ঃ২-৩)। অষ্টাদশ শতকের এই অবস্থারই সম্প্রসারণ ঘটে ঊনবিংশ শতকে। কিন্তু তা সত্বেও বলা যায় যে ঊনিশ শতকের আদি থেকে মধ্য পর্বে Macaulay Minute (১৮৩৫) বাংলায় দৃঢ়প্রোথিত হওয়ার আগে এবং Charles Woodós Despatch (১৮৫৪) এর অবশ্যম্ভবী ধারা অনুসারে ইংরাজী শিক্ষা infiltration গ্রাম বাংলাতেও সম্পূর্ণতা পাওয়ার আগে বাংলায় টোলশিক্ষার ধারা তার শেষ উজ্জ্বল অস্তিত্ব বজায় রেখেছিল। সংস্কৃত কলেজের পণ্ডিতদের জীবনীপাঠে এবং ব্রজেন্দ্রনাথ বন্দ্যোপাধ্যায়, গোপীকামোহন ভট্টাচার্য্য এবং দীনেশচন্দ্র ভট্টাচার্য্যদের রচনায় পন্ডিতদের জীবনী এবং সংস্কৃত কলেজের ইতিহাসে উনিশ শতকে যে বহুসংখ্যক পণ্ডিতের নাম পাওয়া যায় তাঁদের মধ্যে অঙ্গুলীগণ্য কয়েকজনই কলকাতার বা বারানসীর সংস্কৃত কলেজের ছাত্র ছিলেন। বাকি সকলেই টোলধারারই অনুসরণকারী ছিলেন। হেমচন্দ্র ভট্টাচার্য্য সঙ্কলিত 'বঙ্গীয় সংস্কৃত অধ্যাপক জীবনী'তে আমরা ঊণবিংশ শতকের আদি ও মধ্য পর্বে আমরা এক বিপুল সংখ্যক অধ্যাপককে দেখতে পাই যাঁরা টোলের ছাত্র এবং অন্য বৃত্তি নেওয়ার সাথে সাথে বা অধিকতর বেতনের চাকুরী (যেমন কলেজের অধ্যাপক) হওয়ার আগে টোল বজায় রাখছেন। সংস্কৃত কলেজের অলঙ্কার ও পুরাবৃত্তের অধ্যাপক কমলাকান্ত বিদ্যালঙ্কার (?-১৮৪৩) যার প্রকৃষ্ট দৃষ্টান্ত (ভট্টাচার্য্য ১৩৬৭ঃ৪৩)। তিনি প্রথমে স্বগৃহে টোল স্থাপন করে অধ্যাপনা, পরে সংস্কৃত কলেজে অধ্যাপনা এবং পরে মেদিনীপুরের জজপণ্ডিতের কাজে নিযুক্ত হয়ে জীবিকা নির্বাহ করেন।

১৮৩৫ সালে সংস্কৃত কলেজের পাঠ শেষ করার পর এবং ১৮৩৮ সালে বারানসীতে পাঠ শেষ করার পর ১৮৪৫ সালে প্রসিদ্ধ পণ্ডিত তারানাথ তর্কবাচস্পতি সংস্কৃত কলেজের ব্যাকরণাধ্যাপকরূপে যোগ দেন। এর

মধ্যবর্তী সময়ে তারানাথ অন্যান্য বিভিন্ন ব্যবসার পাশাপাশি চতুষ্পাঠী করে ছাত্রদের বিদ্যাদান করেন। শম্ভুচন্দ্র বিদ্যারত্ন জানাচ্ছেন যে ১৮৪৪ সালের ১০ই ডিসেম্বর ঈশ্বরচন্দ্র বিদ্যাসাগর কালনায় গিয়ে দেখেন যে তারানাথ নিজস্ব চতুষ্পাঠী স্থাপন করে বহু ছাত্রকে বিদ্যাদান করছিলেন। কিন্তু Major G.T. Marshall এর সংস্কৃত কলেজে তারানাথের জন্য কৃত সুপারিশ পত্রে দেখা যায় " He does not teach a ''Tole" or public school– but he has– I am creditebly informed several private pupils....." (বন্দ্যোপাধ্যায়, ১৩৪৮ঃ১৫৪)। ন্যূনপক্ষ ১৮৪৫ খ্রীষ্টাব্দ অবধি প্রত্যক্ষভাবে এবং তারপরেও ব্যাকরণাধ্যাপক হিসাবে এবং একপত্রীরূপে পরোক্ষভাবে টোলের অধ্যাপনার সাথে যোগ ছিল। সংস্কৃত কলেজের ন্যায় অধ্যাপক নিমচাঁদ শিরোমণি পূর্ববঙ্গ অর্থাৎ ঢাকা, মৈমনসিংহ, যশোর, বিক্রমপুর প্রভৃতি জেলার টোলের পণ্ডিতদের প্রেরিত নিমন্ত্রণপত্র গ্রহণের এবং তর্কযুদ্ধে যোগদানের অধিকারী বা 'একপত্রী' ছিলেন। সংস্কৃত কলেজের প্রথম যুগে বাংলায় পণ্ডিতরা একশো টাকা পর্যন্ত সর্বোচ্চ বিদায় পেতেন (কিন্তু সংস্কৃত কলেজের অধ্যাপকরা নিয়মিত মাসিক বেতন পেতেন বলে পঁচিশটাকা পর্যন্ত বিদায় পেতেন। এই কারণে অপমানিত জ্ঞান করে কলেজের অধ্যাপক অদ্বিতীয় নৈয়ায়িক নিমচাঁদ শিরোমণি নিয়ম করে যান যে যতদিন না পর্যন্ত সংস্কৃত কলেজের অধ্যাপকরা সর্বোচ্চহারে বিদায় পাবেন ততদিন তাঁরা বিদায় গ্রহণ করবেন না।) নিমচাঁদের পর একপত্রী হন ভবশঙ্কর তর্করত্ন এবং তারপর তারানাথ। তাঁর আমলেই সংস্কৃত কলেজের অধ্যাপকরা একশ টাকা হারে বিদায় পান এবং তারানাথ দীর্ঘতম সময় 'একপত্রী' থাকেন। এই একপত্রী থাকার ব্যাপারে শম্ভুচন্দ্র বিদ্যারত্ন জানাচ্ছেন "ঐ পত্রের বিদায় আনা বড় কঠিন। সে দেশের জমিদার ও সম্ভ্রান্তগণ, পণ্ডিতদিগকে অত্যন্ত সম্মান করেন; কিন্তু বিচারে যদি পরাস্ত হন, তাহা হইলে তাঁহাদের বিদায় পাওয়া দূরে থাকুক, তাঁহাদের পাথেয় পর্যন্ত দেন না। বরং তাঁহারা ইহাও বলিয়া থাকেন 'কে তোমাকে টোল করিতে বলিয়াছিল?'.....তর্কবাচস্পতি মহাশয় ঐ সকল দেশে ক্রমান্বয়ে এক সভায় পঞ্চাশ বা ষাট জন পণ্ডিতের সহিত বিচার করিতেন.....এক এক সময় ষোড়শ বা সপ্তদশ দিবস বিচার হইত" (বিদ্যারত্ন ১৩০০ঃ৪৮-৪৯)। ১৮৫০ এবং ৬০এর দশকে এই বিরাট শাস্ত্রসভাগুলি টোলব্যবস্থার অস্তিত্বের উজ্জ্বল প্রমাণ। এ কথা অত্যন্ত উল্লেখযোগ্য যে তারানাথের পুত্র জীবানন্দ বিদ্যাসাগরও (১৮৪৪- ১৯০৬) সংস্কৃত কলেজ থেকে উপাধি লাভের পর লাহোর ওরিয়েন্টাল কলেজ এবং সংস্কৃত কলেজে অধ্যাপনার প্রস্তাব পান এবং পরে জব্বলপুর অঞ্চলের স্কুলসমূহের ইন্সপেক্টর হওয়ারও প্রস্তাব পান। কিন্তু উভয় প্রস্তাবই প্রত্যাখ্যান করে নিজের গৃহে টোল স্থাপনা করে ছাত্রদের পাঠদান এবং সংস্কৃত গ্রন্থের টীকা প্রকাশে ব্যাপৃত থাকেন (ভট্টাচার্য্য ১৩৬৭ঃ ১২৪)। তারানাথের টোলকেন্দ্রিক বিদ্যাভ্যাস ও বিদ্যাদানের ধারা পরবর্তী প্রজন্মেও বিস্তৃত ছিল। ঈশ্বরচন্দ্র বিদ্যাসাগরের (১৮২০-৯১) পূর্বপুরুষরা প্রত্যেকেই 'সংস্কৃত ব্যবসায়ী' ছিলেন। তারকেশ্বর ও আরামবাগের (তৎকালীন জাহানাবাদ) মধ্যবর্তী বনমালীপুর গ্রামনিবাসী বিদ্যাসাগরের বৃদ্ধ পিতামহ ভুবনেশ্বের বন্দ্যোপাধ্যায় এবং পিতামহ রামজয় তর্কসিদ্ধান্ত উভয়েই সংস্কৃত সাহিত্যে সুপণ্ডিত ছিলেন। রামজয় ঘাটাল মহকুমার অন্তর্গত বীরসিংহ গ্রামের প্রখ্যাত পণ্ডিত উমাপতি তর্কসিদ্ধান্তের কনিষ্ঠা কন্যা দুর্গাদেবীকে বিবাহ করেন। বিদ্যাসাগরের পিতা ঠাকুরদাস বন্দ্যোপাধ্যায় বাল্যকালে (উনিশ শতকের প্রথম দশকের শেষভাগ) মাতুলালয় বীরসিংহে মানুষ হতে থাকলে মাতামহ উমাপতি তর্কসিদ্ধান্ত ঠাকুরদাসকে কেনারাম বাচস্পতির টোলে শিক্ষার জন্য প্রেরণ করেন। কেনারাম ঠাকুরদাসকে বাংলা, শুভঙ্করী অঙ্ক ও সেরেস্তার কাগজ দেখা শিক্ষা হলে সংক্ষিপ্তসার ব্যাকরণ পড়াতে আরম্ভ করেন (বিদ্যারত্ন ১২৯৮ বঙ্গাব্দঃ ৩)। এই সংক্ষিপ্তসার ব্যাকরণ পাঠের দীর্ঘ সময়কালই টোলে পড়ার ক্ষেত্রে এক বড় অন্তরায় হয়ে

উঠেছিল। শম্ভুচন্দ্র বিদ্যারত্ন জানাচ্ছেন যে বিদ্যাসাগরকে টোলে বা সংস্কৃত কলেজে কোথায় প্রবেশ করানো হবে এ বিষয়ে যখন দ্বন্দ্বের সৃষ্টি হয়েছিল তখন ঠাকুরদাসের পরিচিত সংস্কৃত কলেজের তৃতীয় শ্রেণীর ব্যাকরণ অধ্যাপক গঙ্গাধর তর্কবাগীশ তাঁকে জানান "কলেজে প্রবিষ্ট করিয়া দিলে ৫/৬ মাস পরে পরীক্ষায় উত্তীর্ণ হইলে, আপাততঃ মাসে মাসে ৫ টাকা বৃত্তি পাইবে, দেশের টোলে পড়িতে দিলে সংক্ষিপ্তসার অধ্যয়ন করিতে দীর্ঘ সময় লাগিবে। কলেজে মুগ্ধবোধ অধ্যয়ন করিয়া তিন বৎসরের মধ্যে ব্যাকরণে ব্যুৎপত্তি জন্মিলে কাব্যের শ্রেণীতে প্রবেশ করিতে পারিবে" (বিদ্যারত্ন ১২৯৮ বঙ্গাব্দঃ ২১)। আমরা দেখতে পাই যে এই বৃত্তি এবং ব্যাকরণের ক্রমশঃ আধুনিকীকরণ (মুগ্ধবোধ থেকে সিদ্ধান্তকৌমুদী এবং সরলা) ছাত্রদের ক্রমশঃ টোল থেকে কলেজের দিকে আকৃষ্ট করছিল। কিন্তু এ সত্ত্বেও এই সময়েও টোলের গুরুত্ব কম ছিল না। বিদ্যাসাগরের জননী ভগবতী দেবী পাতুল গ্রামনিবাসী পঞ্চানন বিদ্যাবাগীশের দৌহিত্রী ছিলেন। বিদ্যাবাগীশের সময় থেকে প্রতিষ্ঠিত আদি চতুষ্পাঠী ছাড়া ভগবতী দেবীর চার মাতুল রাধামোহন বিদ্যাভূষণ, রামধন তর্কবাগীশ, গুরুপ্রসাদ শিরোমণি এবং বিশ্বেশ্বর তর্কালঙ্কারের প্রত্যেকের স্বতন্ত্র চতুষ্পাঠী ছিল। ভগবতী দেবীর পিতা রামকান্ত চট্টোপাধ্যায়ের নিজস্ব চতুষ্পাঠী ছিল গোঘাটে। একটিমাত্র পরিবারের সাথে যুক্ত মোট ছয়টি চতুষ্পাঠী, টোলের বৃহৎ ছাত্রসম্পদের কথা ঘোষণা করে। বিদ্যাসাগরের চাকুরীজীবনে টোল, নর্ম্যাল স্কুল এবং সংস্কৃত কলেজের ছাত্রদের যোগ এবং তাদের নিয়োগ সংক্রান্ত ব্যবস্থা এক গুরুত্বপূর্ণ স্থান গ্রহণ করে। সংস্কৃত কলেজে টোলের পণ্ডিতদের পরিবর্তে সংস্কৃত কলেজের ছাত্রদের নিয়োগের ব্যাপারে বিদ্যাসাগরের ভূমিকা সর্ববাদীসম্মত। ১৮৪৯ খ্রীষ্টাব্দে সংস্কৃত কলেজের জ্যোতিষ ও গণিত বিভাগের প্রসিদ্ধ অধ্যাপক যোগধ্যান মিশ্রের মৃত্যু হয়। কলেজ কর্তৃপক্ষ টোলের অধ্যাপকদের মধ্য থেকে উপযুক্ত জ্যোতিষ-গণিত বিশেষজ্ঞ অধ্যাপক নির্বাচনের সিদ্ধান্ত করলে বিদ্যাসাগর তার পরিবর্তে সংস্কৃত কলেজের জ্যোতিষ ও গণিত বিভাগের শ্রেষ্ঠ ছাত্র প্রিয়নাথ ভট্টাচার্য্য সিদ্ধান্তপঞ্চাননকে নিয়োগের অভিমত প্রকাশ করেন এবং প্রিয়নাথ উক্ত পদে নিযুক্ত হন। ১৮৫৩ খ্রীষ্টাব্দে প্রিয়নাথ দেওয়ানি আইন পাস করে ওকালতি শুরু করলে সংস্কৃত কলেজে ইউরোপীয় পদ্ধতিতে গণিত শিক্ষা দেওয়া শুরু হয় (বন্দ্যোপাধ্যায় ১৯৩৯ঃ ২৪৮)। কিন্তু এ সত্ত্বেও বিদ্যাসাগর টোলের ছাত্রদের একাদিক ক্ষেত্রে নর্ম্যাল স্কুলে এমনকি সংস্কৃত কলেজে নিয়োগ করেছেন ও তা নিয়ে কর্তৃপক্ষের সাথে বিবাদও করেছেন যার মধ্যে সর্বাপেক্ষা উল্লেখযোগ্য হল মহেশ ন্যায়রত্নের নিয়োগ। ১৮৬৪ সালের জানুয়ারী মাসে সংস্কৃত কলেজের অলঙ্কারের সুপ্রসিদ্ধ অধ্যাপক প্রেমচাঁদ তর্কবাগীশ অবসর গ্রহণ করলে প্রেমচাঁদেরই কনিষ্ঠ সংস্কৃত কলেজের অতি উজ্জ্বল ছাত্র রামময় ভট্টাচার্য্য যিনি কাব্য, অলঙ্কার, জ্যোতিষ, স্মৃতি ও দর্শন পাঠ করে কলেজের সর্বোচ্চ বৃত্তি প্রাপ্ত হয়েছিলেন তিনই ঐ পদের জন্য প্রার্থী হন। রামময় কাব্য, অলঙ্কারের জ্ঞানের এবং সংস্কৃত শ্লোক রচনার ক্ষমতার জন্য বিশেষ পরিচিত ছিলেন। একই সময় মহেশচন্দ্র ন্যায়রত্নও ঐ একই পদের প্রার্থী হন যাঁর ন্যায়শাস্ত্র জ্ঞান তখন বহুল পরিচিত ছিল। প্রেমচাঁদ ও অন্যান্য ব্যক্তিরা রামময়ের ঐ পদপ্রাপ্তি বিষয়ে নিঃসংশয় ছিলেন। সংস্কৃত কলেজের তদানীন্তন প্রিন্সিপাল Edward Byles Cowell ঐ পদপ্রাপ্তির উপযুক্ত ব্যাক্তি নির্বাচনের জন্য বিদ্যাসাগরের শরণাপন্ন হলে বিদ্যাসাগর জানান যে অলঙ্কারের শ্রেণীতে কাব্য-প্রকাশ পড়াতে হলে ন্যায় ভালো জানা প্রয়োজন তাই মহেশচন্দ্র ন্যায়রত্নই ঐ পদের যোগ্য (বিদ্যারত্ন ১২৯৮ বঙ্গাব্দঃ১৭৩-৭৪)। এই বিশেষ ঘটনা থেকে দেখা যাচ্ছে যে ১৮৬৪ সালেও সংস্কৃত কলেজের ছাত্র অপেক্ষা টোলের ছাত্রকে বেশী গুরুত্ব দেওয়া হয়েছিল এবং বিদ্যাসাগরের সংস্কৃত কলেজের ছাত্রদের প্রতি একদেশদর্শীতার অভিযোগের এটিকে প্রতিবাদ বলা যায়।

মফঃস্বলের টোল থেকে যে সমস্ত ব্রাহ্মণ পণ্ডিতগণ নর্ম্যাল স্কুলের পণ্ডিত পদপ্রার্থী হতেন তাদের গণিত ও বিজ্ঞান শিক্ষাদানের বিশেষ ব্যবস্থা করেন। টোলের পণ্ডিতদের নিয়োগের ক্ষেত্রে অন্যতম উল্লেখযোগ্য হল নৈহাটীবাসী বিখ্যাত পণ্ডিত নন্দকুমার ভট্টাচার্য্য ন্যায়চুঞ্চুর নিয়োগ। নন্দকুমারের ন্যায়শাস্ত্রের অধ্যাপনা খ্যাতি সেই সময় বহুবিস্তৃত ছিল এবং বিদ্যাসাগর তাঁকে সংস্কৃত কলেজে উচ্চ পদ দিতে আগ্রহী ছিলেন। কিন্তু তিনি সংস্কৃত কলেজের ছাত্র ছিলেন না বলে সিক্ষাবিভাগের তদানীন্তন ডাইরেক্টর Gordon Young এই প্রস্তাব সমর্থন না করলে তিনি কিছুদিন নন্দকুমারকে ঐ পদে নিযুক্ত করেন। পরে জয়নারায়ণ তর্কপঞ্চাননের সাথে নন্দকুমারের বিখ্যাত শাস্ত্রালোচনার পর পাইকপাড়ার রাজা ঈশ্বরচন্দ্র ও প্রতাপচন্দ্রের সাহায্যে তাঁদের মুর্শিদাবাদের কান্দীতে প্রতিষ্ঠিত স্কুলে নন্দকুমারকে প্রধান পণ্ডিত করে পাঠান। নন্দকুমারের আকস্মিক জ্বররোগে মৃত্যু হলে কিন্তু বিদ্যাসাগর তাঁর সহোদরদের অর্থাৎ যদুনাথ ভট্টাচার্য্য এবং হরপ্রসাদ ভট্টাচার্য্য (পরে শাস্ত্রী) কে টোল থেকে ছাড়িয়ে এনে সংস্কৃত কলেজে প্রবেশের ব্যবস্থা করেন (বিদ্যারত্ন ১২৯৮ বঙ্গাব্দঃ ১০৯-১০)। ১৮৬৪ খ্রীষ্টাব্দে ভাটপাড়ার বিখ্যাত নৈয়ায়িক রাখালদাস ন্যায়রত্ন গৃহে টোল করে কিছু ছাত্রকে ন্যায়শাস্ত্র শিক্ষা দেওয়ার সঙ্কল্প করেন। কিন্তু তাঁর পিতা ছাত্রদের ব্যয়বহনে অস্বীকৃত হলে তিনি তাঁর শিষ্য মাখনলাল ভট্টাচার্য্যের দ্বারা বিদ্যাসাগরের কাছে আবেদন করলে বিদ্যাসাগর তাঁর পসার না হওয়া পর্যন্ত মাসিক দশ টাকা সাহায্য করতে প্রতিশ্রুত হন এবং আট বছর যাবৎ এই সাহায্য করেন (বিদ্যারত্ন ১২৯৮বঙ্গাব্দঃ ১৬১-৬২)। বিধবাবিবাহ প্রবর্তন ও বহুবিবাহ নিবর্তন এর ক্ষেত্রে বিদ্যাসাগরের সাথে বিতর্করত পণ্ডিতগণ যেমন ভবশঙ্কর বিদ্যারত্ন, ভুবনমোহন ন্যায়রত্ন, ব্রজনাথ বিদ্যারত্ন, জনমেজয় কবিরত্ন, রাজকুমার ন্যায়রত্ন প্রভৃতি প্রত্যেকেই টোলের ছাত্র ছিলেন। স্মার্ত ব্যবস্থাপকরূপে তাঁদের প্রতিষ্ঠা এবং শোভাবাজার রাজবাড়ী, যশোর হিন্দু ধর্মরক্ষিণী সভা প্রভৃতি স্থানে তাঁদের বিপুল প্রতিপত্তি ও উপাধি লাভ (যেমন ব্রজনাথ বিদ্যারত্নের 'নবদ্বীপচন্দ্র' উপাধি লাভ) টোলের পণ্ডিতদের গুরুত্বের কথা ঘোষণা করে। উনিশ শতকের আদি-মধ্য ভাগে টোলগৃহে যাঁর বিদ্যাচর্চার শ্রেষ্ঠ বিবরণ পাওয়া যায় তিনি হলেন পুর্বোল্লিখিত পণ্ডিত মহেশচন্দ্র ন্যায়রত্ন। জয়নারায়ণ তর্কপঞ্চাননের (যিনি সংস্কৃত কলেজের ন্যায়শাস্ত্রের অধ্যাপকও) নারিকেলডাঙ্গার টোলে তাঁর অধ্যয়ন প্রসঙ্গে হরিশচন্দ্র কবিরত্ন জানাচ্ছেন "একটি দোতালা কোটা ও দুটি লম্বা খোড়ো ঘর ছিল.....খোড়ো ঘরের একখানিতে ছাত্রগণ বাস করিতেন। আমাদের আমলে দেখিয়াছি, মহেশ ন্যায়রত্ন, হরচন্দ্র, গৌরীশঙ্কর ঘোষাল ও আরও একজন ছাত্র, তাঁহার নাম আমার মনে নাই, তাঁহার টোলে পাঠ করিতেন-আমরা যখন ভাষা- পরিচ্ছেদ পাঠ করি, তখন মহেশ ন্যায়রত্ন আমাদের সঙ্গে কলেজে আসিয়া পড়িতেন। কারণ ভট্টাচার্য্য মহাশয় বলিয়াছিলেন 'দুই বার করিয়া ভাষা পরিচ্ছেদ পড়ানর দরকার নাই; একসঙ্গে পড়া হইলে আমার পরিশ্রম লাঘব হয়' সংস্কৃত কলেজে যে সকল ন্যায়ের পুস্তক পড়া হইত; তাঁহার টোলে তাহা অপেক্ষা অনেক বেশী হইত। তাঁহার বিরচিত সর্বদর্শন-সংগ্রহ গ্রন্থে, তিনি মহেশ ন্যায়রত্নকে যে সকল গ্রন্থ পড়াইয়াছিলেন তাহার একটি তালিকা দিয়াছেন। তাহা দেখিয়া আমরা অবাক হইয়ছিলাম যে ন্যায়রত্ন এত দর্শনশাস্ত্রের গ্রন্থ পড়িয়াছিলেন"। (কবিরত্ন ১৩৩২ঃ ৬৫১)। দেখা যাচ্ছে যে সংস্কৃত কলেজের নির্দিষ্ট সময়ে ন্যায় পাঠের চেয়ে টোলের বিশেষীকৃত পাঠে কোন নির্দিষত শৃঙ্খলার বিকাশ বেশী হত ও তা কলেজের ছাত্রদের আকর্ষণের বিষয় ছিল। জয়নারায়ণ ঔপনিবেশিক জ্ঞানচর্চার পদ্ধতিটির সাথে প্রাক ঔপনিবেশিক ধারার এক সুষ্ঠু শৃঙ্খলা ঘটান। তাঁর পেশাগত ক্ষেত্রে 'কালেজীয়' এবং তাঁর ব্যক্তিক ক্ষেত্রে 'টোল' ধারা বজায় ছিল। গোপীকামোহন ভট্টাচার্য্য জানাচ্ছেন যে নবদ্বীপের বিখ্যাত অধ্যাপক শ্রীনন্দন তর্কবাগীশ এবং আমাদের পূর্বোল্লিখিত ভাটপাড়ার প্রসিদ্ধ নৈয়ায়িক রাখালদাস ন্যায়রত্ন (পরে

মহামহোপাধ্যায়) এই টোলেরই ছাত্র ছিলেন। মহেশচন্দ্র ন্যায়রত্ন (১৮৩৬-১৯০৫) এই টোলে যা অধ্যয়ন করেন তার তালিকায় দেখা যাচ্ছে যে তিনি 'বৈশেষিক দর্শন, তদভাষ্য, কিরণাবলী, ভাষা পরিচ্ছেদ, সিদ্ধান্তমুক্তাবলী, বৈশেষিক সূত্রোপস্কার, ন্যায়সূত্র, তদবৃত্তি, কপিলসূত্র,তদভাষ্য, সাংখ্যকারিকা, তত্ত্বকৌমুদী, পাতঞ্জলসূত্র, তদবৃত্তি, তদ্বিবৃতি, বেদান্তভাষ্য, শঙ্করাচার্য্যকৃত তদভাষ্য, পঞ্চদর্শী, বেদান্তসার, বেদান্তপরিভাষা, চিন্তামণি-দীধীতি, মাধুরী, জাগদীশী, গাদাধরী, শব্দখণ্ডের আলোক, তন্মাথুরী, শব্দশক্তিপ্রবেশিকা, ব্যুৎপত্তিবাদ, নঞবাদ, শক্তিবাদ, ক্তবাবাদ, আখ্যাতবাদ, মুক্তিবাদ, মুক্তিবিচার প্রভৃতি নব্য ও প্রাচীন গ্রন্থ আদ্যন্ত সমুদায় অধ্যয়ন করিয়াছেন এবং শ্রীহর্ষকৃত খণ্ডনগ্রন্থ এবং শিরোমণিকৃত খণ্ডনগ্রন্থ উত্তমরূপে অধ্যয়ন করিয়াছেন, অলঙ্কার শাস্ত্রের কাব্যপ্রকাশ ও সাহিত্য দর্পণ এবং স্মৃতিশাস্ত্রের নব্যতত্ত্ব সমুদায় এবং প্রাচীন মিতাক্ষরা, শ্রাদ্ধবিবেক, প্রায়শ্চিত্তবিবেক, দায়ভাগ, বিবাদচিন্তামণি, দত্তকচন্দ্রিকা, দত্তকমীমাংসা প্রভৃতি গ্রন্থ সকলের তদাদিদন্ত সমুদয় পাঠ করিয়াছেন" (ভট্টাচার্য্য ১৯৬১ঃ৩৭)। মহেশচন্দ্র এই সকল দর্শনগ্রন্থ সবই জয়নারায়ণের টোলে এবং স্মৃতি, অলঙ্কার, ব্যাকরণ ইত্যাদি কিছু সংস্কৃত কলেজে ও কিছু প্রেমচাঁদ তর্কবাগীশের গৃহে এবং কিছু বারানসীতে অধ্যয়ন করেন। জয়নারায়ণ ও তাঁর প্রিয়তম ছাত্র মহেশচন্দ্রের শিক্ষাজীবন টোল ঘরানার শিক্ষাব্যবস্থার এক উজ্জ্বল চিত্র। এই টোলে অভিজ্ঞতার উজ্জ্বল চিত্র মহেশচন্দ্রকে পরবর্তী কালের টোলের দৈন্যদশা ঘোচাতে এবং প্রাচীনপন্থী টোলগুলিকে সংস্কারের ক্ষেত্রে নিয়ে যেতে উদবুদ্ধ করে।

ঊনবিংশ শতকের প্রথম থেকে মধ্যভাগে ইংরাজী শিক্ষার সম্প্রসারণের পাশাপাশি টোল ব্যবস্থার এই উজ্জ্বল চিত্র নিশ্চয়ই টোল ও সংস্কৃত শিক্ষার এক সম্প্রসারণেরই ইঙ্গিত দেয়। কিন্তু একথাও এই প্রসঙ্গে স্মর্তব্য যে Charles Wood এর theory of infiltration তখনো পূর্ণমাত্রায় প্রভাব বিস্তার করতে পারে নি এবং গ্রাম ও মফঃস্বল অঞ্চলে ইংরাজী প্রাইমারী স্কুল, নর্ম্যাল স্কুল, বেঙ্গলী স্কুল এবং অ্যাংলো-ভার্নাকুলার স্কুলগুলি বিস্তার লাভ করে নি। ইংরাজী ও পাশ্চাত্য বিদ্যা শেখার প্রায় যাবতীয় কেন্দ্রগুলি নগর কলকাতায় অবস্থিত হওয়ায় গ্রাম ও মফঃস্বলের সাথে যে দূরত্বের সুযোগ তাই টোল ও পাঠশালাগুলিকে অস্তিত্ব টিঁকিয়ে রাখতে সাহায্য করেছিল। ১৮৩০ খ্রীষ্টাব্দে বিদ্যাসাগরের কলকাতা পড়তে যাওয়া উপলক্ষ্যে শম্ভুচন্দ্র জানাচ্ছেন "অগ্রজকে কলিকাতায় লইয়া যাইবার নাম শুনিয়া জননীদেবী উচ্চৈস্বরে রোদন করিতে লাগিলেন। তৎকালে এ প্রদেশের কাহারও লেখাপড়া শিখিবার জন্য কলিকাতায় যাইবার রীতি ছিল না। ব্রাহ্মণতনয়গণ কেহ কেহ বাল্যকালে টোলে পড়িত। অধিক বয়স হইলে বিদেশের টোলে অধ্যয়নার্থ যাত্রা করিত। কেহ কেহ জমিদারি সেরেস্তায় কাগজ লিখিতে শিখিত" (বিদ্যারত্ন ১২৯৮ঃ১৬)। কালিদাস সার্বভৌম 'অত্যন্ত হিন্দু' রামকমল সেন তাঁর পুত্রের খ্রীষ্টান না হয়ে যাওয়ার ব্যাপারে বহু প্রকার প্রতিশ্রুতি দিলে তবেই কিশোর তারানাথকে কলকাতায় নিয়ে যাওয়ার অনুমতি দেন (বিদ্যারত্ন ১৩০০ঃ৭)। উনিশ শতকের দ্বিতীয়ার্ধে বাংলা স্কুল, ভার্নাকুলার স্কুল, এবং অ্যাংলো-সংস্কৃত স্কুলগুলি এই প্রাথমিক শিক্ষার জন্য কলকাতায় যাওয়ার প্রয়োজনকে কমিয়ে আনে এবং রেলব্যবস্থার ক্রমবিস্তারশীল প্রচলন কলকাতার অবস্থানকেও অনেক কাছে এনে দেয়। এই দ্বৈত পরিবর্তন কিভাবে উনিশ শতকের দ্বিতীয়ার্ধে টোল ব্যবস্থার মুলটিকে দুর্বল করে তা আমরা পরবর্তী অংশে আলোচনা করেছি। স্কুল এবং প্রাথমিক শিক্ষার প্রসারের এই কার্য্যে প্রধান ভূমিকা নেন ঈশ্বরচন্দ্র বিদ্যাসাগর, দ্বারকানাথ বিদ্যাভূষণ, শিবনাথ শাস্ত্রীর মতো কিছু সংস্কৃতজ্ঞ পণ্ডিতরাই।

টোলব্যবস্থার ভাঙন ও অবক্ষয়ঃ উনিশ শতকের দ্বিতীয়ার্ধ থেকে বিংশ শতকের তৃতীয় দশক

উনিশ শতকের দ্বিতীয়ার্ধ থেকে টোলকেন্দ্রিক শিক্ষাব্যবস্থার ভাঙনের প্রসঙ্গে আলোচনায় প্রথমেই যে কথাটি স্মর্তব্য তা হল যে এটি একটি সম্পূর্ণ জ্ঞানবাদী পাঠ্যক্রম ছিল। কার্য্যকারক ও উপার্জনের ক্ষেত্রে সহায়ক পাঠক্রম এটি বিশেষ ছিল না। আদি আধুনিক যুগ ও উপনিবেশিক যুগের প্রথম দিকেও গ্রামের ছাত্ররা পাঠশালে বাংলা পড়াশোনা, চিঠিপত্র লেখা, সরল শুভঙ্করী, জমিদারি ও মহাজনী হিসাব রাখা প্রভৃতি শিখত যা তাদের মুহুরী, পাটোয়ারী, গোমস্তাগিরি, মহাজনী হিসেব রাখা ও কানুনগো প্রভৃতি কাজের উপযুক্ত করে তুলত। উচ্চাভিলাষী যারা রাজসরকারে কাজ চাইত তারা পাঠশালার পড়াশোনা সাঙ্গ করে মক্তবে প্রবেশ করে ফার্সী লেখাপড়া, হিসাব, আইন ও কিছু দর্শন শিখত (আচার্য্য ২০০৯ঃ ২০৯-১৫)। টোলী শিক্ষাব্যবস্থা যে অল্প কিছু আর্থিক উপার্জনের পথ রেখেছিল তার অন্যতম ছিল বৈদ্যকশাস্ত্র পাঠ। বৈদ্যশাস্ত্র বা কবিরাজী শিক্ষার পর ছাত্ররা ভিষকশাস্ত্রী ও ভিষকরত্ন উপাধি পেত ও স্বাধীনভাবে চিকিতসক বৃত্তি নিত। এছাড়া যে পেশাগুলি ছিল তা হল বিভিন্ন শাস্ত্রালোচনায় ও তর্কে অংশ নেওয়া এবং এই ক্ষেত্রে ও বিভিন্ন ব্রাহ্মণভোজনে নিমন্ত্রণ এবং বিদায় প্রণামী পাওয়া। বিদ্যা, সদাচার ও কৌলীন্যক্রমে এই বিদায় দেওয়া হত। বিদায়ে থাকত কিছু নগদ টাকা, পিতলের ঘড়া, পিতলের কিছু বাসন,উড়ানি ও চাদর ইত্যাদি। জমিদার বা বিদায় কর্তা ধনী হলে গোবৎস, স্বর্ণখণ্ড ও অধিক পরিমাণ নগদ অর্থ পাওয়া যেত। শম্ভুচন্দ্র বিদ্যারত্ন লিখিত তারানাথ তর্কবাচস্পতির জীবনী থেকে জানা যায় যে সংস্কৃত কলেজের প্রথম যুগে বাংলায় পণ্ডিতরা একশো টাকা পর্যন্ত সর্বোচ্চ বিদায় পেতেন কিন্তু সংস্কৃত কলেজের অধ্যাপকরা নিয়মিত মাসিক বেতন পেতেন বলে পঁচিশটাকা পর্যন্ত বিদায় পেতেন। এই কারণে অপমানিত জ্ঞান করে কলেজের অধ্যাপক নৈয়ায়িক নিমাইচাঁদ শিরোমণি নিয়ম করে যান যে যতদিন না পর্যন্ত সংস্কৃত কলেজের অধ্যাপকরা সর্বোচ্চহারে বিদায় পাবেন ততদিন তাঁরা বিদায় গ্রহণ করবেন না (বিদ্যারত্ন ১৩০০ বঙ্গাব্দঃ ২৫)। এছাড়াও বিদায়ে থাকত বিভিন্ন ভোজ্যপূর্ণ সিধা বা মধুপুরী। হরিশচন্দ্র কবিরত্ন লিখিত তাঁর পিতা পণ্ডিত গিরিশচন্দ্র বিদ্যারত্নের জীবনী থেকে জানা যায় যে উনিশ শতকের সাতের দশকে ব্রাহ্মণপণ্ডিতদের যে ঘড়াগুলি বিদায় দেওয়া হত তা অধিকাংশ সময়েই পুরানো ও সছিদ্র হত তাই গিরিশচন্দ্র তাঁর মাতৃশ্রাদ্ধে বিশেষ বায়না দিয়ে উত্তম ঘড়া আনিয়েছিলেন (কবিরত্ন ১৯০৯ঃ ৫৯)। বিদায়ের নগদ অর্থ মূলত 'বিদায়', 'প্রণামী' ও 'পাথেয়' বলে পরিচিত ছিল। 'বিদায়-আদায়' ব্যতীত আরেকটি উপার্জনের রাস্তা ছিল নিজে টোল করে বিদ্যাদান করা। টোলের ব্যয়ভার যেহেতু প্রায়ই স্থানীয় জমিদার বা ধনীর অনুগ্রহের (মূলতঃ মাসিক বৃত্তি ও সিধা) উপর নির্ভর করত তার ফলে প্রায়ই টোলের আর্থিক স্বাচ্ছন্দ্য একটা অনিশ্চিত স্থানে থাকত। উপনিবেশিক যুগে শিক্ষানীতির ব্যবস্থার ফলে জমিদাররা বাংলা স্কুল ও নর্মাল স্কুল প্রতিষ্ঠায় আগ্রহী হলে (যতই সীমাবদ্ধভাবে হোক) টোলের পৃষ্ঠপোষকতার ধারা ক্রমেই ক্ষীণ হয়ে পড়ে। স্মার্ত পণ্ডিতদের আরেকটি পেশা ছিল বিভিন্ন ধর্মীয় এবং ক্রিয়াকাণ্ডে ব্যবস্থা দেওয়া। বিদ্যাসাগর রচিত বিধবাবিবাহ বিষয়ক প্রস্তাবগুলি থেকে এবং 'উপযুক্ত ভাইপোস্য' ছদ্মনামে লিখিত ব্যঙ্গাত্মক রচনাগুলি থেকে জানা যায় যে স্মার্তেরা এই আর্থিক প্রয়োজনে কতপ্রকার অসৎ ও অশাস্ত্রীয় ব্যবস্থা দিতেন (বিদ্যাসাগর ১২৯১ বঙ্গাব্দঃ ৫-৫৪)। এছাড়া টোলের ছাত্রদের আরেকটি পেশা ছিল পুঁথি নকল করা যদিও তা মোটেই বিশেষ অর্থকরী ছিল না। মূলতঃ ছাত্রাব্যস্থাতেই এই পেশা নেওয়া হত উপাধিপ্রাপ্তির আগে। গ্রন্থের টীকা রচনা ও ভাষ্যপ্রণয়ন সম্বন্ধেও একই কথা। এই আর্থিকমার্গগুলি কোনটিই খুব সুগম ছিল না ও উপনিবেশিক নয়া অর্থনৈতিক প্রেক্ষাপটে তা

ক্রমেই অধিক দুর্গম ও সীমাবদ্ধ হয়ে ওঠে। বিদ্যাসাগরের স্বরচিত অসমাপ্ত আত্মচরিত থেকে জানা যায় যে উনিশ শতকের প্রথমার্ধেই (১৯৩০-৩১ নাগাদ) ঠাকুরদাস বন্দ্যোপাধ্যায় বালক ঈশ্বরচন্দ্রকে কোথায় ভর্তি করবেন তা নিয়ে সংশয়ে পড়েছিলেন। যদি তিনি তাকে হিন্দু কলেজে প্রবিষ্ট করাতেন তাহলে তাঁর অভিপ্রেত সংস্কৃত শিক্ষা হত না অন্যদিকে যদি তিনি ঈশ্বরকে চতুষ্পাঠীতে পাঠ নিতে দিতেন তাহলে চাকুরী করে কোন আর্থিক সাচ্ছন্দ্য আনার সম্ভাবনাকে জলাঞ্জলি দিতে হত। এমতাবস্থায় বিদ্যাসাগরের মাতুলপুত্র সংস্কৃত কলেজের ছাত্র মধুসূদন তর্কবাচস্পতি ঠাকুরদাসকে সম্মত করান বিদ্যাসাগরকে সংস্কৃত কলেজে পড়তে দিতে। তিনি ঠাকুরদাসকে বোঝান যে চতুষ্পাঠী অপেক্ষা কলেজে অনেক ভালো সংস্কৃত শিক্ষা হয় এবং অন্যদিকে চাকুরী পাওয়ারও সুবিধা আছে। সংস্কৃত কলেজের ছাত্ররা স্মৃতি ভালোভাবে পাস করলে তাদের জজপণ্ডিত পদে নিযুক্ত করা হয় (বিদ্যারত্ন ১২৯৮ বঙ্গাব্দঃ২১-২২)। বলাবাহুল্য এই জজপণ্ডিত পদের সুযোগ সব টোলের ছাত্ররা পেত না। তারানাথ তর্কবাচস্পতির পিতামহের ভ্রাতা দুর্গাচরণ শিরোমণি, পিতা কালিদাস সার্বভৌম এবং জ্যেষ্ঠতাতের পুত্র তারিণীচরণ বেশ কিছুদিন জজপণ্ডিত ছিলেন (বিদ্যারত্ন ১৩০০ বঙ্গাব্দঃ ৪-৬)। কিন্তু এ সকল সংস্কৃত কলেজ প্রতিষ্ঠার আগের কথা। কলেজ প্রতিষ্ঠার পর ও সেখান থেকে উজ্জ্বল ছাত্ররা বার হলে (যেমন মদনমোহন তর্কালঙ্কার জজপণ্ডিত হন) পদটি প্রায় তাদেরই একচেটিয়া হয়ে পড়ে।১৮৬০এর দশকে সংস্কৃত কলেজের বিখ্যাত স্মৃতি অধ্যাপক ভরতচন্দ্র শিরোমণির সহায়তায় ব্রাহ্মসমাজের বিখ্যাত পণ্ডিত শ্যামাচরণ সরকার শর্মা 'ব্যবস্থা-দর্পণ' প্রকাশ করলে এবং তা হিন্দু সিভিল আইনের প্রামাণ্য ব্যাখ্যারূপে আইনব্যবস্থায় গৃহীত হলে জজপণ্ডিতের পদই অর্থহীন হয়ে যায় ও ক্রমে জজপণ্ডিত ও জজমৌলভী দুটি পদই উঠে যায় (কবিরত্ন ১৩৩২ বঙ্গাব্দ ঃ৮৯১)। সংস্কৃত কলেজের ছাত্ররা যাতে ডেপুটির পদ পায় এই দাবীতে বিদ্যাসাগরকে প্রায় কর্তৃপক্ষের সাথে যুদ্ধ করতে হয়েছিল (বিদ্যারত্নঃ ১২৯৮ বঙ্গাব্দঃ১৪৮-৪৯)। এই পরিস্থিতিতে টোলের ছাত্রদের অবস্থা কি করুণ ছিল তা সহজেই অনুমেয়। ১৮৫২ সালের ১২ এপ্রিল বিদ্যাসাগর তাঁর কলেজের রিপোর্টে টোলের পণ্ডিতের বদলে সংস্কৃত কলেজের প্রাক্তন ছাত্রদের সংস্কৃত সংস্কৃত কলেজে অধ্যাপনার প্রস্তাব করলে ও তা গৃহীত হলে টোলের পণ্ডিতদের সংস্কৃত কলেজে ঢোকাও প্রায় বন্ধ হয়ে যায় (বিদ্যাসাগর ১৪১৩ বঙ্গাব্দঃ১৩-১৮)। মহেশচন্দ্র ন্যায়রত্ন বা চন্দ্রকান্ত তর্কালঙ্কারের মতো কয়েকজন অতি প্রতিভাবান পণ্ডিত যদিও অধ্যাপনাপদে গৃহীত ও মহেশচন্দ্র প্রিন্সিপাল পর্যন্ত হলেও এগুলি অঙ্গুলীগণ্য ব্যতিক্রম মাত্র। এশিয়াটিক সোসাইটি বা সংস্কৃত কলেজের পুথি সটীক মুদ্রণের কাজে যাঁরা যুক্ত হতে পেরেছিলেন তাঁরা সাময়িক মর্য্যাদাপূর্ণ কর্মসংস্থান পেয়েছিলেন কিন্তু তাও কোন স্থায়ী সমাধান ছিল না। এছাড়া অবশ্যই পৌরোহিত্যের পেশা গ্রহণের প্রসঙ্গটি ছিল। কিন্তু পুরোহিতের কাজ প্রায়ই বংশ বা কুলপরম্পরা ক্রমে ছিল এবং টোল-চতুষ্পাঠীর উপাধিধারী পণ্ডিতরা যে যাজনকর্মকে অবজ্ঞাপূর্ণ দৃষ্টিতে দেখতেন তার প্রমাণ টোল ও সংস্কৃত কলেজের পণ্ডিতদের জীবনীতে পাওয়া যায়।

উনিশ শতকের শেষ দিকে এই সমস্যা অধিকতর কঠিন হয়ে ওঠে। বিধুশেখর ভট্টাচার্য্য শাস্ত্রীর স্মৃতিকথা থেকে আমরা জানতে পারি যে উনিশ শতকের শেষ দিকে সংস্কৃত পড়ার সিদ্ধান্ত নিলে তাঁর পরিবারের লোকজন তিনি কোনদিনও উপার্জনক্ষম হবেন এই আশা ত্যাগ করেন (শাস্ত্রী ২০১১ঃ৪০)। প্রথম মহাযুদ্ধকালীন পরিস্থিতিতে এই ভাঙন প্রায় সর্বাত্বক রূপ নেয়। এই সময় গ্রাম অর্থনীতিতেও নগদ অর্থ প্রায় সর্বাত্বক বিস্তার পায় এবং সিধে ও বিনিময় নির্ভর টোলব্যবস্থা প্রায় চূর্ণ হয়ে যায়। একে ঔপনিবেশিক অর্থনৈতিক পরিভাষায় 'নগদ পয়সার ধাক্কা' বলা যায়।

মেকলের প্রশ্রয়প্রাপ্ত কোলকাতার ইংরাজী শিক্ষিত ভদ্রলোক যুবসমাজ সংস্কৃতকে দেখতেন উন্নাসিক দৃষ্টিতে। হিন্দু বা প্রেসিডেন্সী কলেজে সংস্কৃত আদৌ পড়ান হত না যেমন হত না অন্য অনেক কলেজেই। কলিকাতা ইউনিভার্সিটিতে সংস্কৃত ছিল ঐচ্ছিক বিষয়। চার্লস উড ডেসপ্যাচ থেকে স্যাডলার কমিশন পর্যন্ত বিভিন্ন শিক্ষানীতিতেই পর্যায়ক্রমেই টোল ও সংস্কৃতচর্চা অবহেলিত হয়ে চলেছিল। বিদ্যাসাগর প্রতিষ্ঠিত বিভিন্ন গ্রামে গ্রামে 'বাংলা স্কুল' ও 'নর্মাল স্কুল' গুলি টোলের প্রবল প্রতিদ্বন্দ্বী হয়ে দাঁড়িয়েছিল। দীনেন্দ্রকুমার রায়ের 'সেকালের স্মৃতি' থেকে আমরা জানতে পারি কিভাবে কুষ্টিয়ায় তাঁর গ্রামে টোল-পাঠশালার প্রতিদ্বন্দ্বী হয়ে উঠেছিল বাংলা স্কুল এবং শেষ পর্যন্ত স্থানু, প্রাচীনপন্থী টোলের পরাজয় নিশ্চিত হয় (রায় ১৩৫৩ বঙ্গাব্দঃ ২৬-২৭)। অনেক চতুষ্পাঠীর পণ্ডিত এই বাংলা স্কুলের পণ্ডিত হতে বাধ্য হন (বিদ্যারত্ন ১২৯৮ বঙ্গাব্দঃ ৯৯-১০০)। এমনই এক হৃতমর্য্যাদা অথচ আত্মসম্মানপূর্ণ পণ্ডিতের বর্ণনা আমরা পাই অনেক পরে রচিত সৈয়দ মুজতবা আলীর অতুলনীয় গল্প 'পাদটীকা'য় (আলী ১৩৬৫ বঙ্গাব্দঃ ১৩৮)। আমাদের মনে পড়ে বিভূতিভূষণ বন্দ্যোপাধ্যায়ের 'অনুবর্তন' উপন্যাসেও সেই নিত্য সাহেবের কাছে অপমানিত, দরিদ্র স্কুলমাস্টার যদুবাবুর নিজের সঙ্গে পণ্ডিত জগদীশ জ্যোতির্বিনোদের তুলনা করে বেতনবিষয়ক সেই গর্বোক্তি 'আন্ডার- গ্র্যাজুয়েট ও পণ্ডিত এক স্কেলে মাহিনা পাইবে তাহা কখনো হইতে পারে না' (বন্দ্যোপাধ্যায় ২০১১ঃ ৮৩১)। ঔপনিবেশিক শিক্ষাব্যবস্থায় টুলো পণ্ডিতের মান কোথায় নেমেছিল এ তারই করুণ উদাহরণ। পথের পাঁচালীর হরিহর রায়ের কথাও এ প্রসঙ্গে স্মরণীয় যাঁর মত 'বিদ্যা শিখিয়া এ অঞ্চলে কেহ আসে নাই' (বন্দ্যোপাধ্যায় ২০১০ঃ১০১)। কিন্তু যুগবৈগুণ্যে তাঁকে সভাপণ্ডিতের পদ দিতে কোন সিপাহী আসে না বরং তাঁর দারিদ্য নিদারুণতর হয়ে ওঠে। পেশাগত ক্ষেত্রে নেমে সংস্কৃতজ্ঞান অভিমানী হরিহর 'দেবনাগরী বর্ণজ্ঞানহীন বাঙাল' কথকঠাকুরের বৈষয়িক বুদ্ধির কাছে নতমস্তক হতে বাধ্য হয় (বন্দ্যোপাধ্যায়ঃ ২০১০ঃ ১৩৭)।

অপরদিকে গোঁড়া সংস্কৃতজ্ঞ ভট্টাচার্য্যরা যুগের থেকে মুখ ফিরিয়ে নিজেদের জ্ঞানভাণ্ডার সঙ্গোপনে রক্ষা করেন। তাঁরা যে শুধু টোলে কোন নতুন পাঠক্রম চালু করতে অনাগ্রহী ছিলেন তাই নয় দ্বারকানাথ বিদ্যাভূষণের লেখা থেকে জানতে পারি সমসাময়িক Anglo-Sanskrit School-গুলির পরিবর্তিত সংস্কৃত পাঠ্যক্রম (যা নির্ধারণ করেছিলেন সংস্কৃত কলেজের অধ্যাপকেরাই) একবার দেখতেও অস্বীকার করেন (বিদ্যাভূষণ ১৮৭২ঃ ২৫)। যখন সংস্কৃত কলেজের অধ্যাপকরা মূলতঃ প্রেমচন্দ্র তর্কবাগীশ, তারানাথ তর্কবাচস্পতি, ঈশ্বরচন্দ্র বিদ্যাসাগর, গিরিশচন্দ্র বিদ্যারত্ন ও পরে জীবানন্দ বিদ্যাসাগর ও চন্দ্রকান্ত তর্কালঙ্কার অজস্র সংস্কৃত গ্রন্থ সটীক সম্পাদন ও মুদ্রণ করছিলেন এবং প্রায় একই সময় একই কাজ এশিয়াটিক সোসাইটিতে চলছিল রাজেন্দ্রলাল মিত্রের তত্ত্বাবধানে টোলের পণ্ডিতরা সেই সময়েও সেই হস্তলিখিত পুঁথি ও স্মৃতিশক্তি নির্ভর ব্যবস্থাকেই চালিয়ে নিয়ে যেতে দৃঢ়কল্প ছিলেন। তারানাথ তর্কবাচস্পতি যখন কাশী থেকে মূল সিদ্ধান্তকৌমুদী আনিয়ে তার সটীক সংস্করণ মুদ্রিত করেন ও সংস্কৃত কলেজে ব্যাকরণ চর্চাকে আধুনিক ও বৈজ্ঞানিক রূপ দিতে চান তখনো টোলের পণ্ডিতরা তা থেকে মুখ ফিরিয়ে রেখে তাঁদের সাবেক মুগ্ধবোধ, ভট্টিকাব্য ও অমরকোষের ধারাই বজায় রাখতে চান। বঙ্কিমচন্দ্র চট্টোপাধ্যায় এই গোঁড়া ব্রাহ্মণপণ্ডিতদের সম্পর্কে তাঁর 'The Intellectual Superiority of Europe' নামক পত্রপ্রবন্ধে লেখেন

"All who have studied under the older generations of Bhattacharyas of the tols, know, as I have the good fortune to know, that of the wealth of learning which flowed from their lips, much had no record except the memory of the professors. This was specially the case

with artioistic and simplistic knowledge, where another motive-professional jealousy-came into play. Each discoverer, anxious to confise to himself and his own circle the discovery at which he had arrived, never trusted it to writting and satisfied himself with communicating it to his pupils in confidence. To this jealousy we owe that India has now utterly lost so many of her ancient arts and so much of her ancient sciences" (উদ্ধৃত চক্রবর্তী ১৯৯৫ঃ ১০৩)।

উনিশ শতকের শেষপাদ অবধিও টোলের এই ধারা প্রায় অব্যাহত ছিল। উনিশ শতকের দ্বিতীয়ার্ধ থেকে টোল এবং টোলধারীদের বুদ্ধিবৃত্তি ও বিচার পদ্ধতি একমাত্রি উপেক্ষার সম্পর্ক সৃষ্টি হয়। Brian A. Hatcher তাঁর প্রবন্ধে দেখিয়েছেন যে এই সময় পণ্ডিতরা তাঁদের পার্থিব জ্ঞান ও ব্যাখ্যা পদ্ধতি সম্পর্কে গণমানসে ও বিদ্যাজগতে ক্রমশই হেয় হয়ে পড়ছিলেন। বিদ্যাসাগর থেকে বনমালীচন্দ্র বেদান্ততীর্থ পর্যন্ত সংস্কৃতজ্ঞরাই পণ্ডিতদের ব্যাখ্যা রীতি ও গোঁড়ামি নিয়ে কঠিন ভাবে সরব হচ্ছিলেন। নূতন সৃষ্ট bourgeois morale-র সামনে প্রাচীন এই ব্রহ্মণ্যপাণ্ডিত্য নিতান্তই হীন প্রতিপন্ন হছিল (Hatcher 2005-696-97)। বঙ্কিমচন্দ্র চট্টোপাধ্যায় "সংস্কৃতওয়ালাদের" লিখনশৈলী নিয়ে ক্রমশই হয়ে উঠছিলেন ব্যাঙ্গাত্বক এবং অক্ষয়কুমার সরকার প্রমুখ তাঁর অনুগামীরা দ্বরকানাথ বিদ্যাভূষণ সম্পাদিত এবং সংস্কৃত কলেজের ছাত্রদের রচনাবহুল সোমপ্রকাশ সংবাদপত্রকে 'ভট্টাচার্য্যের চানা' নাম দিয়ে বিদ্রুপ করতে থাকেন (শাস্ত্রী১৯০৪ঃ ২৭১)। বঙ্কিমচন্দ্র হরপ্রসাদ শাস্ত্রীকে জানান সাহিত্য সমালোচনার শ্রেষ্ঠ ও উচিত রূপ হল জার্মান শৈলী। (শাস্ত্রী ১৯৯৫ঃ ১২) সংস্কৃত কলেজের ছাত্ররাই টোলের শিক্ষার সীমাবদ্ধতা এবং স্থূলতা বিষয়ে বিরূপ মন্তব্য করেন। সংস্কৃত কলেজে প্রেমচাঁদ তর্কবাগীশের ধারায় অনুপ্রাণিত এবং মহেশচন্দ্র ন্যায়রত্নের অসমান্য ও বহুমুখী অলঙ্কার শ্রেণীর পাঠের ছাত্র হরপ্রসাদ শাস্ত্রী টোলের পণ্ডিতদের সীমাবদ্ধতা সম্পর্কে মন্তব্য করেন "আমি তাঁহার (ভাটপাড়ার পণ্ডিত শ্রীরাম শিরোমণি) নিকট মুগ্ধবোধ ব্যাকরণের শেষ অংশ ও জয়কৃষ্ণের সারমঞ্জরী পড়িয়াছিলাম। তাহার পর তিনি আমাকে নৈষধ পড়াইতে আরম্ভ করেন। নৈষধ পড়াইতে গিয়া কাব্যাংশই তিনি পড়াইতে চান। ব্যাকরণ বা দর্শনের দিকে তিনি ফিরিয়াও চান না। সেকালের টোলের পণ্ডিতরা অলঙ্কার খুব কমই পড়িতেন। যদি বা দুই একজন পড়িতেন তাঁহারা কাব্য প্রকাশের জগদীশ তর্কালঙ্কারের টীকা পড়িতেন এবং ন্যায়শাস্ত্রের কয়েকটি লইয়াই থাকিতেন" (শাস্ত্রী ১৯৯৫ঃ ১১)। সংস্কৃত কলেজে বহু মূল শাস্ত্রের ও ব্যাখ্যার স্বাদ গ্রহীতা হরপ্রসাদের কাছে এই সীমাবদ্ধতা যে পীড়াদায়ক হয়েছিল তাতে সন্দেহ নেই। পণ্ডিত শিবনাথ শাস্ত্রী ১৮৮৩ খ্রীষ্টাব্দে দক্ষিণ ভারতে সাধারণ ব্রাহ্ম সমাজের হয়ে প্রচারে গিয়ে দক্ষিণ ভারতীয় পণ্ডিতদের সংস্কৃত উচ্চারণ শুনে বাংলার টোলের পণ্ডিতদের উচ্চারণ স্মরণ করে তাঁদের উচ্চারণ রীতির প্রতি ঘৃণা বোধ করেন (শাস্ত্রী ১৩২৫ বঙ্গাব্দঃ ৩০৬)। মনে রাখতে হবে যে ঊণিশ শতকের শেষ দিক থেকে প্রতিক্রিয়াশীল হিন্দু পুনরুত্থানবাদী যে আন্দোলন শুরু হয় তাতেও যে পণ্ডিতরা গুরুত্ব পান তাঁরাও কেউ বাংলার কোন টোলে শিক্ষা পান নি। এই প্রতিক্রিয়াশীল আন্দোলনের দুজন পুরোধা পণ্ডিত সত্যব্রত সামশ্রমী ও শশধর তর্কচূড়ামণি উভয়েই বারানসীতে শিক্ষিত ছিলেন। রবীন্দ্রনাথ ঠাকুর তাঁর বিদ্যাসাগরচরিত গ্রন্থে উল্লেখ করেন "বিদ্যাসাগর যদিচ ব্রাহ্মণ এবং ন্যায়শাস্ত্রও যথোচিত অধ্যয়ন করিয়াছিলেন তথাপি যাহাকে বলে কাণ্ডজ্ঞান সেটা তাঁহার যথেষ্ট ছিল। এই কাণ্ডজ্ঞানটি যদি না থাকিত তবে যিনি একসময় ছোলা ও বাতাসা জলপান করিয়া পাঠশিক্ষা করিয়াছিলেন তিনি অকুতোভয়ে চাকরি ছাড়িয়া স্বাধীন জীবিকা অবলম্বন করিয়া জীবনের মধ্যপথে স্বচ্ছল-সচ্ছন্দাবস্থায় উত্তীর্ণ হইতে পারিতেন না।" (রবীন্দ্রনাথ ১৩৬৫ঃ৪৩)। ন্যায়শাস্ত্রপাঠী পণ্ডিত যে কাণ্ডজ্ঞানরহিত ব্যক্তি এই সিদ্ধান্ত

সমাজে দৃঢ়প্রতিষ্ঠিত হয়েছিল এই উক্তি তারই প্রমাণ। তাঁদের বিদ্যাচর্চা যে "অতি সূক্ষ্ম তর্কের বাহাদুরীতে ছোটে ভালো, কিন্তু কর্মের পথে গাড়ি লইয়া চলে না" এই ধারণাও উনিশ শতকের শেষভাগে ইংরাজীশিক্ষিত মননে দৃঢ়মূল ছিল। এই 'পুঁথির বচনের কাছে সহজ স্বাভাবিক বুদ্ধিকে দাসখৎ দেওয়া' ব্যক্তিদের নিয়ে যে বিপুল সংখ্যক বিদ্রুপাত্মক রচনা সমসাময়িক কালে রচিত হয় তা টোলধারীদের বিদ্যাজগতের ও সামাজিক ক্ষেত্রে অবনমনের জাজ্বল্যমান দৃষ্টান্ত।

প্রথম মহাযুদ্ধের পরও বাংলাদেশে বহু টোল ও চতুষ্পাঠী তাদের অস্তিত্ব টিঁকিয়ে রেখেছিল কিন্তু তাদের অবস্থা কি শোচনীয় হয়ে দাঁড়িয়েছিল তা আমরা জানতে পারি ১৯২৭ সালে প্রকাশিত সংস্কৃত কলেজের রিপোর্টে গীর্ষতি তর্কতীর্থ কর্তৃক সঙ্কলিত গোটা বাংলায় সংস্কৃত কলেজের বৃত্তিভোগী বা অন্যান্য স্থানীয় বৃত্তিভোগী টোল-চতুষ্পাঠীরগুলির তালিকা থেকে। এই আশ্চর্য রিপোর্টটির ব্যাপারে আমরা এখন অতি সংক্ষেপে আলোচনা করব। ১৮৭৮ খ্রীষ্টাব্দে লর্ড লিটন গভর্নর জেনারেল থাকাকালীন টোলবিভাগীয় উন্নতিসাধন ও নবীকরণের কথা শিক্ষানীতিতে ঘোষিত হয়। সংস্কৃত কলেজের তৎকালীন অধ্যক্ষ মহামহোপাধ্যায় মহেশচন্দ্র ন্যায়রত্ন বঙ্গদেশীয় যাবতীয় টোলের পরিদর্শক নিযুক্ত হন। ১৮৮৪ সালে সমস্ত টোলগুলিকে এক নূতন উপাধি ব্যবস্থার অধীন করার সিদ্ধান্ত নেওয়া হয়। ১৮৯২-৯৩ সালে পণ্ডিত মহেশচন্দ্র ন্যায়রত্ন বাংলার প্রায় সমস্ত টোলগুলি পরিদর্শন করেন। এরপর নূতন উপাধি পরীক্ষা ব্যবস্থা গৃহীত হয় এবং তিনটি পরীক্ষা গ্রহণ ব্যবস্থা গৃহীত হয়। ১৮৯৭ সালের পর বাংলা, বিহার ও ওড়িশার সংস্কৃত টোল ও শিক্ষাকেন্দ্রগুলির নির্বাচিত প্রতিনিধিদের সুপারিশক্রমে দ্বিতীয় পরীক্ষা গৃহীত হয়। ১৯০৮ সালের পরে এই পরীক্ষাব্যবস্থা ভারত সরকারের Government Resolution No. 1078 T_9 অনুসারে Board of Sanskrit Examinations এর অধীনে আনা হয়। ১৯১৮ সালে এই সংস্থাই Calcutta Sanskrit Associationএ পরিণত হয় ও পরীক্ষার দায়িত্ব নেয়। ৫০০ জন পণ্ডিত এর সদস্য থাকবেন সিদ্ধান্ত হয় এবং ২০ জন এক্সিকিউটিভ নির্বাচিত হয়ে কাউন্সিল স্থাপিত হয়। ২০ জনের মধ্যে ৬ জন পণ্ডিত কলকাতা, প্রেসিডেন্সী ও বর্ধমান বিভাগকে প্রতিনিধিত্ব করবেন, ৬ জন ঢাকা, রাজশাহী ও চট্টগ্রাম বিভাগকে এবং তিনজন আসামের টোলগুলির এই সিদ্ধান্ত হয়। বাকি পাঁচজন হবেন পাশ্চাত্য শিক্ষায় শিক্ষিত ব্যক্তি। এই কাউন্সিল যা ভারত সরকারের দেশীয় ধরণে শিক্ষাব্যবস্থার মুখপাত্র হবে, তার প্রেসিডেন্ট সরকার স্বয়ং নির্বাচন করবেন এবং সেক্রেটারী হবেন সংস্কৃত কলেজের অধ্যক্ষ এই স্থির হয়। এই ব্যবস্থার মূল উদ্দেশ্য ছিল পরীক্ষক নিয়োগ, তিনটি পরীক্ষার ব্যবস্থা করা, সংস্কৃত শিক্ষার ক্রমোন্নতি এবং টোলগুলিকে বৃত্তিদানের ব্যাপারে সরকারকে অবহিত করা ইত্যাদি। ১৯২৭ সালের রিপোর্ট অনুযায়ী এই ব্যবস্থা সম্পূর্ণ ব্যর্থ হয়। ৫০০ জন পণ্ডিতের সমাবেশ একবারও হয়নি। এক্সিকিউটিভ কাউন্সিলে মাত্র দুজন পণ্ডিত সক্রিয় ছিলেন ও বিভিন্ন বিষয়ে আলোচনা একবারও হয়নি (Mukherjee ১৯২৭: ২২-২৩)। এই পরিস্থিতিতে গীর্ষতি তর্কতীর্থের অধীনে যে বোর্ড গঠিত হয় তা বিভিন্ন টোলগুলির অবস্থা পর্যবেক্ষণে নির্দিষ্ট বিবরণপত্র পাঠায়। অনেক পণ্ডিতই এই ফর্ম পূর্ণ করে পাঠান নি। যাঁরা পাঠিয়েছেন ও যাঁরা পাঠাননি তাঁদের সম্পূর্ণকৃত বা অসম্পূর্ণ পত্র গীর্ষতি তর্কতীর্থ ও বোর্ড তাদের রিপোর্টে প্রকাশ করেন। প্রশ্নপত্রে যে ভাগগুলি ছিল সেগুলি হচ্ছে ক্রমিক সংখ্যা, বৃত্তিতালিকায় নির্দিষ্ট সংখ্যা, জেলা, টোলের নাম ও যতদিনের প্রাচীন, অধ্যাপনীয় শাস্ত্র, মোট ছাত্র, উপস্থিত ছাত্র, স্কুল কলেজের ছাত্র, গত তিনবছরের উত্তীর্ণ ছাত্র, গভর্নমেন্ট প্রদত্ত ইম্পিরীয়াল/প্রভিন্সীয়াল বা স্পেশাল বৃত্তি, ডিস্ট্রিক্ট বোর্ড বা মিউনিসিপ্যাল বোর্ড প্রদত্ত বৃত্তি, অপর সাধারণ প্রদত্ত বৃত্তি, অধ্যাপকের নাম,উপাদি, গুরুর নিকট অধীত শাস্ত্র ও যতকাল যাবৎ অধ্যাপনা,

কোন শাস্ত্রে বিশেষজ্ঞা, অধ্যাপকের ব্যয়, অপর ব্যক্তির ব্যয়, ছাত্রের নিজ ব্যয়, টোলের অবস্থা, অভাব, অভিযোগ ও আবশ্যক সংস্কার। মন্তব্যের ঘরে লেখা হয়েছিল সমর্থক সংখ্যা এবং বিবরণপত্র পূর্ণ করে পাঠিয়েছেন কিনা। প্রেসিডেন্সী বিভাগের মধ্যে কলিকাতায় ১৪টি, চব্বিশ পরগনায় ১২টি, যশোরে ৫টি, খুলনায় ৭ টি, নদীয়ায় ১৪ টি, মুর্শিদাবাদে ৪ টি টোলের এইরূপ আলোচনা হয়েছে। বর্ধমান বিভাগে বর্ধমান জেলায় ৩টি, হুগলীতে ৫ টি, হাওড়া জেলায় ১টি, মেদিনীপুর জেলায় ১১টি, বাঁকুড়ায় ১টি ও বীরভূম জেলায় ৪টি টোল আলোচিত হয়েছে। ঢাকা বিভাগের ঢাকা জেলায় ১৪টি , ফরিদপুর জেলায় ৫টি, বরিশাল জেলায় ৩টি, মৈমনসিংহ জেলায় ৭টি টোল আলোচিত হয়েছে, রাজশাহী বিভাগে রাজশাহী জেলায় ৪টি, বগুড়া জেলায় ২টি, পাবনা জেলায় ৬টি টোল আলোচিত হয়েছে। চট্টগ্রম বিভাগে চট্টগ্রাম জেলায় ৪ টি, ত্রিপুরা জেলায় ১০টি, নোয়াখালি জেলায় ৪টি টোলের কথা আমরা পাচ্ছি। সংস্কৃত কলেজের বৃত্তিভোগী পণ্ডিতের সংখ্যা প্রেসিডেন্সী বিভাগে ৬৫ জন, বর্ধমান বিভাগে ২৭ জন, ঢাকা বিভাগে ১৪ জন ও চট্টগ্রাম বিভাগে ২২ জন। সামগ্রিক রিপোর্টটি আলোচনা করে দেখা যায় যে বর্ধমান-বাঁকুড়া অঞ্চলে টোলগুলির সর্বাধিক দুর্দশা ঘটেছিল। কোলকাতা, ঢাকা ও মৈমনসিংহ বিভাগের টোলগুলির অবস্থা অপেক্ষাকৃত ভালো ছিল। কোন কোন সম্পন্ন টোলে একাধিক গুরু ছিলেন। মৈমনসিংহ জেলার একটি টোলে চারজন শিক্ষক ছিলেন। কোলকাতা, বর্ধমান, ত্রিপুরা প্রভৃতি জেলায় একই গুরুর অধীনে একাধিক জায়গায় টোল দেখতে পাই। সম্ভবত সেগুলি প্রধান ছাত্ররা পরিচালনা করতেন। মাত্র দশ বছরের পুরানো টোলের উল্লেখও আমরা পাই যার অর্থ ১৯১৬-১৭ সাল নাগাদও স্বাধীন টোল প্রতিষ্ঠা হয়েছে। অধ্যাপনীয় বিষয় থেকে আমরা জানতে পারি যে এগুলিতে প্রাচীন ও নব্যন্যায়, স্মৃতি, ব্যাকরণ, কাব্য, বেদ, বেদান্ত, পুরাণ, ভক্তিশাস্ত্র, মীমাংসা, যোগ, জ্যোতিষ, বৈদ্যকশাস্ত্র এমনকি জৈন দর্শন পর্যন্ত সবই পঠনপাঠন হত। টোলগুলির অভিযোগের ভাষা অত্যন্ত হতাশাবহুল। অনেক টোলই নামমাত্র আছে, উত্তীর্ণ ছাত্র নেই। ছাত্রাবসের ব্যবস্থা নেই। মাসিক বৃত্তিই অন্তত কুড়ি থেকে পঁচিশ টাকা হওয়া প্রয়োজন, সংগৃহীত পুথি রক্ষা করা যাচ্ছে না, বহু বৈদ্যক টোলে আয়ুর্বেদ পাঠদান বন্ধ হয়ে গেছে, টোলবাড়ির দশা জরাজীর্ণ ইত্যাদি অভিযোগে রিপোর্টটি পূর্ণ। কোথাও আবার প্রতিকারের মধ্যে নতুন চতুষ্পাঠী স্থাপন ও ছাত্রদের মধ্যে ধর্মশিক্ষা প্রচারের কথাও বলা হয়েছে। সব মিলিয়ে বাংলার প্রগাঢ় ঐতিহ্যশালী টোল শিক্ষাব্যবস্থার এক অভূতপূর্ব করুণ ও বিপন্ন ছবি পাওয়া যায় এই বিশেষ রিপোর্টটি থেকে (Mukherjee ১৯২৭:৩৯৮-৪৭৯)।

বাংলার টোল শিক্ষার ধারা ও নারীর অবস্থান

টোলগুলিতে নারীর সংখ্যা অতি সামান্যই ছিল। প্রিয়ংবদা দেবী (ষোড়শ শতক), জয়ন্তী দেবী (সপ্তদশ শতক) হটী বিদ্যালঙ্কার (অষ্টাদশ-উণবিংশ শতক), হটু বিদ্যালঙ্কার (অষ্টাদশ-ঊনবিংশ শতক), দ্রবময়ী (ঊনবিংশ শতক) এরূপ কয়েকজন অঙ্গুলীগণ্যা খ্যাতকীর্তি পণ্ডিতার নাম আমরা পাই। এঁরা প্রায় সকলেই ব্রাহ্মণ কন্যা ছিলেন (ব্যতিক্রম হটু বিদ্যালঙ্কার) এবং মূলতঃ কাব্য, ব্যাকরণ, পুরাণ ও অলঙ্কার পাঠ করেন। হটী বিদ্যালঙ্কার কাশীর পণ্ডিতদের কাছে নব্যন্যায় এবং হটু বিদ্যালঙ্কার সরগ্রামবাসী গোকুলানন্দ তর্কালঙ্কারের কাছে নব্যন্যায় ও বৈদ্যক শাস্ত্রও অধ্যয়ন করেন। হটী বিদ্যালঙ্কার ও হটু বিদ্যালঙ্কার নিজেরা অধ্যাপনা করলেও দর্শনশাস্ত্র শিক্ষা করতে পারেন নি এবং যে বিদ্যা শিক্ষা করলে হয়ত তাঁরা নারীদের টোলে প্রবেশের পথ কিছুটা সুগম করতে পারতেন সেই স্মৃতি পাঠের অধিকার তাঁরা পুরুষশাসিত সমাজে কোনক্রমেই পান নি (চক্রবর্তী ১৯৯৫ ঃ ৯৪-৯৭)। দ্রবময়ীর শিক্ষাও তাঁর পিতা

চণ্ডীচরণ তর্কালঙ্কারের বেড়াবেড়ি গ্রামের টোলে সংক্ষিপ্তসার ব্যাকরণ, তার টীকা, অভিধান, সামান্য ন্যায় এবং কাব্যালঙ্কার পাঠের মধ্যেই সীমাবদ্ধ থাকে। এই পণ্ডিতাদের প্রভাব স্ত্রী-শিক্ষার প্রসার ও উন্মোচনে ব্যতিক্রমী হয়েই থেকে যায় এবং এঁদের বিদ্রোহী আচার্য্যগণ যেমন জগদীশ তর্কবাগীশ, গোকুলানন্দ তর্কালঙ্কার, নারায়ণ দাস, ভৈরব বিদ্যাসাগর প্রমুখ তাঁদেরও বৃহৎ ব্রহ্মণ্যতাড়িত সমাজে একান্ত প্রান্তবাসীর বেশী কোন ভূমিকায় নিজেদের অধিষ্ঠিত করতে পারেন নি।

বঙ্কিমচন্দ্রের উপন্যাসে আমরা যেমন চন্দ্রশেখরের মত একজন টোলের পণ্ডিতকে তার শাস্ত্রসমুদ্রে ক্ষর, অক্ষর, স্ফোট, ভূমা, অপৌরুষত্ব প্রভৃতি তত্ত্বের অনুসন্ধানে বিভোর দেখি (বঙ্কিমচন্দ্র ১২৯০ বঙ্গাব্দঃ ১৮) আবার পাই গজপতি বিদ্যাদিগগজের মত একজন মেরুদণ্ডহীন মূর্খ টুলো পণ্ডিতের চরিত্রও (বঙ্কিমচন্দ্র ১২৬৭ বঙ্গাব্দঃ ৩৪-৩৫)। তবে বঙ্কিমের টোলের যে দুটি চিত্র সর্বাপেক্ষা আকর্ষণীয় সেই দুটিই ছাত্রীর। আনন্দমঠে শান্তি ছেলেদের মত মাথা কামাত, ফোঁটা কাটত, চন্দন লেপন করত, কোঁচা দিয়ে কাপড় পরত এবং যজ্ঞোপবীত গলায় না দিতে পারার দুঃখে কাঁদত। একটু বড় হলে সে একবর্ণ ব্যাকরণ না জেনেও ছাত্রদের সঙ্গে ভট্টি, রঘুবংশ, কুমারসম্ভব ও নৈষধচরিতের শ্লোক টীকাসহ মুখস্ত করতে থাকে। এই ঘটনা দেখে শান্তির অধ্যাপক পিতা তাকে 'যদ্ভবিষ্যতি তদ্ভবিষ্যতি ভাবিয়া' মুগ্ধবোধ অধ্যয়ন করান ও কিছু সাহিত্য পাঠ দেন (বঙ্কিমচন্দ্র ১৩৪৫ বঙ্গাব্দঃ ৫৫-৫৬)। দেবী চৌধুরাণীতে প্রফুল্ল প্রথমে সঙ্গিনী নিশার কাছে বর্ণমালা, হস্তলিপি ও শুভঙ্করী শেখে। তারপর ভবানী ঠাকুর স্বয়ং অধ্যাপনা ভার নেন। প্রফুল্ল অতি দ্রুত ব্যাকরণ অধিগত করে ও তারপর ভট্টিকাব্য ও অভিধান আয়ত্ত করে। এরপর প্রফুল্ল রঘু, কুমার, নৈষধ, শকুন্তলা ইত্যাদি কাব্যপাঠ করে তারপর ভবানী ঠাকুর ন্যায়, সাংখ্য ও বেদান্ত অধ্যয়ন করান। যদিও ষড়দর্শনের এই সকল অধ্যায় তিনি প্রফুল্লকে সামান্যই অধিগত করান। তারপর প্রফুল্লকে গভীরভাবে যোগশাস্ত্রের পাঠ দেন এবং শেষে শ্রীমদভাগবতগীতা শিক্ষা দেন।পাঁচ বছরে শিক্ষা সমাপ্ত হয়। পাঠশালা ও তারপরে টোলের পাঠগ্রহণের এ এক আদর্শ চিত্র। লক্ষণীয় যে বঙ্কিম স্ত্রীলোকের ন্যায়শাস্ত্রে পাঠাধিকার নেই একথা অস্বীকার করেছেন। যদিও তিনি প্রফুল্লকে স্মৃতি পড়ান নি। এর দুটি কারণ থাকতে পারে। প্রথমত তিনি প্রফুল্লকে জ্ঞানার্জনী, কার্যকারিণী, চিত্তরঞ্জনী ও শারীরিকী শিক্ষায় যে বিশেষ শিক্ষিত করতে চেয়েছিলেন তাতে স্মৃতিপাঠ তাঁর অপ্রয়োজনীয় মনে হয়েছিল। আবার দুরূহ স্মৃতিশাস্ত্র পাঠ হয়ত বহু সময়সাপেক্ষ হত। অন্য শিক্ষার সময় কম হয়ে পড়ত। (বঙ্কিমচন্দ্র ১৮৯১ঃ ৬৫) প্রফুল্লের এই বিদ্যাধ্যয়ন আমাদের মনে পড়ায় সরগ্রাম নিবাসী গোকুলানন্দ তর্কালঙ্কারের কাছে মুণ্ডিতমস্তক, শিখা ও উপবীতধারিণী হটু বিদ্যালঙ্কারের নব্যন্যায়, অলঙ্কার, কাব্য এবং চরক-শুশ্রুত পাঠের কথা (চক্রবর্তী ১৯৯৫ঃ৯৬-৯৭)। এই টোলশিক্ষার মাধ্যমে বঙ্কিম অনেকাংশে উপস্থাপন করেন বালিকা বিদ্যালয়ে বা মেম নিযুক্ত করে স্ত্রীশিক্ষার এক বিকল্প পরিপূরক। কিন্তু বলা বাহুল্য প্রফুল্লের ব্যক্তিক জীবনে যোগশাস্ত্র ও গীতা ব্যতীত অন্যান্য সংস্কৃত শিক্ষা কতটুকু প্রয়োজনে এসেছিল তা নিয়ে সংশয় থেকেই যায়। আনন্দমঠেও সংস্কৃত সাহিত্য ও দর্শনে সুশিক্ষিতা এবং আত্মসংযমের পাঠে দীক্ষিতা শান্তির সংস্পর্শ এড়িয়ে চলতে 'আনন্দ' সন্তানরা সর্বদাই শশব্যস্ত থাকে। সংস্কৃত শিক্ষা শান্তিকে কিছু বুদ্ধিদীপ্ত কথোপকথনে দক্ষতা দান করা ছাড়া আর কোন উপকার সাধিত করে তা ধরা যায় না। অর্থাৎ বঙ্কিমচিত্রিত নারীর টোলের শিক্ষার ক্ষেত্রটির প্রায় কোন প্রায়োগিক দিক নেই। সমস্ত সন্ন্যাসজীবনে জীবানন্দের একটি পুথি প্রদীপালোকে পড়তে মাত্র একবারই দেখা যায় নবীনানন্দবেশিনী শান্তিকে। বঙ্কিম রচিত জ্ঞানার্জনী, চিত্তরঞ্জনী, কার্য্যকারিণী ও শারীরিকী শিক্ষার যে বিপুল আদর্শ তার সাথে এই শিক্ষার সীমাবদ্ধতা কতটা সঙ্গতিপূর্ণ তা চিন্তাযোগ্য। বাংলা সাহিত্যে নারীর

টোল শিক্ষার আর কোন বিশ্বাসযোগ্য বিবরণ নেই। শরৎচন্দ্র চট্টোপাধ্যায়ের শ্রীকান্ত তৃতীয় পর্বে দেখা যায় সুনন্দা নামে এক টোল পণ্ডিতের গৃহীনিকে যিনি তাঁর সন্ন্যাসী পিতার কাছে শাস্ত্র অধ্যয়ন করেছেন ও যাঁর স্বামী গৃহে কালিদাসের কাব্য এবং ন্যায়-স্মৃতির বিচার চলে। উনিশ শতকের শেষপাদে আমরা দেখতে পাই কিভাবে পণ্ডিতা রমাবাঈ এর পিতা অনন্ত শাস্ত্রী ডোংগড়ে তাঁর স্ত্রী ও কন্যাকে সংস্কৃতে সুশিক্ষিতা করে তোলার জন্য মহারাষ্ট্রে স্বজাতি ও স্বগ্রাম চ্যুত হয়ে গঙ্গামূল অরণ্যে আশ্রয় নিতে বাধ্য হন। এহেন পরিস্থিতিতে টোল ধারার শিক্ষায় নারীর অস্তিত্ব কতটা আণুবীক্ষণিক ছিল বলাই বাহুল্য।

বিংশ শতকের শেষপাদে রচিত নারায়ণ সান্যালের রূপমঞ্জরী উপন্যাসে চিত্রিত হয়েছে হটী বিদ্যালঙ্কারের বিদ্যাশিক্ষা ও শিক্ষণের এক বাস্তবতাশূন্য কাল্পনিক চিত্র যেখানে নারীর শিক্ষামূলক বিতর্কে স্মৃতি সাহিত্য অংশটিই পরিত্যক্ত হয়ে যায়। ১৯৮৮ খ্রীষ্টাব্দে রচিত অমিয়ভূষণ মজুমদারের নয়নতারা উপন্যাসে সংস্কৃত সামান্য শিক্ষা করেই নায়িকাকে মহাভারত বিচারে প্রবৃত্ত দেখা যায়। প্রকৃতপক্ষে বাংলা সাহিত্যে রবীন্দ্র পরবর্তী যুগে টোলের পণ্ডিতদের এবং অনেক সময় তাঁদের ক্রমবর্ধমান দারিদ্র্যের চিত্র থাকলেও টোলের পঠনপাঠন পদ্ধতির উল্লেখ প্রায় নেই। এমনকি তারাশঙ্কর বন্দ্যোপাধ্যায়ের রচনাতেও উল্লেখ নেই। অনেকেই টোলের শিক্ষারীতি বলতে গিয়ে পাঠশালার শিক্ষারীতি বর্ণনা করেছেন। টোলশিক্ষার এই প্রত্যক্ষ জ্ঞানের অনুপস্থিতি সমগ্র শিক্ষাব্যবস্থাটির সমাজজীবন থেকে প্রবল বিচ্ছিন্নতার স্বাক্ষ্য দেয়। আর টোলে নারীশিক্ষার বর্ণনায় যে এ সীমাবদ্ধতা অধিকতর প্রকট হবে তা বলাই বাহুল্য।

উপসংহার

টোলশিক্ষাব্যবস্থা বাংলার ঐতিহ্যশালী সংস্কৃত শিক্ষাব্যবস্থার নিঃসন্দেহে এক সুদৃঢ় মাধ্যম ছিল। প্রাক ঔপনিবেশিক যুগে বাংলার দেশজ শিক্ষাধারার প্রধান মেরুদণ্ডই ছিল টোল ও মক্তব। কিন্তু ঔপনিবেশিক যুগে নূতন জ্ঞানচর্চার ধারার বিকাশ ও জীবন সংগ্রামের ক্ষেত্রে তারই প্রধান কার্যকারিণী ভূমিকা টোলের সনাতন জ্ঞানচর্চার ধারা থেকে বিচ্ছিন্ন ও ক্রমেক্রমে বিতৃষ্ণ করে তোলে। মেকলের প্রশ্রয়প্রাপ্ত কোলকাতার ইংরাজী শিক্ষিত ভদ্রলোক যুবসমাজ সংস্কৃতকে দেখতেন উন্নাসিক দৃষ্টিতে। হিন্দু বা প্রেসিডেন্সী কলেজে সংস্কৃত আদৌ পড়ান হত না যেমন হত না অন্য অনেক কলেজেই। কলিকাতা ইউনিভার্সিটিতে সংস্কৃত ছিল ঐচ্ছিক বিষয়। চার্লস উড ডেসপ্যাচ থেকে স্যাডলার কমিশন পর্যন্ত বিভিন্ন শিক্ষানীতিতেই সংস্কৃতচর্চা ক্রমাগত অবহেলিত হয়ে চলেছিল। Brian A. Hatcher তাঁর অসাধারণ রচনায় এই পণ্ডিতসমাজের ক্রমবিস্মৃতির যে ছবি তুলে ধরেছেন তা আমরা আগেই উল্লেখ করেছি। কলকাতায় Asiatic Society থেকে Pune Bhandarkar Oriental Research Instituteতে যেখানে প্রাচীন ভারতীয় বিদ্যা বা ইতিহাসচর্চার সাথে সাথে সংস্কৃতচর্চা হত সেখানে সংস্কৃত আলোচনা বা পাঠ দিতেন ইংরাজী শিক্ষিত ব্যক্তিরা যাঁদের সংস্কৃত শিক্ষা হয়েছিল পুরোপুরি কলেজ-ইউনিভার্সিটির ধারায় (Rajendralal Mitra 1885-11:30)। রাজেন্দ্রলাল মিত্র থেকে D.R. Bhandrakar প্রমুখ যে ধারার বাহক। এর ফলে টোল কেন্দ্রিক সংস্কৃতচর্চার ধারা যা পদ্ধতি, গুণ, উদ্দেশ্য বা দৃষ্টিভঙ্গীগতভাবে এই ঔপনিবেশিক এবং আধুনিক bourgeois মননচালিত Oriental জ্ঞানচর্চা থেকে পৃথক ছিল তার ধারাটি ক্রমশ শুকিয়ে যায়। Oriental Research বা Indology কিম্বা প্রাচীন ভারতীয় ইতিহাস চর্চায় যে সনাতন সংস্কৃত জ্ঞানের ধারার বাহকদের এই চূড়ান্ত অনুপস্থিতি সমগ্র প্রাচ্যানুসন্ধান discourseটিরই খণ্ডিত অসম্পূর্ণতাকে দেখিয়েদেয়। বঙ্কিমচন্দ্র চট্টোপাধ্যায় কমলাকান্তের

দপ্তরে ব্রাহ্মণপণ্ডিতদের হাট করা দেখাতে ব্রাহ্মণ পণ্ডিতদের যে ছবি তুলে ধরেন সেখানে পণ্ডিতরা ঝুনা নারিকেল বিক্রি করবার জন্য নিজেদের অভাব অভিযোগের সানুনাসিক বর্ণনা করে ক্রেতাদের নারিকেল কেনার অনুনয় করতে থাকেন। তাঁদের বিচিত্র বর্ণনা শুনে কমলাকান্ত প্রশ্ন করে যে নারিকেল ছাড়ানোর জন্য তাঁদের কাছে দা আছে কিনা। তদুত্তরে ব্রাহ্মণ পণ্ডিতরা বলেন 'আমরা দা রাখি না, কামড়াইয়া ছোবড়া ছাড়াই' যা শুনে কমলাকান্তের মত খরিদ্দাররা বিমুখ হয়। এমন সময় পাশের দোকান থেকে সাহেব পসারীরা এসে ঝুনা নারিকেল কেড়ে নিয়ে যান এবং পণ্ডিতরা মুক্তকচ্ছ হয়ে পলায়ন করতে থাকেন। সাহেবরা উন্নত বিলাতী অস্ত্রে নারকেল ভেঙে আহার করতে থাকেন এবং কমলাকান্তের প্রশ্নের উত্তরে জানান যে এই পদ্ধতির নাম 'Asiatic Research. বঙ্কিম রচিত এই রঙ্গদৃশ্য প্রাচীনপন্থী 'আধুনিক অস্ত্রহীন' টোলধারী ভট্টাচার্য্যদের থেকে পাশ্চাত্য পণ্ডিত এবং তাঁদের শিষ্য ভারতীয়দের সংস্কৃতচর্চার জগতে স্থানান্তরিত হয়ে যাওয়া ও তার নীচে দেশজ ধারাটির নিমজ্জনের এক স্পষ্ট চিত্র (বঙ্কিমচন্দ্র ১২৯২ বঙ্গাব্দঃ ১২৫-৩০)। বঙ্কিমচন্দ্র নিজেও যে এই ইউরোপীয় পদ্ধতির ফসল ও সমর্থক তা বোঝা যায় বঙ্গদর্শনের জন্য কালিদাসের উপর রচিত প্রবন্ধকে জার্মান পণ্ডিতের সাথে তুলনা করেন এবং প্রাচীন ভারতীয় সাহিত্য বিশ্লেষণ যে জার্মান শৈলীতে করতে হবে তাকে মান্যতা দেন (শাস্ত্রী ১৯৯৫ঃ ১২)। এর পাশাপাশি মুসলমান সমাজে ইংরাজী শিক্ষা অনেক পরে প্রচলিত হওয়ায় টোলের তুলনায় মক্তবগুলি দীর্ঘতর পরমায়ু পায়। অপরদিকে টোলের ভট্টাচার্য্যরা আধুনিক যুগ থেকে মুখ ফিরিয়ে তাঁদের জ্ঞানধন অর্গলবদ্ধ করে রাখেন। আর অপরদিকে বৃত্তি-বিদায়লোভী অসাধু ব্রাহ্মণরা নামে মাত্র চতুষ্পাঠী রাখে ও শাস্ত্রালোচনা নিয়ে মাথাই ঘামায় না। উনিশ শতকের শেষপাদ থেকেই কয়েকটি উজ্জ্বল ব্যতিক্রম বাদ দিয়ে এই সমগ্র শিক্ষাব্যবস্থাটি প্রায় চূর্ণ হয়ে যায়। টোল ব্যবস্থার মৃতপ্রায় যে অংশটি সংস্কৃত কলেজের appendage হয়ে থাকতে পারে এবং ভাটপাড়া ও নবদ্বীপকেন্দ্রিক কিছু স্বল্পছাত্র টোল টিঁকে যায় তাই এই একদা গৌরবোজ্জ্বল শিক্ষাধারার শেষ মুমূর্ষু অস্তিত্বের ধারকরূপে বর্তমান থাকে।

গ্রন্থঋণ:

বাংলা সূত্রাদি

* আচার্য্য, পরমেশ, ২০০৯, *বাংলার দেশজ শিক্ষার ধারা*, কলকাতাঃ অনুষ্টুপ প্রকাশনী।

* আলী, সৈয়দ মুজতবা, ১৩৬৫ বঙ্গাব্দ, সৈয়দ মুজতবা আলী রচনাসমগ্র, দশম খণ্ড, কলিকাতাঃ মিত্র ও ঘোষ প্রকাশন।

* কবিরত্ন, হরিশচন্দ্র, ১৩৩২ বঙ্গাব্দ, ভাদ্র সংখ্যা, 'সেকালের সংস্কৃত কলেজ' দ্রষ্টব্য প্রবাসী, পৃষ্ঠা ৬৪৪-৬৫২।

* কবিরত্ন, হরিশচন্দ্র, ১৩৩২ বঙ্গাব্দ, আশ্বিন সংখ্যা, 'সেকালের সংস্কৃত কলেজ' দ্রষ্টব্য প্রবাসী, পৃষ্ঠা ৮৯০-৯৭।

* গুপ্ত, বিপিনবিহারী, ১৩২০ বঙ্গাব্দ, পুরাতন প্রসঙ্গ, কলিকাতা।

* ঘোষ, তপোব্রত, ২০২২, *যেভাবে বঙ্কিম পড়ি*, কলিকাতা ঃ তবু প্রকাশন।

* চক্রবর্তী, অলোককুমার, ২০১৫ সংস্করণ, মহারাজ কৃষ্ণচন্দ্র ও তৎকালীন বঙ্গসমাজ, কলিকাতাঃ গ্রন্থমিত্র।

* চক্রবর্তী, শ্রীজনার্দন, ১৩৬২ বঙ্গাব্দ, *'স্মৃতিভারে'*, কলিকাতাঃ জেনারেল প্রিন্টার্স এন্ড পাবলিশার্স লিমিটেড।

* চক্রবর্তী,রমাকান্ত, ১৯৯৬, বঙ্গে বৈষ্ণব ধর্মঃ একটি ঐতিহাসিক ও সমাজতাত্ত্বিক অধ্যয়ন, কলিকাতাঃ আনন্দ পাবলিশার্স।

* চক্রবর্তী, শ্যামলী, ১৯৯৫, 'বঙ্কিমচন্দ্রের নারীশিক্ষা ভাবনায় টোল' দ্রষ্টব্য পশ্চিমবঙ্গ পত্রিকা বঙ্কিম সংখ্যা, পৃষ্ঠা ৯৩-১০৫।

* চট্টোপাধ্যায়, বঙ্কিমচন্দ্র, ১৩৪৫ বঙ্গাব্দ, আনন্দমঠ (সম্পা) ব্রজেন্দ্রনাথ বন্দ্যোপাধ্যায় ও সজনীকান্ত দাস, কলিকাতাঃ বঙ্গীয় সাহিত্য পরিষদ।

* চট্টোপাধ্যায়, বঙ্কিমচন্দ্র, ১২৯২ বঙ্গাব্দ, কমলাকান্ত, কলিকাতা।

* চট্টোপাধ্যায়, বঙ্কিমচন্দ্র, ১২৯১ বঙ্গাব্দ, দেবী চৌধুরাণী, কলিকাতা।

* চট্টোপাধ্যায়,রামাক্ষয়, ১৮৯২, ঁপ্রেমচন্দ্র তর্কবাগীশের জীবনী ও কবিতাবলী, কলিকাতা।

* জয়ানন্দ, ২০১৬ সংস্করণ, শ্রীচৈতন্যমঙ্গল (সম্পা) বিমানবিহারী মজুমদার ও সুখময় মুখোপাধ্যায়, কলিকাতাঃ এশিয়াটিক সোসাইটি।

* ঠাকুর, রবীন্দ্রনাথ, ১৩৬৫ বঙ্গাব্দ, বিদ্যাসাগরচরিত, কলিকাতাঃ বিশ্বভারতী গ্রন্থনবিভাগ।

* তর্কভূষণ, তারাধন, ১৩০০ বঙ্গাব্দ, তারানাথ তর্কবাচস্পতির জীবনী ও সংস্কৃত বিদ্যার উন্নতি, কলিকাতাঃ ব্রাহ্ম মিশন প্রেস।

* দাস, বৃন্দাবন, ১৮৫৪, শ্রীচৈতন্যভাগবত, শ্রীরামপুর,জ্ঞানোরুণোদয় যন্ত্র।

* পিপিলাই, বিপ্রদাস, ২০০২, বিপ্রদাস পিপিলাইএর মনসামঙ্গল (সম্পা) অচিন্ত্য বিশ্বাস, কলকাতাঃ রত্না প্রকাশণী।

* বন্দ্যোপাধ্যায়, ব্রজেন্দ্রনাথ, 'জয়নারায়ণ তর্কপঞ্চানন' দ্রষ্টব্য সাহিত্য পরিষৎ পত্রিকা ৪৬ বর্ষ প্রথম সংখ্যা।

* বন্দ্যোপাধ্যায়, ব্রজেন্দ্রনাথ, 'সেকালের সংস্কৃত কলেজ' দ্রষ্টব্য সাহিত্য পরিষৎ পত্রিকা ৪৬ বর্ষ চতুর্থ সংখ্যা।

* বন্দ্যোপাধ্যায়, ব্রজেন্দ্রনাথ, 'সেকালের সংস্কৃত কলেজ' দ্রষ্টব্য সাহিত্য পরিষৎ পত্রিকা ৪৭ বর্ষ প্রথম সংখ্যা।

* বন্দ্যোপাধ্যায়, ব্রজেন্দ্রনাথ, 'সেকালের সংস্কৃত কলেজ' দ্রষ্টব্য সাহিত্য পরিষৎ পত্রিকা ৪৭ বর্ষ দ্বিতীয় সংখ্যা।

* বন্দ্যোপাধ্যায়, ব্রজেন্দ্রনাথ, 'সেকালের সংস্কৃত কলেজ' দ্রষ্টব্য সাহিত্য পরিষৎ পত্রিকা ৪৭ বর্ষ তৃতীয় সংখ্যা।

* বন্দ্যোপাধ্যায়, ব্রজেন্দ্রনাথ, 'সেকালের সংস্কৃত কলেজ' দ্রষ্টব্য সাহিত্য পরিষৎ পত্রিকা ৪৭ বর্ষ চতুর্থ সংখ্যা।

* বন্দ্যোপাধ্যায়, ব্রজেন্দ্রনাথ, 'সেকালের সংস্কৃত কলেজ' দ্রষ্টব্য সাহিত্য পরিষৎ পত্রিকা ৪৮ বর্ষ প্রথম সংখ্যা।

* বন্দ্যোপাধ্যায়, ব্রজেন্দ্রনাথ, 'সেকালের সংস্কৃত কলেজ' দ্রষ্টব্য সাহিত্য পরিষৎ পত্রিকা ৪৮ বর্ষ তৃতীয় সংখ্যা।

* বন্দ্যোপাধ্যায়, ব্রজেন্দ্রনাথ, 'সেকালের সংস্কৃত কলেজ' দ্রষ্টব্য সাহিত্য পরিষৎ পত্রিকা ৪৮ বর্ষ চতুর্থ সংখ্যা।

* বন্দ্যোপাধ্যায়,বিভূতিভূষণ, ২০১১, 'অনুবর্তন' দ্রষ্টব্য বিভূতি উপন্যাসসমগ্র দ্বিতীয় খণ্ড, কামিনী প্রকাশণ।

* বন্দ্যোপাধ্যায়,বিভূতিভূষণ, ২০১০, 'পথের পাঁচালী' দ্রষ্টব্য বিভূতি উপন্যাসসমগ্র প্রথম খণ্ড, কামিনী প্রকাশণ।

* বন্দ্যোপাধ্যায়্ হরিচরণ, ১৩৪৪ বঙ্গাব্দ, বঙ্গীয় শব্দকোষ দ্বিতীয় খণ্ড, কলিকাতাঃ বিশ্বকোষ প্রেস।

* বিদ্যারত্ন, গিরিশচন্দ্র ও হরিশচন্দ্র কবিরত্ন, ১৯০৯, ঁগিরিশচন্দ্র বিদ্যারত্নের জীবনচরিত', কলিকাতাঃ মণিকা প্রেস।

* বিদ্যারত্ন, দেবব্রত, ১৯৫২, জীবনকথাঃ পুজ্যপাদ আচার্য্য সত্যব্রত সামশ্রমী, কলিকাতাঃ কলিকাতা বিশ্ববিদ্যালয়।

* বিদ্যারত্ন, শম্ভুচন্দ্র, ১৩০০ বঙ্গাব্দ, পণ্ডিতকুলতিলক মহাত্মা তারানাথ তর্কবাচস্পতির জীবনচরিত, কলিকাতাঃ ইংরাজী-সংস্কৃত যন্ত্র।

* বিদ্যারত্ন, শম্ভুচন্দ্র, ১২৯৮ বঙ্গাব্দ, বিদ্যাসাগর জীবনচরিত, কলিকাতাঃ ইংরেজী-সংস্কৃত যন্ত্র।

* বিদ্যাসাগর, ঈশ্বরচন্দ্র, ১২৮০ বঙ্গাব্দ, আবার অতি অল্প হইল, কলিকাতাঃ সংস্কৃত যন্ত্র।

* বিদ্যাসাগর, ঈশ্বরচন্দ্র, ১২৯১ বঙ্গাব্দ, ব্রজবিলাস, কলিকাতাঃ এস.কে.লাহিড়ী এণ্ড কোং।

* বিদ্যাসাগর,ঈশ্বরচন্দ্র, ২০০৬ খ্রীষ্টাব্দ, 'বহুবিবাহ রহিত হওয়া উচিত কিনা এতদ্বিষয়ক প্রস্তাব দ্বিতীয় পর্ব' দ্রষ্টব্য বিদ্যাসাগর রচনাবলী দ্বিতীয় খণ্ড,কলকাতাঃ সাহিত্যম, পৃষ্ঠা ১০১৭-১১৫৮।

* বিদ্যাসাগর,ঈশ্বরচন্দ্র, ২০০৫ খ্রীষ্টাব্দ, 'বিদ্যাসাগরচরিত' দ্রষ্টব্য বিদ্যাসাগর রচনাবলী প্রথম খণ্ড, কলকাতাঃ সাহিত্যম, পৃষ্ঠা ২১-৩৭।

* ভট্টাচার্য্য, গোপীকামোহন, ১৯৬১, কলিকাতা সংস্কৃত কলেজের ইতিহাস দ্বিতীয় খণ্ডঃ১৮৫৮-১৮৯৫, কলিকাতা সংস্কৃত কলেজ।

* ভট্টাচার্য্য, দীনেশচন্দ্র, ১৩৫৮ বঙ্গাব্দ, বাঙ্গালীর সারস্বত অবদান প্রথম খণ্ডঃ বঙ্গে নব্যন্যায়চর্চা, কলিকাতাঃ বঙ্গীয় সাহিত্য পরিষদ।

* ভট্টাচার্য্য, বিমানচন্দ্র, ১৩৬১ বঙ্গাব্দ, সংস্কৃত সাহিত্যের রূপরেখা, কলিকাতাঃ বিশ্বোদয় লাইব্রেরী।

* ভট্টাচার্য্য, হেমচন্দ্র, ১৩৬৭ বঙ্গাব্দ, বঙ্গীয় সংস্কৃত অধ্যাপক জীবনী, কলিকাতাঃ নবীন প্রকাশক।

* যতী, রামানন্দ, ১৯৬৯, চণ্ডীমঙ্গল (সম্পা) অনিলবরণ গঙ্গোপাধ্যায়, কলিকাতাঃ কলিকাতা বিশ্ববিদ্যালয়।

* রায়, দীনেন্দ্রকুমার, ১৩৫৩ বঙ্গাব্দ, সেকালের স্মৃতি, কলিকাতাঃ নাভানা।

* রায়, নীহাররঞ্জন, ১৩৫৬, ১৪১৬ বঙ্গাব্দ সংস্করণ, বাঙ্গালীর ইতিহাসঃ আদি পর্ব, কলিকাতাঃ দেজ পাবলিকেশন।

* শাস্ত্রী, বিধুশেখর ভট্টাচার্য্য, ২০১১, 'রবীন্দ্রনাথের আশ্রয়' দ্রষ্টব্য রবীন্দ্রসংলাপকণিকা ও অন্যান্য রচনা, কলকাতাঃ যাদবপুর বিশ্ববিদ্যালয় প্রকাশনা, পৃষ্ঠা ৩৯-৫৩।

* শাস্ত্রী, শিবনাথ, ১৩২৫ বঙ্গাব্দ, আত্মচরিত, কলিকাতাঃ প্রবাসী কার্য্যালয়।

* শাস্ত্রী, শিবনাথ, ১৯২৩, যুগান্তর, কলিকাতাঃ ক্রান্তিক প্রেস।

* শাস্ত্রী, শিবনাথ, ১৯০৪, রামতনু লাহিড়ী ও তৎকালীন বঙ্গসমাজ, কলিকাতাঃ এস.আর.লাহিড়ী প্রকাশণ।

* শাস্ত্রী হরপ্রসাদ, ১৪০২ বঙ্গাব্দ, 'বঙ্কিমচন্দ্র কাঁটালপাড়ায়' দ্রষ্টব্য পশ্চিমবঙ্গ পত্রিকা বঙ্কিম সংখ্যা, পৃষ্ঠা ৮-১২।

* সান্যাল, নারায়ণ, রূপমঞ্জরী, ১৯৯০, কলিকাতাঃ দেজ পাবলিকেশনস।

* সেন, দীনেশচন্দ্র, ১৩৬৯ বঙ্গাব্দ,ঘরের কথা ও যুগসাহিত্য, কলিকাতাঃ জিজ্ঞাসা।

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লেখক পরিচিতি:

পিএইচডি গবেষক, যাদবপুর বিশ্ববিদ্যালয় ইতিহাস বিভাগ
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Book Review

Life's Little Tales

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ISBN No. 978-81-955752-0-6 Price: Rs.195 By B.N. Patnaik (printed book)

Life's Little Tales is a collection and compilation of personal and reflective essays written by Dr. B.N. Patnaik (former Professor of English and Linguistics, IIT Kanpur). He mentions in the Preface to his book how Covid-19 enforced him to stay at home for a prolonged duration and how the book is a result of the thoughts and memories that buoyed him up during this period. Dr. Patnaik's research areas and fields of expertise as well as interest are in the field of linguistics and in translations of the great Hindu epic *The Mahabharata*. The Great Epic's retelling in Odia, namely the *Sarala Mahabharata*, is entwined in the essays' lucid, vivid and sometimes even candid, narrative prose. The book achieves a circular pattern; it begins with the Great War at Kurukshetra and Duryodhana awaiting death with his head on Yudhistira's lap and concludes with "ordinary mortals" facing death and managing to look beyond self to consider other people's interests. The final line of this thought-provoking book resonates in the mind of the reader, "There is indeed no one path to *mukti*" (Patnaik 2002: 175)

Dr. Patnaik mentions the transition in his life as a village boy growing up on the banks of the Mahanadi river, his transformation after entering Cuttack's famous Ravenshaw College and later seizing an opportunity to study linguistics in Hyderabad which led to his tenure at IIT, Kanpur. The essays are marvellous expositions on the role and responsibility of some of the major characters in the Kurukshetra war (Bhima, Bhishma, Duryodhana, Dhritarashtra, Krishna, Shakuni, Sahadeva, Yudhisthira, to name only a few). The syntactical style and interpretation by the author of the *Sarala Mahabharata* differentiates actions and consequences according to the cosmic and *laukika* (wordly) perspectives. The second essay is a brilliant analysis of King Dhritarashtra's role and his fate in the *Mahabharata* and how the poet Sarala specifically states that Dhritarashtra was missing from the temporary abodes of *swarga* and *narka*, "the son of Dharma saw his entire clan/ Only Dhritarashtra he did not see) (Patnaik 2002: 20) The mystery of Dhritarashtra's final fate and the pain and humiliation of his miserable existence are brought out poignantly. Dr. Patnaik concludes by saying the lack of a sense of closure in Dhritarashtra's case may be regarded by some as ambiguous and discomforting. In the second essay titled "Lockdown Ramblings on *Sarala*

Mahabharata," Dr. Patnaik mentions the "dusta" character of the Pandava Bhima and goes on to describe how certain words cannot be completely translated as they are "language specific and partly because these carry culture" (25). Bhima's extreme oath is never criticised or even mentioned in the passing in the text as being wrong in itself. The cycles of karma, curses and redemption; foresight and what appears as callous unfairness or even the killing of innocents is difficult to reconcile in the *Sarala Mahabharata* but the "careful and discriminating reader" must choose how to comprehend the words of the text so as to not fall in despair. The third essay "The Assertive Wife Wins her Space" is a balanced and witty discussion of Balaram Das's Odia *Lakshmi Purana* elucidating upon a feminist stratagem for destroying inequality in the worship of Lord Jagannath. Balaram Das's revolutionary rejection of casteism in the heyday of Brahminism can be interpreted as a wife's demand for space in her family. Dr. Patnaik displays his mastery as a storyteller by knowing how to pique the reader's interest and then leave one craving for more as he refuses to reveal the next part of the story or analyse beyond a certain point! The fourth essay "And the Offended Wife Has Her Sweet Revenge" continues the tale of Goddess Lakshmi. The narrative of the angry wife and the happy melting of her anger are humourously conveyed through the descriptions of the Rathayatra rituals of "Hera Panchami", *Niladri Bije* ("return to the temple") and the sweet *rasagola*. The narrative of the sweet *rasagola* is returned to in an essay titled "Rasagola" where Dr. Patnaik links the quality, variety and quantification of sweets like the *khirmohan* to culture in the preference for *Salepur rasagola* and from 2015 onwards the annual Rasagola Day celebration in Odisha. The fifth essay is "The Story of Alakshmi"—a detailed and interesting narrative from the Odia *Kartika Mahatmya* by Mahadeva Das and a retelling of Alakshmi's story in the Sanskrit *Padma Purana*. Once again the story of the two sisters Lakshmi and Alakshmi provides a fresh perspective on the women's point of view.

The middle of the book mainly revolves around various aspects of Linguistics, language and takes Noam Chomsky's theories as models. Interestingly titled "Right Speech", "Bad Language", "Honeyed Language", "Dying Languages", "Thinking About Language and its Use", "Linguistics", "CIEFL" and "The Sahadeva Condition" (which also quotes Said on the responsibility of the intellectual in society): these essays range from the critical, political, philosophical to downright personal. "Right Speech" is an insightful discussion on changing perspectives as society changes and what constitutes value, information, truth and fact from traditional or social viewpoints. Dr. Patnaik elaborates on "PNPC—*para ninda para charcha*, the *adda* in Bengali and *gapasapa* in Odia and *chuguli* or gossip" (57-8) as valuable linguistic contributors to the debates in fact vs fiction! Quoting Chomsky that no information comes with a tag that it is fake, Dr. Patnaik contextualises the statement in the present information-overloaded society which has easy access to developments in technology and improved communication devices. "I-centric language" signifies intellectual arrogance

and boasting is condemned as not being "right speech". "Bad Language" raises questions that the professor faced from his student regarding "polite language"—what constitutes it; whether there should be a norm and who decides that norm. To argue about the merits and demerits of bad language, examples are drawn from childhood, mythology, popular sports and even the quarrels of family and neighbours.

A good linguist whets the appetite for further discussion. In "Honeyed Language" "euphemisms" are analysed, both in the Odia language and English, which are in turn linked to hierarchy and power. Albert Camus points out the limitations of the euphemism when he describes their use to deflect attention from the realities of human brutality. "It seems that sometimes society needs the truth" (77) "Dying Languages" mentions the number of languages dying all over the world and in India. Should one conserve languages as one would an endangered species or should one value the usefulness of languages more and shift to another available language? Patnaik refuses to prioritise utility alone. He addresses his friend Subbakrishna Saab and frames the debate in the form of a colloquial conversation. The distinction between categories of information are dealt with in "Thinking About Language and its Use" and Dr. Patnaik talks about how language studies can be fun and amply rewarding. "Linguistics" refers to the renowned linguist Dr. Suniti Kumar Chatterji and the world of "*bhashatatwa*". Dr. Patnaik's initial personal motivation for studying Linguistics opened his mind to the diversity in dialects and made him respect language teaching as the finer aspects of language were analysed. Marginalisation on the basis of language is another serious social issue. The stint in CIEFL in Hyderabad allows Dr. Patnaik to discuss gender in the 1970s and he does this with wit in his sketches of fellow participants in his PGDTE course. The funny side of the problems of "functional English" and pronunciation are presented rather neatly. "The Sahadeva Condition" dwells on the dilemma between truthfulness and a failure to tell the truth. Sahadeva, the youngest Pandava, gifted with special powers, faced this challenge. Patnaik points out how neither Chomsky nor Said think about the individual intellectual's "extremely unenviable situation" (163) The *Sarala Mahabharata* speaks about the sharing of knowledge and it being a responsibility of the person who has that knowledge.

The essays "Bhuta", "Upuri (Side Income): The Other Culture of Ours", "The Hand of God Goal" and "Of Retirement" contain individualized anecdotes and are more personal in tone. Ghost television serials and film preferences to real-life narratives on ghosts or supernatural manifestations in Odisha, Simla, Nainital and England are augmented with a lively discussion on categories of ghosts and the past or "*bhutakala*". The dosa or "dosi" a gastronomic delight becomes the basis for discussing food habits, food places, politics and food culture. Curd rice and the romance of mixing rice and curd initiate a food lover's descriptions but end on the sombre reality of diminished food intake in old age. *Upuri* is

the culture of extra or illegitimate income or side income. The "aspirational" facet of a community and "lived" facet of a community becomes a discourse on culture, morality and a desire to protect reform in governance along with the interests of the poor and marginalized. "The Hand of God Goal" refers to the famous footballer Diego Maradona's goal in the 1986 World Cup which has become a part of football lore. Dr. Patnaik wonders if the phrase could be extended linguistically to include other footballers' actions of saving, refereeing or passing the ball and includes anecdotes of famous rivalries in football. "Of Retirement" is a melancholic reminder for all working people and it segues into the essay "Facing Death". The pandemic and diseases like cancer provide greater clarity on the reality of death. Patnaik resorts to the *Sarala Mahabharata* once again as he talks about the sense of duty and situations that elevate human actions from the mundane to the noble or spiritual and the book ends on a wonderful note.

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      today lot rain be-pr.pf.3rd
      'Today there was heavy shower.'
   b) boneder ʧhobi.
      sister-gen.pl. picture
      'Sisters' picture.'

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