ISSN 2454-5694
Volume 10 Number 2 December 2024

JOURNAL OF KOLKATA SOCIETY FOR ASIAN STUDIES

An International Bilingual Journal of
Social Science (UGC CARE)



Kolkata Society for Asian Studies

JOURNAL OF
KOLKATA SOCIETY FOR ASIAN STUDIES
Office: 3/25/1, R.K. Chatterjee Road, Kolkata-700042
Phone:+9432490361
Email: ksasianstudies@gmail.com
kspublication1@gmail.com
Website: www.kolkatasocietyforasianstudies.com www.jrksas.org

EDITORS
Ranjana Ray
Sarmistha De Basu

EDITORIAL BOARD MEMBERS

Ranjana Banerjee
Mahidas Bhattacharya
Sanjukta Dasgupta
Mita Banerjee
Sarit Kumar Chaudhuri
Tridib Chakraborti
Sharmistha Banerjee
Swati Sen Mandi
Krishna Bhattacharya
Krunoslav Mikulan
Satyabrata Chakrabarti
President, KSAS (Ex-Officio)

John Adamson
Shyam Sundar Bhattacharya
Pratiti Ghosh
Debi Chatterjee
Mina Dan
Ishita Mukhopadhyay
Sudipa Ray Bandyopadhyay
Mesbah Kamal
Suniti Pathak
Durga Basu
Arpita Basu
Treasurer, KSAS (Ex-Officio)

General Information

Journal of Kolkata Society for Asian Studies is a double blind peer reviewed publication. It is an International Journal dedicated to the development of all branches of Social Sciences with special reference to Asian Studies. The Journal accepts theoretical and empirical papers on interdisciplinary studies. The Journal occasionally publishes special issues which mediate on a single topic. It also publishes research notes, reports, book reviews, etc.

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 Only original unpublished papers are accepted.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.

Subscription and Business Affairs

	Annual Subscription	
Countries	**Institutional Subcribers**	**Individual**
India	**INR 1200.00**	**INR 1000.00**
Foreign Countries	**US $ 100.00**	**US $ 90.00**

All correspondences relating to subscription, advertisements and other business matters should be addressed to the SECRETARY, Kolkata Society for Asian Studies. Remittance should be payable to KOLKATA SOCIETY FOR ASIAN STUDIES

Copyright@Kolkata Society For Asian Studies.

Editorial

After the festive season in West Bengal climate changed to winter, which is quite pleasant in this part of Eastern India. We reached the month of December, which is also a month of festivities and fairs. After going through mandatory plagiarism test, peer review and revision necessary for these processes, a total of sixteen papers are selected for the volume 10, number 2 of the Journal of Kolkata Society for Asian Studies. There are two papers which are outcome of invited lectures. One of the invited lectures was in memory of Late Professor Vinay Kumar Srivastava, former Director, Anthropological Survey of India and Professor, Department of Anthropology, Delhi University. The other was the endowment lecture in memory of Late Professor Karunasindhu Das, former Vice Chancellor of Rabindra Bharati University and an eminent Sanskrit scholar and Philosopher.

The Vinay Kumar Srivastava memorial lecture was delivered by Professor Subhadra Mitra Channa, one time colleague of the Professor in Delhi University. The paper is entitled as *The Teaching of Anthropology: Facing the Challenges, a tribute to Vinay Kumar Srivastava.* The author has emphasized on the holistic aspect of Anthropology as a science of human kind. She has delved briefly into the historical background of development of the subject of Anthropology and made a critical assessment of one of the most important aspect of the subject, the Field Work and Methodology of Anthropological studies and teaching.

Professor Mrinal Kanti Gangopadhyay had delivered the Karunasindhu Das endowment lecture on the *Dharmasastra* in the perspective of ancient philosophers and law givers in his paper, *The Philosophers and the Law-givers in Ancient India.* He has put forward the belief system as Astika and Nastika in the backdrop of Purushartha, which is divided into four classes, i.e. Dharma, Artha, Kama and Moksa. The author showed the historical development of the concept.

The paper entitled, *Forest, Religious Practice and Festival: A Study among the Hos of Jharkhand, India*, written by Sovan Chakraborty has put forward the relationship of the Ho people, a tribal community, residing in East Singhbhum district of Jharkhand, with the immediate environment in which they live. The study is conducted among Ho people living in three villages in the district. Author gave details of the festivals and rituals observed by the people under study and have pointed out the man nature relationship, which is revealed through his studies of the religious practices of the tribe.

Masculinity in Indian epics is the focus point of the paper, *Embodying Indian 'Epic' Masculinities: Interpretations of Masculine Images in Hatim.* The article is written by Mehul Agarwal and Pranta Pratik Patnaik. The authors have selected the Television show of the Arabic fairytale Hatim-Tai,

which was Indianized and is given the title as 'Hatim'. A detailed understanding of the theme of masculinity is defined and critically discussed by the authors in the perspective of understanding of masculinity in the Indian epics.

Politicization of class and caste orientation on the basis of occupation of the Malo community of Bengal is discussed in the paper, *From Water to Rights: The Malo Fisher Folk's Political Journey in Bengal* by Paramita Bhattacharya. Malos, also known as Jhalo Malo, are traditional fisher folk of Bengal, who have gone through political mobilization from colonial period to present day, which may be considered as an example of the determination of the group to face the challenges of a marginalised community for asserting rights and aspirations within a broader social and political system.

Imagining the Nepali Jāti: A Study of Darjeeling's Printed Narratives, written by Nima Doma Lama is based on the print media analysis of the Nepali communities that came out from Darjeeling district, which is considered as the epi-centre of the movement for shaping the cultural aspects of the Nepali community, though the initial print media on the topic came out from Banaras. The author has narrated the development of the concept of Nepali as a *jati*, in the backdrop of cultural diversity in Darjeeling district and various movements that had taken place for giving a shape to the concept.

With the emergence of women's journalism in the nineteenth century, Muslim women also started to express their views through Urdu print media. The paper titled as *Impact of Muslim women in journalism on Indian social reform: Special reference to northern India,* is written by Sudipta Adhikary. The paper discussed the role of Muslim women in the intellectual development and social reform in the early twentieth century. It was felt by the Muslim women intellectuals of the time that only through legislation that discrimination against Indian women could be prevented. Their sustained campaign resulted into several Acts in favour of Muslim women in India.

The paper, *Effectiveness of virtual training for information technology sector employees*, jointly written by Anindya Saha and Amitava Ghosh is based on empirical data gathered from 200 Information sector workers. They have used simple statistical methods for analysis of data and concluded that virtual training method is supported by majority of workers in IT sectors.

Krishnendu Roy's paper, *Impact of Different Parenting Style in Student Performance,* showed the importance and impact of mode of upbringing of parents on school going children. The research concluded that strict parenting helps the students to do well in their academic performance.

Rural tourism is gaining importance at present, where National forests stand out as a major attraction. The paper, *Exploring Challenges and Opportunities in Rural Tourism within Manas National Park,* is written jointly by Gaurav Das and L. S. Sharma. They have written on the importance of Manas National Park. The Park is located at the intersection of the Indo-Gangetic and Indo-Malayan bio-geographical regions. It is considered as India's most diverse wildlife reserve. The authors discussed

the importance of involvement of local people in rural tourism but at the same time advocates interception of Government and Non Government agencies for strengthening rural tourism.

Limbu is an ethnic group from North East India. Purbita Das in her paper, *The Journey of Rhythms: Copyright Protection and Cultural Significance of Limbu Ethnic Music,* has given an understanding of the music of the Limbu community from an ethno-musicological view point. The author has pointed out that the ethnic identity of Limbu tribe is much connected with their music, which is an integrated part of their culture and needs to be protected by the state.

The author Sk Abbas Uddin made an appraisal of Aparna Sen's two films in his paper entitled, *Bengali Cinema and the Body Politics of Representation: Locating Agency in Aparna Sen's Films Parama and Paromitar Ekdin.* Purpose of such analysis is to focus on the feminist movement, its implication; development and the director's perspective for portrayal of subvert patriarchal projection of feministic outlook.

Act East Policy and Northeast India: Initiatives and Challenges by Debotosh Chakraborty and Sarada Jyoti Singha discussed the present policy of the Government known as, 'Look East' and the development of India's relationship with South East Asian Countries in the development of trade and political relationship.

Somnath Hazra's paper, *Activity based learning across the globe after the industrial revolution*, is focused on the views of the philosophers Socrates and Humbolt on activity based child education, which was followed by famous educationists like Froebel, Dewey, Montessori, Gandhiji and Rabindranath Tagore after industrial revolution.

Kaushik Banerjee, Sudipta Adhikary and Paramita Bhattacharyya made a critical assessment of newly formed India's citizenship Act for refugees in their paper, *Assessing the Impacts of India's Citizenship Amendment Act (CAA) on Refugee Protection: A Post-2019 Analysis.* The authors not only discussed details of the Act but also assessed urgency of such Acts in the contemporary situation.

The paper, *Maritime Surveillance, Law and Order and the Indian Coast Guard: Analysing the Role of the Indian Coast Guards and Community Interest Associated,* written by Rebant Juyal indicates the theme of the paper. India's coastal region is not only important for its political security but also for its marine resources. It is considered as Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ). The paper gives an account of the existing relationship between the local communities and coast guards for maintaining law and order and protecting the country's marine resources.

Ratna Paul has authored the paper titled as, *Women's participation in the freedom movement of India: a case study of North Bengal.* In this article the author has given an account of the little known history of participation of women in North Bengal in freedom movement, as early as the start of Swadeshi and Quit India movement. Though she has mainly concentrated her quest in the present day North Bengal comprising of districts of Darjeeling, Jalpaiguri, Cooch Behar, Dinajpur, and Malda,

she had extended her study in the Rajshahi district, part of which now is in Bangladesh. She found that the freedom movements were mainly triggered by the women who were discriminated and suppressed by the society.

There is one paper in Bengali, entitled as *Nadia Jelar Muslimder Smajik Unnoyoner Somiksha,* written by Shekh Rabiul Islam. The paper focuses on the developmental perspective of Muslims living in Nadia, one of districts of southern West Bengal. The work is data based and the conclusion is that, state should pay more attention to both social and economic development of the Muslims living in Nadia district.

The book 'Darwin and Human Evolution : Origin of Species Revisited' edited by Ranjana Ray, Dhrubojyoti Chattopadhyay and Samir Banerjee, published by The Asiatic Society, Kolkata, 2014 was submitted for review in the Journal of Kolkata Society for Asian Studies. Dr. Debasis Kumar Mondal has elaborately reviewed the book.

The editors of the Journal of Kolkata Society for Asian Studies would like to thank the authors for contributing papers on diverse fields and making the Journal rich with information. The editors thank the reviewers, who have taken time off from their valuable academic works and have gone through the articles and enriched the contributions with valuable suggestions. We thank the press for printing the Journal and our gratitude to the members and staff of Kolkata Society for Asian Studies.

Ranjana Ray
Sarmistha De Basu

Content

Editorial

The Teaching of Anthropology: Facing the Challenges, a tribute to Vinay Kumar Srivastava ... 07
(Late Professor Vinay Kumar Srivastava Memorial Lecture)
Subhadra Mitra Channa

The Philosophers and the Law-givers in Ancient India ... 18
(Late Professor Karuna Sindhu Das Memorial lecture)
Mrinal Kanti Gangopadhyay.

Forest, Religious Practice and Festival: A Study among the Hos of Jharkhand, India ... 25
Sovan Chakraborty

Embodying Indian 'Epic' Masculinities: Interpretations of Masculine Images in *Hatim* ... 41
Mehul Agarwal and Pranta Pratik Patnaik

From Water to Rights: The Malo Fisher Folk's Political Journey in Bengal ... 55
Paramita Bhattacharya

Imagining the Nepali *Jāti*: A Study of Darjeeling's Printed Narratives ... 64
Nima Doma Lama

Impact of Muslim Women in Journalism on Indian Social Reform: Special Reference to Northern India ... 81
Sudipta Adhikary

Effectiveness of Virtual Training for Information Technology Sector Employees ... 91
Anindya saha and Amitava ghosh

Impact of Different Parenting Style in Student Performance ... 103
Krishnendu Roy

Exploring Challenges and Opportunities in Rural Tourism within Manas National Park ... 114
Gaurav Das and L. S. Sharma

The Journey of Rhythms: Copyright Protection and Cultural Significance of Limbu Ethnic Music ... 129
Purbita Das

Bengali Cinema and the Body Politics of Representation: Locating Agency in Aparna Sen's Films *Parama* and *Paromitar Ekdin* ... 140
Sk Abbas Uddin

Act East Policy and Northeast India: Initiatives and Challenges ... 153
Debotosh Chakraborty and Sarada Jyoti Singha

Activity Based Learning across the Globe after the Industrial Revolution ... 164
Somnath Hazra

Assessing the Impacts of India's Citizenship Amendment Act (CAA) on Refugee Protection: APost-2019 Analysis ... 176
Kaushik Banerjee, Sudipta Adhikary and Paramita Bhattacharyya

Maritime Surveillance, Law and Order and the Indian Coast Guard: Analysing the Role of the Indian Coast Guards and Community Interest Associated ... 189
Rebant Juyal

Women's participation in the freedom movement of India: a case study of North Bengal ... 204
Ratna Paul

নদীয়া জেলার মুসলিমদের উন্নয়ন-একটি রাজনৈতিক সমীক্ষা ... 217
রবিউল ইসলাম সেখ

BOOK REVIEW ... 229
Darwin and Human Evolution: Origin of Species Revisited
Dr. Debasis kumar Mondal

Acknowledgement to the peer Reviewers ... 233

Notes for Contributors ... 236

The Teaching of Anthropology: Facing the Challenges, a tribute to Vinay Kumar Srivastava*

Subhadra Mitra Channa

Abstract

The teaching of anthropology has always been a challenging job, especially before the digital age, when most information was not available at the click of a button. Anthropology is a complex discipline and since it deals directly with humans, it is also uncomfortably close to our own lives and many critical moral and political issues often confront the researcher as well as the teacher. A second task before teachers is the conduct of fieldwork, which involves a multitude of skills apart from just academic ones. To be a successful anthropology teacher, one needs to be pedagogic but in addition be also an adventurer, an administrator and a psychologist as well. A successful teacher often has to take on separate mantles, in and out of the classroom, in the field and in the examination center. In this paper I will take on the issues of challenges of teaching a holistic discipline and one that takes you to the world of real life out of the ivory tower of academic institutions, and one that stimulates you to be a social person actively involved in the lives of those around you. Vinay Srivastava was one example of such a teacher but such characters should ideally be imbibed in most others who teach anthropology.

Paper

Vinay Srivastava was one of the most popular teachers, one who endeared himself to his students, wherever he taught. He had taught in Hindu College as well as the Department of Anthropology, Delhi University from where he retired before taking up the administrative post of the Director of the Anthropological Survey of India. Being a teacher through and through, he must have been teaching his staff, during his tenure, which was unfortunately cut short by the pandemic that claimed him as a victim. This paper is dedicated to him as a teacher of a subject that is very demanding, because anthropology is a discipline not confined to the classroom. Anthropology is the study of humans, and paradoxically, most people do not consider it as a subject that is really important or as one that has a very high status, either intellectually or in terms of its market potential that is in terms of the earnings one can possibly generate as an anthropologist. It compares unfavorably with disciplines such a medicine, engineering and law, to name a few. Why humans in general should devalue their own study, is an academic matter that is beyond the scope of this paper, but there certainly have been

*Prof. Vinay Kumar Srivastava Memorial Lecture delivered on December 3, 2023 in virtual mode, organized by Kolkata Society for Asian Studies

teachers like Vinay, who have inspired generations of students to fall in love with the subject and also make successful careers out of it. Many of his students, now extremely well placed must be thanking him for inspiring them to take up a career with anthropology and considering the range of their occupational diversity, it is also a proof of the veracity of the subject. This paper is not really about Vinay, about whom a lot has already been written but more about the subject that he taught and which he loved and promoted. What I wish to show here is that anthropology, to be taught properly needs teachers of his caliber who could instill the spirit of inquiry and the capacity for critical thinking in his students. Anthropology is also not a subject that can be taught from a few text books but requires the introduction of life experiences, literature and a vast range of resources into the class room as it is closely tied to real life and is best understood by relation theory to practice.

Anthropology: A Critical Discipline

Anthropology, as a discipline, remains close to those who are studying it, as it describes, analyzes and dissects their own bodies, minds, pasts and presents, prods them to reflect on their own relationships, beliefs, values and attitudes. One reason why as a discipline it does not find favour with many, including states and governments, is that it has the potential to uncover unpalatable truths about one's self, one's ideologies, stereotypes and prejudices. Many populist and conservative governments are trying to discourage the teaching of anthropology as it hits at the roots of racism, homophobia and other forms of discriminations as anthropology, through its analytical and critical insights on humanity and human relationships is able to show how most of the myths of 'natural differences' as well as structural inequalities are neither rooted in nature nor in divinity. In this sense anthropology hits at all those assumptions that are attributed to nature or to God, including pervasive forms of inequalities, like those based on gender, sexuality, caste and race (Channa 2017). Each of these were considered as inevitable and immutable till the anthropologists used the data, they collected from living societies to refute or challenge them.

At the beginnings of the last century, through her comparative work on three New Guinea tribes, anthropologist, Margaret Mead was able to expose the hollowness of the 'biology is destiny' myth that underlined western patriarchy. Throughout the western world, including the USA, women were told that they could do only certain tasks, were good for only limited numbers of occupations, as their bodies and brains were inferior to that of men. Such biological myths were actually backed up by so-called medical expertise, that even deemed intellectual work as 'unnatural' for women, whose bodies were programmed only for child bearing and nurturing infants. Her field study in the New Guineas (Mead 1935) showed that what men and women can do or are expected to do, has nothing to do with their biology, as in the three societies studied by her, men and women do very different things and are assigned very different tasks and masculinity and femininity is constructed in almost opposite ways to the stereotypes constructed about them in the western world. Unlike in the west, women can be the main breadwinners and carry all social responsibilities and men can be delicate and not capable of doing much except to attract women to marry them. Women need not be nurturing always and can be

rejecting mothers, given to violence. In other words, she hit at the roots of western patriarchy by demonstrating that if women cannot do something, it is simply because they are not allowed to do it, not because they cannot do it. Anthropologists also critiqued the essentialized and Eurocentric perspectives of generalizing theories such as those given by Freud about universal trends of human behaviour, using their own culture and personality theories. Accepting that early childhood experiences play a critical role in shaping personality in adult life, field studies of Mead (1930), Linton (1936) and Cora Dubois (1960) showed that such experiences are culturally conditioned and vary according to the child rearing practices of that culture. Ruth Benedict became famous for her National Character theory by which she indicated that similarities in the personalities of people from an entire nation can be attributed to uniformities in child rearing practices and therefore shared early childhood experiences. Post-World War 11, the Americans were greatly interested in understanding the personalities of those who were their greatest enemies, the Japanese and also the communist country of Russia. Benedict's work, *Chrysanthemum and the Sword* (1946) became a best seller and Mead's work *Growing up in New Guinea* (1930) bust the myth of adolescent trauma, again believed to be universal till Mead showed that in many cultures there is no such period of adolescence as children grow quickly into adults. One may compare her data to the Indian practice of early marriage and assumption of adult tasks at an early age by most young adults growing up in rural and tribal areas.

The most significant contribution of anthropology to the world has been to show that many of the things that are taken for granted as given, such as race, sexuality, personality etc. are not 'natural' at all, but all are socially and culturally constructed. This has made anthropologists wary of all forms of discrimination and inequalities, knowing that most of these are only myths created by society itself. Seminal work has also been done by anthropologists in deconstructing race, the racial theories of caste, the biological basis of gender and the inevitability of heterosexual binary sexual dimorphism. In other words, anthropologists have trodden the path of liberalism and inclusiveness, foregrounding universal humanism above all other considerations.

Following the fact of diversity of cultures they have always been critical of universalization of the human experience and Malinowski's work on the Trobriand Islanders (1952), made a significant, though largely ignored critique of Freud's theory of Oedipus Complex, indicating that in societies like the Trobriand, it is not the biological father but the social relation of Mother's Brother who emerges as a key figure in the early childhood of a boy. It is therefore not the sexual figure of mother's husband but the non-sexual mother's brother who has greatest influence in the early childhood experience of the boy who is also the social heir of the mother's brother. In other words, most work by anthropologists have tried to deconstruct most biologically deterministic theories with social and cultural constructs. With the work of Mead and others, gender ceased to be a biological construct but was understood as a social construct.

At the local level, as in India, as pointed out by Guha (2022) there were some like Tarak Chandra Das and Bhupindra Nath Datta who took a critical stance. They critiqued the colonial rule and governance basing their criticism, not on political rhetoric but on ground level data, like that collected

by Das (1949) during the Great Bengal Famine and of Datta on the indigenous Bhumij of Bengal. The doyen of early anthropology in India, Sarat Chandra Roy (1912) has also taken an empathetic and progressive view about the tribal people pointing to them as forgotten heroes unrecorded by history. Their nationalism was also not the Hindu Nationalism that was guiding anthropologists such as N.K. Bose, who was also a close associate of Gandhi, but a more liberal and universal form of nationalism based on humanism and acceptance of cross- cultural diversity. Later and in more contemporary times, anthropologists have criticised state led and top- down concepts of development, policies and plans monitored by those who do not belong and have no understanding of local cultures and world views. War, environment, populism and other such critical perspectives engage anthropologists in the present times.

As anthropologist Levi-Strauss had pointed out, social realities can never be grasped on the surface but lie deep under the layers of what is apparent on the surface. The anthropological methodology based on qualitative research and in- depth data collection and analysis, facilitates the uncovering of these deeper realities of social relations and human behavior (Srivastava 2005). But what is the biggest contribution of anthropology is to foreground the fact of humans being both culturally and genetically constructed, where the cultural factors significantly prominent in defining humanity.

Culture and Politics?

The burden on those who teach anthropology is to carry these insights with them. To teach a subject like anthropology, one has to acquire a mind that is both broad and unburdened with any kind of preconceived notions about any community, people or region, yet one cannot afford to be totally apolitical, for social life is political and any explanation of society has to, if we accept that we are dealing with living human beings exactly like us, involve the political, where political is about arenas of power in which we all operate. Anthropologists are also wary of generalizations and classifications, of making any remarks that are prejudicial or reinforce pre-conceived notions. Since anthropology is a discipline, whose main objective is to make cross-cultural comparisons, one usually comes across cultural practices that are very different from one's own. Anthropologists have also in this sense been accused of being too accepting of condoning even inhuman practices such as infanticide or other forms of violence in the name of cultural relativism and transcending ethnocentrism. Here anthropologists have often to tread the fine line between what they understand as mere cultural 'difference' and what is blatantly a violation of human rights and what amounts to cruelty. Debates have often issued between anthropologists and human rights activists on these grounds. Anthropologists have sometimes provided evidence to defend practices which they have shown have been exaggerated or magnified in order to prove the tribes and indigenous people to be 'primitive'. Felix Padel (2011) in his work on the Kondhs of Orissa has shown how the British stigmatized the Kondhs as primitive and given to violation of human rights because of their practice of human sacrifice. The data presented by Padel clearly indicates that the violence that was unleashed on the Kondhs in the name of stoppage

of human sacrifice led to many more deaths and widespread terror among the local people, and the effects of the so-called 'civilizing' efforts were in fact exceedingly savage and cruel. Even the victims 'rescued' by the British to save them from being sacrificed, never survived the so-called rescue and almost all died in British custody. The task of the teacher then involves engaging the students in such debates, to encourage them to evaluate the cultural practices, not in terms of how they have been presented by the largely Eurocentric scholars but in light of actual evidence based studies and using a non-judgmental anthropological perspective. Along with the notion of cultural-relativism comes the attitude of being non-judgmental, of not morally evaluating any cultural practice, an attitude that has often been criticized by those involved in human rights activism and also in some instances by feminist scholars. The latter had always been critical of the comparative perspective of anthropologists that directly questioned their axiom of universal subordination of women. Anthropological field studies have often demonstrated that not only is the public/private dichotomy somewhat artificial, the women's role in society can be significant as well as appreciated. Patriarchy too manifests itself in various ways. In my study of the Bhotiyas on the Indo-Tibet border in the central Himalayas, I found that while the men were ritually superior, the women had full control of social and village life (Channa 2013a). Unlike Ortner's dichotomy of men as culture and women as nature, the Jad Bhotiya's followed an opposite schema, here the men were equated with nature and the women with culture (Channa 2015), but surprisingly there was no reversal in men's position as superior as among these mountain pastoralists, nature is superior to culture. Anything human is inferior to the supreme and sublime power of nature whom they worship as divinities. In this sense, while teaching the students, they must be taught to appreciate the non-western and indigenous points of view as opposed to the dominant Eurocentric perspectives. The teacher's job is to look for suitable material and also encourage students to search libraries and sources for alternative points of view. In our list of readings more emphasis should be put on teaching from material pertaining to India, whether studied by an Indian or an outside anthropologist. The students relate much better to material that is familiar to them than to ones to which they do not relate. The reality that is close at hand and which is represented in everyday life explains theories much better than alien ones which often make no sense to a young person who has not had much exposure.

Coming back to the debates, one that has often engaged contemporary scholars, especially those who follow the feminist perspective is the often difficult relationship between feminism and culture. The feminist point of view, and often rightly, has been that since most societies are patriarchal it is likely that most cultural practices and social norms would reinforce patriarchy, so if the anthropologists always defend local cultural practices in the name of identity of the people and because of their functional implications, then the women's perspective is almost always lost and their position in their society remains subordinated with no hope of redress. A case in point is the retention of tribal customary laws in the name of protecting their identity. In my conversations with Naga women, however, I have always seen a vehement opposition to the retention of customary laws as the women feel that these are totally patriarchal, denying them full social identity and any inheritance rights. They all expressed

that they would rather have a common civil law as per the Indian legal system and not abide by customary law only. The customary law is defended strongly by the men of the tribe as they are highly patriarchal, and since the Naga apex political bodies, the Naga Hoho, comprise only of men who sit across tables to negotiate political deals with the state, the women's voices never surface. Within the Naga customary law the women have practically no rights of ownership and representation and would rather be ruled by the far more liberal Indian Civil laws than by their own customary laws.

Now such situations pose a dilemma for the anthropologists, as they would like to protect tribal identity and it was because of the initiative of anthropologists like Verrier Elwin that Nehru put forward his Panchsheel and there were legislations to protect tribal customary laws. But from a feminist point of view and from the perspective of universal humanity, is it right not to give women their due in society? Actually, no society is static. At the time when the Nagaland people did not have much private property and most of shifting cultivating land was common property of the clan or village, the property rights of women was not much of an issue but in the present times, with private property taking the place of communal land, the question of women's property rights becomes an issue. Here the role of the anthropologist is a sensitive one and for a teacher too, such questions must be debated with all their pros and cons with the students. Time and change must be an integral part of all analysis as well as a holistic perspective that tries to do justice to all sections of society, and not just incorporate the dominant voices.

Fieldwork and Methodology

What sets anthropology apart is the reliance on fieldwork and the ethnographic method that has certain characters which makes it unique and different from all other disciplines using direct interactive methods such as psychology. Anthropological fieldwork is based upon the obliteration, as much as possible, between the observer and the observed, in what is known as an empathetic approach which is intersubjective in nature. It replaces verticality in relations with a horizontal solidarity where relations of equality, often of the nature of kinship are formed with one's informants and even if there is not total participation at least quasi participation is a must. There is a method in the participation that requires that the person doing fieldwork must merge with the field to the extent that she becomes invisible so to say, or get absorbed to the extent that her presence makes least disturbance in the field. We were taught by teachers who were adept at doing fieldwork and in the department of anthropology at Delhi University where both Vinay and I studied, fieldwork was taken very seriously. In our times the period of fieldwork extended to over a month and we spent this time in some remote area without much facilities, cooking our own food and making do with very simple basic living. In the present times with the corporatization of education, this emphasis on fieldwork where both students and teachers go and live with the informants in the field is almost disappearing with food being catered and rooms being air conditioned.

I had the opportunity to visit Vinay in his field in Bikaner among the Raikas, where he did his Ph. D fieldwork. He was fully a member of the Raika community where he was known as 'masterji'

(the teacher). We had a bunch of students from the Department of Anthropology at Delhi University and were taking them around. As usual Vinay had some brilliant ideas, like pointing to the village grocery store and remarking that someone could just sit in the shop the entire day and observe the proceedings of buy, sell, barter, haggling etc. that went on. He remarked that what was being sold and bought would mirror the consumption patterns and cultural needs of the village as well as give inside reflections about many aspects of village life. Our senior teacher, the late Professor J.S. Bhandari was an astute fieldworker. He would occupy a strategic position in the village and spend practically the entire day there, doing nothing. By the evening he would have gathered far more information than most of us who were slogging away taking interviews and going from house to house, could do. In our M.Sc. fieldwork he took up position in the local tea house and would sit there entire day drinking cups of tea. In the evening he would ask us whether we found out about this or that about the village and its people and we used to be surprised that he knew so much without walking around a single step. In Bikaner he positioned himself on a comfortable cot in the front yard of a middle-aged woman whom he engaged in animated conversation. After talking to him for almost an hour, the woman suddenly raised her *duppatta* and covered her face, so Bhandari asked her as to what happened? Why she suddenly covered her face? She pointed to an elderly man walking at quite a distance and said, there is a man walking by so I have to cover my face (do *purdah*). So surprised Prof. Bhandari asked her, "but you were talking to me for an hour without any *purdah,* am I not a man?" She replied that since he did not belong to the village it did not matter whether he was a man or not; he was basically a non-person. From that one conversation we learnt so much about gender constructs, social personhood and kinship relations in that village. The first truth that emerged was that one was a social person only if one belonged to the village, outsiders were non-entities in terms of gender, social interaction and any other kind of relationship. Secondly relationships could have a name only if one belonged and conversely, if one was given a name in the village, it meant that one belonged. Putting this in the context of Vinay being referred to as 'masterji' meant that the villagers had accepted him as one of them. For this very reason, the women observed *purdah* from him, which they did not from those considered non-entities like Prof. Bhandari. Having been accepted as one of their own, Vinay was denied any access to the inner world of the women, and except for some who were elderly and who considered him as a son and one or two whom he had adopted as his 'sisters', but all being married, he had no knowledge about the inside of the homes, considered the women's domain. So, the first request that he had made to me when I visited his field was that I should go inside the homes and talk to the women, which I did, but sometime with hilarious results. After going around for a while, I developed good rapport with the women, who were very open and friendly and unlike middle class urban women, seemed to have little inhibitions. Conversations often buzzed around who was having an affair with whom on the sly, from whose house a lot of noise was coming at night (accompanied by giggles and knowing looks) and a lot of sexual banter. So, one day told me quite openly and this was their opinion, not mine. They said, "Why do you go around with that man (Vinay) you are not suited to each other; you are '*gori*' (fair) nice looking, he is dark and not good looking". Shocked I told them that we have

no such relation, we are just colleagues and we have got some students to do fieldwork with us. They did not seem convinced. They said, "if he is not your '*bhaila*'(boyfriend or lover), then why are you wandering around with him, here and there (*idhar udhar bhatak rahi ho*)". I said it was my job so they were quick to tell me that I could do something better than wear out the soles of feet going around with a bunch of young people and a not so good looking man, as I could certainly have done better! So, with this rather informed advice my fieldwork was shown its place, and I had no option but to accept their verdict. Another interesting fact observed in that field and which also deconstructed some of the myths people hold about the custom of purdah, assigning it to Muslims in general, was that in a mixed village of Hindus and Muslims, the Muslim women seemed to have far more freedom than the Hindus, and while the married Hindu women observed purdah from the local men, the Muslim married women went around with their faces uncovered and generally showing more liberty in their movements around the village. Investigating the reason led to some interesting observations. The Hindus of North India, practice village exogamy, as all born within the same village of the comparable age group are considered as siblings. The women who were married into this village were none of them born in it and had come from other villages. Custom and cultural norms dictated that the women born in the village, irrespective of whether they were married or not did not have to observe purdah in the village, for here the men of their age groups were their brothers and others were of appropriate kin relations which did not require purdah. One did purdah from one's affines or in-laws. Since all married Hindu women were from outside the village, they all observed purdah, unless they were the daughters of the village who may have come for a visit.

The Muslim women were differently situated as there was no concept of village exogamy for them. Unlike the Hindus, the Muslims practice cousin marriage, and even parallel cousin marriage that is a woman may marry into her own lineage. Such being the case, the Muslim women were mostly both daughters of the village as well as daughters-in-law of the village, but they preferred the former identity and did not observe any purdah, going around the village with their faces uncovered. I had observed similar phenomenon in the villages near Udaipur in Rajasthan, where again in a mixed population, the Muslim women appeared quite free and again went around with no purdah.

Fieldwork where there is no hierarchy and the researcher is able to establish horizontal ties of friendship and kinship with the informants often yields unexpected data and also lends depth to analysis. Anthropologists therefore gain a level of insight into complex social issues and cultural practices that is not achievable by other methodologies. For this very reason at present several other social sciences such as psychology, history, political science and cultural geography have opted for the qualitative ethnographic methods either entirely or as a supplement to more structured forms of data collection. The teachers who teach social and cultural anthropology in Delhi University have always opted for qualitative data and analysis as the primary form of methodology and both Vinay and I have been part of this process. The teaching of anthropology for us has been focused on the realities of day- to- day life and as far as possible it is the role of the teacher to bring to the students, the conjunction of real

life and theory. Anthropological theory cut off from real life is just empty rhetoric and has no value as an explanatory tool

To sum up, let us examine the real goals of the teachings of anthropology, which although began as a discipline to aid colonial administration, developed into a humanistic discipline largely because of its methodology which brought it close to flesh and blood humans. Moreover, they were looking at humans in a holistic perspective, as cultured social beings, and not just as parts, the way physicians and psychologists look at them or as mere figures as they are for the economist. Anthropologists thereafter became advocates for the marginal, voiceless and victims of structural inequalities. The anthropological lens could be used to see though the surface at the root causes of inequality and exploitation and to see the world as looks from the perspective of those who are obscured by history and politics. This empathy also becomes apparent in those who become true anthropologists, like Vinay Srivastava. A fully immersed anthropologist is humble and has ears to listen to every voice. I remember whenever anyone entered his room, Vinay would make them sit and then listen very attentively to whatever they had to say. He would first listen and then talk. He would also give an ear to each and everyone who came to him, and this he continued even when he held high administrative positions. A trained anthropologist learns to see and to listen, a skill not everyone has and although it seems mundane, it is something that is also rare. The teaching of anthropology should involve a close teacher student relationship, an empathetic relation that one extends to informants in the field, should also be formed with the students, who in turn must be encouraged to inculcate the same attitude.

When in the field, I have always asked my students to treat the informants as knowledge givers, as those who are helping you, are superior to you. Instead of asking them questions, ask for their help and advice and one will get genuine data. Students working on traditional healing practices can much better data, if they begin to ask for remedies for problems that they have (even if fictional); like a common cold, or headache or sprained foot. Once treated with respect, the informant will come out with real answers and not just the ideal types that they feel the researcher will anticipate. Genuine respect for those one is studying is a key to successful fieldwork which may be vitiated if a relation of hierarchy is sought to be established with one's informants.

Conclusion

This paper was supposed to be a tribute to Prof. Vinay Srivastava, but since a lot has been already talked and written about his personal achievements and other attributes, this paper is dedicated to the teaching of anthropology and to those who teach it well, and it is well known that he was an exemplary example of the latter. The merit of anthropology is that it is a discipline one imbibes into one's self, become a changed person. The inter subjective nature of its methodology requires that one not only study another culture or society but that one transforms from within to accommodate the subject of study within one's self (Channa 2013b). Anthropologists have relocated into their fields and made them into their homes, many form lifelong relations, almost all find a change that is deep seated that allows them to look at the world in a different way. Those who do not change, never become true

anthropologists and true teachers of anthropology. Vinay was one of them, and it is the greatest tribute one can pay to him.

References

- Benedict, Ruth. 1946. *The Chrysanthemum and the Sword: Patterns of Japanese Culture*, New York: Houghton Miffin
- Channa, Subhadra Mitra. 2013a. *The Inner and Outer Selves: Gender, Cosmology and Ecology on the Himalayan Borders,* Delhi: Oxford University Press
- Channa, Subhadra Mitra. 2013b. 'Becoming a Dhobi' in Subhadra Mitra Channa and Joan P Mencher (eds.) *Life as a Dalit: Views from the Bottom on Caste in India*, New Delhi: Sage Publications
- Channa, Subhadra Mitra. 2015. 'Men as Nature and Women as Culture: Women's Work in a Pastoral Community on the Himalayan Border' In Subhadra Mitra Channa and Marilyn Porter (eds) *Gender, Livelihood and Environment: How Women Manage Resources*, Hyderabad: Orient Blackswan, pp 27-50
- Dubois, Cora. 1960. *The People of Alor*, New York: Harper & Row
- Guha, Abhijit. 2022. *Nation-Building in Indian Anthropology: Beyond the Colonial Frontier*, New Delhi: Manohar
- Linton, Ralph. 1936. *The Study of Man,* New York: Appleton Century Crofts Inc.
- Malinowski, Bronislaw. 1952. *The Sexual Life of Savages in North Western Melanesia,* London: Routledge and Sons
- Mead, Margaret. 1935. *Sex and Temperament in Three Primitive Societies,* New York: Mintun
- Mead, Margaret. 1963[1930]. *Growing up in New Guinea,* U.K.: Penguin Books
- Padel, Felix. 2011[2009]. *Sacrificing People: Invasions of a Tribal Landscape,* Hyderabad: Orient Blackswan (Paperback Edition)
- Roy, Sarat Chandra. 1912. *The Mundas and their Country,* Calcutta: The Kuntalini Press
- Srivastava, Vinay. 1997. *Religious Renunciation of a Pastoral People*, Delhi: Oxford University Press
- Srivastava, Vinay. 2005. *Methodology and Fieldwork,* Delhi: Oxford University Press

Bio Profile of the Author:

Retired as Professor, Department of Anthropology, University of Delhi in 2016. Was the Senior Vice-President of IUAES (International Union of Anthropological and Ethnological Sciences), from 2018-2023 and former Chair of the Commission on Marginalization and Global Apartheid (IUAES 2013-2021) and Chair of the Commission on Anthropology of Women (IUAES 2009-2013). Research interests are in marginalization and identity studies, gender, cosmology and religion, environment and urban communities and landscape. Publications include Gender is South Asia (2013:Cambridge

University Press), Life as a Dalit (ed.,) with Joan P Mencher, (2013: Sage), The Inner and Outer Selves, (2013: Oxford University Press) and Gender, Livelihood and Environment (ed.) with Marilyn Porter (2015: Orient Blackswan), Anthropological Perspectives on Indian Tribes (2021: Orient Blackswan) and Religious Pluralism in India: Ethnographic and Philosophic Evidence, 1886-1936 (ed.) with Lancy Lobo (2023: Routledge). Recipient of Charles Wallace Fellowship (2000), Fulbright Visiting Lecturer (2003), Fulbright Scholar –in Residence (2008-9), Visiting Prof to Kyoto (2001), Visiting Prof. MSH Paris (2002), University of Kentucky (2012), Visiting Prof. Centre for Afro-Asian Studies, Bahia, Brazil (2018). Taught Human Rights at the University of Calcutta as a Visiting Professor, also Visiting Professor at the Universities of Calcutta and Central University, Hyderabad, Kannaur University Kerala and North Bengal University, in India; The President of the Indian Anthropological Association for five years and editor of the Journal Indian Anthropologist (2000-2014); Editorial Board Member of Man: The Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute, Recipient of the S.C. Roy Gold Medal from the Asiatic Society of Calcutta for Lifetime Achievement in Cultural Anthropology (2011), Best Serving Teacher Award from Delhi University (2016); Author of more than eighty scholarly papers.

The Philosophers and The Law-Givers in Ancient India*

Mrinal Kanti Gangopadhyay.

Abstract

According to the Indian tradition, the ends of human life (purusartha) are divided into four classes, namely, Dharma, Artha, Kama and Moksa. The objectives of each are different from one another. The authors of the Dharmasastra or the Law-givers concerned themselves with the maintenance of an ideal social order, while the philosophers are supposed to be the custodians of logic and free thinking. However, evidences show that the law-givers try to influence the philosophers on some basic issues. In this context, we get valuable Information from the Astika-Nastika classification of the Indian philosophies and Sankara's Interpretations of at least one legend in the Chandogya Upanisad.

Keywords: *Philosophers, Law-givers, purusartha.*

The Philosophers and the Law-givers in Ancient India

According to the Indian tradition, the ends of human life (*purusartha*) are divided into four classes, namely, Dharma, Artha, Kama and Moksa. We have thus Manu's Dharmasastra, Kautilya's Arthasastra Vatsyayana's Kamasutra and Moksasastra of the philosophers, namely, the Nyayasutra of Gautama, Vedantasutra of Badarayana and similar others. The objectives of each are different from one another. However, we find that the authors of the Dharmasastra or the law-givers concern themselves with the maintenance of an ideal social order, while the philosophers are supposed to be the custodians of logic and free thinking. Yet evidences show that the law-givers try to influence the philosophers on some basic issues. In this context, we get valuable information from the Astika-Nastika classification of the Indian philosophies.

However, it would be wrong to assume that this idea of philosophical activity is approved of and followed by all the Indian philosophers. A procedure based upon free thinking and unbiased argumentation, which the philosophers try to build up do not appear acceptable to many. Thus, there grows up side by side, another equally strong if not stronger tradition denouncing a tendency to free thinking or pure argumentation' If the former wanted to make 'doubt' the starting point, the latter accorded the highest position to 'faith', faith in scriptural declaration.

---

*Prof. Karunasindhu Das Endowment Lecture delivered on 29th February 2024 at the Anthropological Survey of India. The Lecture was organized by Kolkata Society for Asian Studies.

We may have just one example to form an idea of the extent and seriousness of this opposition to free thinking in ancient India.

An easy but glaring instance of how the philosophers fail to outgrow the spell of Manu is the most widely accepted classification of the systems of Indian philosophy. Though rather unsatisfactory in certain respects, this early classification has not only been never questioned, but also given a prominent status in the sense that most of the textbooks on Indian philosophy, even today, start with it. According to this conventional classification, the systems are either Astika or Nastika. Before considering the principle underlying, it would perhaps be worthwhile to say a few words about the meanings of these two terms.

Let us first consider the view of the grammarians who are primarily concerned with the etymology and meaning of words. Panini, the grammarian, says (4.4.60) that the words *astika* and *nastika* are formed by adding the suffix *thak* to the words *asti* and *nasti*. Thus the literal meanings of *astika* and *nastika* are, respectively, one who believes that 'it' exist and one who believes that 'it' does not exist. But what is to be meant by 'it'?

The commentators more or less agree that 'it' here means the 'other world' or *paraloka.* That is, one would be an Astika if one believes in rebirth or transmigration of the self and a Nastika otherwise. But the conventional classification does not take this into consideration. Why? Perhaps because the term *astika* would then be applicable to the Buddhists and the Jainas also as they too accept the immortality of the self and its journey through births. But how can the representatives of Brahmanical culture accept such a position? After all, the term *astika* carries with it a sense of respect and honor. It should not be allowed to be applied to rivals like the Buddhists or the Jainas.

Other meanings of the words, the popular meanings, rest on the belief or disbelief in God. The theist is an Astika and the atheist is a Nfaith in the scriptures and is astika. A classification on the basis of such an implication may successfully leave out the Buddhists or the Jainas, but still it is not free from difficulty. In that case, the two well-known Brahmanical systems, the Samkhya and the Mimansa, would have to be considered Nastika, because they repudiate God in no uncertain terms. Perhaps that is why this meaning also is not taken into consideration by the conventional classification.

Thus, while classifying the systems of philosophy into the Astika and the Nastika, special meanings have been attached to the terms. Thus, Astika means one who has faith in the Veda, one who believes in the absolute authority and infallibility of the scriptures. Nastika means the opposite, namely, one who does not have faith in the scriptures and is rather a vilifier of the scriptures. But what are the circumstances behind such a shift of meaning, such a specialization? Few scholars seem to have concerned themselves with the question. A well-known scholar after noting the various meaning remarks non-committally that "a post-Buddhistic, but pre-Christian, tradition" fixed these special meanings for the terms. The only scholar to make a categorical statement perhaps is S.N. Dasgupta, who says: "but we have the definition of *nastika* in Manu's own words as one who controverts the Vedic doctrines (*veda-nindaka*)". Fortunately, or unfortunately this tradition became fixed as if for all time and the injunction of the law-giver acquired an absolute philosophical significance as it were.

Just by way of illustrating how this spell of absolute Vedic authority held sway over the classical Indian philosophers we may refer to the remarks of two of them, one early and the other late. Prasastapada (c.5th cent.A.D.), an authority of the Vaisesika system classifies false knowledge (*avidya*) into four forms, one of which is called *viparyaya*, the contradictory false knowledge totally opposed to right knowledge. One of the illustrations for *viparyaya* even by him reads: A false knowledge in the form "it is beneficial" with regard to the views advocated by the Sakyas (Buddhists) etc. whose teachings are opposite to what are taught by the *trayi* (*Rk, Yajus* and *Saman*) would be a case of *viparyaya.* Again Madhusudana Sarasvati (c.1540A.D.), an Advaita Vedantist, while giving a detailed list of the various branches of learning (*prasthana*), simply refuses to include the Buddhists, the Carvakas and the Jainas on the ground that they are all *veda-bahya*, outside the pale of Vedic orthodoxy and , as such, they are not in the list conducive to any good of the human beings even in an indirect way. It is all the better to leave themout of consideration completely. From this conventional hand standpoint three systems are declared to be *nastika* (heterodox) and there is no doubt about their strong anti-Vedic attitude. They are: the materialistic philosophy called Lokayata, Carvaka or Barhaspatya; a variety of philosophical views that claim generally an allegiance to the teachings of the Buddha and hence broadly referred to as the Buddhist an another creed-cum-philosophy, perhaps older than Buddhism, known as Jainism, the name being derived from *jina,* the victor, i.e. one supposed to have achieved complete mastery over oneself by overcoming the passions. On the other hand, six systems are declared to be *astika* (orthodox) which are Purvamimamsa, Vedanta, Samkhya, Yoga, Nyaya and Vaisesika.

Despite the fact that this classification is firmly rooted in the Indian philosophical tradition we would perhaps be not justified in overlooking some of the difficulties it is involved with.

An obvious objection against the special interpretation of the words *astika* and *nastika* would be that it goes against etymology. At least in the case of the Sanskrit language the primary concern for determining the meaning of a word is the grammarian's. But we have already seen that so far as grammatical derivation is concerned there is in it nothing about pledging or not pledging royalty to the scriptures or especially to the Vedas as it has been ordained by Manu. It is proved where the meaning of a word that words do not always retain their etymological significance. Meanings of words are nor permanently fixed. They may change due to analogy, popular usage, association of ideas, contact with other languages and the like and etymology may be forgotten. But instances are perhaps rare where the meaning of a word is fixed, in total disregard to etymology, just on the whim of an individual.

The other peculiar point about this classification is that it originates from a non-philosopher. Manu is after all a law-giver and not a philosopher. Unlike the philosopher, the law-giver may not be concerned with an essentially rational approach to reality. Rather he is interested in the security of a social structure which he considers to be the most desirable and ideal. We have already referred to the fact that, according to the law-givers, one of the highly detestable activities is free thinking, thinking outside the general structure of faith, reasoning not in conformity to what is declared in the scriptures. In their list of offenses against law, free thinking is rather conspicuous. Though the different law-

codes describe somewhat differently the magnitude of this particular offence, the penalty prescribe is nowhere light. Among the opponents of free-thinking Manu may be considered the first and foremost. Also well-known is his bias for Brahmanism, for a society dominated by the Brahmins. Perhaps it is only in defense of his ideal society that he, in spite of not being a philosopher himself, feels the need for taking a definite stand on matters philosophical. Thus, considering not only the fact of his not being a philosopher but also his basic attitude towards philosophy, the enthusiasm for adhering to a classification of philosophies by Manu may appear to be a bit strange.

This conventional classification seems to fall through on another ground also. Being *astika* or *nastika* depends on having or not having faith in the Vedas, the scriptures of a particular religion. What would be the situation if a similar principle is adopted for classification by other religions or systems also? If the Carvakas urge that the only criterion for being an *astika* is in the *Brihaspatisutra*, what would be the fate of the other systems? Should we consider every other system as nothing but *nastika*? Similarly, if the Buddhists or the Jainas decide to consider as *astika* only one who devoutly follows the precepts as laid down by the Buddha or Mahavira, we shall have different sets *astika* and *nastika*. In short, we shall hopelessly land in the mire.

We shall next give another example from the Chandogya Upanisad (4.1.1ff), referring to story of Janasruti and Raikka. Let us briefly give the story and afterwards we shall make a critical assessment of the same. The story runs as follows. Janasruti was a pious dispenser, a liberal donor who built rest-houses so that everywhere people would be eating his food.

Now, one night some swans flew past. One of them warned another that he should be careful, because the glow of Janasruti had spread from earth to heaven and he must not touch it as it might burn him up. To this, the other swan replied disparagingly that the fame of Janasruti was nothing compared to that of Raikka, the man with the cart.

Janasruti happened to overhear all this and next morning, asked his attendant to find out Raikka, the man with the cart. After searching a lot, the attendant finally came across a man who was scratching his itches sitting underneath a cart. He enquired of him whether he was Raikka, the man with the cart and the man said that indeed he was none other than the man the attendant had been looking for.

Then Janasruti took six hundred cows and a gold necklace and a chariot drawn by a she-mule and he went to Raikka, offered him the things and requested him to teach Janasruti the highest wisdom. But Raikka indignantly refused the gifts and asked the king to leave the place immediately.

So, once again, the king took a thousand cows, a gold necklace, a chariot drawn by a she-mule and his own daughter also. He went to Raikka and offered him all the things along with the village he lived in and entreated him to instruct on the secrets of the highest wisdom. Then, Raikka held the chin of the princess up and declared that it was not because of anything else but the sweet face only that he was going to speak and teach the king.[1]

The story is interesting and has engaged a good deal of attention from scholars who, holding views opposed to one another's have debated on the real implications of the story. Let us have a brief idea of the arguments and the counter-arguments.

Raikka is a man of wisdom. He is a knower of Brahman. There is no doubt about it. Even the swans are aware of his fame as a man. But who is this Raikka? How does he become wise? At least in the Chandogya we have no answer to these questions. However, one scholar of repute notes that Raikka has been described as one of the sages who attained brahmajnana or divine wisdom though they did not observe the rules of castes and stages of life.[2]

Some scholars again are not happy with the image of Raikka as presented in the Upanisad. They think that the picture of a man scratching his itches sitting under a cart and melting down before the attractiveness of the face of a girl does not exactly answer to the ideal representation of an Upanisadic sage.[3] Another notable point is that a noble man of the age who might have been a petty king of a small region does not hesitate to offer even his own daughter so that he may receive instruction in the highest wisdom which Raikka possesses. The reason for this may be that a great amount of importance is attached to the acquisition of what is considered the 'secret wisdom' or *upanisad* in those days.

Much more important however is another point that concerns the question whether a Sudra is to be considered fit or not to receive the highest wisdom. The root of the controversy is the fact that, at least two times, Raikka addresses Janasruti as Sudra, a person belonging to the lowest caste in the society – first, while indignantly refusing the gifts and secondly, while graciously accepting the gifts. So some scholars argue that the passages in which the word Sudra occurs are plain and simple and the meaning is easily understood. It can be taken in its literal sense it is not necessary to suggest any other fanciful or far-fetched meaning. But others disagree and say that there are difficulties in accepting the literal meaning. Some other plausible meaning has to be found.

Sankara, the commentator of the Chandogya, is an ardent advocate of Brahmanical supremacy in the society and cannot accept the position that a Sudra also may be eligible for receiving instructions in the sacred scriptures. So, in his commentary, he raises the question that if Janasruti is a Sudra, how can Raikka agree to teach him? He records some answers to the question, the gist of which is that the king is not a Sudra by birth, but he is so addressed because of some special reason.

First, the word *sudra* here is not a proper noun, it is used as an adjective qualifying the king. On listening to the words of the swans that he is inferior to Raikka because of not having wisdom, Janasruti is overwhelmed with grief (*suc).* Following the derivation of the word, it can be shown that the word sudra may mean a person overwhelmed with grief. The word does not mean here a man of the lowest caste. So, there is no difficulty.[4]

Secondly, here Janasruti is only compared to a Sudra, because he commits the great folly of offering money for acquiring knowledge. Knowledge cannot be bought by money. It can only be acquired through honest labor and reverence. So Janasruti's act is as good as a crime that can be committed by a Sudra only. So he is called a Sudra in a figurative sense.[5]

Thirdly, Raikka is infuriated, because the wealth offered by Janasruti is insufficient, not adequate enough. So Raikka uses the word *sudra* as an invective, he wants to insert and hurt the man. He does not mean that Janasruti is really a man of the lowest caste.[6]

Others, on the other hand, disagree and think that such semantic exercise is uncalled for. It is not proper to discard the usual meaning and find a new one unless there is sufficient ground.

Sankara says that here the derivative meaning of the word *sudra* is to be accepted and the meaning established by uses is to be rejected. But this goes against one of the accepted principles of interpretation that usage nullifies etymology. That is, when both kinds of meaning are possible, the one established by usage is to be given preference over the one available from derivation. For example, according to derivation the word *go* derives from the root *gam* (to go), should mean only a thing that moves or walks on, but actually, following general convention it is used in the sense of 'cow' irrespective of whether the animal is moving or standing still.

Moreover, it has been explained that Raikka denounces Janasruti as Sudra because he wants to buy knowledge with wealth. But what really happens in the end? The words of Raikka and his action do not agree. At the first instance Raikka refuses, but finally he agrees to teach, on being promised a lot of wealth and, on top of all, a young bride apparently, he is not averse to worldly pleasures. Why should he then condemn the man who is offering him so many objects of enjoyment? So maybe he is not condemning anybody, but speaking of something that is a fact.

End Notes:

- Chandogya 4.2.5*: tasya ha mukham upodgrhnall uvaca, ajaharemah sudra anenaiva mukhenalapayisyatha iti.*
- S.Radhakrishnan, *The Principal Upanisads,* p.401.
- See, for example, Debiprasad Chattopadhyaya *Indian Philosophy: A Popular Introduction* ,p.42.
- Under Chandyogya 4.2.3, this is Sankara's first solution to the problem: *tatrahur acarya hamsavacanasravanac chug enam avivesa, tenasau suca, srutva raikkasya mahimanam va adravatiti rsir atmanah paroksajnatam darsayan sudretya aheti*.
- Sankara under *ibid.: sudravad va dhanenaivainam vidyagrahanayopajagama, na ca susrusaya, na tu jatyaiva sudra iti*. A genuine student should go to a teacher on being prompted by an intense desire to listen to his discourse and learn; it is a crime to offer him enticements. So the king might not be a Sudra by caste, but he is so by his action.
- Sankara under *ibid., apare punar ahur alpam dhanam ahrtam iti rusaivainam uktavan sudreti. Lingam ca bahvaharana upadanam dhanasyeti.* The sage was overwhelmed anger and greed (he considered the wealth offered meagre at first, but gladly accepted it later when much more was offered) and used the invective. So, it was not meant that the king was a Sudra really. But, then, should we assume that even a man of great wisdom may be moved by anger and greed like an ordinary person?

Bio Profile of the Author:

(M.A., D. Litt., Vyakaranatirtha).
(Retd.) Asutosh Professor of Sanskrit, Calcutta University.

Brilliant academic career all along, placed in First Division and First Class. First Class second in Sanskrit Honours (C.U) and First Class First in Sanskrit M.A. (C.U).
Awarded scholarship, prizes and medals. Awarded D. Litt. By the Calcutta University for research work on Buddhist Logic (reconstruction into Sanskrit from Tibetan of a text the original of which is not available). Also passed a number of Sanskrit examinations conducted by the Vangiya Sanskrita Siksha Parishat (Government of West Bengal).
Taught in Post-Graduate and successfully guided research students for Ph.D. and M.Phil. for about 34 years. Total teaching experience about 43 years.

Publication include:

- ***Books:*** More than twenty five Research works, and also translation into Bengali and English from Sanskrit original of a number of philosophical texts and dramas.

Referred to and acknowledgement by scholars, Indian and foreign. One section of the work on Indian Atomism translated into Japanese. One book on Indian philosophy translated into Hindi.

- About 45 research papers published in Journals, Encyclopaedias, Felicitation Volumes etc. published in India and abroad.

Attended and presented papers on invitation in seminars and conference in different parts of country. Examiner of Ph.D theses of different Universities. Invited as Resource person and Visiting Fellow, Refresher Courses in Sanskrit and Philosophy, in different Universities.

Forest, Religious Practice and Festival: A Study among the Hos of Jharkhand, India

Sovan Chakraborty

Abstract :

The indigenous communities of India intricately weave their religious beliefs with the natural environment, perceiving the forest as a divine entity. Living in close proximity to the forests is essential for the survival of the majority of indigenous peoples, shaping their way of life, economic activities, socio-cultural systems, and religious practices. The Ho people view the forest not merely as a resource but as a deity, embodying a spiritual essence deeply embedded in their way of life. The study aims at comprehensively exploring the symbiotic relationship between the Ho community of West Singhbhum district in Jharkhand, India and their forest environment, specifically investigating the intertwining dynamics of religious beliefs, socio-cultural systems, and ecological practices. Through ethnographic methods, interviews, and participant observation, the objective is to provide nuanced insights into how the forest shapes the spiritual identity, rituals, and festivals of the Ho people, contributing to a deeper understanding of their unique human-environment interactions. The forest, regarded as a sacred entity, plays a pivotal role in sustaining the livelihoods of the Hos. From sourcing food to constructing homes, crafting tools, gathering firewood, and obtaining various essentials; the forest is an integral part of their daily existence. Additionally, their spiritual connection extends to perceiving ancestral spirits within the forest's landscapes and other natural elements, including bushes, hills, trees, animals, birds, and sacred groves. All of which are subjects of reverence and worship. The Ho people's festivals, intricately linked to nature, underscore their Eco-centric worldview. Examining their socio-cultural system reveals a commitment to environmental conservation through totemic clans and taboos, showcasing indigenous awareness and sustainable practices.

Key Words : *Forest Ecology, Tribal Religion, Symbiotic Relationship, Sacred Grove, Festivals, Indigenous Knowledge.*

Introduction :

The intricate tapestry of the forest and tribal religion is woven with threads of inseparable unity. Within this belief system, the forest is not merely a landscape; it is revered as a maternal entity, cradling the Ho tribe as its children. Their entire way of life; encompassing religious, socioeconomic,

and sociocultural dimensions; intricately interlaces with the forest environment. The symbiosis is so profound that the terms "tribes" and "forests" become interchangeable, reflecting a profound fusion of existence (Sabar 2017:316). Ingrained in their consciousness is the conviction that the spirits of their ancestors find abode in the midst of the trees, hills, streams, and the myriad lives within the forest ecology. This profound connection harks back to ancient times when these indigenous communities, once hailed as the custodians of the forest, lived in complete harmony with nature (Purabi 2012: 665). Top of Form

In the heartland of Jharkhand, where the rhythmic rustle of leaves orchestrates a symphony of ancient tales, unfolds a captivating exploration into the symbiotic embrace of the Ho tribe and the enchanted forest. This journey transcends the mundane, delving into the mystical realm where religion intertwines with the very essence of nature. Comprising 26.2% of Jharkhand's demographic fabric, the state boasts a tapestry of 32 distinct tribal communities, featuring notable groups like Santal, Munda, and Ho (Singhal, 2021:2278). These indigenous societies, deeply ingrained in rich cultural traditions, assume a pivotal role in upholding the ecological richness of the region. Their spiritual convictions; interwoven with tenets of totemism, veneration of sacred trees, and the sanctity of groves; emerge as a robust force in the preservation of the landscape (Ormsby and Bhagwat, 2010: 324). Nevertheless, the encroachment of modernization and commercialization, coupled with the gradual waning of time-honored belief systems, presents a formidable challenge to the sustainable conservation of floral and faunal biodiversity (Rowkith and Bhagwan, 2020: 549). Recognizing the influential role of religion, it becomes imperative to safeguard the sanctity of indigenous communities' religious values and associated taboos from erosion, ensuring an unwavering commitment to the quality and longevity of environmental conservation efforts. The research reveals that the tribal lifestyle is intricately woven into a psycho-spiritual and socio-ecological cosmological worldview, shaped by generations of indigenous existence. Their unique spirituality venerates nature, prioritizes family bonds, and embraces celebratory rituals, forming an integral part of their psyche (Thakur, 2009: 65).

Religious beliefs and practices constitute universal aspects of human society, characterized by diverse expressions across societal dimensions. Max Muller (1889:12), the founder of comparative religion, posited that cults and myths stem from the poetic personification of natural phenomena. He argued that religion emerged from the emotional responses of early humans to natural occurrences evoking wonder, awe, and fear. Scholars like Spencer (1876:45), Tylor (1871:103), and Frazer (1922:99) approached religion from an intellectualist perspective, interpreting it as a mechanism for explaining events with divine attribution. While contemporary terminology assigns "religion" to a specific realm of life and institution, it remains an integral facet of tribal existence, influencing domains such as hunting, agriculture, science, and art (Friess and Schneider 1965:12). Religion encompasses diverse public and private methods through which individuals and groups engage with deities, spirits, and ancestors. As Melford Spiro (1966: 17) elucidates, religion is a culturally molded association involving

culturally postulated superhuman entities. In brief, religion entails the belief in supernatural forces appeased by individuals who attain spiritual empowerment through rituals and sacred performances, as highlighted by Mibang et al. (2004:56). It manifests through the acknowledgment of both natural and supernatural powers, the training of religious specialists, and the enactment of ritual practices. Religion encompasses ideas, attitudes, and actions prevalent at all cultural levels, be it primitive or civilized. The relevance of the sacred grove in tribal life, as well as its social and ecological value, has been demonstrated by Gadgil and Vartak (1981:59). The many scheduled tribal communities are found in almost all states of India and make up about 8.6% of the country's total population (Census of India, 2011).

The Ho tribe, an indigenous community predominantly residing in the state of Jharkhand, India, is characterized by a distinctive cultural heritage and traditional practices. Linguistically, they communicate in the Ho language, which belongs to the Munda subgroup of the Austroasiatic language family (Roy, 1918:15). Engaged primarily in agriculture, the Ho people cultivate staple crops such as rice, millets, and pulses, supplementing their livelihood with animal husbandry. Their societal structure is organized around clans, each affiliated with a totemic symbol, and is led by a village headman known as the *Munda*. The Ho people had their own good and malicious spirits, which they referred to as *Bongas*. As per Majumdar (1950:76), these *Bonga*s are believed to inhabit the nearby hills, forests, and village environs, representing a broad term encapsulating gods and spirits endowed with unique forces or powers. The Ho community relies on village priests owing to their perceived natural prowess in pacifying these deities during times of affliction, epidemics, or to ensure agricultural prosperity and livestock health. Sir S.C. Roy (1918:1) provides insights into their religious framework, denoted as the "*Sarna*" religion. It is characterized as a regulated emotional state system encompassing their lifestyle, involving veneration of deities and ancestral spirits. The central deity, regarded as the creator of the planet, assumes legendary status, accompanied by a retinue of gods and goddesses, some of whom are considered malevolent.

The primary objectives of this study among the Ho community in Jharkhand, India, are to comprehensively examine the intricate relationship between the forest environment and tribal religious practices and festivals. The study aims to elucidate the significance of the forest in shaping the Ho people's way of life, religious rituals, and cultural festivities. Specifically, the research seeks to identify and analyze the religious patterns, traditional belief systems, and practices embedded in the Ho community's connection with the forest. Furthermore, the research endeavors to explore how these religious activities contribute to the conservation of natural resources and the maintenance of ecological balance. By focusing on the Ho community in West Singhbhum, the study aspires to provide valuable insights into the interplay between indigenous religious beliefs, forest ecology, and cultural practices, contributing to a broader understanding of the intricate dynamics between human communities and their natural surroundings.

This study's uniqueness emerges from its profound investigation into the symbiotic relationship between the Ho community of West Singhbhum, India, and their forest environment. By seamlessly integrating religious beliefs, socio-cultural systems, and ecological practices, the research offers a nuanced understanding of how these elements intricately shape the fabric of Ho people's lives. Focused specifically on the Ho tribe, the study delves into their distinct religious rituals, festivals, and socio-cultural norms, avoiding broad stereotypes associated with tribal communities. Utilizing environmental ethnography, the work illuminates the Ho people's intimate connection with the forest, going beyond mere descriptions to reveal the forest's perception as a deity, a mother, and an indispensable part of their daily existence. Emphasizing the eco-centric worldview of the Ho community, the study highlights their sustainable practices and conscious efforts, such as the protection of specific tree species, to maintain a harmonious relationship with nature.

Exploring the historical roots of Ho beliefs provides a temporal dimension to their cultural and religious expressions, enriching the analysis with insights into the continuity and evolution of their traditions. The study adeptly weaves together religion and ecology, illustrating how Ho religious practices and festivals are deeply embedded in their ecological surroundings. Moreover, by documenting specific rituals, festivals, and associated practices, the research adds a practical dimension, offering a tangible portrayal of the Ho community's cultural expressions. In essence, this work significantly contributes to understanding indigenous cultures, environmental practices, and the interconnectedness of belief systems and ecology.

Exploring Methodologies and Study Region

The research employs a combination of qualitative methods, including participant observation, in-depth interviews, and ethnographic fieldwork. The use of participant observation allows the researcher to immerse themselves in the daily lives and rituals of the Ho community, fostering a nuanced understanding of their religious practices. In-depth interviews serve as a valuable tool for eliciting detailed insights into the beliefs, customs, and perceptions of the community members. The researcher conducts open-ended interviews with key informants, religious leaders, and participants in festivals. This approach facilitates the elicitation of rich narratives, providing insights into the symbolic meanings attached to the forest, religious rituals, and festive celebrations. Additionally, ethnographic fieldwork involves prolonged engagement within the community, facilitating the collection of contextual data and the establishment of rapport with the participants. Additionally, case studies were conducted, focusing on religious individuals and priests to gain a deeper understanding of their beliefs and practices. The selection of case studies was intentional, aiming for diversity and depth in perspectives. The researchers opted for structured schedules to maintain consistency and facilitate quantitative analysis of demographic and religious data. Case studies allowed for a qualitative exploration of individual

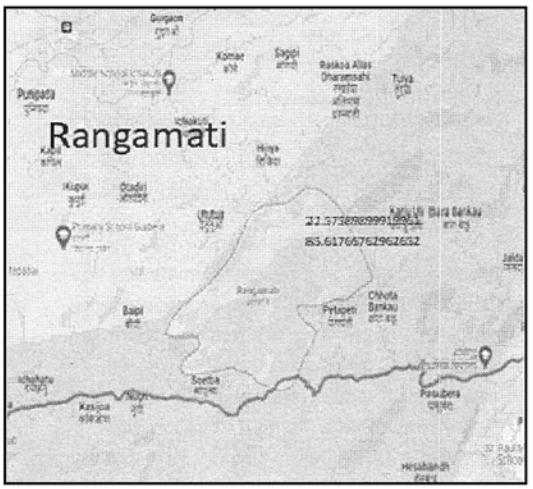
experiences, providing depth and context to the broader findings. The documentation of forest resources, including trees and folk beliefs, was integral to the study, contributing to a comprehensive understanding of the Ho tribe's intricate relationship with their environment. The selection of case studies was likely based on criteria such as expertise, influence, or unique perspectives, ensuring a well-rounded exploration of religious beliefs and practices within the community. Archival research is also undertaken to complement contemporary observations, providing a historical dimension to the study. By employing this multi-faceted approach, the research aims to offer a holistic and in-depth analysis of the intricate connections between the Ho tribe, their natural surroundings, and their religious and festive expressions.

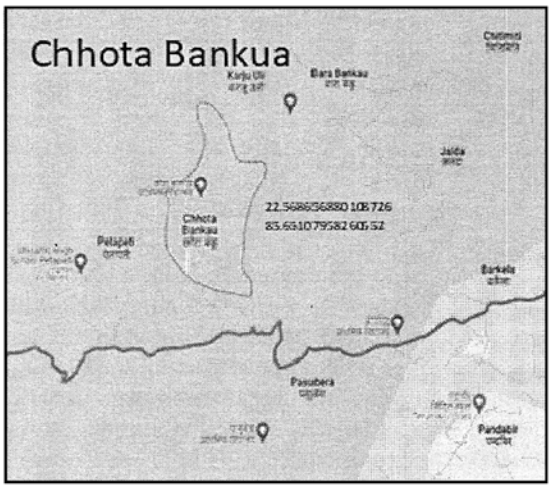
Hence, this study was conducted in the West Singhbhum District of Jharkhand, India, a region characterized by its significant tribal population. Jharkhand, being one of India's youngest states, is prominently inhabited by indigenous communities that have established their presence in the area for an extensive period. According to the 2011 Census of India report, the scheduled tribes in the state constitute a substantial portion, accounting for 26.20% of the total population, with a recorded figure of 8,645,042 individuals. The study site specifically lies within the Kolhan Forest Division, encompassing 700,042 hectares in the West Singhbhum District of Jharkhand. This district, situated in the eastern part of India, is recognized for its Ho tribe settlements, referred to as the Kolhan area (FSI, 2015), where the Ho community, one of the largest tribal groups in the state, resides. Geographically, the Ho tribe is widespread across West Singhbhum, Seraikella-Kharsawan, East Singhbhum districts, dwelling in diverse environments including urban, rural, and forested areas.

Conducting field research focused on investigating the role of the forest in the religious life of the Ho tribe, the study targeted three villages situated in remote forest areas. The selected villages, Rangamati, and Chota Bankua (positioned within a forest area), were situated in the Khuntpani block and Chota Khunta (proximate to a forest), a small hamlet under Khunta village were situated in the Chaibasa block. The sampling method employed could have incorporated elements of purposeful and stratified sampling, considering the deliberate inclusion of villages with varying proximity to the forest. The rationale for selecting these specific locations is grounded in several considerations. First, the study area aligns with the predominant habitation of the Ho people, facilitating a concentrated examination of their unique cultural dynamics. Second, the deliberate inclusion of villages with varying proximity to forests, Chota Khunta being near a forest and Rangamati and Chota Bankua situated in forested areas, allows for a nuanced exploration of how different environmental contexts influence religious practices. Additionally, the presence of the territorial chief (*Manki*) as the arbiter of inter-village disputes introduces a governance dimension that may influence religious dynamics. The traditional village priest (*deuri*) playing a central role in religious ceremonies, festivals, and sacred performances further justifies the choice of this study area, as their involvement signifies the integral link between the Ho people's religious practices and their cultural identity. The selection of Chaibasa

and Khuntpani blocks and the specific villages within them reflects a strategic approach to capturing the diverse facets of the Ho tribe's religious engagement with the forest environment.

Area Map showing three studied villages:





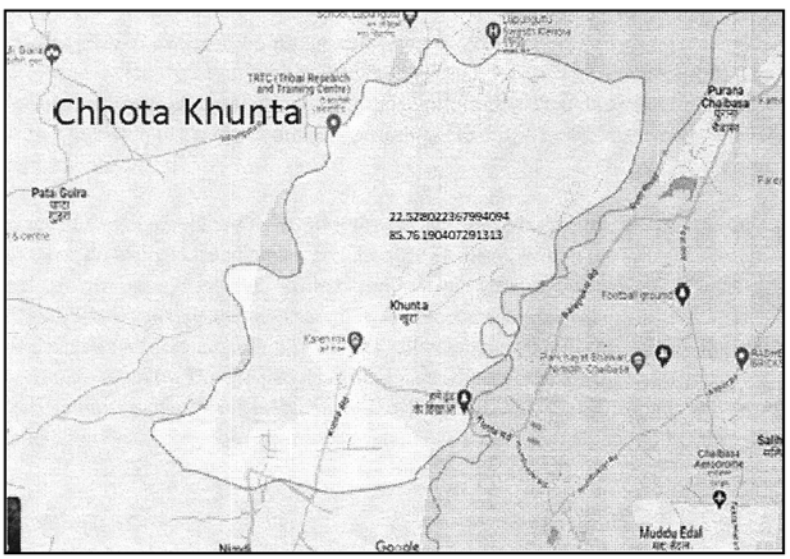


Table No. 1: Population Distribution of the Studied Ho community in the Studied Three Villages:

Block	Village	No of Family	Male	Female	Total
Khutpani	Rangamati	50	135 (48.04%)	146 (51.96%)	281 (100.00%)
	Chota Bankua	93	252 (49.90%)	253 (50.10%)	505 (100.00%)
Chaibasa	Chota Khunta	98	246 (51.04%)	236 (48.96%)	482 (100.00)
Total		241	633 (49.92%)	635 (50.08%)	1268 (100.00%)

The presented Table No 1 encapsulates demographic data for three villages—Rangamati and Chota Bankua in the Khutpani block, and Chota Khunta in the Chaibasa block—focusing on the number of families and the gender distribution within Ho community. In Rangamati, out of 281 individuals across 50 families, males constitute 48.04%, while females make up 51.96%. Chota Bankua, with 505 individuals in 93 families, demonstrates a near balance with 49.90% males and 50.10% females. Chota Khunta, comprising 482 individuals distributed among 98 families, exhibits a slight male majority at 51.04%. Cumulatively, across all three villages, the total population amounts to 1,268 individuals, with a relatively balanced gender distribution (49.92% males and 50.08% females). This data provides a foundational understanding of the demographic composition of these villages, offering valuable insights for further socio demographic analyses.

Symbiosis of Woodlands and Traditional Spiritual Practices:

The intricate symbiosis between woodlands and traditional spiritual practices among this community is notably characterized by the veneration of the forest as a divine entity. Functioning as custodians, their commitment to forest preservation is deeply rooted in religious doctrines, societal structures, and ancestral traditional wisdom (Khan 2008: 282). The forest assumes a paramount significance in their religious ethos, conceptualized as a maternal figure, and the community, in turn, identifies as progeny of the forest. Embedded within their religious framework are distinctive beliefs and rituals, overseen by designated priests. Moreover, their religious activities and ceremonies demonstrate a profound interconnection with forest ecology and the broader environment. The centrality of the forest extends beyond religious dimensions, significantly influencing their economic pursuits and socio-cultural fabric. This holistic integration underscores the indispensable role of the forest in shaping their religious, economic, and socio-cultural paradigms.

The Ho sacred place of worship, referred to as *Jaherthan* or *Jaherera*, is essentially a consecrated grove comprising a diverse array of trees, typically situated on the periphery of a village. Within the

villages scrutinized, a total of five extraneous sacred groves were discerned, each encompassing various tree species. Notably, these trees hold significant medicinal and economic value. The study documented thirteen distinct tree species present in these sacred groves, as detailed in Table 2. Each tree species holds unique significance within the cultural and religious framework of the Ho community. The Ho people exhibit a steadfast commitment to the preservation of these trees, refraining from any felling or harm, thus maintaining a delicate ecological equilibrium. The symbiotic relationship between the Ho's religious and ceremonial practices is intricately woven into the fabric of these sacred groves.

Table No. 2 : Trees in Sacred Groves

SL No	Local Name	Scientific Name	No
1.	*Sarjom or sakhua*	*Shorea robusta*	15
2.	*Harra*	*Terminalia chebula*	9
3.	*Kend*	*Diospyros melanoxylon*	3
4.	*Kurchi*	*Holarrhena antidy*	2
5.	*Dho*	*Anogeissus latifolia*	4
6.	*Pia Sal*	*Pterocarpus morsupium*	4
7.	*Beela*	*Semecarpus anacardium*	7
8.	*Bhur-ru*	*Gardenia gummifera*	7
9.	*Neemu*	*Azadirachta indica*	3
10.	*Asan*	*Terminalia tomentosa*	5
11.	*Jojo*	*Tamarindus indica*	4
12.	*Sisum*	*Dalbergia latifolia*	5
13.	*Behara*	*Terminalia bellirica*	6

Table 2 presents a diverse array of tree species within the sacred groves of the Ho community. Notably, *Sarjom* or *Sakhua* (*Shorea robusta*) emerges as a predominant species, emphasizing its central role in these sacred spaces. The table underscores the biodiversity and cultural significance of the sacred groves, with various tree species contributing to the ecological, cultural, and economic fabric of the community. Beyond their religious importance, certain trees hold medicinal properties, reflecting a dual cultural and health significance. The deliberate conservation practices, particularly the protection of *Sarjom* as guardians of the sacred groves, highlight the Ho community's commitment to ecological balance and cultural preservation.

The Ho people engage in the worship of a diverse array of deities inhabiting the hills, forests, farmlands, and village grounds. Within their kitchens, they have a designated space for venerating ancestral spirits, *Bura* and *Buri*. Prayerful gestures are directed toward various gods and goddesses residing in the adjacent forests and hills. The Sun God, or *Sing Bonga*, holds the pinnacle as their

ultimate deity, responsible for crucial aspects such as annual rains, harvests, and the sustenance of life. Additional deities, including *Marangburu*, the hill god, are also objects of worship. Notably, strong beliefs in both benevolent and malevolent spirits are observed among the studied individuals.

The collective term "*Bonga*" is used by the Ho to refer to all their gods, described as formless yet potent beings. Participants in the study reported that these *Bongas* can be perceived in nearby forests and mountains. Consequently, "*Bonga*" encapsulates both the concepts of power and spirit. Among the significant *Bongas* of the Ho are *Marang Bonga*, *Singh Bonga*, and *Dessauli*. The religious leader, known as the *Deuri*, assumes the role of a priest officiating at all village or community services. While the direct understanding of a *Bonga's* role in daily life eludes the Ho, revelations about the roots of disease, drought, and other misfortunes occur through dreams. The worship of the *Bonga* god is integral to seasonal festivals, childbirth, weddings, and post-death rituals. During these occasions, the community dedicates offerings such as flowers, rice, vermilion, and the sacrifice of black chickens as a homage to honor the *Bongas*. This intricate system of spiritual beliefs and practices forms an integral part of the Ho cultural and religious landscape.

Cultural celebrations enacted by the Ho community

The Ho people observe distinct religious ceremonies corresponding to different seasons, with festivals holding paramount significance within their religious practices. Traditional festivals encompass the veneration of animistic spirits, apparitions, and deities, marked by rituals involving the offering of various colors of fowl (*Sim*) and goat (*Marom*). These offerings, made during celebrations, serve as acts of supplication to appease these spiritual entities and seek their blessings for the prosperity and well-being of the community, individual families, or lineages. Notably, the communal aspect of these festivals is underscored by the active participation of relatives from neighboring villages. To alleviate the routine aspects of their lives, the studied community commemorates diverse festivals throughout the year, aligning with their daily responsibilities. Given the agrarian nature of the Ho community, their primary festivals are intricately linked to the agricultural cycle, spanning from the sowing of seeds to the harvest. These festivals serve as occasions to worship multiple deities, aiming to safeguard and enhance their agricultural yields.

Table No. 3 delineates the ceremonies, religious practices, and festivals observed by the Ho community, elucidating their connection to the forest. Predominantly centered around agricultural pursuits, the principal festivals include *Maghe*, *Ba* or *Baha*, *Hero*, *Jomnawa*, and *Kakamolam*. *Maghe* stands out as the paramount festival in the Ho community. The ensuing discussion delves into the nuances of these traditional Ho festivals.

Table No. 3: list of month wise festivals of the studied community

Festival Name	Time	Duration	God (*Bonga)* Worship	Trees Connected (with local name)	Reasons for Worship
Maghe	January-March	Five days	*Dessauli*	*Sarjom (Shorea robusta)*	Traditional festival for the welfare of the villagers
Baha	March-April	Two days	*Dessauli*	*Sarjom (Shorea robusta)*	During New Year when new flower comes out and worshiped in the village level.
Hero	June-July	One day	*Dessauli* and *Jaheraburhi*	*Bel (Limonia acidissima) and Sarjom (Shorea robusta)*	For sufficient rain and good crop
Bahatuli	June-July	One day	*Dessauli*	*Tiril* or *Kendu* (*Diospyros melanoxylon*)	For the protection of paddy fields from external agencies.
Jomnawa	September-October	One day	*Dessauli* and *Sing-Bonga*	Rice plant *(Oryza Sativa)*	New Rice taking ceremony in family level
Kalamkarsa	December-January	One day	*Dessauli, Sing-Bonga* and *Marang-Bonga*	Rice plant *(Oryza Sativa),* Tulsi (*Ocimum tenuiflorum*) and Mango (*Mangifera indica)*	Purification of Paddy straw before threshing.

The table 3 presents a fascinating glimpse into the cultural and religious tapestry of the studied community, where festivals are intricately woven into the fabric of their lives. The seasonal alignment of each festival reflects a deep understanding of and harmony with the natural cycles. Notably, the choice of specific trees and plants for worship, such as *Sarjom*, *Bel*, and *Tiril*, suggests a nuanced ecological consciousness. These aren't merely symbolic choices but are integrated into practical aspects of the community's existence, from protecting paddy fields to ensuring bountiful crops. The festivals are more than ceremonial; they embody a shared cultural identity and foster community bonding through collective participation. The rituals, ranging from traditional ceremonies for welfare to the purification of paddy straw, likely carry profound cultural significance, passed down through generations. Moreover, the festivals underscore a pragmatic approach, where spirituality and practicality intersect seamlessly, reflecting a community deeply rooted in both tradition and environmental stewardship. In essence, the critical analysis of the table reveals a community where cultural heritage, ecological mindfulness, and practical considerations are interwoven into the very fabric of their festivals.

Festival wise Discussion

Maghe, the main festival celebrated by the Ho community, holds significant cultural and spiritual importance. Taking place over five days, its timing is determined by a joint meeting of the village priest (*Deuri*), village chief (*Munda*), and elders. The festival revolves around worshiping deities like *Sing Bonga*, *Gram Siri*, and *Budhipat* for the prosperity of the village. Emphasizing the importance of the forest, the festival kicks off with the village chief planting *Sal* tree branches collected from nearby woods. These trees play a crucial role in the rituals and offerings. The festival includes various ceremonies, each with a unique purpose. Notably, *Guri* festivals involves worshiping the deity in the sacred grove outside the village, highlighting the sacred connection between the community and the surrounding natural environment. The use of natural elements, such as red chicken sacrifices and offerings of flowers from the *Palash* (*Butea monosperma*) tree, underscores the intertwined relationship between the Ho people and their ecosystem. One distinctive aspect of *Maghe* festivals is its role in community bonding and societal dynamics. The festival incorporates drinking rice beer and dancing, providing a platform for the youth to choose marriage partners. The communal nature of the celebration reflects a deep connection between cultural practices, spirituality, and the environment. The festival not only underscores the practical use of forest resources in rituals but also symbolizes the community's reliance on and gratitude towards the natural world for their prosperity and well-being.

The Flower Festival, or *Ba/Baha*, holds significance in the Ho community, occurring in March or April when *sal* trees bloom. This two-day celebration involves collecting *sal* flowers from the forest for offerings at the sacred grove, *Jaherthan*. The taboo of abstaining from new jungle fruits or using *sal* leaves underscores the festival's cultural and spiritual importance. Rituals include a traditional hunt, homage to ancestral spirits, and the sacrifice of red chickens and black He goats led by the village priest. The festival signifies a harmonious relationship between the community and nature, with communal celebrations featuring drinking, dancing, and feasting. This highlights the Ho people's deep respect for the environment and their cultural practices intertwined with the natural world.

The festivals of *Batauli, Hero, Jomnawa*, and *Kakamolam* within the Ho community reveal a deep intertwining of agricultural practices with cultural and spiritual rituals. *Batauli* festivals, held in July, focuses on protecting paddy fields from pests through worship of the *Dessauli* god, showcasing a pragmatic blend of tradition and agricultural concerns. *Hero* festivals, occurring after sowing in July, involves village-wide ceremonies following the initial worship by the village priest, underlining a communal agricultural ethos. *Jomnawa* festivals celebrates the harvest with offerings to *Sing Bonga*, combining ancestral spirit worship with festivities. *Kakamolam* festivals, held in December and January, emphasizes family-oriented agricultural rituals, symbolically linking the worship of deities with farming implements for a successful harvest. These festivals highlight the Ho community's holistic approach, where agricultural sustainability, spiritual beliefs, and cultural practices converge seamlessly in a cyclical celebration of their agrarian way of life.

The Interplay Between Forests and the Socio-Cultural Fabric

The forest and the way of life of the tribes are connected. Their economy, religion and socio-cultural life are closely intertwined. They worship trees as a deity. Since prehistoric times, trees have been an indispensable part of the life of the studied people. The forest, consisting of trees, plants, hills, valleys, streams and rivers, was the life force of the animal world. Frazer (1922:130) cited the examples of tree worship in India, Europe, Australia, Africa, China, Japan and other countries showing different shades of belief and different rituals and customs associated with different tree species.

Socio-cultural life of the tribes is closely related to forest ecology. The presence of sacred groves is noticeable in most tribal groups. According to the people studied, *Jaherthan* is the home of a spirit, and it can leave and return there at will. The female spirit that lived in the grove was *Jahiraburi*. She is believed to be *Dessauli's* consort, and she is worshiped along with her consort as she sows seed and reaps grain. They weren't allowed to touch the tree because it was forbidden. The ghost can change shape and takes on the shape of a human. The spirit was believed to have rightful ownership over the tree, which eventually becomes the forest god.

The tree cult was associated with the practice of totemism. During the study, the people studied were found to have more than fifty exogamous totemic clans (Chatterjee and Das, 1927:72; Majumdar, 1950:123). They believe that the totemic plants or animals help and protect clan members in many ways. Ironically, it can be said that they are reasonable enough in selecting species for food and other uses. Such people are firmly convinced that they come from either a certain animal, bird or natural object. They form subgroups with a common ancestor. The clan-specific distribution of totem and taboo among the populations studied is presented in the table no 4.

Table No. 4 : Clan specific distribution of totem and taboo

Sl No	Name of the Clan	Plant/Animal connected to Clan	Taboo
1.	*Lugun*	*Lugum* or *Tusser*	Don't touch and eat
2.	*Deogam*	A type of Bird	Do not touch or eat the bird
3.	*Purty*	A type of flora	Don't touch and eat
4.	*Melgundi*	*Peepul* tree	Do not touch or cut the tree
5.	*Kaika*	A kind of tree	Do not touch or cut the tree
6.	*Kudadah*	Blackberry	Don't touch and eat
7.	*Jamuda*	A type of paddy	Don't touch and eat
8.	*Tupid* (Mouse)	Animal	Do not touch or eat the animal
9.	*Charad*	stone	Do not touch
10.	*Charabayad*	Fish	Don't touch and eat
11.	*Hasada*	A type of Mud	Do not touch
12.	*Tesa*	Bird	Do not touch or eat the Tesa bird.

Table No. 4 presents the clan-specific distribution of totems and associated taboos within the studied community. The analysis reveals a diverse cultural landscape marked by a variety of totems, including *Lugum*, *Peepul* (*Ficus religiosa)* tree, *Tupid* (Mouse), and *Tesa* bird, each linked to specific clans. The corresponding taboos, such as refraining from touching or eating certain plants, animals, stones, or mud, provide insight into the cultural, environmental, and spiritual dimensions of these beliefs. The taboos against cutting specific trees or interacting with particular animals suggest a potential commitment to environmental stewardship. Additionally, these totems and taboos may serve social and spiritual purposes, contributing to the preservation of cultural identity and fostering a harmonious relationship with the natural world. In essence, Table No. 4 reflects the intricate interplay between cultural practices, environmental awareness, and spiritual significance within the community's unique belief system.

Conclusion:

The study of the Ho tribe in Jharkhand, India, presents a rich tapestry of the symbiotic relationship between the community, their forest environment, and their religious practices. The forest is not merely a backdrop but a revered maternal entity, intricately woven into the very fabric of the Ho people's existence. The research illuminates the profound connection between the Ho tribe and their forest environment, emphasizing the interchangeability of the terms "tribes" and "forests." The forest is perceived as a deity, a mother, and a vital component of their daily lives. The intricate religious tapestry of the Ho community, rooted in the "*Sarna*" religion, highlights the veneration of ancestral spirits and deities entwined with the landscape.

An interdisciplinary approach, incorporating environmental ethnography, religious studies, and cultural anthropology, provides a nuanced understanding of the Ho tribe's way of life. The research delves into their unique spirituality, which venerates nature, prioritizes family bonds, and embraces celebratory rituals. Festivals, intricately linked to the agricultural cycle, emerge as dynamic cultural expressions that underscore the Ho people's profound understanding of natural rhythms. The study goes beyond documenting traditions; it serves as a call to preserve the unique legacy of the Ho tribe, navigating the complexities of a changing world and ensuring the longevity of their profound connection with the forest.

The research sheds light on the challenges posed by modernization and commercialization, emphasizing the need to safeguard indigenous religious values for sustainable conservation efforts. The Ho people's conscious efforts in the conservation of specific tree species reflect a holistic integration of cultural identity and environmental stewardship. However, the encroachment of modernization

and the gradual erosion of time-honored belief systems present formidable challenges to the sustainable conservation of the forest ecology.

The festivals observed by the Ho community, intricately connected to the agricultural cycle, highlight a pragmatic approach where spirituality and practicality intersect seamlessly. The festivals embody a shared cultural identity, fostering community bonding through collective participation. The study reveals the Ho people's deep respect for the environment, evident in their deliberate conservation practices, such as the protection of specific tree species. Moreover, the totemic clans and associated taboos underscore a commitment to environmental stewardship and the preservation of cultural identity.

In critically evaluating the research, it is imperative to recognize its significance in contributing to the broader understanding of the intricate dynamics between human communities and their natural surroundings. The interdisciplinary methodology employed, encompassing participant observation, in-depth interviews, ethnographic fieldwork, and archival research, enhances the depth and authenticity of the findings. The study's focus on the Ho tribe specifically avoids broad stereotypes associated with tribal communities, offering a nuanced exploration of their distinct cultural expressions. However, the research could benefit from further exploration of the nuanced socio-economic dimensions and the impact of external influences on the Ho community. The critical analysis of festivals, while comprehensive, could delve deeper into the power structures within the community and the evolving nature of these traditions in the face of modern challenges. Additionally, an examination of how external interventions, such as government policies or globalization, affect the delicate balance between cultural practices and environmental conservation would provide a more holistic understanding.

In conclusion, the study among the Ho tribe serves not only as a documentation of traditions but as a significant contribution to the discourse on indigenous cultures, environmental practices, and the interconnectedness of belief systems and ecology. It calls for a holistic approach to conservation that acknowledges the spiritual and cultural dimensions of indigenous communities, recognizing their role as stewards of the environment. Ultimately, the research urges stakeholders to navigate the delicate balance between tradition and modernization, ensuring the preservation of the Ho people's profound connection with their forest environment for generations to come.

References

- Bose, Purabi., Bas, Arts., and Han Van Dijk. 2012. 'Forest governmentality': A genealogy of subject-making of forest-dependent 'scheduled tribes' in India', *Land Use Policy*, 29 (3): 664-673. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.landusepol.2011.11.002
- Chatterjee, A., and Das, T. 1927. *The Hos of Seraikella:Part 1*. Calcutta: The University of Calcutta.

- Census of India. 2011. *Report of the Census of India*. New Delhi: Office of the Registrar General, India.
- Forest Survey of India. 2015. *State of Forest Report.* Dehradun : Ministry of Environment and Forest, India.
- Frazer, J. G. 1922. *The Golden Bough*. London: Macmillan.
- Friess, H.L., and Schneider, H.W. 1965. *Religion in Various Cultures*. New York: Johnson Reprint Corporation.
- Gadgil, M., and Vartak, V.D. 1981. Sacred Groves of Maharastra. In: S.K.Jain (eds.), *An Inventory in Glimpses of Indian Ethnology*. pp. 294-299. New Delhi: Oxford and IBH Publishing Co.
- Khan M. L., A. D. Khumbongmayum., and R. S. Tripathi. 2008. 'The Sacred Groves and Their Significance in Conserving Biodiversity An Overview', *International Journal of Ecology and Environmental Sciences*, 34 (3): 277-291.
- Majumdar, D.N. 1950. *The Affairs of a Tribes: A Study in Tribal Dynamics*. Lucknow: Universal Press Ltd,.
- Mibang, T., and Chaudhuri, S.K. 2004. *Understanding Tribal Religion*. New Delhi: Mittal Publications.
- Muller, F. M. 1889. *Natural Religion*. London: Longmans, Green, & co.
- Ormsby, Alison, A., and Shonil, A, Bhagwat. 2010. 'Sacred forests of India: A strong tradition of community-based natural resource management', *Environmental Conservation*, 37 (3): 320-326. https://doi.org/10.1017/S0376892910000561
- Roy, S.C. 1918. *Oraon Religion and Customs.* Calcutta: The Industry Press.
- Rowkith, S. and Bhagwan, R. 2020. 'Honoring Tribal Spirituality in India: An Exploratory Study of Their Beliefs, Rituals and Healing Practices', *Religions*. 11(11):549-. https://doi.org/10.3390/rel11110549.
- Sabar, Bhubaneswar. 2017. 'Religious Beliefs and Practices among Chuktia Bhunjia Tribe of Odisha: Looking through Anthropological Lens', *The Oriental Anthropologists*, 17 (2): 303-323. https://doi.org/10.1177/0976343020170206
- Singhal, V., Ghosh, J. and Saleem, S. 2021. 'Role of Religious Beliefs of Tribal Communities from Jharkhand (India) in Bio-diversity Conservation', *Journal of Environmental Planning and Management,* 64 (13): 2277-2299.

- Spiro, Melford. 1966. Religion: Problems of Definition and Explanation. In: Michael Banton (eds.), *Anthropological Approaches to the Study of Religion*. pp. 85–126. London: Tavistock.
- Spencer, H. 1876. *The Principles of Sociology*. London: Williams & Norgate.
- Thakur, Devendra., and D. N. Thakur. 2009. *Tribal Life and Forests*. New Delhi: Deep and Deep Publications Pvt. Ltd.
- Tylor, E.B. 1871. *Primitive Culture*. London: Murray.

Bio Profile of the Author:
Assistant Professor, Department of Anthropology,
Government General Degree College Gopiballavpur-II,
West Bengal, India
Email: chakraborty.sovan@gmail.com

Embodying Indian 'Epic' Masculinities: Interpretations of Masculine Images in *Hatim*

Mehul Agarwal[1] *& Pranta Pratik Patnaik*[2]

Abstract

Multiple interpretations of Indian masculinities have transcended into popular culture, of which ones in television shows have received the least scholarly attention. This paper explores the Indianized rendition of the Arabic fairy-tale Hatim Tai from the television show Hatim to locate the embodiment of masculinities that reflect notions from Indian epics, the Ramayana and the Mahabharata. The show's narrative embodies the constructive functions introduced by Vladimir Propp as intrinsic to fairy tales. The research divulges an episodic reading of the protagonist, Hatim's masculine identity, positioned against that of Dajjal, the antagonist, read against masculine images from the Indian epics. The study involves an interpretative analysis of the male characters' apparent and insinuated characteristics, physical appearances, and agency in the fairy-tale narrative, exploring how twenty-first-century fairy-tale media renditions reaffirm notions of masculinity dawning down since ages. The paper discusses how Indian 'Epic' masculinities percolate into popular culture through television shows.

Keywords: *Fairy Tales, Gender, Masculinities, Mythology, Fictional Television*

Introduction

In the contemporary age, children can select any popular culture pond to dive into, owing to the evolution of technology, a blend of media texts and linked material artefacts (Lindstrand et al., 2016), with one such pond being fairy tales. For millennia, audiences from different eras were drawn to the intoxicating concoctions of beauty, terror, wonders, violence, and charm that fairy tales have produced (Tatar, 2010). Themes like good versus evil, fairness over oppression, compassion, friendship, and faithfulness frequently feature in fairy tales, which are stories with magical components like talking animals or items and enchanted locations. Fairy tales, named so by Marie-Catherine d'Aulnoy (Zipes, 2011), can 'elicit what Richard Wright has described as a total emotional response' (Tatar, 2010, p. 59). Vladimir Propp equated fairy tales with 'tales of magic (Aguirre, 2011, p. 2), which, as a genre, has resisted being dominated by any media, continuing to be disseminated by word of mouth.

Fairy tales are still told orally but have even been adapted for films and television (TV), with foreign shows like ABC's *Once Upon A Time* (2011-2018) and CBS All Access' *Tell Me A Story*

(2018-2020). Fairy tale productions have not escaped the small screen in India. While DD National's *Vikram Aur Betaal* (1985-1986) centres on the collection of *Baital Pachisi* tales, considered to have been told by the ghost Vetala to the legendary king Vikramaditya, the protagonist in Star Plus' *Son Pari* (2000-2004), is a young girl who receives a magical ball that, when rubbed, summons a fairy and her friend. However, blending foreign tales and folklore, mainly Arabic folktales, into TV productions offers a more interesting avenue to explore. These tales 'continue to exist in unique ways under different environmental conditions' (Zipes, 2011, p. 221) but percolate into Indian TV as tools of unapologetic fantasy storytelling. One example is Star Plus' *Hatim* (2003-2004), a popular fantasy show.

The tale of this benevolent prince of the *Tayy* tribe of Yemen has had multiple renditions in Indian media, including a 1956 and a 1990 film, due to its popularity and relatability in the country, as well as nations beyond, like Pakistan and Iran (Muhabat et al., 2015). Muhabat et al. (2015) examined this Arabic folktale using the TV rendition by Sagar Films Pvt. Ltd. for the channel Star Plus to analyse the narrative functions proposed and characterised by Vladimir Propp. They affirm that it contains all the primary components established by Propp, with the story's elements cohesively combined, some appearing more than twice, thus sufficing as a fairy tale. However, in this version, the impressions of story traditions from Indian epics are not lost on any viewer. Instances such as the villain kidnapping the female protagonist on a flying vehicle or using manipulated dice in a game against the hero remind one of the epics *Ramayana* and *Mahabharata*.

Beyond the plot points and values imparted, the impressions of masculinities unmistakably portray a garnished blend of Indian sociocultural values and Arabic folklore through the characters Hatim, the principal protagonist and Dajjal, the leading antagonist. In studying masculinities in children's programs, Myers (2012) argues that non-hegemonic masculinities may disrupt traditional ideas about being male. However, certain characters only reinforce the dominant concepts of singular (hegemonic) masculinity, helping maintain the standard gender order. Such studies inspire more academic investigation. Thus, this research divulges an episodic reading of Hatim's masculine identity against that of Dajjal's in the backdrop of parallel characters from the two epics. Frames are drawn along the lines of activeness, aggressiveness, physicality, martial skills and morality using an interpretative analysis of apparent and insinuated characteristics of the male characters, helping understand ideas on masculinities being portrayed in such tales, culminating in extensive commentaries of the hero and villain archetypes such tales showcase. It would be an interface as to how masculine imagery percolates through fictional Indian TV shows.

Legacy of Masculinity: Tracing the Evolution

As an adult, Hatim is introduced as a skilful horse rider and an able archer who jumps to save a lonely female stranger from scary flying creatures. In one episode, he shouts at a crowd cheering to watch a hand-to-hand battle to death, 'Stop this bloody game… if you still want to get called a man, come

fight me (in the ring) … Sitting afar and clapping will not prove your masculinity' (Ep. 21). The *Mahabharata*, on the other hand, states, 'the act of a coward, a eunuch, or a fool, (are) three abjected constructs of masculinity' (Brodbeck, 2017, p. 129). Given the myriad ideas on being a man instanced in such tales, understanding masculinities contextually becomes imperative. Masculinities are the socially constructed characteristics that men develop over time, and this is reflected in both the social structures they adopt and the ways they conduct themselves (Chowdhry, 2019). Masculinities have varying connotations for different people as such identities change, collapse, and reassemble over time, consequently necessitating ongoing reinforcement and reminders (Chowdhry, 2019; Reeser, 2010; Srivastava, 2015).

Mature relationships, institutional frameworks, and global power dynamics are impacted by a man's social status, behavioural patterns, and how these behaviours are collectively embodied. This makes masculinities a crucial field of study. However, until a recent focus on masculinities studies in the past few decades, the notion always escaped the investigative scanner (Gottzén et al., 2020). Notwithstanding, Sahgal (2009) attempts to draw a cohesive picture of masculinities by asking significant questions about their construction and composition. The most sustaining attributes thereof have been identified as sexual and procreative functions, with recognised traits like the display of power in public and domestic domains, as well as the reassertion of temper and physical strength, particularly in violent acts (Sahgal, 2009), like European colonial Christian cultures (Connell, 2016). While old texts, such as the *Rksamhita*, look at the masculine framings of gods, the epics discussed here define what '*Kshatriya* masculinity' ought to be. In either case, the relational status between hegemonic masculinity and femininity and/or other masculinities is undeniable (Brodbeck, 2017; Sahgal, 2009).

However, the epics have, stage by stage, defined what it means to be a man and how weaker masculinities or 'antagonist masculinity' ought to have stayed away from. This contrasts with a variety of interpretations of masculinities, encompassing embodied practices, traits, and beliefs alongside institutionalised and routinised behaviours and symbols. Understanding these changing norms, as reflected in the media, thus appears to depend on observing masculinities in ephemeral mediated texts. Various studies have tried to explore the portrayals on the small screen using varied methodologies and angles. Wood (1994) states that in children's television, males are shown as hostile, commanding, and rejoicing in activities that reward them for masculine achievements. Myers (2012) examines masculinities in children's programming and argues that conventional notions of what it means to be a man could be challenged by non-hegemonic masculinities, but he also points out that some characters only serve to uphold the conventional gender order by reinforcing ideas of hegemonic masculinity.

A recent report (Geena Davis Institute on Gender in Media et al., 2020) states that while popular TV for boys challenges some masculine stereotypes, it also reinforces the idea that 'real men' are independent, rugged, physically attractive, engage in high-risk behaviours, and not caring for others. Such studies beget more attention on representations of masculinities on TV. Traditionally, "masculinity

tends to be associated with such traits as rationality, efficiency, competition, individualism and ruthlessness", with the male hero being "physically strong, aggressive, and assertive, takes the initiative, is independent, competitive and ambitious", (Ahmed, 2012, p. 2). Today, not only are male characters figuratively more three-dimensional but narratives are also supplemented by more masculine plotlines that both protect and break traditional masculine stereotypes (Feasey, 2008). Various genres of television programming bring in varied renditions of masculine identities and embodiment based on source material, plotline, and target audience, among other factors. *Hatim*, a fantasy television program, also contains unique masculine trajectories and, as such, becomes the focal point of this study.

Narrative Progression and Similarities

The story of Hatim, whose name means 'black crow' in Arabic, banks on the plank of indomitable courage and extreme generosity but has not been consistent across the various media renditions. However, stories of this model of 'Arab manliness' have always had seeking answers to seven questions at the core of the plotline, and the Star Plus version is no exception. Here, Hatim, the newborn heir of Yemen's Emperor, is decreed as the harbinger of peace and kindness. Dajjal, the son of the Emperor of Jaffar, is born around the same period, and an old palace servant, Najumi, offers the born-dead infant as a servant to *Shaitaan* (the Devil or evil forces). Twenty-four years pass, and Hatim matures into a gentle and well-liked prince, whereas Dajjal kills his parents and becomes the emperor. He wishes to become the supreme master of the universe by seizing the forces of goodness, which is only possible if he marries Durgapur's princess, Sunaina.

Dajjal turns her teenage brother Suraj into a stone statue, giving her seven months to accept his marriage proposal before Suraj's curse becomes permanent. Hatim's fiancé, Jasmine's father, the Emperor of Paristan, divulges a prophecy that Hatim must travel to distant lands and find solutions to seven magical questions to decimate Dajjal's evil force, freeing Suraj consequentially. Jasmine enlists the help of her childhood friend and bodyguard, an elf called Hobo, to accompany Hatim. Dajjal's powers and magical fortresses are gradually destroyed as Hatim solves the questions through complex journeys across enchanted lands, meeting mysterious people. Once Hatim has answered the sixth question, he does not have the time to answer the last. Several armies descend on Jaffar for the climactic battle, with Hatim arriving at the castle to combat Dajjal. They both die simultaneously, but Hatim negates death by answering the last question.

The recurrent narrative commonalities between Hatim and the epics provide the foundation for the contextual location of this research. Hatim's birth is as warmly celebrated as Ram's in the *Ramayana*. However, it is Dajjal's birth that appears more interesting. Pronounced as an evil who would mark the end of his empire, Dajjal was born without a heartbeat, and the emperor ordered that his heart be taken out. However, Najumi takes exception to the directive and offers the child to the evil forces in exchange for him growing up to establish the rule of evil in this world. In the epic *Mahabharata*, Queen Gandhari had a long pregnancy and gave birth to a blob of immobile flesh. The foetus was

divided into pieces, placed in jars with *ghee* (clarified butter) and incubated. Eventually, one by one, one hundred one offspring (the Kauravas) were birthed, the eldest male of whom was the primary antagonist, Duryodhana.

While the prince of Ayodhya in the *Ramayana* is sent to fourteen years of exile on the eve of his coronation, in the *Mahabharata*, the Pandavas (Yudhishthira, Bheem, Arjun, Nakul and Sahadev – five brothers, the protagonists) earn thirteen years of exile in a lost game of dice, of which the last is to be incognito. While Hatim is not officially exiled, his seven-month-long journey to find answers to the seven questions is no less than one. In exile, the protagonists discover or validate their purpose of being. Ram finds comfort in Lakshmana's company, while the Pandavas are accompanied by their common consort, Draupadi. Although Hatim initially cannot endure Hobo's presence, he grows fond of him, as does the latter, and a promising friendship blooms between them. The protagonists go through life-changing experiences to consequentially learn the value of friendship and companionship. They underline the ageless idea that hardship is a furnace for self-realisation and purpose fulfilment.

In the epics, the protagonists often find themselves fighting others' battles for a sense of duty natural to them. Ram assures Sugriva of his help and kills Bali, the ruler of Kishkindha, who had taken his brother Sugriva's wife, Ruma, for his own after a misunderstanding over the kingdom. When the Kauravas in the *Mahabharata* attack King Virata's empire Matsya, the Pandavas take charge and defend it against the attempted invasion. Hatim, too, indulges in fighting for selfless causes, freeing kidnapped children from the shackles of an evil musician Akrab and rescuing the evil-turned-good Teesta's son from her merciless husband, despite her having turned innocent people, including Hobo, into inanimate objects. All of them get the returns for their noble deeds in the form of help to eventually defeat the leading antagonist.

The contrivance, which helps brew preachy and mystic fairy tales that serve to instil in listeners practices, rituals, and events (Meland, 2020), is not devoid of supernatural elements. Most folklorists agree that supernatural characteristics reside in these old tales, and the folklores considered here also have them (Muhabat et al., 2015). Ram faces Surpanakha, a shapeshifting demoness and the antagonist Ravana's sister during exile. A sage, mating with his wife in the disguise of a deer, curses Pandu, the father of the Pandavas, to die the instant he tries to "taste the pleasures of the bed" (Rajagopalachari, 2021, p. 38). Hatim encounters not only shapeshifters, one of whom impersonates his fiancé but is himself at a point cursed to turn into a dog for half a day, with Jasmine condemned to be a pigeon for the other half. Thus, shape-shifting, considered one of the defining features of fairy tales (Tatar, 2010), also finds its place here.

Beyond the inspired characters and plot points, it is the 'string of actions or events called functions' (Aguirre, 2011, p. 2) that binds *Hatim* in the same fabric as the epics. Instances of absentation, trickery, mediation, branding, villainy, struggle, transfiguration, punishment and other functions adorn all three stories. The fulfilment of these functions aids the characters' discourse through the narrative, which consequentially drafts stereotypical imagery of the characters for the audiences. Additionally,

stereotypes of the 'performance of masculinity' (Butler, 1996; Waite, 2009) are constructed in propagating such ideals. Such inflexible archetypes may mould children's conception of appropriate 'masculine' behaviour. Such reinforcements result in an excessive focus on particular traits, limiting the variety of ways men can be themselves, especially given the variance in how men are consequentially viewed in society (Feasey, 2008). Thus, such examinations of masculine imagery in fictional narratives become imperative.

Heroic Echoes: The 'Manly Ideals' Resonated

In *Ramayana*, Ram is hailed as *Maryada Purushottam* (*Maryada* meaning dignity, *Purush-ottam* being a portmanteau for *purush* meaning male and *Uttam* meaning the best), translating into the most extraordinarily dignified ideal man. Yudhishthira in the *Mahabharata* is referred to as *Dharmaraj* (The righteous ruler), who is so fair and just that his chariot stays two feet above the ground. Hatim is similarly hailed as '*Ummeed ki Kiran*' (the ray of hope) (Ep. 1) and '*Neki ka Farishta*' (the angel of righteousness) (Ep. 30). In the respective stories, Ravana, Duryodhana and Dajjal receive the flak for being short-sighted, arrogant and foolish. Their greed and pride lead to their imminent downfall and consequent death. The reinforcement of stereotypical distinguishing of moral values into the black-and-white ends of the spectrum, with no space for greyness in characters, does not excuse the lack of critical attention these characters have suffered (Carter, 2006; Jorgensen, 2018). An interpretative analysis of their trajectories shall close this gap.

Quests and Quandaries: Masculine Proactivity

There is a sharp contrast between the male characters and their female counterparts in fairy tales. For one, the former need to be more active and are judged on their ability to overcome obstacles (Jorgensen, 2018; Stone, 1975). They face unique challenges and must overcome them using martial, logical, and makeshift skills. Ram is faced with the challenge of finding a path from India to (Sri) Lanka, for which he prays to the ocean. As per instructions then received, a member of his *vanara sena* (monkey army) engraved his name on rocks and threw them into the ocean. They start floating, solving Ram's ordeal (Narayan, 1977). In the *Mahabharata,* it is contended that a *Kshatriya* should be restless because this dissatisfaction would drive him to acts of heroism and riches. Therefore, the Pandavas actively sought alliances before the impending war with their cousins, the *Kauravas*, enlisting the help of Sri Krishna (their maternal cousin and a god).

Hatim must continuously be on his toes, looking for answers to one question after the other. His valour makes him offer himself as bait to monsters and giants, even though the battle is not his and there is no guaranteed fruit at the end. Women are given a more passive role in the sense that even though it may be centripetal of the narrative, their reliance on the men to avenge them or defend their honour is quintessential. In the epics, 'the damsel's distress compels and is assuaged by heroic action' (Brodbeck, 2017, p. 130). Sita, Draupadi and Jasmine fall into the same pigeonhole. Draupadi,

humiliated by Duryodhana and his brothers, waits for Bheema to get her Dushasana's blood to wash her hair. Sunaina weeps for her brother and blames herself for the ordeals, yet she relies on Hatim to vanquish Dajjal. Their activeness is limited to trusting their male counterparts or boosting their morale, leaving it upon the man to think on their feet, fight and vindicate any dishonour they encounter.

Rescuing Damsels in Distress: Masculine Valour

Bordo states that ideal men are gentle with women (Jorgensen, 2018). This gentleness is complimented by their physical abilities to ensure women are respected and protected under all circumstances. Gender norms reinforce specified roles for men and women, wherein boys may take it upon themselves to protect and defend women (Carter, 2006). Fairy tales render and uphold a prototypical notion wherein male protagonists always possess the ability and means to rescue women. The inability to defend women and preserve their honour is a blemish male characters in fairy tales cannot sustain. Even beyond tales, a community's manhood depends on preserving women's honour, and invoking masculinity would hypothetically safeguard women from 'others' (Gupta, 2011). Such tales are laced with obstacles for their heroes, who, despite all odds, protect and defend women under all circumstances. This trait stands integral to their masculine sense of self. Unsurprisingly, physical strength and ability succour them in doing so.

Cekiso (2015) uses the Xhosa-language fairy tale *Untonganayentsimbi* (Iron-rod) as an example where the male protagonist, Bhuzalusiba, rescues his sister from the orges. When the Pandavas' uncle Dhritharashtra's son-in-law Jaydratha passed by their hermitage and saw Draupadi, he urged her to leave the brothers and become the queen of his heart. On her refusal, he snatched her and fled the scene. The Pandavas pursued his army, vanquished them, and shaved Jaydratha's scalp as retribution, leaving him alive for the sake of their cousin sister Dushshala (Rajagopalachari, 2021). In *Hatim*, Jasmine does not doubt for even a moment that Hatim will rescue her from the shrinking magical bubble Dajjal has confined her to and would punish the latter for doing so. In his quest to save her, Hatim is ship-wrecked and lands in a distant land, pronounced dead by the rest of the world, yet he manages to locate and save Jasmine. He ensures she is safely returned to Paristan before continuing his journey.

The Martial Essence: Masculine Aggression

The hero's robust and charismatic physicality complements and does not subdue his fighting skills as a reflection of his heroism. In fairy tales, masculinities are associated with autonomy, competition, lack of emotion, aggression, and violence (Cekiso, 2015). According to Lowe et al. (2012), aggressiveness is a respectable way for men to assert control over their surroundings and avoid shame, and men battle to maintain their honour and respect. Since ancient times, the display of fury and physical power, particularly in violent activities such as warfare and the confrontational attitude, have been recognised as attributes associated with masculinity (Sahgal, 2009). Brodbeck (2017) writes

that in battle, the Kshatriya must fight without regard for his survival. His natural occupations are valour, energy, resolution, skill, benevolence, mastery, and not escaping a conflict. This valour of a fairy-tale hero is accompanied by his boastful ability, which denotes 'the assertion of superiority over their opponents in advance of battle' (Brodbeck, 2017). The narratives here make no exception to these beliefs.

Krishna tells Arjuna that if the latter declines to fight, great warriors will believe he withdrew from the field out of fear and will be slighted despite his previous high reputation. Even his adversaries will also say numerous unsavoury things about his ability (Brodbeck, 2017). Hatim is not only an able sword-wielder who swirls it along to handle multiple opponents together but also a skilled warrior who takes part in a gladiator-like fight barehanded. He is a skilled archer who hits the bullseye, just like Arjuna does in the *Mahabharata,* to win Draupadi's hand in marriage (Rajagopalachari, 2021). Upon learning his fate, where he is told he will meet his doom fighting Dajjal, he says, 'Since I have left Yemen, I have been playing with perils' (Ep. 44). Ready to sacrifice his life to protect the goodness in the world, he tells Dajjal that he hates him and that it is his fate to kill him.

Physique and Charisma: Masculine Allure

Physical fitness has been integral to the idea of a complete man since ancient times in India (Sahgal, 2009). The dominance of Christian manliness over the effeminate babus in colonial India was asserted by a definable muscularity, among other factors (Banerjee, 2005; Sinha, 1995). As the reverse is true, this translates into an attractive body and handsome appearance, usually expected of princes (Hönekopp et al., 2007). Skin colour and other transient traits are becoming more prominent in the perception of 'facial masculinity', a marker of attractiveness (Scott et al., 2010). Fairy tales have demanded their men to be 'to a large extent strong, dashing and fearless' (Meland, 2020, p. 2) for quite a long now. Male protagonists of the tales in general, and the ones considered here, are charming men of definable physical build and attractive appearance. These given tales place equal, if not more, emphasis on the appearance of the male characters, upholding prototypical notions of male beauty.

Ravana's sister Surpanakha was charmed by Rama's alluring beauty. His broad shoulders, big arms, conch-shaped throat, complexion like a black lotus flower, dreamy eyebrows, and coppery eyes combined with a friendly demeanour cast a magical spell on her (Narayan, 1977). While in exile, Arjuna visited his Lord Indra's palace. Urvashi, a nymph, was drawn to his charming, handsome appearance and declared her love for him. However, Arjuna referred to her as his mother because of their shared ancestry, making her curse him, only to eventually reduce it. Usually covered by his golden armour, Hatim has a fair, hairy and muscular body, with defined pecs and strong muscles that add to the appeal of his fanciable face. Hatim's youthful handsomeness makes the female character Mallika-a-Husn (literally - Empress of Beauty), who has the power to make any man fall on her feet, fall in love with him. Her obsession extends to the point where she even attempts to impersonate and harm Jasmine.

Ethical Paragons in Narratives: Masculine Virtues

The structure of personal values has systematically changed in the modern era, as have people's interpretations of what they mean. Although the general value circle is still present, its details vary depending on age and gender (Borg, 2019). However, with a disregard for individual differences, the male protagonist of any epic or fairy tale is supposed to be a living embodiment of truth, fairness, kindness, generosity, compassion, and simplicity. The characters are designed to be a mix of sweet, simple, and humble (Jorgensen, 2018). Ancient Indian beliefs on gods, such as Shiva being virile and aggressive yet compassionate and giving (Sahgal, 2009), percolate into the epics too. Generosity is one of the two foundations of the *Kshatriya* reputation. Such ideal qualities help the leading male characters secure a unique place in the hearts of others, who go out of their way to help these heroes fulfil their objectives and vanquish their enemies. This model sets the heroes apart from their narrative opponents.

Narayan (1977) states that while describing why Ram should succeed him as the ruler, his father, King Dashratha of Ayodhya, stated that Ram, the epitome of all perfection, will make an excellent ruler as he has compassion, a sense of justice, and courage and sees no disparities between humans—old or young, royal or peasant; he treats everyone equally. Justice was so dear to Yudhishthira's heart that when all his brothers lay petrified at the edge of an enchanted pool, just so that the justice scales would be level, he decided to bring his father's second wife's first-born Nakula back to life, instead of his mother's second born Bheem. Likewise, Hatim, as the model of justice and benevolence, on hearing Teesta's pathos as a mother separated from her child, vows (and eventually fulfils the vow) to get her son back to her. He refuses to take help in a way that may cause harm to others and aid the evil powers, even if this means a longer, more challenging route for him.

Malevolent Counterparts: Resonating 'Antagonist Masculinity'

Born without a heartbeat, Dajjal, as an adult, is introduced as *Jadugar Badshah* (Sorcerer-Emperor), who is revered and respected among all believers of evil power as their overlord. His lust for power knows no bounds, and he is completely drained of affection. His only quest is to acquire more land, power, and respect by becoming the unchallenged evil ruler of the world. Drowned in pride and power, he believes if Hatim succeeds in even finding the seventh question, 'Before the wind changes its direction, I will strangle it to death and stop the trajectory of the moon and the stars' (Ep. 41). It is imperative to look at his menacing nature to develop a sense of his antagonist masculinity, drawing parallels from the villainous males from the *Ramayana* and the *Mahabharata*.

For one, these characters have strong faith and are ardent followers of the power they worship. Ravana in the *Ramayana* is a devotee of Lord Brahma, who blessed him with partial immortality, rendering him invulnerable to beings above humans (for he considered humans meek and unworthy). Though not wholly devoted to a single lord or power, Duryodhana was a faithful believer who had

respect for divine beings. Dajjal, who cuts off his head to appease the supreme evil power and gain favour, is frequently shown bowing before it. However, this worship could not teach humility to show respect to others or any of these antagonists. Duryodhana wanted the Gandharvas (a tribe) to vacate the lake he wanted to bathe before his arrival as he considered them below himself, but they overpowered him. Dajjal also does not deal with people he considers below him due to the air of superiority his name carries in the evil world and is thus cheated often.

In the tales discussed, greed is the root cause of villainy by the antagonists. They are led astray by believing they can have everything they ever desire and finally end up with nothing. Avarice leads Ravana wrong, who then falls victim to a particular fantasy of power: the goal of continuous dominance. Until his eventual doom, he could not be convinced otherwise. Duryodhana's lust for property and power drove him wild enough to deny the Pandavas only five villages out of the vast share of land, for his answer was that he would not give them even a needle-size portion of land. Similarly, Dajjal wants to marry Sunaina only to acquire the power to indicate to the sun when to set and to the moon when to rise. His greed, too, has a fateful ending at the hands of Hatim. However, he has no realisation of it till the end.

All three ignored warnings of their impending dooms. Besides greed to acquire more land and become more powerful and respected throughout (as the case may be), all three are drowned in pride and do not heed any reprimands to mend their course. Their *amour propre* is deeply embedded within their masculinity and makes them undervalue any opponent they may face till the point of doom. Hanuman preached about Ram, advising Ravana to change his ways and forewarning him of Ram's impending devastation. Duryodhana was repeatedly requested by one and all to avoid war with the Pandavas, for it was to bring unforeseen destruction and loss to his clan, but he did not heed a single advice. Dajjal, who likes to insult his opponents to establish his credibility, does not consider Hatim a match and ignores every warning despite it being foretold that he is cursed to die at the hands of the latter.

Duryodhana is not one to forget any humiliation. When Draupadi makes fun of him and terms him the blind son of a blind man, he takes the insult in as tasting blood and humiliates her after 'winning her' as a wager in the fateful game of dice. In the *Ramayana*, When Lakshmana chopped off Surpanakha's nose, she hurried to Lanka to apprise Ravana of the horror. 'Gods held their breath, unable to gauge the upheaval that would follow when Ravana struck in revenge', writes Narayan (1977: 149). Similarly, Dajjal cannot get to grips with humiliation at the hands of Hatim or failure by his henchmen. He kills one of his supporters for failing him once in deceiving and killing Hatim and Hobo. Similar in spirit to the proactivity of their nemeses, their masculine ideals do not allow any negotiation with ignominy and spur them into revengeful action.

Masculinity, for these characters, is about apodictic dominance, unlimited power, no opposition, and no fear of death, for dishonour is worse than death, and every means to circumvent it is justified. They express a solid adherence to the hegemonic model of masculinity (Howson & Hearn, 2020;

Myers, 2012), showing excellent abilities in battles, asserting their dominance and pre-eminence through boasts and exhibiting their sovereignty by fighting till the very end. In contrast to the heroes' traits, these antagonists represent an expression of masculinity characterised by unwavering pride, insatiable greed, and an aversion to humility. Their unwavering quest for dominance and their unwillingness to heed advice or change direction highlight a strict and harmful ideal that finally brings them to an end. Though scholarly attention has not investigated the depths of their qualities, possibly owing to a dearth of negative male characters in fairy tales, they provide a deep understanding of masculinities among men.

Conclusive Musings: On Imagery and Beyond

'Someday you will be old enough to start reading fairy tales again', said C. S. Lewis, who defended fairy tales against allegations of promoting escapism and frightening children and subtitled the last of his space trilogy books as *A Modern Fairy-Tale for Grown-Ups*. Like how fairy tales weave beautiful concoctions and inspire children, the *Ramayana* and the *Mahabharata* continue to influence multiple aspects of quotidian practices of individuals across the Indian subcontinent at various levels. Different authors have affirmed 'the power of these tales to speak to current affairs' (Brodbeck, 2017, p. 125). *Hatim* and the epics skilfully channel the essence of heroic masculinity as these tales cross over to the fabric of societal values, highlighting their enduring significance in shaping cultural ideals. The male protagonists in these tales honour their responsibility to protect women and thus excel in combat against multiple opponents.

As an exemplary fairy-tale male hero, Hatim embodies a fanciable physicality, is active in overcoming hurdles that try to thwart him and is a living testimony to the virtues that heroes in Indian epics are revered for, shining as 'a man of god' who is just, kind, and worthy of honour. Like the epics, Hatim's story, though originally Arabic, stands out with pronounced notions of masculinities that have defined for audiences the way of being an idealised man for ages. Though rarer in fairy tales, the male antagonists are sunk in the sea of pride and greed, flying along an air of superiority that makes them devalue the protagonists. Their value systems are morally corrupt and convincingly complicit to the standards of hegemonic masculinity. Ravana, Duryodhana and Dajjal continue to show how one can stray from their path to invite their doom nearer with abhorred qualities.

In contrast, an exemplary man who is truthful, physically handsome, capable, strong, loved by all and who never leaves the ways of righteousness culminates into what Rama, the Pandavas and Hatim are. In the case of either set of characters, there is a strictly defined set of features that they are limited to, reaffirming notions of masculinities that have been dawning for ages. They suggest strict boundaries in which men should operate and describe any deviance as sinful, ultimately punished with mortal perishing. Such stories, mainly aimed at children or exposed during childhood, are potentially impactful and impressionable on young minds, as substantiated by Myers (2012) and Wood (1994). Such allegiance to idealised notions may inspire impersonation by audiences and prohibit

breathing grounds for contemporary, alternative notions of masculinities. The recurrent themes of idealised masculinities in the symphony of the stories presented highlight the enduring influence of narrative traditions in shaping cultural norms.

End Notes:

1. Episodes of the show *Hatim* were downloaded from the website *Dailymotion*. Observations and interpretations made here are based on the forty-five episodes available there.
2. Multiple renditions of the *Ramayana* and the *Mahabharata* are available, across multiple formats, for reference. Text versions of the same have been considered and cited below for reference.
3. Indian renditions of *Hatim* have always focused on the character's journey to find answers to seven questions. Hatim learns through these experiences by undertaking gnarly tasks involving multiple demanding stages and detours.

References

- Aguirre, M. 2011. 'An Outline of Propp's Model for The Study of Fairytales', *The Northanger Library Project*, 143–175.
- Ahmed, A. 2012. 'Women and soap-operas: Popularity, portrayal, and perception', *International Journal of Scientific and Research Publications*, 2(6): 1–6.
- Banerjee, S. 2005. *Make me a man!: Masculinity, Hinduism, and nationalism in India*. Albany: State University of New York Press.
- Borg, I. 2019. 'Age-and gender-related differences in the structure and the meaning of personal values', *Personality and Individual Differences*, 138: 336-343.
- Brodbeck, S. 2017. Mapping masculinities in the Sanskrit Mahābhārata and Rāmāya. In: I. Zsolnay (eds.), *Being a Man: Negotiating Ancient Constructs of Masculinity*. pp. 125–149. Oxford: Routledge.
- Carter, J. B. 2006. 'Princes, Beasts, or Royal Pains: Men and Masculinity in the Revisionist Fairy Tales of Mary E. Wilkins Freeman', *Marvels & Tales*, 20(1): 30–46.
- Cekiso, M. 2015. 'Using Fairy Tales in the Foundation Phase Reading Classroom to Raise Awareness on and Mitigation against Gender-based Violence in South Africa', *International Journal of Educational Sciences*, 10 (2): 306–310.
- Chowdhry, P. 2019. *Gender, Power and Identity: Essays on Masculinities in Rural North India* (1st ed.). Hyderabad: Orient BlackSwan.
- Connell, R. 2016. 'Masculinities in global perspective: hegemony, contestation, and changing power structures', *Theory and Society*, 45 (4): 303–318.

- Feasey, R. 2008. *Masculinity and popular television*. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press.
- Geena Davis Institute on Gender in Media, Promundo, USC Viterbi School of Engineering, & Kering Foundation. 2020. *If he can see it, will he be it? Representations of Masculinity in Boys' Television*.
- Gottzén, L., Mellström, U., & Shefer, T. 2020. Introduction: Mapping the field of masculinity studies. In: L. Gottzén, U. Mellström, & T. Shefer (eds.), *Routledge International Handbook of Masculinity Studies* (1st ed.). pp. 1–16. Routledge.
- Gupta, C. 2011. 'Anxious Hindu Masculinities in Colonial North India', *Crosscurrents*, December 2011: 441–454.
- Hönekopp, J., Rudolph, U., Beier, L., Liebert, A., & Müller, C. 2007. 'Physical attractiveness of face and body as indicators of physical fitness in men', *Evolution and Human Behavior*, 28 (2): 106–111.
- Howson, R., & Hearn, J. 2020. Hegemony, hegemonic masculinity, and beyond. In: L. Gottzén, U. Mellström, & T. Shefer (eds.), *Routledge International Handbook of Masculinity Studies* (1st ed.). pp. 41–51. Routledge.
- Jorgensen, J. 2018. 'Masculinity and men's bodies in fairy tales: Youth, violence, and transformation', *Marvels and Tales*, 32 (2): 338–361.
- Lindstrand, F., Insulander, E., & Selander, S. 2016. 'Multimodal representations of gender in young children's popular culture', *Journal of Media and Communication Research*, 61: 6–25.
- Meland, A. T. 2020. 'Challenging gender stereotypes through a transformation of a fairy tale', *European Early Childhood Education Research Journal*, 28 (6): 911–922.
- Muhabat, F., Mangrio, R. A., Kazemian, B., Sadia, S., & Noor, M. 2015. 'Arabic Fairy-Tales: An Analysis of Hatim Tai's Story within Propp's Model', *Communication and Linguistics Studies*, 1 (2): 21–25.
- Myers, K. 2012. '"Cowboy Up/!": Non-Hegemonic Representations of Masculinity in Children's Television Programming', *The Journal of Men's Studies*, 20 (2): 125–144.
- Narayan, R. K. 1977. *The Ramayana: A shortened modern prose version of the Indian epic*. London: Penguin Books.
- Rajagopalachari, C. 2021. *Mahabharata*. Mumbai: Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan.
- Reeser, T. W. 2010. *Masculinities in Theory: An Introduction* (1st ed.). Wiley-Blackwell.
- Sahgal, S. 2009. 'Masculinity in Early India/: Constructing an Embryonic Frame', *Indian History Congress*,70: 151–163.

- Scott, I. M. L., Pound, N., Stephen, I. D., Clark, A. P., & Penton-Voak, I. S. 2010. *Does Masculinity Matter? The Contribution of Masculine Face Shape to Male Attractiveness in Humans*. PLoS ONE, 5(10): e13585
- Sinha, M. 1995. *Colonial Masculinity: The "Manly Englishman" and the "Effeminate Bengali" in the late nineteenth century*. Manchester: Manchester University Press.
- Srivastava, S. 2015. 'Masculinity Studies and Feminism: Othering the Self.' *Economic & Political Weekly,* L(20): 33–36.
- Stone, K. 1975. 'Things Walt Disney Never Told U', *The Journal of American Folklore*, 88 (347): 42–50.
- Tatar, M. 2010. 'Why fairy tales matter: The performative and the transformative', *Western Folklore*, 69 (1): 55–64.
- Wood, J. T. 1994. *Gendered lives: Communication, gender, and culture*. Boston: Wadsworth Publishing Co Inc.
- Zipes, J. 2011. 'The Meaning of Fairy Tale within the Evolution of Culture', *Marvels & Tales*, 25 (2): 221–243.

Bio Profile of the Authors:

[1]Assistant Professor,
Birla School of Communication,
Birla Global University, Bhubaneswar
Email ID: 2020phdcms002@curaj.ac.in

&

[2]Assistant Professor,
Department of Culture & Media Studies,
Central University of Rajasthan
Email ID: Prantapralik@curaj.ac.in

From Water to Rights: The Malo Fisher Folk's Political Journey in Bengal

Paramita Bhattacharya

Abstract:

Historical inquiries into twentieth-century South Asia have often focused on the shift from caste-based awareness to political consciousness. Yet, scant attention has been given to the caste and political consciousness of the Malo community in this region. A thorough examination would reveal that the Malos sought to challenge traditional perceptions of their caste identity to shape their narrative. Over time, this endeavor evolved into a political awareness, particularly gaining momentum in the second quarter of the twentieth century. The Malo community actively engaged in the electoral processes of late colonial Bengal, espousing both nationalist and class-oriented perspectives. This article aims to provide a balanced analysis, situating the caste assertion of Bengal's Malo community within its historical context.

Keywords : *Communal Consciousness, Caste Avowal, Malos, Scheduled Castes, Caste Politics*

Introduction

The evolution from 'caste consciousness' to political awareness was a common narrative among the prominent Scheduled Caste communities in late colonial Bengal. Alongside other significant Scheduled Caste groups such as the Rajbanshis, Namasudras, and Poundras, the Malos (Malla Kshatriyas), a notable fishing community in Bengal, embraced colonial rule with a positive perspective. They not only challenged the conventional perceptions of their caste identity propagated by leading scholars but also crafted their own historical narrative using available theoretical frameworks and historical sources. This proactive stance by the Malos gradually evolved into a political consciousness by the second quarter of the twentieth century. They were actively engaged in the electoral politics of late colonial Bengal, expressing both nationalist and class-oriented perspectives (Banerjee, 1990).

The Malos, also known as Jhalo Malos, originating from the fishing communities of Eastern and North-eastern India, including present-day Bangladesh, have inhabited these regions since ancient times. References in precolonial Bengali and Kamrupi literature attest to the presence of this community in the riverine regions of Bengal and Assam. However, estimating their population and way of life before colonial rule presents significant challenges. Among colonial administrative scholars, Buchanan Hamilton was among the first to provide a detailed account of the Malos. During his survey (1807-1814 CE) across various districts of Assam and Bengal, Buchanan described the social, economic, and cultural aspects of the Malos in areas like Calcutta, Dinajpur, Goalpara, Rangpur, and Mymensingh (Barman, 2008).

Subsequently, with the commencement of population censuses in India in 1871-72, the Malos garnered considerable attention from the colonial government. Census data from the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries (1872-1941) reveal that the Malos were primarily concentrated in districts such as Mymensingh, Tipperah (Comilla), Dacca, Pabna, Jessore, Khulna, Nadia, Murshidabad, Hooghly, Rangpur, Rajshahi, 24 Parganas, Faridpur, and Bakharganj.All of which were rich in rivers and other water bodies. Colonial administrative scholars also provided insights into the racial and physical characteristics, as well as the social status, of the Malos. Dr. James Wise (1835-1886), a notable ethnographer of Dacca, documented some of these aspects in 1883 and wrote: "*They (Malos) are remarkable for strength, nerve, and independent bearing. The fine examples of Bengali manhood are found among them, and their muscular figures astonish those inhabitants of towns."* (Barman, M. M., 1323 BS/1916CE)

This indicates the Malos possessed greater resilience compared to the general populace of Bengal. H.H. Risley, in his work "Tribes and Castes of Bengal" (1891), suggested that 'the Malos represent the remnants of a distinct indigenous tribe rather than solely an occupational group.' Thus, colonial accounts imply that the Malos were and are indigenous to Bengal (Das Ray, 1314 BS/1921CE).

Caste Consciousness and Malo Community

The educated Malos (particularly lawyers, teachers, officials and other white color job holders) had come forward to develop a sense of 'self-respect' to fight against social injustice. Initially, the Malos had emphasized their structural integration through the foundation of an organization of their own. In 1913, they founded the 'Jhalla Malla Kshatriya Samity' to place the Malos as a respectable 'Kshatriya' caste community of Bengal.Within a decade; this organization became popular among the Jhalo Malos. The Malos of several villages and towns of Eastern Bengal and Assam (with their local bodies) was greatly organized by this association (Barman, 2018).

The second step of the social movement of the Malos was the construction of a history of their culture, society and Kshatriya hood. In the case of the Malos, this trend was initiated by Mahendranath Malla Barman of Chhatrapur (Mymensingh). With the support of Dinanath Malla Barman of Achargram (Nandail), Mahendranath produced an excellent historical work on the Malos of Bengal called *'Dwitiya Varna Kshatriya Ba Jhal-Mal Tattwa: Pratham Bhag* (Mymensingh, Dinanath Malla Barman, 1914).' He published the second part of his work as *Sanschipta Kshatriya Tattwa': Dwitiya Bhag* in 1916. In these works, Mahendranath had claimed that the Jhalos had migrated to Bengal from Jhalwar of Rajasthan and the Malos from Mallagarh of Northwestern India. Both the Jhalos and Malos were the descendants of the Kshatriya dynasties of those regions. They took up fishing as an occupation in Bengal which was in no way an inferior one in the ancient period. He wrote,"*Fish is a common item in the life and culture of the people of Bengal. It has every respect in society. So as a profession, fishing should be respected in society."*(Barman and Sarkar, 2020)

Mahendranath had argued with testimonies that 'fishing' and 'selling of fish' as professions are in no way substandard. Therefore, as fishermen, the Malos deserve respect.' And as the successors of the Kshatriyas of Rajasthan, the Malos of Bengal must adopt Kshatriya surnames as a symbol of their

respectable caste identity. He suggested the Malos to accept the surnames like, Jhal Barman, Jhalla Barman, Mal Barman, Malla Barman, Mal Barma, Jhal Barma, Das Barman, etc. (Chattopadhyay, 1984).

Mahendranath Malla Barman's work inspired the Malos of different districts of Eastern Bengal for writing their history. Hence the Malo scholars of Bengal produced several other historical pieces, namely, *Jalla Malla Kshatriya Itihas* (1920) of Brajanath Das Barman, *Jyoti* (1921) of Shashi Bhusan Das Ray, *Sanschipta Jalla-Malla Kshatriya Tattwa* (1923) of Dharmachand Malla Barman and some other books. These works strengthened the arguments of Mahendranath Malla Barman in respect to the Jhalla-Malla Kshatriya identity of the Malos as well as highlighted their achievement in different fields.These works also contributed to integrating the Malos as a distinct caste community of Bengal (Risley, 1981)

Bengal and Malo Community

In 1924, Mahimchandra Malla Barman composed supplementary historical documents on the Jhalo Malos. In his work titled *'Jhalla-Malla Parichay'* Mahimchandra added sixteen appendices for fortifying the previous historical construction of the Malo scholars (published since 1914 to 1923). With the self-constructed history, the Malos had started unifying their caste fellows of Bengal, mainly of Mymensingh, Dacca, Pabna, Bogra, Tipperah, Jessore, Nadia, Murshidabad, 24 Parganas, Faridpur etc and of Sylhet and Goalpara from Assam. They had also started publishing a journal called '*Jhal Mal Badhanv'*specified for their caste (Barman, 2020a)

All these activities of the Malos had given rise to a sense of belonging among them, especially in the early twentieth century. In 1923 Dharmachand Malla Barman had prepared a list of villages and towns of Bengal with the considerable emphasis on the caste movement of the Malos. From his work, it appears that the Malo of erstwhile Mymensingh, at present comprising Mymensingh, Netrokona, Sherpur, Jamalpur and Kishoreganj; erstwhile Bogra-Pabna, presently comprising of Bogra, Sirajganj, Natore and Pabna; erstwhile Tipperah presently Comilla and Brahmanbaria; erstwhile Dacca presently of Tangail, Gazipur, Narasindi, Manikganj, Dhaka, Narayanganj and Munshiganj; erstwhile Jessore, present day Jessore, Meherpur, Chuadaga, Jhinaidaha, Magura and Narail; erstwhile Murshidabad, present say Nadia, 24 Parganas of Bengal; erstwhile Dhubri-Goalpara and Sylhet comprising of present day Sunamganj, Sylhet, Maulavi Bazar and Habiganj of Bangladesh part of Assam were considerably influenced by the Malla Kshatriya movement. It appears that the Malos of Eastern Bengal were organized under their Jhalla Malla Kshatriya Samity having its branches and organizers in different towns, markets and villages.

The third step of *kshatriyaization* of the Malos was the adoption of rites, rituals and sacraments (*sanaskaras*) of the upper caste Hindus of Bengal. Earlier, the Malos used to follow 30 days post-death pollution (*ashouch*, for maintaining social distance) in their society. But this position was changed in the early twentieth century. Instead of 30 days, they had introduced the ritual of performing *shraddha* on the 13th day after the death of any member of the family. They had also adopted Kshatriya surnames like Barman, Malla Barman, Jhalla Barman, Das Barman, Mal Barman, Malla Das, etc.[23] [instead of

surnames (like Malo, Majhi, Patra and Bapari) as recorded by H.H. Risley in the last decade of the nineteenth century].[24] Simultaneously, the Malos had also started holding sacred thread (*paita*) after performing certain Vedic rituals (*Bratyostom Yagna*) approved by the Brahmin priests. (Barman, 2019b)

Dr. Sashi Bhusan Ray Barman (a Malo doctor of Toknayan Bazar of Dacca) organized a huge gathering of the Malos in 1932 where Digindra Narayan Bhattacharya (a Congress-cum-Hindu Mahasabha activist) had recognized the Kshatriyahood of the Malos. This gesture of the Hindu Mahasabha had fulfilled the aspirations of *Kshatriyahood* of the Malos of Bengal. However, the Malos had accepted the Scheduled Caste status (in 1936) without much criticism. While the Malo scholars had advocated for Kshatriyahood and the adoption of sacraments of the upper castes but they did not contempt their traditional livelihoods. Rather, they always looked into their caste-based occupations as a matter of pride. Thus Mahendranath Malla Barman wrote in 1914 that 'profession cannot destroy the caste of any community. Since we eat fish we must catch them. (Barman, 2019c)

Incidentally, NBOAPMS had received the attention of the Swarajya Party [founded by Chittaranjan Das (1870-1925, a prominent lawyer and a politician of Bengal) and his close supporters]. The Swarajist leaders like Hemanta Kumar Sarkar (1897-1952), and Hemaprabha Majumder were very much active in NBOAPMS. In its third conference (held at Madaripur of Faridpur district on 11-12 March 1926) NBOAPMS showed its interest in the working-class movement for the protection of the rights of the Malos (Barman, M., 1331 BS/1924C).

Political Consciousness and Malo Community

The social assertion of the Malos took a new turn at the beginning of the 1930s when they got interested in the political mobilization of their caste consciousness. There were of course serval causative factors for this transition. Firstly, the demand of the Jhalo-Malos for Malla Kshatriya identity was accepted by the colonial government, especially in the census of 1931 followed by the recognition of the Hindu Mahasabha (1932). Secondly, communities like the Rajbanshis, the Poundras and the Namasudras took interest in the provincial electoral politics which had induced the Malos for their political empowerment. In such a background, the Malos had proceeded to the election of 1937 [the first election held under the *Government of India Act* (1935) for the Legislative Assemblies of British-ruled provinces]. Two provinces of British India like Assam and Bengal were suitable for their political empowerment (Barman, M. M., 1321 BS/1914CE) Though the Malos had a comparatively less population in the districts of Assam (Goalpara and Sylhet), the districts of Eastern and Central Bengal (particularly Mymensingh, Tipperah, Pabana, Bogra, Faridpur, Nadia, Jessore, Murshidabad and 24 Parganas) were full with Malo population. The Nikhil Bangiya Assam Pradeshiya Matsyajibi Samity (NBOAPMS) was interested to ensure the rights of the fishermen and fish traders and retailers. On the other hand, the Bangiya Malla Kshatriya Samaj Unnayan Sabha [BMKSUS (centred in Calcutta, founded in 1932)] was engaged in the educational attainment of the Malos especially to facilitate the Malo students in the urban centers (particularly in Calcutta and Dacca) (Barman, 2019).

The Nikhil Bangiya Assam Pradeshiya Matsyajibi Samity (NBOAPMS) was interested to ensure the rights of the fishermen and fish traders and retailers. On the other hand, the Bangiya Malla Kshatriya Samaj Unnayan Sabha [BMKSUS (centred in Calcutta, founded in 1932)] was engaged in the educational attainment of the Malos especially to facilitate the Malo students in the urban centers (particularly in Calcutta and Dacca). Despite the limitations of the Malos, we have noticed that a few Malo leaders [from the Malla Kshatriya Samity] had contested the election of 1937 from several non-Muhammedan constituencies. Among them, Ram Ratan Barman, Dwarakanath Malla Barman, Harendra Kumar Malla Barman, and Jogesh Chandra Malo were prominent. However, they could not get victory in any constituency. Harendra Kumar Malla Barman, on the other hand, had contested the election as a candidate of the Indian National Congress (INC) from Tipperah SC-Reserve Constituency. He was defeated by Jagat Chandra Mondal (a Namasudra independent candidate). Similarly, Jogesh Chandra Malo was defeated by Birat Chandra Mondal (an influential Namasudra leader) in Faridpur Constituency. It means the Malos could not send any representative to the Legislative Assembly of Bengal. However, the success of the Namasudra, Rajbanshi, and Poundra lawyers and land-owning classes (as MLA) had inspired many Malos to be prepared for future electoral contests. The Independent Scheduled Caste MLAs, however, had organized themselves in the Legislative Assembly under the umbrella of a newly formed 'Independent Scheduled Caste Party' (ISCP, 1938**).**

The force that influenced the Scheduled Castes in 1946 was the Hindu Mahasabha (HM). Even though the caste Hindu traditions made the Scheduled Castes 'outcastes or untouchables' but in the election, they were accepted with great enthusiasm by the Hindu Mahasabha. The success of the Scheduled Caste Hindu Mahasabha candidates was comparatively higher than the non-SC candidates. Among them, Kanti Bhusan Biswas (Jessore: 8,367), Kshetra Mohun Sikdar (Faridpur: 9,743) and Manmohan Das (Mymensingh: 13,971) got a considerable percentage of votes although they could not turn out as MLAs. The election records of 1946 show that these three candidates got 40% of the votes secured by the Hindu Mahasabha in the election 1946. The communal tension and violence for the Pakistan demand of the Muslim League, an outbreak of the *Tebhaga* movement (1946) led by the Scheduled Caste peasantry with the moral support of the urban educated non-Scheduled Caste Communists and other political developments had submerged the whole of Bengal under political uncertainty. The condition was further worsened with the publication of the proposal of the Cabinet Mission (on May 16, 1946).

From Bengal, 25 Congress members were elected to the Constituent Assembly including 3 SC members. However, the non-Congress Scheduled Castes found that their future would be unsaved in the newly formed Constituent Assembly since Dr. B. R. Ambedkar and the AISCF could not send their representatives (Barman, 2019d).

The Muslim League was not ready to work with Congress. Rather it adopted a resolution in Bombay (on 19th July) for 'Direct Action' for attaining Pakistan. The Working Committee of the Muslim League had preferred 16th August as the 'Direct Action Day'. 'Direct Action' turned violent in Calcutta resulting in murder, rape, indiscriminate killing of the Hindus and destruction of their properties which became infamous as the 'Great Calcutta Killing' in the history of the Indian subcontinent. https://archive.org/details/in.ernet.dli.2015.316801, 2024)

Fazlur Rahman, Tarak Nath Mukherjee, Nagendra Nath Roy (an SC MLA of the Rajbanshi sub-caste), and Dwarkanath Baruri were given a berth in the Ministry of Suhrawardy (on 25 November 1946). [The last two were allied with Jogendra Nath Mandal and actively involved in Ambedkar's election to the Constituent Assembly through the Malo MLAs were excluded from ministerial power] https://archive.org/stream/in.ernet.dli.2015.37999/2015.37999.The-Calcutta-Gazette-1932-July-September_djvu.txt, 2024)

However, the League's entry into the government did not stop the communal tension. Even the Muslims (with the support of the Muslim League) had started forced conversion, murder, burning, and destruction of properties of the Hindus, raping, abduction, and forced marriage of the Hindu womenfolk including the Scheduled Castes at Noakhali and Tipperah in East Bengal (with an organized way) (Barman, 2020). This trend resulted in the forced migration of the Hindus (including the SCs) from Noakhali and some other places of East Bengal (Singh, A. I., 1991)

Finally, the *Indian Independence Act* was ratified on 18th July 1947 in the British Parliament and Bengal and Punjab were divided by 15th August 1947 to form independent India and Pakistan. Partition of Bengal and Punjab appeared before the people of the respective provinces as a serious threat that had generated the forces of forced migration from both sides of the newly created states (PROF. REHAN, 2024). The Malos of Eastern Bengal could not escape from this trend. Along with minority communities, a huge number of the Malos of East Bengal had migrated to West Bengal, Assam, Tripura, Meghalaya, and other states of India (Paschima Bangla Matsyajibi Samity, 1983).

Judicial Analysis :

The Supreme Court has issued several landmark judgments related to the rights of Scheduled Castes (SCs), which include communities like the Malos. The Supreme Court of India has analysed various Constitutional Provisions like Article 14, 15, 19, 23, 24, 29, 30, and 32 in this regard. These judgments have set precedents and established principles that apply to the protection and enforcement of constitutional rights for marginalized communities. (https://www.jstor.org/stable/4416612)

In the case of State of Kerala v. N.M. Thomas **(State Of Kerala & Anr vs N. M. Thomas & Ors n.d., 490)** Supreme Court affirmed the importance of reservation policies for Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes in government employment. The Supreme Court emphasized the need for affirmative action to uplift these communities and ensure their representation in public services (State Of Kerala & Anr vs N. M. Thomas & Ors, 1976).

The Indra Sawhney v. Union of India **(Indra Sawhney Etc. Etc vs Union Of India And Others, Etc. Etc. on 16 November, 1992 n.d., 477**) Commonly known as the Mandal Commission case, this judgment addressed reservations in public employment and upheld the constitutional validity of reservations for SCs, Scheduled Tribes (STs), and Other Backward Classes (OBCs). While not specific to Malo communities, it reaffirmed the principle of affirmative action for marginalized groups. (https://indiankanoon.org/doc/1218090, 2024)

In M. Nagaraj v. Union of India**,** the Supreme Court laid down guidelines for providing reservations in promotions for SCs and STs in government jobs. The judgment clarified that the state

must collect quantifiable data to demonstrate the backwardness of these communities before providing reservation in promotions (M.Nagaraj & Others vs Union of India & Others, 2006).

B.K. Pavitra v. Union of India Case dealt with the implementation of reservation policies in Karnataka. The Supreme Court emphasized the importance of collecting empirical data to justify the extension of reservation benefits to specific communities and ensuring their effective implementation.

While these cases do not directly address the Malo communities, they establish broader principles related to the constitutional rights of Scheduled Castes and marginalized groups. The legal framework and principles established in these cases can be invoked to protect and enforce the constitutional rights of Malo communities as well. It's essential for legal advocates and policymakers to interpret and apply these judgments in a manner that addresses the specific socio-economic challenges faced by Malo communities. (Singh, I., 2008)

Concluding Remarks

In conclusion we can say that, initially, the caste movement among the Malo community mirrored characteristics akin to the 'Sanskritisation process', primarily influenced by the 'demonstration effect'. However, the subsequent phase diverged. Malos began to embrace and take pride in their occupation rather than abandoning it. In the third stage, their caste consciousness evolved into political awareness. Consequently, they engaged in political movements led by various groups such as the Indian National Congress, Hindu Mahasabha, and Communists. However, the partition of Bengal in 1947 resulted in the dispersal of Malos, relegating them to the status of a marginalized caste community in Bengal (Barman, M. M., 1321 BS/1914CE).

The exploration of political mobilization among Bengal's Malo fisherfolk reveals a multifaceted journey marked by resilience, adaptation, and challenges (Barman, K., 2001).

The transition from caste consciousness to political awareness illustrates the community's ability to navigate complex socio-political dynamics and assert their agency within the colonial and post-colonial contexts. The evolution of the Malo community's political consciousness highlights the intersections between caste, occupation, and political identity. Initially influenced by processes such as Sanskritisation, the Malo caste movement gradually transformed as the community developed a sense of pride in their occupation and actively engaged in political movements (Martin, 1976). Their participation in various political groups, including the Indian National Congress, Hindu Mahasabha, and Communist parties, underscores their quest for representation and empowerment. However, the partition of Bengal in 1947 posed significant challenges, leading to the dispersal of Malo communities and further marginalization. Despite these obstacles, the study of political mobilization among Bengal's Malo fisherfolk sheds light on the resilience and determination of marginalized communities to assert their rights and aspirations within the broader socio-political landscape (Mitra, 1953).

Overall, Beyond Caste: Political Mobilization among Bengal's Malo Fisherfolk provides valuable insights into the complex dynamics of identity, politics, and social change, emphasizing the importance

of understanding the experiences and struggles of marginalized communities in shaping the trajectory of history.

References:

- Banerjee, Dilip. 1990. *Election Recorder,* Book Front Publication Forum, Calcutta.
- Barman, Kiran Chandra. 2001. Amar Smritite Adwaita Malla Barman', in Susanta Halder (ed), *Bhasaman-3*, Kolkata, Adwaita Malla Barman Educational Society, Kolkata
- Barman, Mahendranath Malla. 1321 BS/1914CE. *Dwitiya Varna Kshatriya Ba Jhal-Mal Tattwa: Pratham Bhag*, Mymensingh, Dinanath Malla Barman,
- Barman, Mahendranath Malla. 1323 BS/1916CE. *Sanschipta Kshatriya Tattwa': Dwitiya Bhag,* Mymensingh, Jhalla Malla Kshatriya Samity,
- Barman, Mahimchandra Malla. 1331BS/1924CE. *Jhalla Malla Parichay,* Nikli, Jhal Mal Samity,
- Barman, Rup Kumar. 2008. *Fisheries and Fishermen: A Socio-economic History of Fisheries and Fishermen of Colonial Bengal and Post-Colonial West Bengal,* Abhijeet Publications, Delhi
- Barman, Rup Kumar. 2018. Right Left Right: The Scheduled Castes in West Bengal Assembly Election (1920-2016), *Contemporary Voice of Dalit,* 10(2): 216-231
- Barman, Rup Kumar. 2019. *Caste, Class and Culture*, Abhijeet Publications, Delhi
- Barman, Rup Kumar. 2019. *Caste, Class and Culture: the Malos, Adwaita Malla Barman and History of India and Bangladesh,* Abhijeet Publications, Delhi
- Barman, Rup Kumar. 2019. *Caste, Politics, Casteism and Dalit Discourse,* Cognition Publications, Kolkata
- Barman, Rup Kumar. 2019. *Fisheries and fishermen,* Abhijeet Publications, Delhi
- Barman, Rup Kumar. 2020. *Caste, Politics, Casteism and Dalit Discourse,* Abhijeet Publications, Delhi
- Barman, Rup Kumar, and Sarkar, Krishna Kumar. 2020. *Malo Jatir Itihas O Akar Grantha*, Cognition Publications, Kolkata
- Chattopadhyay, Gautam. 1984, *Bengal Electoral Politics and Freedom Struggle 1862-1947,* South Asia Books, Delhi
- Martin, Montgomery, 1976. *The History, Antiquities, Topography and Statistics of Eastern India,* Cosmo Publications, Delhi
- Mitra, A, 1953.*The Tribes and Castes of West Bengal, Calcutta*, West Bengal Government Press, Calcutta.

- *Paschima Bangla Matsyajibi Samity, Bhagirathi*, 1983 Special Issue published on the occasion of 3rd Conference of the West Bengal Fishermen Conference held at Berhampur 6-8 June 1986, Berhampur, Conference of the West Bengal Fishermen Conference:3
- Risley, H.H. 1981. *The Tribes and Castes of Bengal.* first published in 1891, Bengal Secretariat Press, Calcutta.
- Singh, Anita Inder. 1991, *Origins of Partition.* Oxford University Press, Delhi.
- Singh, Inder. 2008. Abul Kalam Azad and Coalition Politics, *The Indian Journal of Political Science* 69, (4): 879-888

Website Links :

https://ebooks.inflibnet.ac.in/hrdp04/chapter/cultural-rights-in-the-indian-constitution-and-case-law (Accessed on 10th May, 2024)

https://indiankanoon.org/doc/1218090 (Accessed on 11th May, 2024)

PROF.REHAN, https://ebooks.inflibnet.ac.in(Accessed on 10th June, 2024)

https://archive.org/details/in.ernet.dli.2015.316801 (Accessed on 29th June, 2024)

https://archive.org/stream/in.ernet.dli.2015.37999/2015.37999.The-Calcutta-Gazette-1932-July-September_djvu.txt (Accessed on 29th June, 2024)

https://www.jstor.org/stable/4416612 (Accessed on 29th June, 2024)

https://www.gssmp.in/assets/pdf/Volume-8Number-1,June-2022/3.pdf (Accessed on 24th July, 2024)

Case References Cited :

Indra Sawhney Etc. Etc vs Union Of India And Others, Etc. Etc. on 16 November, 1992, AIR1993SC477

M.Nagaraj & Others vs Union of India & Others on 19 October, 2006, AIR 2007 SC 71

State of Kerala & Anr vs N. M. Thomas & Ors, AIR 1976 SC 490

B.K. Pavitra vs Union of India on 10 May, 2019, AIR 2019 SC 2723, AIRONLINE 2019SC 275

Bio Profile of the Author :
Assistant Professor, School of Law
Brainware University, Barasat, India
mailtoparamita84@gmail.com

Imagining the Nepali *Jāti*: A Study of Darjeeling's Printed Narratives

Nima Doma Lama

Abstract

This paper explores the role of periodicals in shaping the cultural and socio-political narratives of the Indian Nepali community, focusing on publications that emerged in the Darjeeling region from the early to mid-twentieth century. It investigates how print culture facilitated the creation of a public sphere, enabling the Indian Nepali community to imagine itself as a cohesive entity despite its diverse ethnic and linguistic roots. By examining the significance of Darjeeling as a dynamic contact zone and the backdrop for movements like the Gorkhaland movement (1980) and the linguistic movement (1992), the study highlights the region's pivotal role in fostering cultural exchange and discourse. It delves into the transformation of a society rooted in oral traditions to one unified through print literacy in a shared language, emphasizing the periodicals' impact on the evolving Nepali identity. The paper also addresses the nuances of readership and the engagement of these periodicals with modernity, offering insights into how they shaped the socio-cultural fabric and nationalism of Nepali society in India and beyond.

Keywords: *Print culture, Public sphere, Periodicals, Indian Nepali nationalism, Imagined community, Contact zone*

The concept of a nation and the modern nation-state exists within the bounds of a given territory wherein its sovereignty, authority, and legitimacy within that territory are considered absolute. While it can foster unity and solidarity, it can also lead to exclusion and conflict. The establishment of clear borders and the creation of the sovereign state as representing a distinct and shared identity, therefore, problematizes questions of belonging and identity. It further raises questions about the permeability of borders, contact zones- areas where different cultures and communities interact and influence each other- and the fluid and dynamic nature of national identity, shaped by historical events, migration, globalization, and internal changes. It is within this complex discourse of nation-state, belonging and identity that the question of the formation of the Nepali *jāti* in India must be analyzed and understood. To understand the early narratives within the public sphere, that inevitably shaped Nepali society and Nepali nationalism in India, this paper closely examines periodicals, a source which greatly acts as a mirror of its times, and investigates the extent to which these periodicals attempted to shape the cultural narratives and discourses of the Nepalis in India. To Borrow Anderson's idea, this is a study of the role of print in the creation of the space within which the Indian Nepali community could be

imagined. Though Banaras is the locus where the Nepali print culture established its foundation, this study lays its thrust on the periodicals that emerged from the Darjeeling region. Nestled in the lap of the Himalayas, the region serves as vibrant contact zone and melting pot of diverse ethnic groups, each contributing to the rich tapestry of cultural exchange. Home to movements such as the 'Bhâsâ ndolan' (Linguistic Movement) of 1992, and the Gorkhaland Movement of 1980, Darjeeling is an important site in the history of Nepali Nationalism, that was borne out of the growing consciousness amongst the Nepalis in India. However, this journey that involved numerous cultural, social, and political developments, which not only led to forging of a cohesive sense of Nepali identity, but culminated in strong regional and nationalistic expressions, was a complex one. Hence, this paper closely examines the periodical landscape in Darjeeling, starting from the early to the mid-twentieth century, and their significance in shaping the socio-cultural narratives of the Nepali society in India and beyond. It explores the intricacies of a society that evolved from culturally and linguistically diverse ethnic groups with oral traditions to one characterized by print literacy in a shared language. It delves into the various nuances within the context of readership, concerning periodicals as a modern form of publication, in the Nepali society and investigates the emerging narratives in their encounter with modernity.

Early Beginnings

The growth of the publishing industry in Banaras and participation in a shared print culture resulted in the emergence of a discursive space. The world of print enabled the use of this discursive space and led to formations of popular opinions and stimulated public debates. The first Nepali periodical, *Gorkhay Bhārat Jiwan*[1], was published in Benaras and subsequently *Mādhavi, Sundari, Gorkhāli*, *Chandra,* and others emerged from the city. In fact, Bhagyamani Bhikshacharya, the father of Parasmani Pradhan- a key figure in the advancement of Nepali language and literature- had once left Nepal to seek knowledge in Banaras. He was asked by Pandit Biswaraj Harihar, the owner of Durga Press, where he worked at the time, to travel to Darjeeling to sell copies of the freshly printed Bhanubhakta's *Ramayana*. He travelled to Siliguri, Kurseong, Nagari Kaman, fulfilling his duty, and finally reached Kalimpong and settled there. This serves as an early example of the bridge between Banaras and Darjeeling, in Darjeeling's exposure to Nepali print culture. Benaras, therefore, was the site where the foundations for the development of Nepali language and literature were laid. These discourses were consequently adopted by periodicals emerging in Dehradun, Assam, other parts of India, and most importantly Darjeeling, an emotional heartland for the Nepali community in India, which became an important site for the rhetoric of development of the Nepali *jāti*. Parasmani, undoubtedly must have had the opportunity to read the Banaras-based Nepali periodicals, which inspired him to write his first poem 'Samasyāpurti'. He also contributed several writings to these periodicals and derived inspiration to begin his own periodicals in Darjeeling. He started *Chandrikā*, from Kurseong in 1918, and served as its editor. Though it only ran for a year, *Chandrikā* was the first literary periodical to

emerge from Darjeeling, thus making Parasmani, the first in the region to have had a literary aim in mind. He later stated that the goal of *Chandrikā* was 'to bring about *unnati* of the Nepali language and uniformity in language.'[2] However, preceding *Chandrikā* was *Gorkhay Khabar Kāgat*, the first periodical to emerge from Darjeeling in 1901. Unlike *Chandrikā, Gorkhay Khabar Kāgat*, was not influenced by the literary traditions of Banaras but was instead a product of colonial and missionary efforts. Started and sustained by an early convert (Christian priest), Ganga Prasad Pradhan, which ran for twenty-nine years (1901-1930), the periodical limited its aim to spreading Christianity amongst the Nepali masses. However, its contribution cannot be overlooked, as it reflects the state of the Nepali language and literature of the contemporary society. Parasmani's 'Gazal', along with few original works, translations and stories were published in *Gorkhay Khabar Kāgat*.[3] The periodical in a way, helped in cultivating literary interest and reading habit in a freshly budding society in the region. As the print landscape evolved, engagement with discourses surrounding identity gradually gained momentum and became even more pronounced in Darjeeling because unlike Benaras, Darjeeling's Nepali community was far more ethnically diverse and contained a large number of Non-Brahmanical educated populace. By the second decade of the twentieth century, the Nepali society had begun to emerge out of its pre-literate state to a literate and progressively modern one.

As the educated lot acquired the knowledge of the social, cultural, economic and political life of the rest of India and the world, they became aware of the importance of one's language, literature, culture and identity. This newly created middle class was engaged in various socio-political reforms and often engaged in pedagogical missions, in the need to strengthen the social, cultural, and economic fabric of the Nepali community in India. A number of civil society organizations like the Hillmen's Association, Kalimpong Samiti, Gorkha Janapustakālaya (Library), Nepali Sāhitya Sammelan, Gorkha Dukha Niwārak Sammelan, Sri Hitkari Sammelan, Himalayan Kala Mandir, and others emerged. Gradually a host of periodicals emerged from the region such as *Nebulā, darsha, Aba, Khoji, Nepāli Sāhitya Sammelan Patrikā* which was later renamed *Diyālo.* During the post-independence era, when political borders became more defined and rigid, the Nepali community grappled with larger issues of identity and belonging. This period witnessed the emergence of diverse periodicals such as *Bhāratī, Gorkha, Janadut, Gunâso, Hâmro Bhāsā, Himādri, Gāu Sudhār Patrikā, Mālingo, Pukār, Janadut* and others.

Language of Print

If language plays a pivotal role in the integration of heterogeneous groups into what Anderson calls an 'imagined community', the need of an instrument that could tie people together in different ways than earlier modes of kinship, caste, clan, or religion was essential. According to Anderson, 'print-capitalism' was that instrument that made it possible to link 'fraternity, power, and time meaningfully together'. 'National print language' was the ideological and political tool that laid the basis for national consciousness.[4] He further highlights the instrumental role that the 'growth in literacy, commerce, industry, communication, and state machinery' played in the unification of vernacular languages within

each dynastic realm. Language was therefore the key foundation on which the Nepali nation could be formed and though Nepali was not endorsed by the state, its rise to prominence in the Darjeeling region was a complex phenomenon. Kumar Pradhan observes that, had the pre-literate, multi-lingual populace sharing a common space, not mobilized their private concern for a common language to conduct interactions in an intelligible way, the question of Nepali nation in Darjeeling would have hardly emerged.[5] However, the colonial rule too played a crucial role in the creation of symbols and forms to institutionalize Nepali language at the cost of delegitimizing the several other creoles, pidgins, and 'non-standard' dialects.[6] Colonial policies concerning language tried to apply rational, European standards and categories: 'first of all, in advocating the use of the vernacular as the language of education and administration, and then in trying to define the best or 'true' script and style and encouraging their use'.[7] In case of the diverse communities living in Darjeeling and in all the confusion of tongues, many individuals of different tribes could communicate with one another, but not one could understand or speak a word of English, which undoubtedly made administration difficult for the British in the Darjeeling region.[8] Hence, learning the language of the natives was a primary requisite in establishing colonial rule and the British evidently attempted to find a common language spoken by majority of the community in the region, which was the *Parbatiya* or Nepali dialect. Nepali found a colonial standardized version to be used by the British officials.[9] With the advent of Nepali print capitalism in Benaras, the use of Nepali as the print language greatly increased the formal use of the language. Later, eminent literary figures like Parasmani Pradhan, Dharanidhar Sharma Koirala, and Surya Bikram Gewali (collectively known as Su-Dha-Pa) championed for the advancement of Nepali, which took the shape of linguistic nationalism that would further bind the heterogeneous masses of the hills into a unified *jāti.* In this way, traditional dialects lost prominence and their scripts gradually disappeared in the region while Nepali took centre-stage, to an extent that today, the people who belong to these ethnic groups hardly find their dialects intelligible. Therefore, this process of institutionalization further bolstered by print made Nepali a 'language of power'.

Forging a Readership: Cultivating a Literary Community

The creation of an imagined community involves the formation of a sense of belonging amongst individuals who may never meet but feel connected through a common thread of language, culture, and nationality by creating narratives, symbols and experiences that people can relate to and identify with. The newspapers and periodicals served as effective mediums for rapid dissemination of such discourses. Hence, while the early twentieth century saw an emergence of several Nepali periodicals in Darjeeling, one of the foundational steps involved the establishment of a readership base. In an article in *Chandrikā* titled 'The Necessity of Reading Newspapers', Indra Mân Baidya states: 'But sadly, this practice is not prevalent among our Gorkhalis. It is disappointing that the periodicals and newspapers published in our own language have received no support by even the educated Gorkhas. I sincerely hope that the educated Gorkhas will provide the desired remedy to improve the health of the periodicals and newspapers printed in our language.'[10]

The above statement paints a poignant picture of newspaper consumption within the Nepali community. The literature of the time provides a broader insight into the challenging circumstances faced by the Nepali periodicals. A sense of despair is palpable in works like A.K. Sambhu's 'Alas! Gorkhali', and Vasundhari Devi's 'Prayer', in *Chandrikā*, that highlights the alarming shortage of readers. Since a question posed by Sardar Bahadur Dewan, in the inaugural issue received no response, Devi's 'Prayer' decries the Gorkha community's apparent indifference to its own affairs and implores them to 'Speak up!' and not squander precious time.[11] Lekhnāth Poudyāl's essay 'Necessity' also sheds light on the dismal state of Nepali language periodicals, portraying their pathetic fate and death. He states how the *Gorkha Patra* in Nepal struggles with a limited readership while the weekly, *Gorkhali*, from Banaras is described as ailing and in need of proper care and nourishment. *Chandrikā* itself is ascribed the metaphor of a 'young girl' in need of support and nourishment[12], appealing for the support from virtuous individuals dedicated to the development of the language. Parasmani too likens the periodical to a toddler attempting amateur expressions.[13] Such personifications not only humanize the publication but imply that, like an infant, it is in its early stages of development and may lack the sophistication of refined communication. This underscores the need to nurture, to help the periodical mature and deliver more cultivated content. The overall narrative underscores the urgent need of collective action and support to revive and sustain Nepali periodicals during this challenging period. Images such as the 'Bharat Mata' or in this case *Chandrikā*, as a young girl, serve to evoke nationalist feelings by tapping into emotional connections and invoking a sense of duty and belonging towards one's nation.[14]

With the establishment of the All India Gorkha League(AIGL) in 1943, the first political body of the Nepalis in India, *Gorkha* emerged in 1945 as its mouthpiece. Dambar Singh Gurung, the president of the AIGL, in his essay, 'The Birth of Gorkha'[15] notes that periodicals of that era may have struggled due to lack of engaging content and a reluctance to delve into political matters. Hence, *Gorkha* was founded with a political ideology, with emphasis on the importance of political discourse to disrupt monotony. Gurung further highlights the need to break free from a state of ignorance and actively engage with these periodicals. Expressions of support and enthusiasm from readers were evident in gratitude notes published in these periodicals. For instance, the editor of *Gorkha*, Randhir Subba, extends thanks to a subscriber who generously contributed ten rupees instead of the required four rupees for a one-year subscription.[16] The anticipation that *Gorkha*, as a political periodical, would thrive, proved true. This is evident in its successful first year. In the concluding issue of the inaugural year, Hemanta Pradhān, the Director of *Gorkha*, expresses gratitude and remarks, 'everyday we've received letters expressing their eagerness to become *Gorkha* subscribers.'[17] Yet *Gorkha* encountered challenges, particularly in its sixth year, where the financial report presented to the Gorkha League's Central Committee reflects that subscribers and agents had not remitted a sum exceeding ten thousand rupees. *Bhāratī* faced even greater setbacks and financial losses. In the periodical's editorial, titled 'Our Taste' Parasmani recounts an interaction where an agent suggested him to incorporate love stories or even erotic content in *Bhāratī* to boost sales: 'Write love stories in *Bhāratī*, Guruji! I will

sell one thousand copies in one breath", said a book seller to me the other day. He even smiled mischievously and said-'write erotic stories, I will take the burden of selling three thousand copies. After all, I need to make a modest income. Relying solely on literary writings is not sufficient for selling.'[18]

Parasmani acknowledges the financial constraints of selling literary periodicals in a market where hundred copies of Hindi's *Manohar Kahaniya* (Sensational Stories) sold hundred copies while it was a Herculean task to sell even ten copies of *Bhāratī*. However, Parasmani makes it clear that the initiative of starting the periodical was not motivated by the pursuit of profit and that *Bhāratī*'s standards could not be compromised by cheap publicity stunts. This reflects that literary content in the contemporary society faced challenges in capturing a larger audience compared to sensational or popular genres and highlights that periodicals of the time, such as *Bhāratī,* failed to cater to a variety of reader interests.

Sadly, many other periodicals of the period were short lived and met an untimely death due to crisis of readership. However, despite the challenges faced by periodicals like *Bhāratī and Diyālo* in gaining traction within the society, the periodical stewards were driven by a genuine passion for language and societal development and persevered in their dedication to serving society. In *Bhāratī*'s concluding issue, Parasmani asserts that, despite numerous obstacles and financial difficulties, the primary goal of producing the auspicious 108 issues was successfully achieved.

Also, it is important to note that these educated elites demonstrated a broad vision by extending the reach of their periodicals beyond geographical boundaries. These periodicals often featured contributions from writers based in Nepal and beyond. In fact, an announcement in *Chandrikā*, addressing readers in Nepal state that, they could now conveniently purchase the journal from Malick Gorkha Agency Nepal.[19] In the first issue of *Bhāratī's* third year, Mahendra Beer Bikram Shah, the then King of Nepal, expresses satisfaction with the periodical's efforts to enhance Nepali literature, and even agrees to be its prime-patron. Therefore, while these periodicals primarily concentrate on the experiences of Nepalis in India, the 'imagined community' they create extends well beyond the borders of India indicative of a shared cultural space that transcends national borders.

Being Nepali: The creation of the 'imagined' *'jāti'*

The idea of 'Nepalipan' and the feeling of 'we' (*hāmi)* dates as far back as the reign of King Prithivi Narayan Shah, his unification of Nepal and the consolidation of the Nepali identity. Thehomogenization of the ethnic groups as 'we Nepalis' was further propagated by King Gyanendra, who called upon every Nepali to rise above 'I' and begin to think as a collective 'we' instead.[20] Within the Indian borders, the situation of the nationality question of the Nepalis as a 'sub-nation', and the urge to belong and shed their 'sub-ness', is evident in the quest for Indian Nepali nation in Darjeeling. Hence, the shaping of a homogenous Nepali identity, which no doubt involved organic changes and developments[21], was still motivated by the need to carve out a distinctive nation of their own in India, whose members are not confined to the political boundary of a country called Nepal.

The problem with the idea of the 'imagined community' is the predicament of having to 'other' in order to assert itself for there can be no 'we' without 'them'. This fashioning of the 'we' in the case of the Nepalis has been historical in shaping the modern Nepali identity. The articulation of a collective 'we' among Nepalis, has involved a feeling of unity shaped by common historical experiences and collective narratives, and at times, emphasizing differences with neighboring communities, contributing to a nuanced understanding of their own identity. From a class perspective Kumar Pradhan argued, 'the national consciousness of the Indian Nepalis emerged on the pretext of a subjective feeling of commonality in the life experiences of the exploited and subjugated classes,' which laid the groundwork for the 'us' versus 'them' divide between Nepalis and plainsmen, despite neither owning the means of production.[22] For Pradhan, class analysis became a tool to grasp the experience of being a hill person, or more specifically, a Nepali in Darjeeling's history. As a result, the modern Nepali identity emerges as a product of historical negotiations, contestations, and accommodations, reflecting the intricate process of self-definition in relation to the 'other'.

With the construction and solidification of the Nepali identity, marked by the dialectics of inclusion and exclusion, yet another pertinent question that arises is, if an entirely authentic Nepali identity truly exists? Though ethnographic studies have attempted to record the 'authentic' cultures and communities of Nepal, one of the defining features of Nepal is its ethnic diversity which is a testament of its people's resilience and adaptability. In the Darjeeling region, the assimilation, and a degree of acculturation, has led to the emergence of a more consolidated Nepali identity based on their shared history, common cultural roots and collective memory. Still the larger questions surrounding the authenticity of 'Nepaliness' in the Indian context, looms. It can however be argued, that the construction of a wide, shared sense of belonging within the Nepali community in India, could have hardly been achieved without adulteration.

Therefore, the Nepali identity is characterized by its hybrid nature, but it is additionally the confusion between Nepalese and Indian Nepali identities that adds to this complexity for Nepal's historical and geographical proximity to border regions in India blurs lines and fosters a sense of shared heritage. This hybridity in identity, shaped by both internal diversity and external influences, highlights the nuanced nature of being Nepali. In a compelling letter to the editor, of the *Gorkha*, a writer named Parmananda Giri raises thought-provoking questions, challenging the notion that migration of Gorkhalis severs their ties to Nepal.[23] Giri questions whether citizenship alone defines identity, emphasizing the potential exclusionary concept that only residents of Nepal can be considered Nepali while those living outside Nepal are 'A Nepali' (not quite Nepali).[24] This raises the notion that Nepalis outside Nepal may be perceived as less authentic, prompting a deeper exploration of how migration and citizenship intersect with notions of belonging and national affiliation. This fear of (in)authenticity on one hand and questions of belonging on the other, is further accentuated by the periodical *Bhāratī's* motto: "We are Nepali Bhāratī (Indians), let us follow Bhāratī. Let us revere Bhāratī and die as devoted followers of Bhāratī'. These narratives encapsulate the complex interplay between Nepali and Indian identities that characterized the Nepali community's quest for self-definition

in India. It serves as a poignant reflection of the nuanced struggle for identity experienced by Nepalis in India, thus highlighting the tension between their Nepali heritage and their lived reality as Indian citizens, for though the Nepalis in India trace their roots to Nepal, they do not tie their imagined connection with Nepal as their homeland. Since 'the desire to come back home', which is the essential marker of a diasporic community does not hold true in the case of the Indian Nepalis, the Indian Nepali nation cannot be considered a diasporic nation.[25]

Another noteworthy issue pertaining to the challenges inherent in nation-building and nationalism in the Indian Nepali context is the conflict between the adoption of the terms 'Nepali' and 'Gorkhali', to collectively represent the various ethnic groups within the Nepali community. In the agitation for separate statehood in 1980, Subash Ghising, the leader of Gorkha National Liberation Front (GNLF) coined the term 'Gorkhaland' for this proposed new state. Later in 1988, when an autonomous hill council was set up, Ghising insisted on retaining the term 'Gorkha' and agreed to the council's name as being Darjeeling Gorkha Hill Council instead of Darjeeling Hill Council.[26] To comprehend this, it is imperative to revisit the earlier discussions and debates that laid the foundation for it. Though a cursory understanding would suggest that these terms are somewhat like two sides of the same coin, a thorough study reveals that the words Indian Nepalis or Gorkhas are particularly used to denote Nepali citizens of India, for though the small kingdom of Gorkha did much in the unification of Nepal, 'Gorkhali' was not a term widely used to represent the people of Nepal.[27] This underscores an effort to establish a clear distinction, separating them from their brethrens in Nepal, for 'an inescapable part of being Nepali in the world beyond Nepal's borders is that Nepalis must struggle for the right to belong'.[28]

Some of the essays published during these formative years record the many debates that ensued regarding the socio-cultural and political implications of the terms 'Nepali' and 'Gokhali', if they could be used interchangeably, or if only one of these terms should be formally accepted. Prior to the establishment of the AIGL, the members of the committee underwent numerous deliberations regarding its naming. A speech given by Dambar Singh Gurung, to address the gathering in Darjeeling on 14th May 1943, published in Bulletin no.5 of the AIGL, states;

Now do listen as to why between the terms 'Gorkha' and 'Nepali', we preferred 'Gorkha'. We had many discussions regarding this and many still say that the name Nepali League would have been better than the Gorkha League. We had no objection to this but one has to consider a lot of things before giving anything a name- which name will fulfill our goals better, which name is popular worldwide, by which name do the other communities know us?

Hence, to the founding fathers of the AIGL, 'Gorkha' was an umbrella term, inclusive of all the ethnic races that inhabited modern-day India, but trace their origins to Nepal, and a sense of we(ness) could be only be fostered by addressing them as 'Gorkhali'. Also, the use of the word reflects the AIGL's broader inclination to align with the popular perception of the Gorkhas as a formidable martial race.[29] However, the debates surrounding the name ensued and remained unresolved. Ramakrishna Sharma, a foremost Nepali critic's essay in *Bhāratī* titled 'Gorkhali' highlights AIGL's opting for

'Gorkhali' over 'Nepali' and its implications on the issue of identity. He writes;

The primary motive behind this is to honor our soldiers whose valor has positioned our *jāti's* ancestral land and motherland in the global political map. Another reason being, the Bhutias and Lepchâs who consider themselves as separate communities do not feel like they have betrayed their conscience when enlisted in the army under the Gorkha regiment. Therefore, with the hope that the above mentioned communities could potentially be connected through a common thread, the term 'Gorkhali' was employed instead of 'Nepali'.[30]

However, since certain factions disapproved of the term 'Gorkhali' as being exclusionary and hence, unfit to represent all the ethnic groups who were considered 'Nepali', Sharma's essay is an attempt at flouting this misunderstanding. Sharma presents a detailed account of how, despite the etymology of the word 'Gorkhali' tracing back to the Gorkha district in Nepal, inhabited by Bâhun, Chettri, and few other groups, ethnicities like Kirāt, Tāmang, Tharu, Sherpā, and others, became the residents of Gorkha under the rule of King Prithivi Narayan Shah. He further rejects the notion that the word 'Gorkha' originated from *gaurakshā* (protector of cows). For if that was the case, the Bahuns, Chettris, Shahis should have been called Gorkhali prior to King Prithivi Narayan's ascension of Gorkha. For Sharma, as opposed to those who daubed the usage of 'Gorkhali' as communal, 'Gorkha' was not a sectarian term since it was accepted as a synonym of 'Nepali' by renowned figures: eg, Motiram Bhatta's naming of the first Nepali periodical as *GorkhāBhārat Jiwan.* In response to Sharma's article, Shri Ganeshlal Subba's 'Nepali or Gorkhali?'[31], in the same periodical, analyzes Sharma's use of the title 'Gorkhali' and Surya Bikram Gewali's use of 'Nepali'[32] for their respective essays. He states, '…the seed of *jāti* planted by Prithivi Narayan Shah has not germinated yet. But it will grow, and bear flowers and fruits for the formation of a modern Nepali *jāti* is inevitable. But, if this is the situation in Nepal, then what is the situation of those who have settled within the Indian borders? Have the various ethnic groups that have settled in India assimilated into a unified *jāti*? Since the Nepalis (or Gorkhalis?) in Darjeeling district and Sikkim are living as a community and because these areas were once a part of the Nepal kingdom, the progression towards a modern Nepali identity is only possible here.' He further mentions that one only needs to carefully observe the Nepali populace of Darjeeling and Sikkim to understand that the various ethnic groups are gradually coming together as a unified community and at present they exist somewhere between a collective entity and a modern *jāti*. Subba finally asks a pertinent question which leads us back to the issue of naming: 'what shall we name this modern jāti? 'Gorkhali'or 'Nepali'? Do we want to become a modern *jāti* or do we want to remain divided in groups?' He concludes, that to embody a modern identity, one that has transitioned from varied *janajātis* to a unified *jāti,* the Nepalis in India must opt for the name 'Nepali' and solely that.[33]

The issue surrounding the nomenclature, therefore, reflects the dynamic and fluid nature of the Nepali identity in India. Parasmani himself used the term 'Gorkhali' in his 'Gazal' published in *Gorkhay Khabar Kāgat*, stating 'Oh! Gorkhali, you are asleep'[34], and this label was used by prominent publications, alongside the use of 'Nepali'. One can find an equal usage of 'Gorkhali' and 'Nepali' in *Chandrikâ*, while *Bhāratī* and other periodicals like *Nebulā* and *darsha* consistently employed the

term 'Nepali', while *Gorkha*, persisted in the use of the term 'Gorkha'. Parasmani in the eighth year of *Bhāratī* emphasizes the importance of using a singular term, 'Nepali', arguing that the use of various terms creates confusion for non-Nepalis, which further complicates the already precarious status of Nepali identity.

Visions of Progress

Simultaneous to the efforts at building a vibrant readership and forging a unified Indian Nepali identity, was the need to use periodicals as effective mediums for engaging with progressively modern concepts and drive social, economic and cultural advancement. Discourses within these periodicals often delved into the examination of the existing social realities, highlighting areas of backwardness and proposing ways to initiate development. The word *unnati* resurfaces across various periodicals of the era and *unnati* could be attained by *ekta* (unity), pursuit of *vidyā* (knowledge), and *bhāsonati* (progress of the mother tongue). Numerous essays and poems underscore the lack of '*ektā*' and, consequently, emphasize the necessity for it, in order to foster collaboration, strength, and a shared sense of purpose. The establishment of the Hill-People's Social Union Darjeeling in the year 1934, mirrors an attempt to bring together the Bhutia, Lepchas, and Nepalis as one. Hence, its mouthpiece, *Nebulā*[35] (Ne-Nepali, Bu-Bhutia, La-Lepcha) was initiated. The primary objective of the Union was 'to foster brotherhood and to augment further the existing tie of social unity among the different Hill-people, viz. the Nepalese, the Bhutias and the Lepchas'.[36] The colors chosen by the brethrens for the Union were Gold, Blue and Red representing Brahma, Bishnu and Maheshar of the Hindus, the Buddha, Dharma and Sangha of the Buddhists and the Trinity of the Christians. The three colors represented the three communities and the Union Jack, in the midst of the tri-color banner represented the membership of the Great British Empire. The sign of the Union was three fingers of the right hand held up separately to represent the three communities, and the thumb pressing over the little finger signifying 'unity'.

The publication of *Chandrikā* in 1918, had marked a transformative shift. *Chandrikā* is a Sanskrit word meaning 'moonlight'. It was to be published on first week of the *Shuklapaksha* (waxing phase of the moon that starts on the day of the New Moon, and continues until the Full Moon), an auspicious day when the divine rays of the Moon falls on earth. This, combined with the symbolism inherent in its name aligned perfectly with the periodical's overarching goal; to dispel societal darkness and usher in illumination. A renowned poem by Dharnidhar Sharma Koirala, 'Awake' in *Chandrikā,* employs the metaphor of awakening, signifying the initiation of the process of nation-building.

> Sacrifice your deep sleep, you've slept enough, now rise.
> Friends and countrymen! Wake up and work towards progress.
> Wash, wash the contamination of your hearts, dispel your fears.
> Awaken, awaken now, arise and awake, work towards progress.[37]

This metaphorical sleep portrays the community as in a state of dormancy, requiring profound awakening. Numerous writings across periodicals echo similar sentiments, often times highlighting

that lack of collective urge for progress impeded societal development, hindering the community from embracing positive changes, innovation, and adaptation to contemporary challenges. Once the community would be awakened, the next step involved collectively striving for progress. Education was regarded as the means by which the society could move out of its state of ignorance. Also, various essays on women's education, signifies its pivotal role in societal development. However, *vidyā* which translates to 'knowledge' transcends mere bookish knowledge to embrace a deeper journey towards wisdom. Writings such as 'Dharma', 'Knowledge', 'Good Character is the Basis of Progress', 'Unity', 'Love', 'Or You Shall Be Ruined!', 'The Importance of Science' etc, therefore, reflect broad visions of progress, with continued emphasis on values such as integrity, compassion, morality, which are crucial to nation-building. The launching of, *Khojī* (meaning 'to search'), the mouthpiece of the Gorkhā Dukha Niwārak Sammelan (GDNS) in 1940, encapsulates the essence of exploration and to delve into the unknown with a sense of curiosity and pursuit of progress. Also, distinct voices emerged for the articulation of alternative paths to progress; urging individuals to explore avenues such as entrepreneurship and skill development, and *darsha* (1930) was an example of that. *darsha* distinguished itself by not solely focusing on literary content but incorporating a wide spectrum of subjects, including artistry, farming, business, trade, education, and cooperative banking, for which books in Nepali were not yet available. Furthermore, the vision of *unnati* extended to *bhāsonati*, the preservation and promotion of the mother tongue, thus echoing Hariśchandra's speech 'work for the progress of your nation, in your own language'. Parasmani and other language enthusiasts like Dharnidhar Koirala, and Surya Bikram Gewali, propagated for the standardization of Nepali, in order to bring about uniformity in spelling and grammar; which was considered key for the progression of Nepali language and literature. This was a discourse that took centre stage until the last decades of the twentieth century, and continues till this date. Replete with several debates on standardization, *Bhārāti* and *Nepāli Sāhitya Sammelan Patrikā* (the mouthpiece of Nepali Sahitya Sammelan), played a crucial role in advancement of Nepali literature and language. Therefore, these ideas collectively formed a roadmap towards a more enlightened and progressive society.

While the pursuit of progress necessitated embracing modern forms of progress, the simultaneous urge and necessity to protect tradition can be found in discourses surrounding the preservation of culture, customs, traditions, attire, and civilization. Recorded in the third issue of inaugural year of *Gorkhā*, the speech given by Bal Bahadur Chettri on AIGL's foundation day, documents an embrace of progress intertwined with the preservation of tradition. This dichotomy in the 'progress of tradition' is a call to reject the overwhelming influence of Western culture, symbolizing a resistance to external influences and the preservation of indigenous culture. Hence, in the midst of embracing modern means to progress, a notable counterbalance is reflected as progress signaled a defiant departure from complete adherence to modernity. The tension between contemporary values and traditional beliefs is also reflected in discussions surrounding the role of women and women's education. As evidenced in an article titled 'The Position of Women in Society', the author R. Ghising, while advocating for women's education, also suggests that it should primarily serve to enhance their abilities in married

life, thereby reinforcing traditional gender roles and expectations. Such viewpoints underscore the tension between promoting women's education as a means of empowerment and perpetuating societal norms that confine women to domestic spheres. The perception of women as both subjects and objects reflects societal attitudes towards gender roles and empowerment.

Conclusion

Therefore, this study showcases the pivotal role printed narratives played in perpetuating the notion of being Nepali through the reinforcement of the 'imagined' *jāti*. Through the pages of these periodicals, we not only get an insight into the roles of elites in shaping attitudes and popular opinions, such as narratives of progress, but also the narratives of struggle in a society grappling with questions of identity and belonging. The challenges pertaining to creation of readership possibly exposes the community's orally tuned past rooted in diverse cultures and languages, and the problems of navigating modernity within a dominant print language. Anderson's notion of 'imagined communities' though influential, encounters limitations when directly applied to the Nepali community within this context. First, the crisis of readership that contributed to the unequal distribution of readership, causing disparities in access to information and cultural narrative can disrupt the envisioned simultaneity theorized by Anderson. Secondly, there is an issue of territoriality, wherein the notion of a unified Nepali community transcends geographical boundaries, thus challenging conventional understandings of nationhood tied to specific territories. The Himalayan region, as a contact zone, stands as a distinctive and intricate landscape marked by a myriad of complexities, where arbitrariness and ambiguities prevail. Hence, the limitations of Anderson's 'imagined communities', becomes particularly pronounced in areas like the Darjeeling region, where cultural and historical bonds with Nepal co-exist with its integration into modern India. Cross-cultural engagements further contribute to the intricate mosaic, highlighting the need for an analytical framework that goes beyond traditional conceptualizations. In navigating the complexities of the Himalayan region, and in this context, the Darjeeling region, an approach that embraces diversity, acknowledges historical entanglements, and recognizes the evolving nature of identity is imperative. The region's socio-cultural landscape is not confined to predefined categories but thrives on the richness derived from the interplay of various influences, demanding a nuanced perspective to comprehend its multifaceted realities.

Notes

[1] Before *Sudha Sagar*, the first issue of *Gorkha Bharat Jiwan,* edited by Motiram Bhatta was published in Benaras in1886. This is mentioned in Grishma Bahadur Devkota's 'The Development of Newsmagazines and Press in Nepal'. This is why *Gorkha Bharat Jiwan* is considered to be the first newsmagazine to be published in Nepali. Around the same time, a local press used to publish another magazine, *Bharat Jiwan* in Hindi, which carried an advertisement of *Gorkha Bharat Jiwan*. However, apart from this one evidence, no one has laid eyes on the magazine or met anyone who has seen it. This has led to a deduction that maybe the well-meaning desire to publish

Gorkha Bharat Jiwan never materialized. Professor Balkrishna Rupawasi , a linguist expert, is said to have spent an entire week inside the office of that organization in search for evidence on the said magazine, with the hope of stretching the history of Nepali newsmagazines, but found nothing. Had he found a concrete proof, 1886 could be considered as the beginning of Nepali periodicals but since history cannot be based on myth, *Sudha Sagar* is considered to be first Nepali periodical.

2 Nagendramani Pradhan, *Dā Pārasmaniko Jivanyātarā* (Darjeeling: Dr. Parasmani Prakashan, 1991), pp 49.

3 Hira Chettri, *Bhārateli Nepāli Patra-Patrikāko Satābdi 1887-1986* (Kalimpong: Charitra Prakāshan, 2011), 32-33

4 Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities*, (Rawat Publications: Jaipur, 2015), pp 44-45.

5 Kumar Pradhan, Dārjilingmā Nepāli Jāti ra Janajātiya Cinārikā Nayā Udānharu, The Mahesh Chandra Regmi Lecture (Lalitpur: Social Science Baha, 2004), 12.

6 Swatahsiddha Sarkar, "Nepali Nation and Nationalism in Darjeeling," *Studies in Nepali History and Society* 20, no. 1 (2015): 49.

7 Orsini Francesca. 2002, *The Hindi Public Sphere: 1920-1940* (New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2002), 23.

8 Archibald Campbell, *Final Report of the Survey of Settlement of the Kalimpong Government Estate in the District of Darjeeling* (Calcutta: Bengal Secretariat Press, 1905), 6.

9 For more details, see Bernard Cohn, *Colonialism and Its Form of Knowledge: The British India* (Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2002), 33., and Kumar Pradhan, *History of Nepali Literature* (New Delhi: Sahitya Academy, 1984), 10.

10 Indra Mān Baidya, "Akhbār Patraharu Parnako washyakta,"*Chandrikā* 1, no 7 (1918): 21-22.

11 Vasundharā Devi, "Prārthanā," *Chandrikā 1* no. 4 (1918): 18-19.

12 Lekhnāth Poudyāl, "washyakta," *Chandrikā* 1, no. 1 (1918): 2-4.

13 Pārasmani Pradhān, "Priya Pāthakbarga," *Chandrikā* 1, no. 12(1918): 21.

14 For detailed discussion on the use of Bhārat Māta imagery in instilling nationalistic feelings, and the symbolic significance in evoking feelings of patriotism, solidarity and collective identity among Indians, transcending regional, linguistic and religious barriers, see Sugata Bose, *A Hundred Horizons: The Indian Ocean in the Age of Global Empire* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2006).

15 Dambar Singh Gurung, "Gorkhā ko Janma," *Gorkhā 1*, no. 1 (1945): 5-7.

16 Randhir Subba, "Dhanyabaad," *Gorkhā 1*, no. 11 (1945): 12.

17 Hemanta Pradhān, "Gorkhāka Priya Pāthakbarga," *Gorkhā 1*, no. 23/24 (1945): 16.

[18] Pārasmani Pradhān, "Our Taste," *Bhāratī 4*, no. 1 (1952): 50.

[19] Pārasmani Pradhān, "Nepalka Grahak Haulai Suchana," *Chandrikā* 1, no. 3 (1918): 26.

[20] CK Lal, "We Nepālis. How to make Nepālipan more inclusive," *Nepāli Times,* no. 136 (March, 2003): https://archive.Nepālitimes.com/news.php?id=4018. Also see, John Whelpton, "Political Identity in Nepal: State, Nation, and Community" in Nationalism and Ethnicity in a Hindu Kingdom: The Politics of Culture in Contemporary Nepal, eds. David Gellner, Joanna Pfaff-Czarnecka and John Whelpton (Amsterdam: Harwood, 1997), 39.

[21] Pradhan was the first to argue that while the nation formation in Nepal has undergone the process which may be called as *kamila prakrya* (a process in which people forage in group like the ants), the process of Nepali nation formation in Darjeeling was a result of a cultural renaissance which could be called the *mauri prakrya*(swarming of bees) For more details see, For more details see, Kumar Pradhan, *Dārjlingmā Nepāli Jāti ra Janajātīya Cīnārīkā Nāyā Udānharu*. The Mahesh Chandra Regmi Lecture (Lalitpur: Social Science Baha, 2005), 3.

[22] Kumar Pradhān, "Agam Singh Girīko Kavītāmā Jātīya Bhāvanā," in *Adhiti Kehi,* ed. Kumar Pradhān Siliguri: Purnima Prakashan, 2005 (1982), 109-133.

[23] Parmānanda Girī, "Sampādak Lāi Patra,' *Gorkhā* 4, no. 49 (1948): 751.

[24] Fisher noted that Tanka Prasād charya, a political leader opposing the Rana regime in Kathmandu 'unlike most other Nepalese politicians, such as B.P. Koirālā…who lived much of his life, and received much of his education, in India, Tanka Prasād is an unadulterated Nepāli'. This remark underscores the complexity of the Nepāli identity. For more details, see James F. Fisher, Living *Martyrs. Individuals and Revolution in Nepal* (Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1997), 4.

[25] T.B. Subba, "Living the Nepali Diaspora in India: An Autobiographical Essay," in *Zeitschrift fur Ethnologie* 133 (Berlin: Dietrich Reimer Verlag, 2008): 216.

[26] Hutt states that in the late 1980s, the political discourse in Darjeeling revolved around what to call the non-Nepalese Nepāli community. The term 'pravāsī', meaning dwelling in a foreign land, fell out of favor as the movement aimed to assert that Nepālis in India should not be viewed as foreigners. Intellectuals in Darjeeling and Kathmandu began using 'Bhāratīya Nepāli' or Indian Nepāli but the leaders of the Gorkhāland movement (from whom these intellectuals began distancing themselves), were adamant that severing ties with Nepal was essential for Nepālis India. Hence, the chosen label became Gorkhā. For more details see, Michael Hutt, "Being Nepali without Nepal: Reflections on a South Asian Diaspora" in Nationalism and Ethnicity in a Hindu Kingdom: The Politics of Culture in Contemporay Nepal, eds. David Gellner, Joanna Pfaff-Czarnecka and John Whelpton (Amsterdam: Harwood, 1997), 39.

[27] Kumar Pradhān states that the term 'Gorkhā' finds its historical roots in the nomenclature adopted by the British Gorkhā Officers. This term, with its martial undertones, gained prominence and was subsequently utilized by Colonel W. Brook Northey in his book 'The Gurkhas', contributing to its recognition in the context of the Gorkhā regiments and their military history. On the contrary,

the language known by various names like Khas-Kurā, Parbatīya and Gorkhālī assumed the name 'Nepāli' only after the establishment of the present kingdom of Nepal. Interestingly, the locals did not use this name initially. J.A.Ayton, in 1820, is believed to be one of the first to use the term in his grammar of the Nepāli language. During their residence in Nepal from 1829 to 1842, Hamilton and B.H. Hodgeson referred to the language as Khasa and Parbatīya. In Nepal, poets and writers commonly referred to it as 'bhasha', Khas-kura, or Parbatīya, even though it was officially Gorkhālī. The term 'Nepāli' gained popularity outside Nepal, and the country's rulers officially recognized it in the 1930s, facilitated by the unification of Nepal. For details, see Kumar Pradhan, *The Gorkha Conquests: The process and consequences of the unification of Nepal, with particular reference to Eastern Nepal* (Kathmandu: Social Science Baha, 2009), 224

[28] Michael Hutt, "Where is Home for an Indian Nepāli Writer?," in *Indian Nepālis: Issues and Perspectives,* eds. T. B Subba, A.C.Sinha, G.S Nepal and D.R. Nepal (New Delhi: Concept Publishing Company: 2009), 47

[29] See AIGL's Bulletin no. 5.

[30] Ramakrishna Sharmā, 'Gorkhālī,' *Bhāratī* 3, no. 9 (1952): 413-419.

[31] Shri Ganeshlāl Subbā was at that point the Secretary of the Darjeeling Committee of the Communist Party of India.

[32] Surya Bikram Gewāli, "Nepāli," *Bhāratī* 2, no. 11 (1951): 560-561.

[33] Shri Ganeshlāl Subba, "Nepāli ki Gorkhālī?," *Bhārati* 3, no. 12 (1952): 553-562.

[34] Chettri states that the 'Gazal' was published in *Gorkhāy Khabar Kāgat* on 1st October 1916. However, Chettri has resorted to using a lot of secondary sources. Regrettably, *Gorkhāy Khabar Kāgat* appears to be inaccessible or missing. For more details see, Hira Chettri, *Bhārateli Nepāli Patra-Patrikāko Satābdi 1887-1986* (Kalimpong: Charitra Prakāshan, 2011), 32.

[35] *Nebulā* was later changed to *Parivartan,* since the three communities were no longer members.

[36] This speech was published both in English and Nepāli in *Nebulā*. The usage of 'Nepalese' instead of 'Nepālis' in this context could be indicative of either an oversight or a lack of awareness regarding the evolving political and social landscape. It is possible that at the time, the individuals or entities responsible for language choice were not fully conscious of the nuances or implications surrounding the terminology. Additionally, it could reflect a broader trend of using more general terms without much consideration of its implications.

[37] Dharnidhar Sharmā Koirālā, "Udbodhan," *Chandrikā* 1, no. 10 (1918): 22-23.

REFERENCES

- Anderson, Benedict. 2015. *Imagined Communities*. Rawat Publications: Jaipur.
- Bose, Sugata. 2006. *A Hundred Horizons: The Indian Ocean in the Age of Global Empire.*

Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

- Campbell, Archibald. 1905. *Final Report of the Survey of Settlement of the Kalimpong Government Estate in the District of Darjeeling.* Calcutta: Bengal Secretariat Press.
- Cohn, Bernard. 2002. *Colonialism and Its Form of Knowledge: The British India.* Delhi: Oxford University Press.
- Chettri, Hira. 2011. *Bhârateli Nepâli Patra-Patrikāko Satâbdi 1887-1986.* Kalimpong: Charitra Prakāshan.
- Fisher, James F. 1997. *Living Martyrs. Individuals and Revolution in Nepal*. Delhi: Oxford University Press.
- Francesca, Orsini. 2002. *The Hindi Public Sphere: 1920-1940*. New Delhi: Oxford University Press.
- Hutt, Michael. 1997. "Being Nepali without Nepal: Reflections on a South Asian Diaspora" In *Nationalism and Ethnicity in a Hindu Kingdom: The Politics of Culture in Contemporay Nepal*, edited by David Gellner, Joanna Pfaff-Czarnecka and John Whelpton. Amsterdam: Harwood, 39-78.
- Hutt, Michael. 2009. "Where is Home for an Indian Nepâli Writer?" In *Indian Nepâlis: Issues and Perspectives,* edited by T. B Subba, A.C.Sinha, G.S Nepal and D.R. Nepal. New Delhi: Concept Publishing Company: 28-48.
- Pradhan, Kumar. 1984. *History of Nepali Literature*. New Delhi: Sahitya Academy.
- Pradhan, Nagendramani. 1991. *Dâ Pārasmaniko Jivanyātarā*. Darjeeling: Dr. Parasmani Prakashan.
- Pradhan, Kumar. 2004. *Dārjilingmā Nepāli Jāti ra Janajātiya Cinārikā Nayā Udânharu*. The Mahesh Chandra Regmi Lecture. Lalitpur: Social Science Baha.
- Pradhān, Kumar. 2005. "Agam Singh Girîko Kavītāmā Jātīya Bhāvanā," In *Adhiti Kehi,* edited by Kumar Pradhān. Siliguri: Purnima Prakashan, (1982).
- Pradhan, Kumar. 2009. *The Gorkha Conquests: The process and consequences of the unification of Nepal, with particular reference to Eastern Nepal.* Kathmandu: Social Science Baha.
- Sarkar, Swatahsiddha. 2015. "Nepali Nation and Nationalism in Darjeeling." *Studies in Nepali History and Society* 20, no. 1.
- Subba, T.B. 2008. "Living the Nepali Diaspora in India: An Autobiographical Essay," In *Zeitschrift fur Ethnologie* 133. Berlin: Dietrich Reimer Verlag.

Nepali Periodicals

darsha, monthly (January – August 1930)Kalimpong

Editor and publisher: Ses Mani Pradhan

Bhārati, monthly (1949-1958), Darjeeling

Editor and publisher: The Chief Editor was Rup Narayan Sinha till Year 6 no 6, Editor was Paramani Pradhan, and Parasmani Pradhan was chief editor and editor following Rup Narayan Sinha's demise.

Chandrikā, monthy (January 1918- September 1919), Kurseong

Editor and publisher: Parasmani Pradhan, succeeded for final two issues by Rasmi Prasad Ale

Gorkhā, weekly (1945- 1980s), Kalimpong, then published from Darjeeling after the shifting of AIGL head office to Darjeeling.

Editors: Randhir Subba, Shiv Kumar Rai, Tikaram Sharma, Laxmiprasad Kshatriya, Ramakrishna Sharma, Purna Prasad Sharma, Narjit Sinha Chettri, Narbahadur dahal, Devprakash Rai, Jagat Chettri, Rupram Dewan

Khoji, monthly (1940-1941), Darjeeling

Editor- Rup Narayan Sinha, published by Gorkhā Dukha Niwārak Sammelan

Nepāli Sāhitya Sammelan Patrikā, later known as ***Diyālo*** annual (1931-1936),Darjeeling

Editor and publisher: Padmaprasad Pradhan, published by Nepali Sahitya Sammelan

Nebulā, monthly (February 1935-January 1936), Kalimpong

Editor and publisher: K.D. Pradhan, published by the Hill-Peoples' Social Union

Bio Profile of the Author:
Assistant Professor, Department of English, Asutosh College, Kolkata.
Pursuing Ph.D, Department of English, Jadavpur University.
Her research interests are Post-colonial Studies, Eastern Himalayan Studies, and Gender Studies.
Email-ID = nimalama36@gmail.com

Impact of Muslim Women in Journalism on Indian Social Reform: Special Reference to Northern India

Sudipta Adhikary

Abstract

During the middle to late nineteenth century, women's journalism emerged in multiple Indian languages. Women's journalism opposed patriarchal notions of society and bolstered women's efforts for social, political, and educational advancements. The field of journalism had a profound and transformative effect on the lives of women. Urdu-speaking women from the Muslim middle class utilised this platform to articulate their thoughts and exchange perspectives with individuals from many societies, including both men and women. The current study examines the role of Urdu women's journalism in promoting intellectual involvement and social reform among Muslim women in early 20th-century in North India. This style of journalism served as a platform for advancing their demands for gender equality and justice.

Keywords: *Journalism, Social Reform, Parda, Burqa, Education, Widow remarriage, Women's Rights, Northern India, Urdu, Muslim Culture.*

Introduction

Studying Urdu journalism is crucial for examining the education of women and the implementation of social changes within Sharif Muslim households in northern India. Males, either with or without the cooperation of their wives, were responsible for introducing the initial women's Urdu publications. *Rafeeq-e-Niswan,* the first Urdu women's periodical, was published from Lucknow on March 5, 1884. Isabella Thoburn, a renowned Christian missionary, was the one who introduced it. Syed Ahmad Dehlvi established *Akhbar-un-Nissa* on August 1, 1884, right after this. Since the early 20th century, Urdu women's journals started to be publish regularly, with the *Tehzb-un-Niswan* taking the lead. Urdu women's journalism commenced notably later than Bengali and Hindi women's journalism. However, over time, women gradually started to actively engage in publishing operations and finally came to dominate the field. It questioned the prevailing patriarchal beliefs in the society and expanded the limits of women's roles and awareness (Aftab 2007: 56).

Issues discussed in the women's magazines:

Parda Issue

Parda remains a contentious subject in women's magazines. The custom had a long standing and it

predominantly hampered women's movement and visibility in public life. Because of the severity of parda, ladies were forced to keep physical distance from both men and women. In response to this issue, an anonymous woman published an essay titled *'Girls Parda from Women'* in the *Tehzib un Niswan* (Chandrababu and Thilagavathi 2007: 128). Concerning the stringent implementation of *parda,* she stated that women were required to follow it in front of both men and women. It had been so harsh that they could not even walk outside on their terraces to breathe fresh air. In response to the above mentioned essay, Zubaida Khatun from Lahore backed the anonymous writer's viewpoints in the next edition of *Tehzib un Niswan*. She was shocked by the strictness with which the anonymous writer enforced *parda* and remarked that it was not that severe in her household. She questioned the practice of *parda*, claiming it was needless to pursue such an outmoded practice. Doctor Begum Abdul Gafoor wrote an essay in the *Harem* magazine that questioned the sanctity of this practice (Forbes 1996: 73). The first verse used by Doctor Begum Abdul Gafoor to refute the holiness of parda was from the chapter '*Al Imran'* (verse 61). This verse discusses God's order to the Prophet to summon his men or women with non-believers (men/women) so that a meeting may be conducted to resolve any issues between them (Chatterji 2013: 84). According to the writer, the Prophet, with Hazrat Ali, the Prophet's son-in-law; Fatima,the Prophet's daughter, and his grandsons, Hassan and Hussian; encountered the non-believers both men and women. The author argued that "if a meeting of men and women, believers and non-believers, could be convened during the Prophet's time, why does a patriarchal society have qualms about women leaving their homes and participating in public life?" In the following issue of *Harem*, another piece about was published. Doctor Begum Abdul Gafoor utilised an excerpt from Maulvi Ahmad Mukhtar Sahib Abbasi's work, which had several biblical pieces of evidence against the *parda* system. Hussani Begum received a monetary prize for writing many articles for *Tehzib-un-Niswan* in 1904 against the *Parda* (Forbes 1996: 59). She campaigned for the use of Mrs. and Ms. before their names rather than the names of their male guardians, namely, father, husband, brother or son. After discarding the *parda*, Nazar Sajad Haider added Ms. before her name. Hussani Begum, a female writer, opposed defining women in the perspective of the males of the family, emphasized that such practices stripped women of their identity and personality. Notably, geniuses like Hussani Begum had such advanced way of thinking in an era when it was deemed impolite to address women by their first names in public (Hali 1910: 91). The taboo was so rigid that even postmasters could not openly state the identities of subscribers of women's publications.

In the context of English women's writing, Elaine Showalter stated that female authors established themselves in an intellectual ambiance that male writers otherwise controlled (Forbes 1996: 67). Women thinkers of India, such as Hussani Begum, are notable for emphasizing women's self-identification rather than the acknowledgment given through the male members of their family (Hyder 2003: 121). This was a direct refutation of the notion that women should be recognized by the names of male members of the family. It is worth mentioning that Muhammadi Begum's, editor of *Tehzib un Niswan,* name never appeared on the magazine's cover. It was not until 1914, six years after her death, that the name appeared on *Tehzib un Niswan*'s cover page.

Apart from print media, *parda* was debated in public venues such as in women's associations. The topic of *parda* was highlighted at the 'All India Women Conference," held on March 26, 1918, in Bhopal. Sughra Humayun Mirza, the editor of *Al Nissa,* submitted a resolution on *parda*, advocating that the practice should be discarded. However, academicians, namely, Rokiya Sakhawat Hussian wore it in their personal lives despite their condemnation of the *parda* (*Burqa*). Rokiya Sakhawat Hussain had to compromise since she needed to recruit females to her school immediately. Despite her aversion, women chastised Sughra Humayun Mirza for observing such a compromise or contradiction. Sughra Humayun Mirza responded to Western allegations that Islam is to blame for the existence of the backward practice of *Parda*. She said that parda existed before Islam and was practised in Egypt and other European nations where women were already segregated. She presented historical data that women were accessible throughout the Prophet's time. She described how, during the Prophet's time, women battled alongside men, got education from men, and served as instructors to them. For instance Hafiz Ibn Asakir stated that eighty female teachers educated him.

Sughra Humayun Mirza admitted the practice of *parda* in Indian society but contended that there was no Scriptural evidence. She cited Maulana Shibli's travelogue, "*Safar Nama Rome wa Misrwa Sham,*" which described a society where men and women coexist peacefully but not so in India. She highlighted the strictness of the *parda* in India and stated that women exercised *parda* from other women in particular households. Women's garments were not given to washer men or tailors in a number of families for washing or stitching in those days. She thought it was insane that Muslim guys were proud of it. She went on to say that men's patriarchal attitudes provided enough opportunity for non-Muslims to demonize Muslim women and Muslim culture.

Women were active in several national groups throughout the 1920s. The Ali Brothers, namely, Muhammad Ali and Showket Ali and Jinnah were special invitees to the Nagpur session of the Indian National Congress in 1920. Some Muslim women also attended. Mrs. Ruttie, Jinnah's wife; Mrs. Yaqub Hussain, and Nishat-un-Nissa Begum, Hasrat Mohani's wife; were among them. The media chastised these women for failing to observe *parda* during the Indian National Congress session.

Bilquis Begum unambiguously claimed that the practice of parda observed in India was not according to Sharia law but rather conventional, thoroughly exposing the double standards maintained by Begum Hasrat Mohani's male detractors. She claimed that the disparity in following the parda by three female Indian National Congress members should be seen in this light. She used Maulana Shibli's travel report of Egypt to de-legitimize the common practice of *parda* in India (Sarkar 2001: 236). Using Maulana Shibli's statement, she emphasized that women and men can freely roam in Turkey.

Doctor Begum Abdul Gafoor, as a medical practitioner, was concerned about women's health. Her interest in women's health was evident in her *Harem* magazine. While providing data on an increasing number of typhoid infections among Muslim women, she said that most Muslim women belonging to the middle class families held *parda* practice more rigidly and were the biggest sufferers of poor health standards. She backed up her views with statistical data, which showed that 80% of typhoid-affected women were from middleclass. She contended that women suffered more in the

lower classes, not just because of *parda* but also because of poverty. In their situation, they suffered in both ways, culturally and economically. People from wealthier class, observed *parda* to some limited extent and lived in adequately ventilated homes. There were additional factors that harmed women's health. She listed them as follows:

1. Forced Marriages, 2. Polygamy, 3. Divorce, 4. Ignorance of women, 5. Ill-treatment of women by men, 6. Idle life of Muslim women and 7. Political subjugation.

The Urdu women's publications were not only community-centered, but they were also inclusive in addressing non-Muslim women's problems. For example, the presidential speech of Maharani Chamnabai, Maharani of Baroda, which was published in*Harem,*in its February 1927 edition.She delivered the address during the inaugural session of the 'All India Women Conference in Poona in January 1927. She emphasized the negative impacts of *parda* on women's bodies.

Educational Reforms of Women

Educated women of Muslim society led a campaign for women's education as early as the beginning of the twentieth century. Mrs Nasir Jung, who appreciated *Tehzib un Niswan*'s efforts to popularize the cause of women's education, provided several arguments supporting women's education. She used the Prophet's tradition to help women's right to education, emphasizing that 'getting knowledge for every man and woman is obligatory'. She saw women's education as a religious responsibility in this way. Mrs Nasir Jung explained the need for women's education by considering the desires of modern-educated men. She contended that educated husbands and illiterate wives did not make for happy conjugal couples since their interests, preferences, and perceptions were incompatible, resulting in perpetual domestic turmoil. She advocated for developing women's intellectual powers through education to make them ideal partners for their English-educated husbands.

Although the necessity for women's education was limited to making them better mothers and wives, the demand for women's education garnered significant support from educated middle-class men at the turn of the twentieth century. From 1910 to the present, the primary concern of women reformers had been how to educate women. The fifth session of the Indian Muslim Ladies' Conference, held in Lahore from March 3 to 5, 1918, focused on two issues: polygamy and women's education. Abru Begum, who presided over the meeting, emphasized the need to make plans for women's education. She expressed her displeasure with the home-based schooling. She stressed the need to produce well-trained female teachers and develop an appropriate curriculum. She was critical of the British curriculum implemented in Indian schools. She sought a well-defined curriculum based on the Indian people's interests and the Muslim community's cultural sensibility. She advocated for practical education for women to become wage earners and emphasized the importance of establishing a women's university. The Muslim Ladies Conference also approved a resolution requesting that the Muslim University set aside a specific amount of money for women's education. Muslim women intellectuals defended their demand by claiming that while women may contribute to men's education by donating to the Muslim University, why could the university not allocate funds to support women's education?

The 1920s witnessed a change in discussions by the women over women's education. Authors of women's magazine have progressed beyond the concept of competence in domestic chores of the women, i.e. making women better mothers and perfect wives. According to them, education was now required to pursue public employment and work for the government. A female writer claimed in the 1920 edition of *Al Nissa* that the necessity for women's education was already understood, and women were to focus more on higher education, with the establishment of a women's university being one major step in that direction.

Noorani Begum's article in *Al Nissa* compared the advancement of Indian women with that of Western (British) women. She recounted Western women's advances in various life sectors, providing examples of how Western women became physicians, judges, merchants, equestrians, warriors, and so on. She also praised Eastern ladies such as Sughra Humayun Mirza, Begum of Bhopal (Shah Jahan Begum); Begum Hasrat Mohani, Mrs Hyderi, and Amjadi Begum (wife of Maulana Muhamamd Ali Jauhar). Nonetheless, she contended that the number of such females in India was comparable to the amount of salt in the flour.

Although women intellectuals continued to demand women's rights from the standpoint of competent domesticity, the need for education gained momentum as time passed. Amjadi Begum, emphasizing the necessity of women's education, warned men that if they did not marry educated women, their married life would be disrupted, since illiterate spouses would be a cultural burden on them. She believed thateducation for women was aimed at making educated men's families happy.

Widow Remarriage and widowhood

Widowhood and widow remarriage were other critical problems that women reformers addressed from the beginning of the twentieth century. The publication of Altaf Hussian Hali's *Bewa-ke-Munajat*, which emphasized the plight of widows in India, pushed the topic to the forefront. Women intellectuals had been debating on the subject even before Altaf Hussian Hali. Although Muhib Hussian, the editor of *Mui'llim Niswan,* addressed the issue of widows in his magazine, but it received regular attention in the *Tehzib un Niswan*. A widow in the August 24, 1901, issue of *Tehzib un Niswan*, protested to the editor about disregarding widows' concerns in Indian society. This letter elicited a strong reaction from both the editor and the readers. Mohammadi Begum, the editor, promised to cover the topic of widowhood and widow remarriage, and she did. Muhammadi Begum addressed the topic of widow remarriage in the December 14, 1901, issue of Tehzib un Niswan. She disagreed with the widow who wrote her letter on widow remarriage. Although the 'saddened widow' pleaded to cease the various atrocities committed on widows, she did not suggest widow remarriage in her letter. However, Muhammadi Begum passionately pushed for widows to be remarried and supported their stand with evidences from scriptures. She referred several lines from the chapter *Bakra* and contended that widows might remarry with a gap of four-months and ten days period following the death of their spouses. However, like many other Hindu and Muslim reformers of the period, she promoted remarriage only for young widows and not for elderly widows.

The Western ladies also paid close attention to the topic of widow remarriage. Miss Church was a subscriber of the magazine *Shareef Bibi* and was a 'Parda club' member in 1910, She paid attention to widow remarriage. This group consisted of both English and Indian ladies. In *Shareef Bibi* Miss Church provided statistics on the number of younger widows present in India. She noted how early marriage for girls robbed them of the ability to educate themselves. As a result, the girls' mental abilities did not develop, culminating in their marital maladjustment. The author contended that the rising number of widows was a direct result of the heinous practice of underage marriage. The large age gap between brides and grooms led to the growing number of widows. She provided specific statistics on widows in the magazine *Shareef Bibi* (February 1912). This was also published in the 1915 edition of *Vivekavati,* a Telugu-language women's publication.

The female mortality rate was another serious issue that drew the attention of colonial Muslim scholars. Doctor Begum Abdul Gafoor, using statistics from Kanpur municipal records, stated that the death rate was most significant in 1926-27 compared to the preceding year. According to an article in *Harem* magazine, the death rate was 43.07% per thousand in the year 1926 and 53.48% in the year 1927. She warned males of the Kanpur city and recommended scientific solutions to the problem after revealing the specifics of the women's death rate, which was reported at 93.54% per thousand.

Issues of Polygamy:

For a long time, the question of polygamy was hotly debated in women's periodicals. This issue was complex and controversial, considering that Prophet Muhammad had several wives. Women, on the other hand, argued against this practice on secular grounds. Hamida Begum was one of the first female academicians to speak out against polygamy. It was remarkable that she did not rely on (re)interpretation of scripture in order to defend her anti-polygamy stance. She discussed the different pretexts that guys use to marry more than one woman. According to her, men pretended to have no children from their first spouse or to have just daughters. While asserting the plight of polygamy victims, she said that polygamy should be prohibited by any means. Her aversion to polygamy was so intense that she said that if a husband wanted to remarry, he should first poison his first wife. She urged women to get together to stop this heinous practice. An anonymous lady endorsed Hamida Begum's commitment in the following edition of *Tehzib un Niswan*. She praised Hamida Begum for her determination. She presented the example of a person she knew who wanted another wife for no other reason than desire. She debated the benefits and drawbacks of polygamy and determined that it harmed happy married life.

Another anonymous lady spoke out against polygamy in the *Mu'llim Niswan* in June 1900. Without the support of the colonial administration, which regarded polygamy as an issue of religious intervention, she urged a few educated females to come up to oppose this social evil and presented a memorandum to the government against it. Polygamy was an intensely controversial topic at the 5th session of the Muslim Ladies Conference in Lahore. Jahan Ara Shahnawaz, who presented the motion

condemning polygamy, argued that no religious authority sanctioned the custom of polygamy in India. She passionately opposed it, claiming that it harmed the community's growth. She urged women to unite to put an end to this evil custom. Sahar Banu explored the different circumstances that gave birth to polygamy while explaining its origins in the women's periodical *Musturat-i-Kanpur*. She said that throughout the Prophet's time, each territorial tribe attempted to expand its political authority. This led to the institutionalization of polygamy. Therefore, more and more women were married to strengthen political relations and increase military might through population growth. She said that the Prophet's polygamy should be considered in this context. She contended that each age group had a distinct set of circumstances. She added that sometimes being incorrect was necessary to deal with the circumstance. However, its ultimate goal was discouraging evil custom rather than fostering it.

Women's Rights and Justices

Coming out in a public place was not possible for women at the turn of the twentieth century due to significant patriarchal prohibitions on women's public exposure (Malla, 1998). However, Akbari Begum covertly published several articles and novels addressing women's plights. She denounced the patriarchal stifling of women's voices. She showed twin tyranny of women due to patriarchal rule, which, on the one hand, committed crimes against women while also preventing them from expressing their grief. Miss Abdul Sattar made a similar argument while discussing the same issue. She questioned in her writing, the subjection of women based on men's biased and unjustified constructs. This was published in the September edition of *Shareef Bibi in* 1910. She claimed that males stereotyped women, calling them dim-witted and ignorant. She wondered if one asked the males for proof of all their slander against women, they would start telling the cock and bull stories to support their nastily inherited positions. In contrast to the fact that the Quran explicitly addresses the dishonesty of women, men frequently utilize this against women. She contended that with men's entrenched patriarchal biases against women, women hardly expected the former to break down the gender barrier.

Women's political consciousness was on the rise in the 1920s. Many women took part in the Non-cooperation and Khilafat movements. At the same time, the All India Women's Conference was held in 1927, strengthening the spirit of other women's associations. These changes aided women in becoming more politically aware of their rights (Saiyid 1998).

Imtiaz Fatima, editor of *Sartaj* magazine, authored an article on men's resistance. Imtiaz Fatima strongly condemned the criticism imposed by men, stating such complaints merely showed men's double standards. Men interpreted the Islamic texts to suit their vested interests. She upheld her case further by asking why the press remained silent when the Punjab courts ruled against the inheritance of property by women, a right that Islam recognizes. She revealed the patriarchal monster embedded in them by offering another example of how men disobeyed the restrictions of the *Torah* by marrying multiple wives, which occasionally exceeded the maximum of four (Sarkar 2001, 236). She advocated women's divorce rights (*khula*), stating that women had been subjugated to such an extent that they were afraid to utilize this privilege. She asserted that men conspired to keep women illiterate, so that they would not be able to grasp their rights as given in the holy scriptures.

Imtiaz Fatima worked tirelessly to mobilize women in Punjab's Multan province, an area where women were particularly oppressed. Many women were mobilized in the Multan region in February 1928 for the second annual All India Muslim Ladies' Conference session held in Delhi. As a result, many resolutions on women's rights were enacted at the municipal level. Women overwhelmingly agreed to support the 'Age of Consent Bill' and urged that the marriage for females must be set at 16 years of age. Another resolution was passed, requiring the Punjab government to form a committee to investigate women's issues and pass laws to protect women's property rights on the *Mehr,* prohibit polygamy, and restore women's right to divorce *(khula*), among other things (Yamane 2007a: 32).

Women's consistent collective efforts became effective in the shape of the enactment of numerous legislation protecting women's rights in the 1930s. The 'Child Marriage Restraint Act', sometimes known as the 'Sarda Act', was passed in September 1929 and took effect on April 1, 1930. However, Hindu women pioneered the campaign to raise the age limit of marriage, which Muslim women enthusiastically supported. They also launched a vigorous campaign in its favour, and the topic was widely discussed at numerous women's conferences. While presiding over the second annual session of the All-India Ladies' Conference in Delhi in 1928, Begum Sultan Jahan warned the ladies against religious divisiveness and asked them to work together to advance women's rights. Despite the desire of many Muslim male leaders to exempt Muslims from the scope of the 'Sarda Act', Muslim women members of the All India Women's Conference firmly backed it (Yamane 2009b: 72). They sent a letter to the viceroy urging his support in favour of it. Begum Sharifa Hamid Ali led a campaign in Sind to support the 'Sarda Act'. Addressing the ladies of Sind, she drew example from her own experience, stating that her two daughters had been victims of this practice. She was a vanguard in the enactment of the 'Sarda Act', emphasizing the importance of applying the Act to the Muslim population.

Muslim women reformers had long advocated for the right to property granted to women by Islam. However, patriarchal systems prevented them from doing so. They sparked public outrage through the media and other public venues, notably women's journals and conferences (Yamane 2002c: 95). In this context, the Muslim League, in collaboration with other socio-religious organisations, pushed for the restoration of women's rights as sanctioned by Islam. As a result, the Shariat Act was established in 1937, restoring women's right to inherit property as prescribed by Islam.

Although the topic of women's right to divorce (*khula*) was raised in the second half of the nineteenth century, its popularity grew in the 1930s. Begum Sharifah Hamida Ali prepared a model *Nikkah Nama* (marriage contract) in 1937, including the provision granting a woman the right to divorce her husband. This was a kind of protest for lack of a divorce clause. It alarmed the *Ulema* society. As a result, the *Ulema, as* for example, Ashraf Ali Thanawi, asserted that women might get divorced under the *Malki* School of Muslim Jurisprudence. This was the reason for enacting the Dissolution of Muslim Marriage Act in 1939.

We have seen how the women intellectuals discussed various issues such as education, health, parda, dress code, child marriage, widowhood, widow remarriage, polygamy, women's right to property and divorce, etc. Muslim women intellectuals demanded various rights without compromising their

Muslim identity. They did not find any contradiction between their rights and Islam. Most of them powerfully argued that they were not enjoying rights as prescribed in their holy scriptures. The women's journals served as communicators of women's ideas and activism. It has been seen how the journals published the speeches of women intellectuals delivered at various women's conferences and the activities undertaken by several women's organizations. Such spreading of information was necessary for consolidating the women's movement.There is no reason to doubt that the Journals ably performed this extraordinary task. General women readers were informed about several things, which they could learn at home. It is seen that several female intellectuals discussed and debated issues that concerned them and arrived at certain conclusions. By publishing articles representing diverse opinions, the female readers were exposed to a new world of ideas from which they could choose. It also demonstrated that, despite being nationalistic, the Muslim women intellectuals did not blindly discard British intervention in Indian affairs, which was the reason why they welcomed legislation enacted by the British government. They strongly felt that it was only through legislation that various discrimination perpetrated on Indian women had ended. Their sustained campaign resulted in the passage of several Acts, such as, the Sarda Act, 1929; the Shariat Act, 1937; and the Dissolution of Muslim Marriage Act, 1939.

References

- Aftab, Tahera. 2007. *Inscribing South Asian Muslim Women: An Annotated Bibliography and Research Guide*. Leiden: Brill.
- Chandrababu, B. S., and L. Thilagavathi. 2007. *Women, Her History and Her Struggle for Emancipation*. Chennai: Bharathi Puthakalaya; Al Amen University Press.
- Chatterji, Rakhahari. 2013. *Gandhi and Ali Brothers: Biography of Friendship*. New Delhi: Sage Publishers.
- Forbes, Geraldine. 1996. *Women in Modern India*. New Delhi: Cambridge University Press.
- Hali, Altaf Hussain. 1910. *Bewa ke Munajat*. Amritsar: Esteem Press.
- Hyder, Qurratul-Ain. 2003. *Kar-e-Jahan Daraz Hai*. New Delhi: Education Publishing House.
- Malla, N. 1998. *Nationalism, Regionalism and Philosophy of National Integration*. New Delhi: Regency Publications.
- Saiyid, Duksha. 1998. *Muslim Women of the British Punjab: From Seclusion to Politics*. Britain: Macmillan Press Ltd.
- Sarkar, M. 2001. Muslim women and the politics of (in) visibility in late colonial Bengal. *Journal of Historical Sociology*, 14(2), pp.226-250.
- Yamane 2007a. "19 Seiki Hajime Indo niokeru Urdu-go Seisho-hou (Urdu Orthography in India in the Early 19th Century)."*Studies in Language and Culture* 67: 17-47.

- Yamane. 2009b. “Sounds of Difference: A Study on Urdu Orthography in the Beginning of the Nineteenth Century.”*International Journal of South Asian Studies* 2: 59-85.
- Yamane. 2002c. “Ghalib no Urdu-go Shokan ni Mirareru 19 Seiki Nakaba no Deli nitsuite (Delhi in the Mid-19th Century as Gleaned from His Urdu Letters in Urdu).”*Bulletin of the Society for Western and Southern Asiatic Studies, Kyoto University* 56: 61-99.

Bio Profile of the Author:
Assistant Professor, School of Law
Brainware University
Mail Id: sudiptaadhikary24@gmail.com

Effectiveness of Virtual Training for Information Technology Sector Employees

Anindya Saha[1] & Amitava Ghosh[2]

ABSTRACT

The use of virtual training has become increasingly popular in recent years, as it provides a cost-effective and flexible alternative to traditional classroom training. In the information technology (IT) sector, where employees need to continuously upgrade their skills to keep up with rapidly changing technologies, virtual training offers a practical solution to meet the training needs of employees. This study aims to investigate the effectiveness of virtual training for information technology (IT) sector employees. The respondents of this study were IT sector employees who have undergone virtual training. Data has been gathered from 200 employees of IT companies in Kolkata. In the present research, the researcher utilized the method of Pearson correlation, employing simple analysis to examine the different variables across all pairs of data series. The study found that IT sector employees generally have positive attitudes and perceptions towards virtual training. The study also found that effectiveness of virtual trainings has positive impact on improvement of communication, providing high speed information, encourage team efforts, progress in the career and professional enrichment.

Keywords: *Virtual training, IT sector, Correlation, Communication, High speed information, Career and Professional enrichment*.

INTRODUCTION

In the current scenario, the progress of data technology has led to a transformative and fundamental change in virtual training. The exponential growth in the need for training within IT companies has reached maturity, enabling employees to receive simulated virtual training instead of traditional brick-and-mortar sessions; Ramayah (2012). In recent years, the popularity of virtual training has grown significantly due to its cost-effective and flexible nature, making it a favored alternative to traditional classroom training. In the information technology (IT) sector, where employees need to continuously upgrade their skills to keep up with rapidly changing technologies, virtual training offers a practical solution to meet the training needs of employees; Kumar & Sharma (2021).

The IT Companies are always dealing with new technology, so re frame of knowledge for every employee are always required for sustaining into the domain and in emerging areas. Training is always

a very important part for them. The level of efficiency and creativity depends on training only by enhancing their skill. The IT employees developed may online 2 training tools for their customers on behalf of their companies. Due to its global accessibility and reach, Virtual Training is considered the preferred learning channel, allowing it to take place anywhere with just a click of a mouse over the internet (Ellis & Kuznia, 2014).

The development of knowledge technology has brought about an evolutionary and paradigmatic change in the current state of virtual training. The increasing demand for corporate training has paved the way for providing employees with simulated virtual training as an alternative to traditional in-person instruction. Businesses have been employing technology to increase the efficiency of their daily operations for more than ten years. Organizations leveraging technology to deliver training to their staff enjoy several benefits, such as cost savings on travel expenses and training time, flexibility in coaching delivery, accessibility to a wide range of content, continuous utilization of corporate resources, and enhanced worker productivity, among others.

The goal of training activities at the micro level is to help employees of a firm or organisation become more competent in their jobs and improves how well they accomplish the tasks that have been given to them. As a result, everyone participates in training of some kind in order to survive and thrive in the corporate world. Without physically meeting, virtual training is a fantastic opportunity for employees to improve their talents. Although virtual training can be difficult, it also gives staff members the chance to improve their learning process thanks to ease, flexibility, and technical innovation. Making the most of the virtual possibilities depends on your ability to comprehend this training style and some of its possible advantages, whether you're designing, leading, or taking part in a virtual training session.

SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

Since human resources are the most adaptable component of the production system, it is necessary to regularly educate human workers about new and evolving technological developments. This necessitates the introduction of fresh knowledge-delivery and skill-transfer strategies. To keep up with the latest innovations, one needs a cutting-edge training programme. The most practical answer to today's problems of keeping up with technological advancements might be thought of as virtual training. Accepting the reality that training has numerous advantages for both personnel and the organisation as a whole is noteworthy. Employees become more active, self-assured, and encouraging of one another. Additionally, as a result of training, personnel grow in morale, which helps them perform better. Employees benefit from this aspect's impact in terms of their personal, professional, and occupational knowledge. Employees who receive training that may be customised to their needs are more committed to attaining performance goals, forge close relationships with the company, and work there for a longer period of time. The importance of virtual training activities holds great significance for all businesses operating within the manufacturing sector. Training practices have the potential to enhance service levels in the industry, prompting organizations to assess the costs, benefits, and effectiveness

of training initiatives. In the IT sector and other industries, employees face mounting pressure to work efficiently, effectively, and adapt rapidly to changes. Trainers now go beyond the traditional focus on skill development. Along with the significant changes in roles and accountability, strategic planning for the company is increasingly including effective training and development practices. Therefore, the research study is entitled **"**EFFECTIVENESS OF VIRTUAL TRAINING FOR INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY SECTOR EMPLOYEES**"**.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Yunus Kathawala and Andreas Wilgen's (2004) emphasized on E-Learning, which is evaluating from an organisational perspective. They looked at advantages including cost-effectiveness, increased productivity, personalised instruction, quicker learning with higher retention, risk-free interaction and community development, traceability, IT skills, and storage of content and knowledge, among other advantages.In-depth critical analysis of the advantages, strategies, and evaluation procedures used in employee training and development in a business is done by Henry Ongori and Jennifer Chishamiso Nzonzo (2011). A selection of 61 managers from diverse organizations was made. The authors uncovered that investing in staff training and development enhances competitiveness and organizational effectiveness. Ultimately, the study aims to convince managers from various backgrounds to recognize the importance of staff development and training within their respective firms. In her study, Amita Maxwell (2012) looked at the effects of information and communication technologies (ICT) and the emergence of electronic learning, which is now widely acknowledged as having transformed training and education. The training market is also impacted by some of the new innovations, much like the other IT sector divisions that have been severely affected by the revolutionary advances in technology. The author discovered that in order for the firms to utilise the most recent training method, they must weigh the costs and benefits.The adoption and use of two video-conferencing methods for training are virtual video conferencing and distant video conferencing. These were examined by Bernard Galleries *et al.* (2013). During actual training sessions, they looked at the perceptions, attitudes, and behaviours of 60 employees. The author discovered that virtual classes were more satisfying than remote classes. The findings indicated that virtual training is seen as being significantly more useful. Kulkarni (2013) studied the function, value, and benefits of training as well as its favourable effects on the advancement of the organisation. Additionally, they put a lot of emphasis on training that promotes positive organisational goals for the greatest possible improvement in the quality of the workers' working lives. Programs for training and development assist in raising employee morale and enhance their behaviour and attitude toward their work. The findingsof the study show that a training and development programme improves workers' quality of life at work.

It highlights the benefits of virtual training, such as its flexibility, cost-effectiveness, and ability to deliver customized training programs. The review also points out the importance of using interactive and engaging training content and technologies to enhance the effectiveness of virtual training (Baldwin & Walters (2018). Alotaibi (2020) suggests that IT employees generally have positive attitudes towards virtual training, as it provides them with flexibility, convenience, and accessibility. The review also highlights the importance of providing engaging and interactive virtual training content to enhance

the motivation and engagement of learners. Mohamad *et al.* (2020) suggest that in order to gain a deeper understanding of how specific similarities and differences impact the effectiveness of online training programs. It is crucial to examine several significant organizational features, such as, department and online training resources; and employee characteristics, such as, gender, age, education, position, and tenure. Furthermore, if future research aims at establishing causal relationships between the variables of interest, the longitudinal analysis should be considered as an alternative research approach. Lastly, to comprehensively understand the impact of online training, content should be on job motivation. Future studies should consider comparing two or more types of organizations. Bhattacharya & Sharma (2021) identified several factors, such as, the quality of the virtual training content, the technology used in delivering the training, the support provided by trainers and peers, and the motivation and engagement of learners. The review suggests that addressing these factors can improve the effectiveness of virtual training for IT employees.

OBJECTIVE OF RESEARCH

Objective of the research is to assess the efficacy of virtual training for employees in the information technology sector.

METHODOLOGICAL FRAMEWORK

Research Design

The researcher employed the descriptive survey research method in the present study to assess the effectiveness of virtual training for employees in the information technology sector.

Type of Samples/Sample Design

Sample is taken from the target population. A sample is the part of population which is studied with a purpose to make inferences concerning the whole population. In the present study, researcher used simple random sampling to collect the information from different respondents. The employees of selected IT Companies in Kolkata (West Bengal) are considered as respondents for the present study.

Sample Size

200 Employees employed in IT Sectors are taken as respondants.

Research Area

City of Kolkata.

Collection of Data

Primary Data: Data has been collected from 200 employees working in IT companies located in Kolkata.

Secondary data: Secondary data have been collected by examining research papers, journals, article reviews, and other relevant sources.

RESEARCH INSTRUMENT

For the present study, a questionnaire method has been used to obtain primary data. The responses to the questions were rated with the use of Likert Scale questions based on objective of the study.

ANALYSIS OF DATA

The data obtained from questionnaires sheets completed by the IT sector employees were analyzed and interpreted with the use of pie charts.

TOOLS/ STATISTICAL TECHNIQUE USED IN THE STUDY

In the current research, the researcher has employed simple analysis and correlations, using the Pearson method, to examine various aspects such as the effectiveness of virtual trainings, improvement of communication, provision of high-speed information, promotion of team efforts, career advancement, and professional enrichment.

RESEARCH HYPOTHESIS

Hypothesis 1:

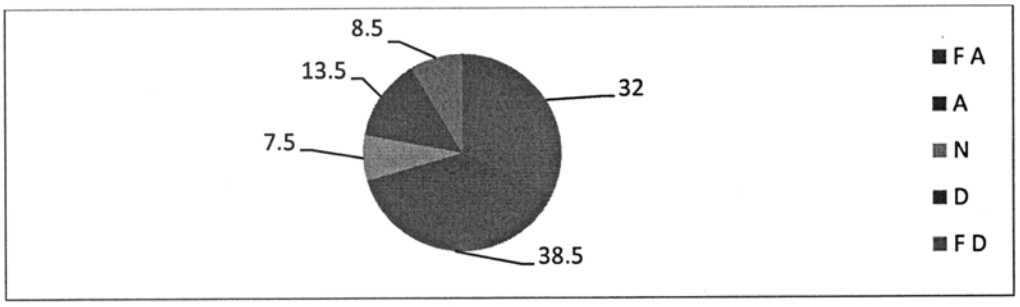
Ho: There is no significant correlation between components regarding effectiveness of virtual training for information technology sector employees.

H_1: There is significant correlation between components regarding effectiveness of virtual training for information technology sector employees.

DATA ANALYSIS IN RESPECT TO EFFECTIVENESS OF VIRTUAL TRAINING FOR INFORMATION TECHNOLOGYSECTOR EMPLOYEES

Table 1: In response to the question "Do you agree that virtual trainings are effective in improve your communication?"

S. No.	Components	No. of Respondents	Per cent
1	F A	64	32
2	A	77	38.5
3	N	15	7.5
4	D	27	13.5
5	F D	17	8.5
	Total	**200**	**100**



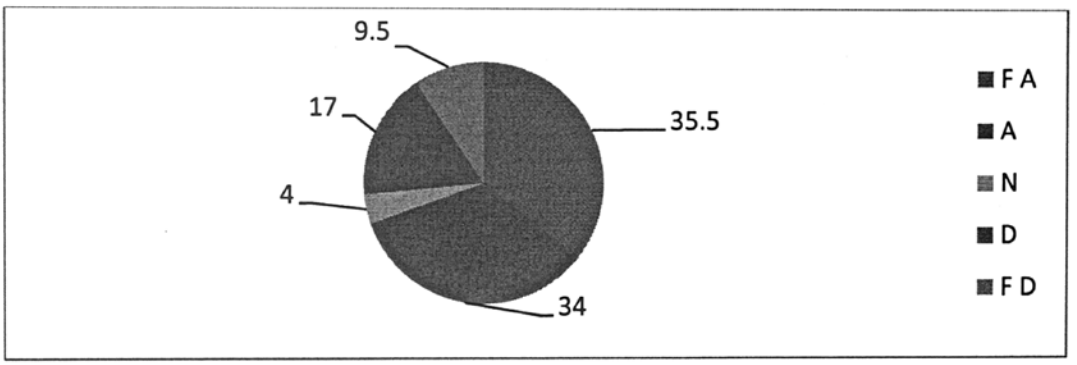
FA: Fully Agree, A: Agree, N: Neutral, D: Disagree, FD: Fully Disagree

Figure 1: In response to the question "Do you agree that virtual trainings are effective in improve your communication?"

Analysis: Of all respondents, 32% fully agreed, 38.5% agreed, 7.5% were neutral, 13.5% disagreed, and 8.5% fully disagreed that virtual trainings are effective in improve your communication.

Table 2: In response to the question "Do you agree that virtual trainings are effective in encourage team efforts?"

S. No.	Components	No. of Respondents	Per cent
1	F A	71	35.5
2	A	68	34
3	N	8	4
4	D	34	17
5	F D	19	9.5
	Total	**200**	**100**



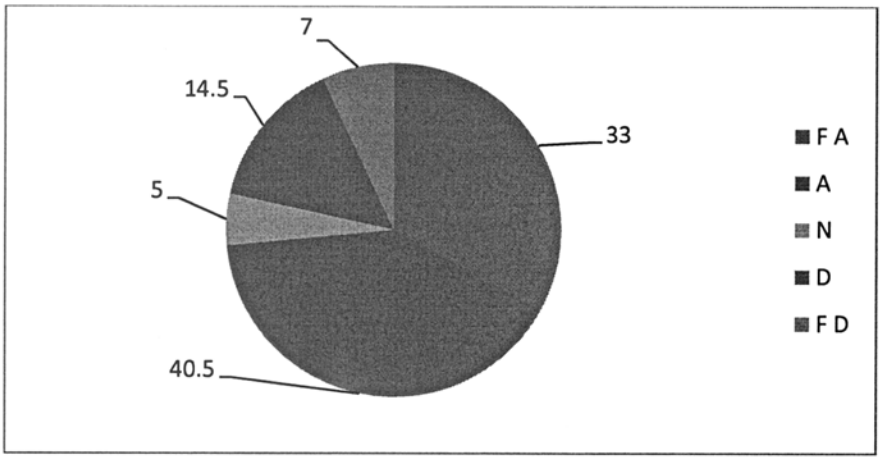
FA: Fully Agree, A: Agree, N: Neutral, D: Disagree, FD: Fully Disagree

Figure 2: In response to the question "Do you agree that virtual trainings are effective in encourage team efforts?"

Analysis: Of all respondents, 35.5% highly agreed, 34 % agreed, just 4% were neutral, 17% opposed, and only 9.5% strongly objected that virtual trainings are effective in improve your communication. The vast majority of respondents so agreed that virtual trainings are effective in encourage team efforts.

Table 3: In response to the question "Do you agree that virtual trainings are effective in provide high speed information?"

S. No.	Components	No. of Respondents	Per cent
1	F A	66	33
2	A	81	40.5
3	N	10	5
4	D	27	14.5
5	F D	14	7
	Total	**200**	**100**



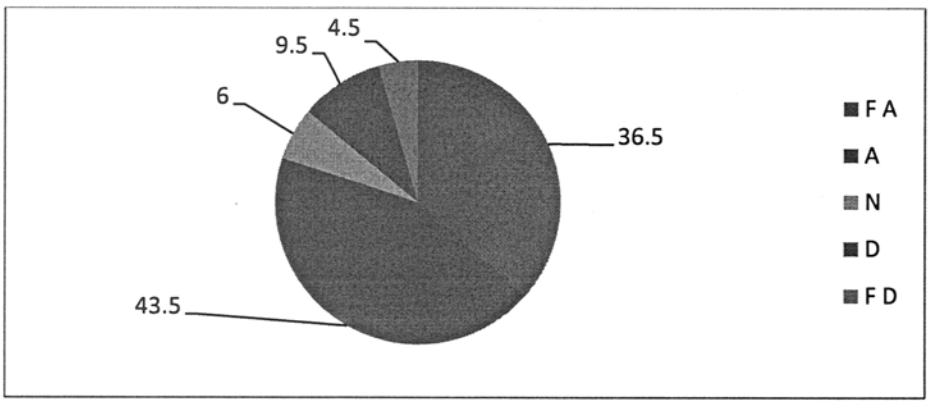
FA: Fully Agree, A: Agree, N: Neutral, D: Disagree, FD: Fully Disagree

Figure 3: In response to the question "Do you agree that virtual trainings are effective in provide high speed information?"

Analysis: Only 5% of respondents were in different, 14.5% disagreed, and only 7% fully disagreed that virtual trainings are effective in provide high speed information. Of all respondents, 33% fully agreed, 40.5% agreed. The overwhelming majority of respondents agreed that virtual trainings are effective in provide high speed information.

Table 4: In response to the question "Do you agree that virtual trainings are effective in progress of your career?"

S. No.	Components	No. of Respondents	Per cent
1	F A	73	36.5
2	A	87	43.5
3	N	12	6
4	D	19	9.5
5	F D	9	4.5
	Total	**200**	**100**



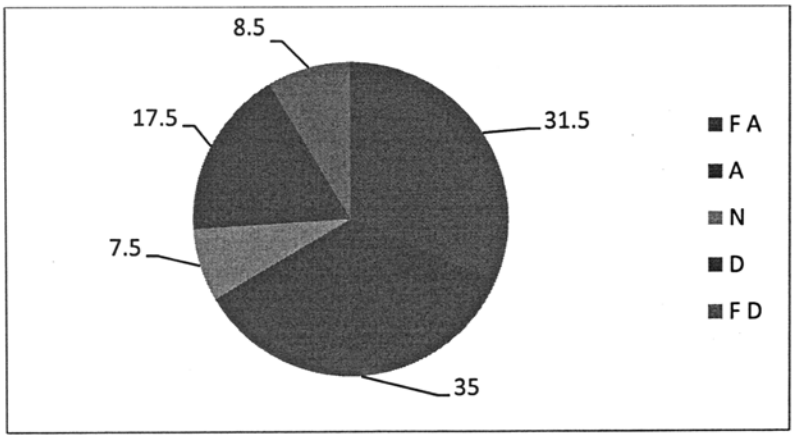
FA: Fully Agree, A: Agree, N: Neutral, D: Disagree, FD: Fully Disagree

Figure 4: In response to the question "Do you agree that virtual trainings are effective in progress of your career?"

Analysis: All respondents indicated that virtual trainings are effective in progress of your career, with 36.5% strongly agreeing, 43.5% agreeing, 6% neutral, 9.5% disagreeing, and just 4.5% severely disagreeing. The vast majority of respondents stated that they would be helpful from the virtual trainings to progress in their career.

Table 5: In response to the question "Do you agree that virtual trainings are effective in your professional enrichment?"

S. No.	Components	No. of Respondents	Per cent
1	F A	63	31.5
2	A	70	35
3	N	15	7.5
4	D	35	17.5
5	F D	17	8.5
	Total	**200**	**100**



FA: Fully Agree, A: Agree, N: Neutral, D: Disagree, FD: Fully Disagree

Figure 5: In response to the question "Do you agree that virtual trainings are effective in your professional enrichment?"

Analysis: Among all respondents, 31.5% fully agreeing, 35.5% agreeing, 7.5% neutral, 17.5% disagreeing, and just 8.5% fully disagreeing. In order to virtual training effectiveness for professional enrichment nearly two thirds of respondents said they typically prefer virtual trainings.

HYPOTHESIS TESTING

H_0 There is no significant correlation between components regarding effectiveness of virtual training for information technology sector employees.

H_1: There is significant correlation between components regarding effectiveness of virtual training for information technology sector employees.

Table 6: Correlations for all pairs of data series (method=pearson)

	A	b	C	d	E
A	1	0.964	0.998	0.996	0.987
B	0.964	1	0.972	0.951	0.985
C	0.998	0.972	1	0.989	0.994
D	0.996	0.951	0.989	1	0.975
E	0.987	0.985	0.994	0.975	1

Table 7: Correlations for all pairs of data series with p-values

Pair	Pearson r	Spearman rho	Kendall tau
a;b	0.9644	0.9	0.8
p-value	(0.008)	(0.0833)	(0.0833)
a;c	0.9978	1	1
p-value	(1e-04)	(0.0167)	(0.0167)
a;d	0.9961	0.9	0.8
p-value	(3e-04)	(0.0833)	(0.0833)
a;e	0.9868	1	1
p-value	(0.0018)	(0.0167)	(0.0167)
b;c	0.972	0.9	0.8
p-value	(0.0056)	(0.0833)	(0.0833)
b;d	0.9509	0.8	0.6
p-value	(0.013)	(0.1333)	(0.2333)
b;e	0.985	0.9	0.8
p-value	(0.0022)	(0.0833)	(0.0833)
c;d	0.9887	0.9	0.8
p-value	(0.0014)	(0.0833)	(0.0833)
c;e	0.9937	1	1
p-value	(6e-04)	(0.0167)	(0.0167)
d;e	0.9749	0.9	0.8
p-value	(0.0047)	(0.0833)	(0.0833)

Result: Based on the analysis above, it is evident that there exists a strong correlation among all components of the present research, including the effectiveness of virtual trainings, improvement of communication, provision of high-speed information, promotion of team efforts, career advancement, and professional enrichment. So, from the correlation analysis it is clear that Ho is rejected which means there is significant correlation between components regarding effectiveness of virtual training for information technology sector employees.

CONCLUSION AND FINDINGS

Without physically meeting, virtual training is a fantastic opportunity for employees to improve their talents. Although virtual training can be difficult, it also gives staff members the chance to improve their learning process thanks to ease, flexibility, and technical innovation. Making the most of the virtual possibilities depends on your ability to comprehend this training style and some of its possible advantages, whether you're designing, leading, or taking part in a virtual training session.

The findings of the study include:

1. The research study found that among all respondents, 32% fully agreed, 38.5% agreed, 7.5% were neutral, 13.5% disagreed, and 8.5% fully disagreed that virtual trainings are effective in improve your communication.
2. Of all respondents, 35.5% highly agreed, 34 % agreed, just 4% were neutral, 17% opposed, and only 9.5% strongly objected that virtual trainings are effective in improve your communication. The vast majority of respondents so agreed that virtual trainings are effective in improve your communication.
3. Only 5% of respondents were indifferent, 14.5% disagreed, and only 7% fully disagreed that virtual trainings are effective in provide high speed information. Of all respondents, 33% fully agreed, 40.5% agreed. The overwhelming majority of respondents agreed that virtual trainings are effective in provide high speed information.
4. All respondents indicated that virtual trainings are effective in progress of your career, with 36.5% strongly agreeing, 43.5% agreeing, 6% neutral, 9.5% disagreeing, and just 4.5% severely disagreeing. The vast majority of respondents stated that they would be helpful from the virtual trainings to progress in their career.
5. Among all respondents, 31.5% fully agreeing, 35.5% agreeing, 7.5% neutral, 17.5% disagreeing, and just 8.5% fully disagreeing. In order to virtual training effectiveness for professional enrichment nearly two thirds of respondents said they typically prefer virtual trainings.

REFERENCES

- Alotaibi, A. F. 2020. 'Employees' Perceptions and Attitudes towards Virtual Training: A Literature Review.' *International Journal of Advanced Computer Science and Applications,* 11(1), 110-117.
- Baldwin, J. P.& Walters, C. K. 2018. 'Virtual Training Effectiveness: A Review of the Literature.' *International Journal of Information Technology Project Management (IJITPM),* 9(4), 19-32.

- Bernard, F., Roxana, T. & Sylvie, G. 2013. Acceptance and Appropriation of Videoconferencing for E-training: an Empirical Investigation, 1-15.
- Bhattacharya, A.& Sharma, V. 2021. 'Virtual Training Effectiveness for IT Employees: A Literature Review.' *International Journal of Advanced Research in Computer Science,* 12(1), 14-22.
- Ellis, P. F., & Kuznia, K. D. 2014. 'Corporate Elearning Impact on Employees.' *Global Journal of Business Research*, 1-15.
- Kulkarni, P. 2013. 'A Literature Review on Training & Development and Quality of Work Life,' *International Refereed Research Journal*, 4(2).
- Kumar, A.& Sharma, V. 2021. 'Effectiveness of Virtual Training: A Study of Information Technology (IT) Sector Employees.' *Journal of Human Resource Management,* 4(2), 33-48.
- Maxwell, A. 2012. 'Technological Advancements in Methods of Training with Reference to Online Training: Impact and Issues for Organizations.' *International Refereed Research Journal*, 3(3).
- Mohamad, N.I., Ismail, A. & Nor, A.M. 2020. 'Effect of managers' support in technology based training on training transfer.' *International Journal on Emerging Technologies,* 11(2), 985-990.
- Ongori, H. and Nzonzo, J.C. 2011. 'Training and Development practices in an organisation: An intervention to enhance organisational effectiveness.' *International Journal of Engineering and Management,* 2(4), 187-198.
- Ramayah, T. 2012. 'An Assessment of E-training Effectiveness in Multinational Companies in Malaysia.' *Educational Technology & Society*, 15.
- Yunus Kathawala and Andreas Wilgen. 2004. 'E-Learning: Evaluation from an Organizations prospective" Training & management development methods.' *Emerald Group of Publications,* 18, 5-13.

Bio Profile of the Authors:

1. Research Scholar, Seacom Skills University, W.B.
Assistant Professor, Army Institute of Management, Kolkata
Ananda Niketan, Block 2, 100D, Naipukur, Rajarhat, Kolkata, W.B. 700135
Email-anindyasaha2006@gmail.com

2. Adjunct Faculty Member & PhD Supervisor, Department of Management
Seacom Skills University, Kendradangal, Birbhum, West Bengal – 731236
Email-amitava67@gmail.com

Impact of Different Parenting Style in Student Performance

Krishnendu Roy

Abstract

The impact of different parenting styles on student's performance is a crucial research topic. Purpose of this study understands of how different parenting styles affect performance of the student. Three parenting styles and their impact on academic achievement are the focus of the research. Qualitative method with secondary data was used in the study. The results of this study show how important it is for parents to be involved in their children's schoolwork. The study's goals and hypothesis are apparent, which shows how important the study is for changing how parents raise their children and how schools run. A qualitative research method was used in the study. The results and analysis show how different parenting styles affect the performance of students in the school. After looking at the data, the study came to some conclusions that emphasizes that how important it is to be a strict parent. It stresses how important it is for parents to use good parenting skills that help their kids to do well in school. The importance of the study makes its contribution on parenting styles and student performance. The study's results show how parent-child relationships change over time and how that changes impact on the performance of the students in school. Different parenting styles are looked at in terms of how they affect kids. The study can help parents and school officials make decisions.

Keywords: *Parenting styles, Student performance, Academic achievement, Authoritative parenting, Authoritarian parenting and Permissive parenting*

Introduction

Parents affect how well their children do in school. How parents treat their kids can affect how well they do in school in the long run. It will look into how different parenting styles affect how well students do in school. The three types of parenting are authoritative, authoritarian, and permissive. Parents draw the lines for the boundaries. Religious parents are rigorous. Most of the time, parents who allot are lovely. How parents raise their kids can affect how well they do in school. Parents who are strict with their kids are more likely to help them learn how to control themselves. Authoritarian parenting can make kids feel like they have to do well in school but don't get the help and support they need. Children whose parents are too permissive may not have the structure and discipline they need to do well.

The study aims to investigate the connection between parenting styles and how well students do in school. What the hypothesis says is that authoritative parenting will help kids do better in school, while authoritarian and permissive parenting will hurt them. To test this hypothesis, we will do a

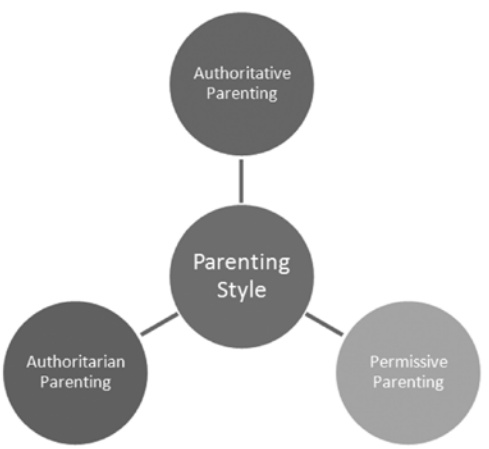
secondary qualitative analysis of research that has already been done on parenting styles and how well students do in school. We will look at studies that show how different parenting styles affect how well kids do in school. The study's goal is to find out how significant parental involvement is in how well a student does in school. The results of this study can help policymakers figure out how to help students do well in school and understand the effects of different parenting styles.

Literature Review

According to Ally (2019), child development experts are interested in how different parents raise their kids. Three different ways were put forward as ways to parent. How these styles make people feel has been looked into. Authoritative parenting, which makes the home a warm and supportive place, has been linked to good outcomes in children, like doing better in school. Self-esteem, self-control, and social skills are all better in people with this style. Your kids will be more interested in school if you are strict with them. Bad things happen to kids when their parents are too stringent. It's not good for kids to feel anxious and low in self-esteem when their parents are authoritarian and strict. Children whom authoritative adults raise don't want to go to school. Children suffer because of it. Parents who are too permissive don't always set clear limits and expectations, which can make kids feel lost and not able to control themselves. Allowing kids to do what they want makes them less motivated.

APPENDICES

Appendix 1: Different types of Types of Parenting



(Source: Self-created)

The research says that authoritative parenting is the best way to help kids do well in school. There are other factors affecting educational attainment. Socio-economic status, access to resources,

and teacher support are other factors. The influence of parenting styles on a child's academic prowess, social prowess, and emotional stability has long been a focal point for researchers. The link between parenting styles and student performance was examined in the literature review. The way in which parents engage with their offspring and the methodologies they use in their upbringing has been shown to affect a child's development (Mukhamedov et al., 2020). Academic achievement is significant in fostering positive outcomes. Studies show the efficacy of authoritative parenting in nurturing children's success. Illustrating its propensity to instill fear and anxiety in children, authoritarian parenting, typified by strictness and lack of warmth, is associated with diminished academic performance.

Perishable parenting, marked by a lack of boundaries, tends to hinder academic achievement by fostering a lack of discipline and motivation. A child's socio-emotional development is influenced by parenting styles. Children's self-esteem, social competence, and emotional resilience are all boosted imitative parenting. The maladaptive socio-emotional outcomes include diminished self-esteem, impaired social skills and emotional instability. Parenting styles affect self-regulation skills. Authoritative parenting cultivates robust self-regulation abilities, including self-control, self-monitoring, and intrinsic motivation, by providing a supportive yet structured environment. The development of self-regulation skills is hampered mysterianism and permissive parenting styles. A literature review shows the role of parenting styles in shaping student performance. The pathways through which parental influence affects the landscape of child development are shown in the differential impacts of authoritative, authoritarian, and permissive parenting.

Authoritative Parenting

A balanced approach to parenting combines warmth. Parents who use this style give clear boundaries and expectations while also being responsive to their children's needs and encouraging their independence. A child who is socially and academically competent has better mental health and is less likely to engage in problematic behaviour, which meditative parents can produce. Research shows that authoritative parenting is related to students' performance. Children who were raised by authoritative parents had better skills. It was found that authoritative parenting was associated with better social skills in children (Biesta et al., 2020).

Appendix 2: Impact on Academic Achievement

Parenting Style	**Impact on Academic Achievement**
Authoritative	Higher grades, motivated learners
Authoritarian	Lower grades, stressful environment
Permissive	Poor academic performance, lack of direction

(Source: Self-Created)

Authoritarian Parenting

As stated by Brandt (2022), there are strict rules and punishments for authoritarian parenting. The parents who use this style priorities obeying over their children. Children with lower self-esteem are more likely to be produced by their parents. A study shows that authoritarian parenting is bad for students. The study found that children raised by authoritarian parents had lower IQs and poorer language skills. There were more Behavioural problems with children who had authoritarian parenting.

Permissive Parenting

Permissive parenting is characterized by a lack of structure and boundaries, with parents giving in to their children's demands. Children who are impulsive, aggressive, and have low self-control are more likely to be produced by their parents. Permissive parenting is linked to student performance. Children raised by permissive parents had lower IQs and poorer language skills. There were more Behavioural problems in children who had more permissive parenting. A literature review shows that authoritative parenting is associated with better student performance. A balanced approach to parenting that combines warmth, structure, and support is essential, according to the findings.

Appendix 3: Characteristics of Impact on Academic Achievement

Parenting Style	Characteristics	Impact on Academic Achievement
Authoritative	Supportive, Encouraging,	Higher grades, motivated learners
	High Expectations, Guidance	
Authoritarian	Strict, Demanding,	Lower grades, stressful environment
	High Pressure	
Permissive	Lenient, Indulgent,	Poor academic performance, lack of direction
	Lack of Structure, Guidance	

(Source: Self-Created)

Policymakers can develop effective strategies to support parents in fostering a positive and productive learning environment for their children by understanding the different parenting styles and their impact on student performance. Our research shows that authoritative parenting style has a positive effect on student performance in terms of academic achievement, socio-emotional development, and self-regulation skills. The impact of authoritarian and permissive parenting styles on student performance is not good. The findings suggest that parents should use an authoritative parenting style to promote their children's academic achievement, socio-emotional development and self-regulation skills (Carrillo and Flores, 2020).

Theories that explain how different parenting styles affect student outcomes

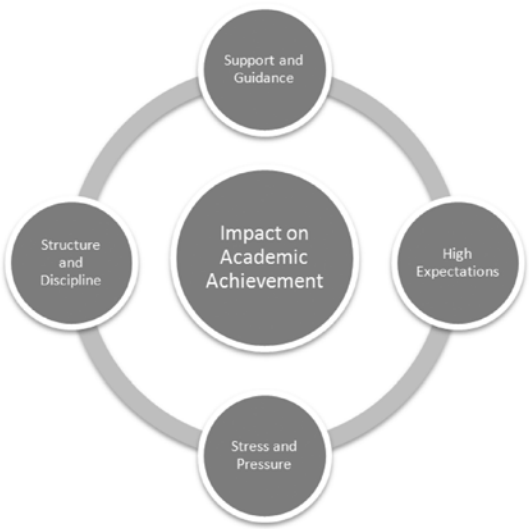
According to Ching et al. (2020), understanding the ideas is crucial before examining the effects of parenting styles. Essential concepts include social learning and attachment. According to social learning

theory, imitation causes behaviour. Children absorb their parents' ideals, says the notion. Parenting methods affect children's academic, motivational, and emotional well-being. Attachment theory suggests that a child's growth depends on their caregivers' relationship. According to this notion, children with stable attachments are available and receptive. The secure connection provides emotional stability. They know how parenting styles affect student performance, and child development is insightful. Social learning theory states individuals acquire new behaviours by watching others. Children may learn parental values. A parent's attitude or conduct increases a child's adoption chances. Authoritative parents help their kids succeed in school. Supportive environments encourage learning. Setting limits and expectations helps kids be responsible. Children with authoritarian parents may suffer. Authoritarian parents' discipline may create a fear-based relationship. This might worry kids and damage their grades.

Attachment Theory

Healthy caregiver-child bonding is crucial to a child's growth. The hypothesis states that children require stable caregiver attachments to develop healthy emotional and social abilities. Secure parent-child extensions improve academic performance. Securely bonded children feel comfortable and supported, allowing them to explore and create. They engage well with instructors due to their social abilities. Parents-attached kids may suffer at school. Insecurely connected children may be apprehensive or avoidant, making it hard to build good connections with instructors and classmates. This may affect academic achievement (Langford, Uehara and Scherer, 2021).

Appendix 4: Impact on Academic Achievement



(Source: Self-Created)

Methodology

As stated by Guerrero and Reche (2020), Different parenting styles and student performance were examined using secondary qualitative methods. This method analyzed and interpreted academic article data rather than doing surveys or experiments. As per Dent, Harden and Hunt (2021), we employed secondary qualitative methods. Our thorough study knowledge helped us find patterns and themes in the data. Analyzing data from numerous sources gives us a more complete picture of how parenting styles affect student achievement. Our study topic explored parenting styles and student outcomes rather than testing a hypothesis. Therefore, this technique was acceptable.

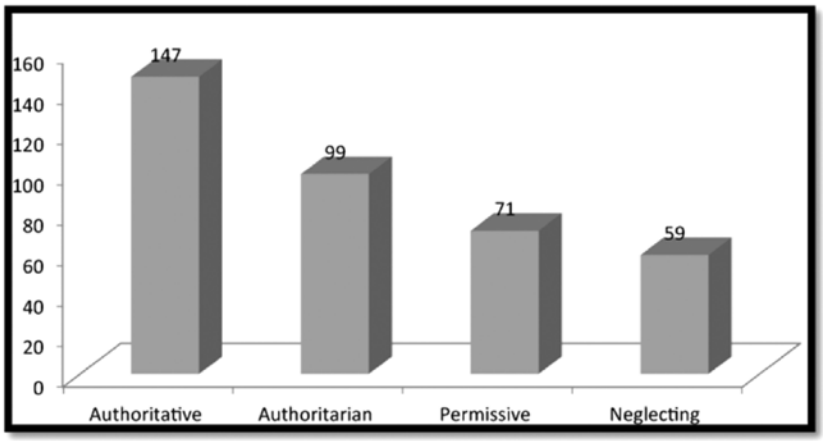
There are many educational books and articles. We investigated how parental types affect student achievement. Our research yielded rich and varied data that helped us comprehend the intricate link between parenting styles and student achievement. By evaluating and interpreting existing data, it found patterns and themes that single research would have missed. Authoritative parenting affects academic accomplishment in many ways, including grades, intrinsic drive, and a good learning attitude. We read books and chapters on parenting, student accomplishment, and related subjects. Studies examined how authoritative, authoritarian, and permissive parenting styles affect student performance, self-regulation, motivation, and emotional well-being (Nzarirwehi and Atuhumuze, 2019). Our approach revealed the association between parental types and student performance.

Analysing and interpreting data revealed patterns and themes that would have been difficult to find in single research. Authoritative parenting affects academic accomplishment beyond grades, including motivation and a good learning attitude. Authoritative parents create an environment that supports, encourages, and high expectations by empowering their children to thrive academically.

Findings and Analysis

According to Niss and Blum (2020), The influence of parenting styles on student performance was studied. The role of parenting styles in shaping student success has been found. Authoritative parenting is characterized by warmth and clear expectations. The adverse effects of authoritarian and permissive parenting styles were found in the lowest grades. Parenting styles have different outcomes in terms of socio-emotional development. Children's self-esteem, social skills, and emotional resilience were strengthened. Maladaptive socio-emotional outcomes include reduced self-esteem and impaired social competencies as a result of authoritarian and permissive parenting styles. The impact of parenting styles on self-regulation skills is explained. Developing robust self-regulation abilities, such as self-control and intrinsic motivation, was helped imitative parenting. The parents hampered the skills of impulse control and motivation. Our research shows the influence of parenting styles on student performance (Ford and Minshall, 2019).

Appendix 5: Relationship between Parenting Style and Academic Performance



(Source: Springer.com, 2024)

1. Academic Achievement:

According to Ferdig et al. (2020), according to our research, parenting style has a positive impact on academic achievement. Students with authoritative parents do better in school. The fact that authoritative parents give a stimulating environment for their children to learn and explore is the reason for this. They support their children in achieving their goals. Authoritarian parenting styles negatively impact academic achievement. Authoritarian parents can create a stressful environment for children. Lower grades can be a result of this. When parents are too easy on their kids, they don't help them enough. This could make you do poorly in school. Much of our research demonstrates that authoritative parents affect school performance. Kids enjoy learning and exploring with their parents in a safe and exciting environment. They push their pupils to high standards and help them achieve academic objectives by supporting and equipping them. Parents' strictness affects a child's school performance. Overly demanding parents might hurt their kids' academic performance. Because they lack discipline and direction, permissive parents don't encourage their kids' academic achievements. This hinders their academic performance and job leadership. Both authoritarian and permissive parenting approaches demotivate and hinder school performance, according to our research (Scull et al., 2020).

2. Socio-emotional Development:

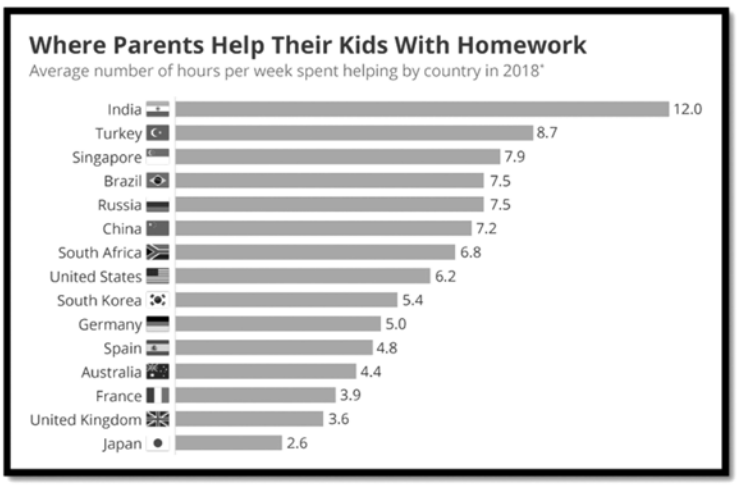
As stated by Velasco, Herrero and Campillo (2021), It was found that authoritative parenting has a big effect on a child's emotional and social growth. In a safe space, people can say what they think and learn how to get along with others. Bad things can happen when parents are too strict. Kids whose

parents are strict and demanding might feel stressed and worried. This can lower their self-esteem, make it hard for them to make friends, and make it harder for them to deal with their feelings. Not giving kids enough rules can hurt their social and emotional growth. Kids may find it hard to make friends, feel good about themselves, and control their feelings when their parents are too laid-back. What we learned shows that parenting styles that are both strict and loose can have both good and bad effects. Being a permissive parent has some bad effects (Kang and Zhang, 2023).

3. Self-regulation Skills:

According to Cervera (2021), children behave better when their parents are strict, according to the study. It's easier for kids to stay in line when their parents are strict. When children are in a fun and interesting place, they learn how to control themselves. It can be hard to keep your emotions in check if your parents are authoritarian or permissive. Parents in Italy can make their homes stressful for their kids. Kids can have a hard time because their authoritarian parents are often too strict and demanding. This can make it hard to keep your cool, which can make you not want to do anything or control yourself. Parents, on the other hand, are too easy on their kids and don't help or guide them enough. This can make it hard to control or motivate yourself, which is a bad example of self-regulation. According to our research, an authoritative parent can help their child do well in school, grow socially and emotionally, and learn how to control their feelings. It might be hard to keep yourself in check. When parents are too easy on their kids, they don't help them enough. If you don't know how to control yourself, you might have low self-control (Westerlund, Karlsen and Partti, 2020).

Appendix 6: Where Parents Help Their Kids in Homework



(Source: Statista.com, 2024)

Conclusion

It looked at how the way parents raise their kids affects how well they do in school. Our analysis showed how important good parenting is in determining how well a student does in school. Authoritative parenting styles were linked to better academic performance, social and emotional growth, and the ability to control one's emotions. This way of parenting seems to help kids do well in many areas because it is warm and structured. The effects of authoritarian and permissive parenting styles on student performance were shown. Our findings have implications for policymakers and parents. An authoritative parenting style can benefit a child's academic and personal growth, as parents play a vital role in shaping their child's future. Teachers can use this information to support students with different parenting styles. Policymakers can use these insights to improve the well-being of children and society. The impact of parenting styles on student performance is provided in our study, but some areas need further exploration. Future research could investigate the effects of different parenting styles on different student populations, such as those from diverse cultural backgrounds. Parent-teacher communication and its impact on student performance can be examined. In our study, the importance of parental involvement is emphasized. The future of our children can be contributed to by recognizing the significance of effective parenting.

References

- Ally, M. 2019. Competency profile of the digital and online teacher in future education. *International Review of Research in Open and Distributed Learning*, *20*(2). Retrieved from: https://www.erudit.org/en/journals/irrodl/1900-v1-n1-irrodl04703/1061343ar.pdf [Retrieved on: 08/02/2024]
- Biesta, G., Takayama, K., Kettle, M., & Heimans, S. 2020. Teacher education between principle, politics, and practice: A statement from the new editors of the Asia-Pacific Journal of Teacher Education. *Asia-Pacific Journal of Teacher Education*, *48*(5), 455-459. Retrieved from: https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/1359866X.2020.1818485 [Retrieved on: 08/02/2024]
- Brandt, G. L. 2022. *The realization of anti-racist teaching*. Routledge. Retrieved from: https://api.taylorfrancis.com/content/books/mono/download?identifierName= doi& identifierValue= 10.4324/9781003144625&type = googlepdf [Retrieved on: 08/02/2024]
- Carrillo, C., & Flores, M. A. 2020. COVID-19 and teacher education: a literature review of online teaching and learning practices. *European Journal of teacher education*, *43*(4), 466-487. Retrieved from: https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.1080/02619768.2020.1821184 [Retrieved on: 08/02/2024]
- Ching, F. N., So, W. W., Lo, S. K., & Wong, S. W. 2020. Preservice teachers' neuroscience literacy and perceptions of neuroscience in education: Implications for teacher education. *Trends in Neuroscience and Education*, *21*, 100144. Retrieved from:https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S221194932030020X [Retrieved on: 08/02/2024]

- Damsa, C., Langford, M., Uehara, D., & Scherer, R. 2021. Teachers agency and online education in times of crisis. *Computers in Human Behavior*, *121*, 106793. Retrieved from: https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0747563221001163 [Retrieved on: 08/02/2024]
- Dent, J., Harden, R. M., & Hunt, D. 2021. *A practical guide for medical teachers, e-book*. Elsevier health sciences. Retrieved from: http://edc.sirums.ac.ir/images/pdf/A_Practical_Guide_for_Medical_Teachers_6th_2021_compressed_1.pdf [Retrieved on: 08/02/2024]
- Ferdig, R. E., Baumgartner, E., Hartshorne, R., Kaplan-Rakowski, R., & Mouza, C. (Eds.). 2020. *Teaching, technology, and teacher education during the COVID-19 pandemic: Stories from the field*. Waynesville, NC: Association for the Advancement of Computing in Education. Retrieved from: https://www.academia.edu/download/66108184/2020SheltonAguileraGleasonMehta_Critical_Humanizing_Pedagogies.pdf [Retrieved on: 08/02/2024]
- Ford, S., & Minshall, T. 2019. Invited review article: Where and how 3D printing is used in teaching and education. *Additive Manufacturing*, *25*, 131-150. Retrieved from: https://www.academia.edu/download/58211830/Ford_-_3DP_and_education_literature_review_-_Accepted.pdf [Retrieved on: 08/02/2024]
- Kang, X., & Zhang, W. 2023. An experimental case study on forum-based online teaching to improve student's engagement and motivation in higher education. *Interactive Learning Environments*, *31*(2), 1029-1040. Retrieved from: https://www.researchgate.net/profile/Kang-Xiaowei/publication/344601107_An_experimental_case_study_on_forum-based_online_teaching_to_improve_student's_engagement_and_motivation_in_higher_education/links/5fccd1aa92851c00f85489e4/An-experimental-case-study-on-forum-based-online-teaching-to-improve-students-engagement-and-motivation-in-higher-education.pdf [Retrieved on: 08/02/2024]
- Lacruz-Pérez, I., Sanz-Cervera, P., &Tárraga-Mínguez, R. 2021. Teachers' attitudes toward educational inclusion in Spain: A systematic review. *Education Sciences*, *11*(2), 58. Retrieved from: https://www.mdpi.com/2227-7102/11/2/58/pdf [Retrieved on: 08/02/2024]
- Moreno-Guerrero, A. J., Aznar-Díaz, I., Cáceres-Reche, P., & Alonso-García, S. 2020. E-learning in the teaching of mathematics: An educational experience in adult high school. *Mathematics*, *8*(5), 840. Retrieved from: https://www.mdpi.com/2227-7390/8/5/840/pdf [Retrieved on: 08/02/2024]
- Mukhamedov, G., Khodjamkulov, U., Shofkorov, A., & Makhmudov, K. 2020. Pedagogical education cluster: content and form. *ISJ Theoretical & Applied Science*, *1*(81), 250-257. Retrieved from: https://www.academia.edu/download/63253440/PEDAGOGICAL_EDUCATION_CLUSTER_CONTENT_AND_FORM20200509-36943-1q3u1ei.pdf [Retrieved on: 08/02/2024]
- Niss, M., & Blum, W. 2020. *The learning and teaching of mathematical modelling*. Routledge. Retrieved from: https://books.google.com books?hl=en&lr=&id=tD73DwAAQBAJ&oi=fnd&pg=PP1&dq=Niss,+M.+and+Blum,+W.,+2020.+The +learning+and+teaching+of+

mathematical+modelling.+Routledge.+&ots= YiLSH18KnQ&sig=WyI uKlGUzLw ThdciIp03tku3 lno [Retrieved on: 08/02/2024]

- Nzarirwehi, J., &Atuhumuze, F. 2019. In-service teacher training and professional development of primary school teachers in Uganda. *IAFOR Journal of Education*, *7*(1), 19-36. Retrieved from: https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/EJ1217948.pdf [Retrieved on: 08/02/2024]
- SalasVelasco, M., MorenoHerrero, D., & Sánchez Campillo, J. 2021. Teaching financial education in schools and students' financial literacy: A crosscountry analysis with PISA data. *International Journal of Finance & Economics*, *26*(3), 4077-4103.Retrieved from: https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/abs/10.1002/ijfe.2005 [Retrieved on: 08/02/2024]
- Scull, J., Phillips, M., Sharma, U., & Garnier, K. 2020. Innovations in teacher education at the time of COVID19: an Australian perspective. *Journal of education for teaching*, *46*(4), 497-506. Retrieved from: https://www.academia.edu/download/71866281/02607476.2020.pdf [Retrieved on: 08/02/2024]
- Springer, 2024. *Relationship between Parenting style and academic performance*. Retrieved from: https://link.springer.com/article/10.1007/s10671-020-09278-2 [[Retrieved on: 08/02/2024]
- Statista, 2024. *Where Parents Help Their Kids in Homework.*Retrieved from: https://www.statista.com/chart/13838/where-parents-help-their-kids-with-homework/[Retrieved on: 08/02/2024]
- Westerlund, H., Karlsen, S., & Partti, H. 2020. *Visions for intercultural music teacher education* (p. 219). Springer Nature. Retrieved from: https://library.oapen.org/bitstream/handle/20.500.12657/23105/1/1007053.pdf [Retrieved on: 08/02/2024]

Bio Profile of the Author:
Assistant Professor & Head
Department of Education
Domkal Girls' College
Domkal, Murshidabad, West Bengal

Exploring Challenges and Opportunities in Rural Tourism within Manas National Park

Gaurav Das[1] and L. S. Sharma[2]

Abstract

National parks play a significant role in promoting rural tourism and have become increasingly important for the economic development of rural areas. Rural tourism is a growing sector that offers unique experiences and opportunities for travelers seeking to explore natural landscapes, experience local cultures, and engage in outdoor activities. Tourism-related economic activities; such as,home stays, ethnic restaurants, tour operators, and curio shops; thrive in proximity to national parks. Manas National Park is an important destination that accommodates many tourists from India and foreign countries that still lack rural tourism. The study aims to explore the potential tourism opportunities in Manas National Park and to identify the various challenges associated with rural tourism in the park, along with proposing appropriate recommendations. The study employed a qualitative methodology by conducting fieldwork in Manas National Park and collecting primary data through questionnaires and interviews.

The study finds that although young people are involved in economic activities, yet regional imbalances, policy deficiencies, and insufficient government efforts hinder locals from fully accessing these opportunities in order to boost local socioeconomic growth.

Key Words: *Rural Tourism, Wild Life, Economic, National Park, Livelihood*

1.Introduction

Tourism has emerged as a prominent societal occurrence with worldwide implications. Its impetus stems from the human inclination for knowledge acquisition and entertainment and for our inherent proclivity for exploration and in pursuit of novel encounters (Pearce, 2005). The advancement of education has fostered an inclination towards gaining deeper insights into global affairs, accompanied by a heightened eagerness to explore diverse perspectives. However, individuals' motivations are not solely driven by a thirst for knowledge; their religious and business interests also play a significant role. Furthermore, the human quest for novel experiences and information has been amplified due to technological advancements, which have effectively dismantled barriers to communication (Margetts, 2002).

Rural tourism not only assumes a crucial role within the global sphere but also possesses the potential to exert a similarly significant impact within the context of rural India (Su 2011). Through its ability to provide respite from the monotonous urban lifestyle characterized by traffic, noise, and

pollution, this form of tourism ensures a tranquil experience for travelers while offering them personalized and fulfilling vacation options. Moreover, it plays a pivotal role in generating employment opportunities for the local community, thereby fostering economic diversification and regional employment. The development of jobs and income derived from rural tourism holds substantial importance for the socioeconomic advancement of rural areas. For a country like India, where approximately 74 percent of the population resides in approximately seven million villages, the establishment of a robust platform centered around rural tourism would yield significant benefits (Ministry of Tourism, Government of India).

The Manas National Park located at the intersection of the Indo-Gangetic and Indo-Malayan bio-geographical regions, stands out as India's most diverse wildlife reserve. Nestled in the Himalayan foothills, the sanctuary encompasses a gradual alluvial slope transitioning from wooded hills to verdant meadows and lush tropical vegetation. This sanctuary provides a home to numerous rare species namely the tiger, pygmy hog, Indian rhinoceros, and elephant, as documented by Choudhury (2015). Located 41 kilometers to the north of the municipality of Barpeta Road and 175 kilometers northwest of Guwahati (the capital of the Assam), the Manas Wildlife Sanctuary adjoins the northern boundary of Bhutan's Royal Manas Wildlife Sanctuary, while the southern boundary adjoins the densely populated region of North Bengal.

Assam has experienced notable growth in its tourism sector, primarily driven by the allure of national parks and wildlife sanctuaries (Das, 2010). The state boasts of a total of seven national parks and eighteen wildlife sanctuaries, with Kaziranga and Manas National Parks standing out as the most renowned. The study areas selected for the research are Makhibaha, Bhuyapara, and Kaklabari. These are villages located adjacent to the park and are always neglected from developmental activities. Despite having located near the park with huge resources from the forest, these villages are not being considered as the attraction for tourism. This article aims to shed light on the challenges and potential of rural tourism, with a particular focus on the significant role played by Manas National Park.

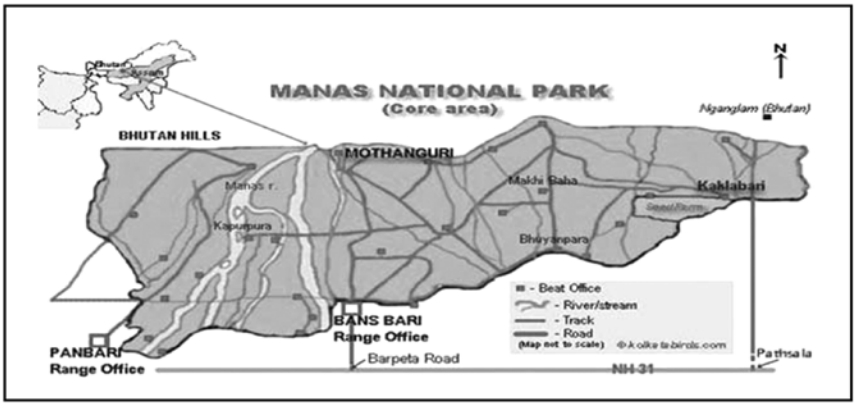


Figure 1. Map of Manas National Park

Source: http://www.kolkatabirds.com/manas/manas

Manas National Park, recognized as a significant wildlife destination, has provided substantial economic opportunities for the local communities. These areas have showcased the essence of traditional village life through the avenue of rural tourism, encompassing a wide range of cultural aspects; such as attire, customs, craftsmanship, folklore and traditions. To attract tourists, rural tourism initiatives have organized a week-long folk cultural festival and an annual village fair at specific times of the year. Additionally, various endeavors related to rural tourism, including the establishment of orchid gardens, the cultivation of flowers, fruits, and vegetables, sericulture, mushroom farming, and the utilization of bamboo and cane crafts, have been implemented to captivate visitors. These efforts have contributed to the availability of employment opportunities for the villagers. However, the benefits derived from such initiatives have not been equitably distributed due to developmental disparities in the areas surrounding the National Park. Of the three ranges within Manas National Park that is Bansbari, Bhuyapara, and Panbari; Panbari and Bhuyapara have not undergone significant development for an extended period, leaving the local populace at a disadvantaged state.

Rural tourism operates in conjunction with community development while preserving the natural splendor and resources (Chen & Kong, 2021). The National Park plays a crucial role in providing resources to the local inhabitants and sustaining their livelihoods. However, this dynamic also leads to conflicts over land and resources, adversely impacting both the Park and its residents. Surrounding the national park, there are over 50 villages dispersed across its three ranges: Panbari, Bansbari, and Bhuiyapara. Each of these peripheral settlements faces its own unique challenges and vulnerabilities. The forest-dwelling communities require fundamental infrastructure for their basic needs, including schools, electricity, healthcare facilities, water supply, roads and sanitation. Consequently, the residents' access to non-timber forest products is restricted in the National Park. Moreover, a significant portion of the population in these areas is affected by illnesses, such as malaria and dysentery. The people residing in these regions, burdened by economic backwardness and the enduring impact of militancy, have had the opportunity to engage in various economic activities through visitors to Manas National Park. However, the unequal distribution of development in the areas adjacent to the national park hampers their progress, resulting in disparities in revenue accumulation. While the Bansbari Range boasts adequate infrastructure, economic activities, and transportation, the Panbari and Bhuyapara ranges have experienced limited development for many years, leaving the residents struggling to meet their basic needs. This study aims to shed light on the challenges and potential prospects of rural tourism in these areas.

1. Objectives of the Study

a) To examine the prospective tourism opportunities in Manas National Park.
b) To identify the various problems associated with rural tourism in Manas National Park and to propose suggestions.

2. Methodology ad Data Collection

The methodology adopted to examine the prospective tourism opportunities and to identify the problem is through the medium of qualitative method of study. In order to undertake this research, fieldwork was conducted within Manas National Park in Assam, with the aim of gaining insights into the effects on the local population and to incorporate the findings toward achieving the project's objectives. The study has primarily depended on primary data collection through a meticulously designed questionnaire and direct interactions with the respondents of the select villages. Additionally, secondary data sources, including books, scholarly journals, government reports, and online resources, were also utilized.

Altogether 30 local residents, 10 from each village, and 20 stakeholders consisting of employees, resort owners, and home stay owners were interviewed with an open-ended structured questionnaire using convenience sampling so that every respondent gets an equal chance. The local residents were asked questions in the local language viz., Assamese and all the responses were recorded in audio device. From the recorded audio, transcriptions were made; the responses were written in Assamese in pen and paper, then it was typed in computer in detail manner and analyzed. The privacy of respondents was kept and for that the names are being coded differently signifying each respondent differently. Secondary data also were used extensively to triangulate the findings of the study.

3. Literature Review

Gannon and Greffe (1994) finds that rural tourism generates money, provide employment, and function as a driving force for a wide range of activities. The ability of rural tourist channels to promote cooperation and alliances between communities in the region is emphasized by Briedenhann (2004). These channels also present opportunities for the development of culturally authentic tourism enterprises in less economically developed regions. Wilson (2001) focuses on the value of community involvement and collaboration in the growth of rural tourism and entrepreneurship. The studies' findings broadly imply that rural tourism can be a practical choice for rural communities wishing to diversify their economy and enhance their quality of life.

Based on the studies of rural tourism, it is suggested that India's social and economic development could benefit significantly from rural tourism. The potential for rural tourism to create jobs and secure livelihoods for residents has been highlighted by Gadad (2014) and Banu (2020). Reddy (2020*a*) points out the significant role of rural tourism in preserving culture, heritage, and tradition. According to Parashar (2014), improving standard of living and protecting the environment are two ways in which rural tourism may support sustainable tourism management. Overall, the studies imply that for tourists who appreciate traditional ways of life, arts, crafts, and culture, rural tourism in India may provide a unique and authentic experience.

Gantait (2021) finds that rural tourism is essential for providing rural areas alternate opportunities for employment and improving their socioeconomic position. As stated by Reddy (2020*b*), rural tourism may be a vehicle for rural development, but it needs careful planning and execution. While Dashper (2014) raises questions regarding the role of tourism in rural revitalization and observes that rural tourism may fall short in terms of anticipated economic advantages and employment generation, Aslam (2016) discusses the challenges of ensuring sustainable development in rural areas through tourism. Overall, the papers suggest that while rural tourism has potential benefits for rural communities, it also faces challenges that need to be addressed for it to be successful in India

The collective findings within the above mentioned papers seems to indicate that rural tourism in India holds promise as a means to generate economic prospects for rural populations, yet it is also beset by numerous obstacles. Raheem (2014) argues that regional imbalances in Nigeria contribute to problems such as hyper-urbanization, unemployment, income inequality, and poverty. Kuzmynchuk (2019) proposes using marketing methods and tools to promote regional development and prevent the unevenness of development from becoming a threat to the economic unity of the state. Ahmed (2012) discusses how regionalism in Indian polity has deprived certain regions of the country of enjoying the benefits of economic growth. Finally, Ezcurra (2006) delves into the examination of the interplay between regional disparities and the level of economic development across 14 Western European nations. The study reveals that regional inequalities tend to escalate until a particular threshold of development is attained, at which point they begin to diminish and eventually stabilize.

4. Results and Discussions

Table 1: General information about the participants (stakeholders)

Acronym	*Gender*	*Age*	*Workspace*	*Year of Experience*	*Code*
Stakeholder 1	Male	21	Tour Guiding Sector	5	T1
Stakeholder 2	Male	25	Tour Guiding Sector	5	T2
Stakeholder 3	Male	28	Resort Owners/ Managers	2	R1
Stakeholder 4	Male	51	Resort Owners/Managers	12	R2
Stakeholder 5	Male	62	Resort Owners/Managers	15	R3
Stakeholder 6	Female	38	Resort Owners/Managers	5	R4
Stakeholder 7	Male	52	Resort Owners/Managers	2	R5
Stakeholder 8	Male	29	Forest Guard	5	FG1
Stakeholder 9	Male	36	Forest Guard	6	FG2
Stakeholder 10	Male	25	Forester 1	5	F1
Stakeholder 11	Male	32	Forester 1	8	F2
Stakeholder 12	Male	44	Forester 2	6	F3
Stakeholder 13	Male	42	Forester 2	10	F4
Stakeholder 14	Female	29	Game Watcher	8	G1
Stakeholder 15	Male	32	Game Watcher	9	G2
Stakeholder 16	Male	45	Beat Officer	9	B1
Stakeholder 17	Male	58	Beat Officer	5	B2
Stakeholder 18	Male	43	Range Officer	7	R1
Stakeholder 19	Male	28	Ranger	2	RA1
Stakeholder 20	Male	43	Ranger	8	RA2

Source: Primary survey

Table 1 shows the various stakeholders associated with Manas National Park. These stakeholders consists of the tour guiding sector, as well as resort owners and managers, who are collectively categorized due to the interchangeable presence of either the owner or the manager during visits to the resorts. Additionally, employees have been included in the study, with different staff members approached based on their availability. To ensure clarity in interpretation and to maintain the confidentiality of their identities, all stakeholders have been coded.

Table 2 : General information about the participants (Locals)

Acronym	*Village*	*Gender*	*Age*	*Occupation*	*Year of Stay*	*Code*
Local 1	Makhibaha	Male	29	Agriculture	Since Birth	LM1
Local 2	Makhibaha	Female	21	Home Maker	Since Birth	LM2
Local 3	Makhibaha	Male	25	Business	Since Birth	LM3
Local 4	Makhibaha	Female	28	Agriculture	Since Birth	LM4
Local 5	Makhibaha	Female	51	Agriculture	Since Birth	LM5
Local 6	Makhibaha	Female	45	Farming	Since Birth	LM6
Local 7	Makhibaha	Male	52	Labour	Since Birth	LM7
Local 8	Makhibaha	Female	29	Home Maker	Since Birth	LM8
Local 9	Makhibaha	Male	36	Labour	Since Birth	LM9
Local 10	Makhibaha	Male	21	Service	Since Birth	LM10
Local 11	Bhuyapara	Female	25	Agriculture	Since Birth	LB1
Local 12	Bhuyapara	Male	28	Agriculture	Since Birth	LB2
Local 13	Bhuyapara	Male	51	Farming	Since Birth	LB3
Local 14	Bhuyapara	Female	23	Home Maker	Since Birth	LB4
Local 15	Bhuyapara	Male	38	Agriculture	Since Birth	LB5
Local 16	Bhuyapara	Female	52	Agriculture	Since Birth	LB6
Local 17	Bhuyapara	Male	58	Agriculture	Since Birth	LB7
Local 18	Bhuyapara	Male	43	Labour	Since Birth	LB8
Local 19	Bhuyapara	Male	28	Labour	Since Birth	LB9
Local 20	Bhuyapara	Male	43	Labour	Since Birth	LB10
Local 21	Kaklabari	Male	28	Labour	Since Birth	LK1
Local 22	Kaklabari	Male	22	Agriculture	Since Birth	LK2
Local 23	Kaklabari	Male	27	Agriculture	Since Birth	LK3
Local 24	Kaklabari	Female	36	Agriculture	Since Birth	LK4
Local 25	Kaklabari	Female	27	Agriculture	Since Birth	LK5
Local 26	Kaklabari	Male	28	Agriculture	Since Birth	LK6
Local 27	Kaklabari	Male	45	Agriculture	Since Birth	LK7
Local 28	Kaklabari	Male	44	Agriculture	Since Birth	LK8
Local 29	Kaklabari	Male	42	Agriculture	Since Birth	LK9
Local 30	Kaklabari	Female	35	Agriculture	Since Birth	LK10

Source: Primary survey

The above table 2 is related to demographic profile of the local people who are residing near Manas National Park. These individuals constitute an integral part of the park, being directly or indirectly connected to it, and their perspectives on rural tourism were deemed essential for the study. The research involved selecting three villages, from each of which ten individuals were chosen. Data on their age, village of residence, occupation, and length of residence were collected. To facilitate analysis and preserve the anonymity of their identities, unique codes were assigned to each participant.

Classification of Rural Tourism

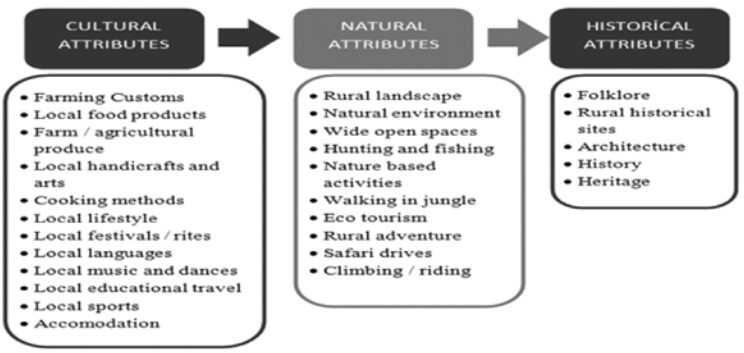


Figure 2: Classification of Rural Tourism Activities

Source: Nair et al., 2015, 330.

Prospective Areas for Rural Tourism in Manas National Park:

Manas National Park attracts national and international tourists during the season time, opening up the opportunity for the growth of rural tourism in that place (Devi, 2012). After hectic safaris and exploration of the forest, most tourists want to explore the local areas and get a taste of their cultures and their living (Bruner, 2005). Tourists exhibit a particular attraction to rural destinations due to their distinct and enchanting characteristics, encompassing elements of mystique, culture, history, ethnicity, and geography (Smith, 2012). Progress and financial gain for all parties involved depend on several factors, including attractions, investments, services, proper infrastructure, and varied hospitality marketing. For this collection of criteria to function, business people and government agencies must collaborate. Some prerequisites for the growth of rural tourism as well as several reasons to support it may be inferred from the literature. Some of the factors affecting rural tourism are:

(a) Model Village Tour: Many villages are on the outskirt of the national park (Nath, 2013). It has been seen that many tourists come to explore the village life in that area and explore the way of living of the local people. Each ethnic village possesses its distinct culture and tradition, and by emphasizing and preserving their ethnic heritage and traditions, these villages have the potential to be developed into exemplary ethnic model villages (Choudhury, 2012*b*).

(b) Tea Garden Visit: Assam is known for its tea and people coming from different states want to visit tea plantation sites (Behal, 1992). There is also fascination among all foreign or local tourists coming to Assam to visit a tea estate or have a look over the tea estates. This purpose is being well served by visiting Manas National Park as there is a huge tea estate called Bansbari Tea Plantation, which gives the tourist chance to explore the forest as well as the tea estate. This can be monetized by collecting a small amount for entering the tea garden. Tourists can click pictures and separate resting places can be made. Local people from the villages can also open small tea stalls inside the area for revenue generation.

(c) Sport fisheries: The local villagers are all equipped with abundant lands and most of the houses has fisheries in their home. The rise of home stays has led tourists to get a taste of the cultures and virtues of the local people. Many home stays can start very popular sports fisheries. In developed nations across the globe, recreational fishing stands as a firmly established leisure pursuit. Furthermore, several emerging economies have also successfully established their own recreational fishing industries. However, it is worth noting that in countries such as India, there has been a notable absence of substantial discourse addressing the essential considerations for enhancing the sustainable progression of this specific endeavor (Gupta, 2015).

(d) Food tourism: Asia is diverse in terms of geography, socioeconomic, biology, and culture. The range of traditional meals reflects this as well. Traditional foods are defined as culinary offerings that have been cultivated, preserved, and celebrated for generations, with their origins dating back to ancient times (Harmayani, 2019). A significant number of tourists exhibit a preference for indulging in regional cuisines while on vacation, and ethnic culinary experiences rank among the foremost travel motivators for gastronomic enthusiasts (Türker, 2022).

(e) River Sports: River-based recreational activities like kayaking and canoeing, characterized by their relatively low environmental impact, have the potential to generate favorable economic outcomes that extend beyond coastal areas. To harness the full economic benefits of these activities and their role in promoting sustainable tourism development, it is essential to gain a comprehensive understanding of the factors influencing expenditures on river sports (Ferreira, 2021). Beki River one of the important and prominent rivers, which flows in Manas National Park.Some of the adjoiningvillages can be taken into consideration for river sports. Professionals have to be hired or locals can undergo training for that and after obtaining a license, they can initiate river sports.

6. Problems of Rural Tourism

Poor Marketing Strategy: During 2020-21, Govt. has spent Rs. 1747.62 lakhs for Kaziranga and Rs. 460.042 lakhs for Manas (Economic Survey of Assam). The revenue collected by the forest department was 352.77 crore, as reported by the forest department. Despite collecting high fees, still, the footfall at Manas National Park is low compared to Kaziranga National Park.

The locals have an opinion that Manas National Park has been neglected in terms of marketing strategies. The study revealed that the owner of the home stay do marketing to attract tourists through social media but in a large scale the marketing is in lower side. One of the officials (named here as FI)

in a view point said:

> *"The marketing has been done by the Tourism Department but the concentration is more in Kaziranga National Park, as the revenue is in larger scale from Kaziranga National Park. Recently Mr. Kevin Petersen visited Kaziranga National Park for a documentary which gave boost to the marketing tremendously and it has been observed celebrity and political figures visits the Kaziranga National Park more often due to the marketing done by the officials and government."*

***Livelihood problems*:** Tourism has an impact on the livelihoods of persons and organizations,those who reside near tourist attractions. Assam's government's approach to the organization and management of MNP makes it difficult to manage the livelihood of people who live near the Park, as many lands have been encroached by locals and natural calamities such as floods take away many lands that are meant for agriculture every year. As a result, many lands have been encroached on by locals, and the park area is shrinking every year. The process of institution building is costly, as well as participating locally (Vedeld, 2002). Existing customary customs or rights of local populations living near the NPs are not taken into consideration when developing new policy decisions, making local administration more problematic and conflict-prone. In the context of participation most of the fringe people in the area has a negative perception about the participation of locals in decision making process. One of the locals (named here as LMI) said that:

> *"We don't get chance to participate in any decision-making process, the authority takes certain decision which impacts the livelihood of the people and upon complaining also they neglect and gives zero response."*

Contrary to the statements made by the locals, the officials provided a different perspective; however, the results remain consistent in nature. The official (named here as F2) said:

> *"The locals are always in a conflict with the park authority and don't participate in decision making process, their demands are contradictory with the sustainable development of the national park."*

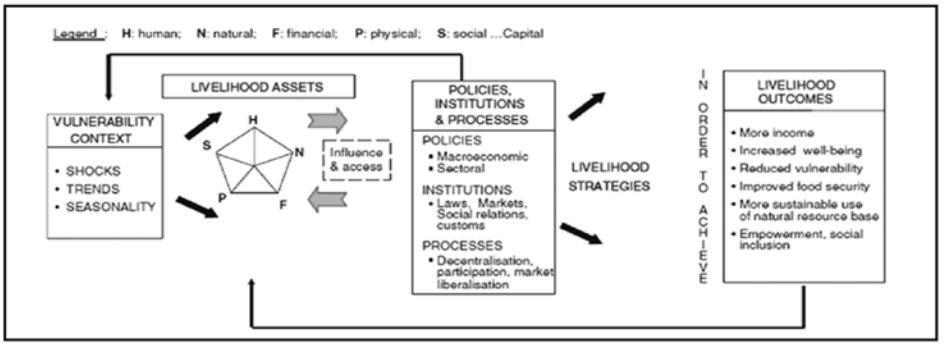


Figure 3. Livelihood Framework Model

Source: Livelihood Framework (Allison dan Horemans, 2006)

The subsequent model offers a potential solution to livelihood challenges. The illustrated figure 3 demonstrates that livelihood resilience depends on the capacity of individuals or groups to secure financial resources, which are influenced by various factors such as patterns, seasonal changes, and unexpected disruptions. These factors can be thoroughly examined through the frameworks of policies, institutions, and processes. Policy dimensions include both sector-specific initiatives and broader economic strategies, while institutional characteristics cover legal, market-related, social, and cultural aspects. Process-related elements involve decentralization, participation, and open trade.

Risk-taking inability: The risks associated with various stages in the development, advertising, presentation, marketing, and sale of rural products exert a continuous influence on the growth and progress of the rural tourism sector (Štetiæ, 2010). There exists a perception among stakeholders that local residents may lack awareness of tourism as a potential source of income and may be hesitant to invest their livelihoods in the tourism sector.

The study found that most of the people are either labour or agriculturist which puts them below poverty line and their awareness level is comparatively low, they are unaware of the govt schemes and other benefits which are bestowed for the local people residing near national parks.

Due to this the people are unable to start some economic activities with the help of government schemes and benefits. The low risk taking ability of the locals are acting as a hindrance to the rural tourism in the area due to poverty.

***Financial Hindrance*:** A primary concern faced by residents in the communities adjacent to Manas National Park pertains to the insufficiency of financial resources for the development of tourism-related enterprises. Financial constraints, in particular, have the potential to hinder entrepreneurs from making optimal investments in their ventures. Were it not for these financial constraints, entrepreneurs could bridge the gap between their available capital and the level of investment required for maximizing profits through borrowing (Paulson, 2004). The survey revealed that there has been lack of financial aid from the government for the locals. The local people are in a state of earning their livelihood by doing daily wage labour, agricultural works or doing some petty jobs in the resorts or guest houses. Most of the locals do not get any finical aid to start up some tourism activities. In this context another local (named here as LB 2) shared the view points of other locals as follows:

> *"There has been some help from the government at the time of Covid-19 but the government didn't give any aids for starting any tourism activities or empowering the people to earn some revenue."*

***Leakage of Revenue*:** Tourism leakage refers to a situation in which the economic gains generated from tourism-related activities do not remain within the same location and are instead diverted elsewhere. This diversion of economic resources is particularly pronounced when tourism establishments are owned or operated by entities from foreign countries. High levels of leakage are commonly associated with mass tourism and high-end, luxury tourism, both of which are typically

externally controlled. Leakage can also occur when tourism-related products, services, and labor are imported from external sources. Consequently, mitigating leakage presents a significant challenge, especially in small rural areas that rely on the importation of skilled personnel and goods and services. In these rural areas, where entrepreneurship takes various forms, the impact of leakage is evident. Few new ventures emerge to meet the demand for activities specific to the region. Local entrepreneurs engage primarily in activities such as offering accommodations in their homes, organizing Jeep safaris, operating restaurants, and facilitating elephant rides, among others. These activities serve as vital sources of income, and the sustained support of local residents is essential for the functioning of the park. However, the potential for income generation has been constrained due to the occurrence of leakage. Establishment of resorts by outside party, selling of products which are not local and bringing human resources from outside creates Leakages of Revenue. It has been found in Manas National Park that most of the above-mentioned points are present in Manas National Park, which acts as hindrance to the revenue generation through rural tourism. Most of the resorts and guest house are owned by the people residing outside state. One official (Named here as R1) remarked on the following topic as below:

> *"The local people are below the poverty line and due to lack of awareness and risk-taking ability they sell the land to other parties from outside and spent the money in agricultural works. They are themselves responsible for Economic leakage as the land are theirs and park management authority cannot sell their land on behalf of them."*

Regional Imbalances: Kaziranga and Manas National Parks, are declared as UNESCO heritage centers (Dutta, 2015), but the Assam government has always been more concerned about the development of Kaziranga National Park (Barbora, 2017). Kaziranga National Park indeed has more footfall of tourists and revenue generation is high (Economic Survey of Assam) in comparison to Manas National Park. Though Kaziranga is promoted immensely and famous for the one-horned rhino, but ecotourism potential in Manas is much greater compared to Kaziranga National Park, because of untapped tourism support and resources (Chakrabarty, 2019). Regional Imbalance in the field of development often acts as a hindrance to rural tourism. Kaziranga National Park has Eastern Forest Range, Kaziranga Forest Range, Western Forest Range, and Burapahar Forest Range. All the ranges are operative and developed in a systematic manner, which widens up the opportunity for rural tourism in those areas. Whereas in Manas National Park there are three forest ranges Bansbari, Bhuyapara, and Panbari. The Bansbari range is operational and developed in a significant manner but the Buyapara range is not developed in terms of infrastructure. The Bhuyapara range lacks the basic amenities for rural tourism. (Survey done by the researcher). Panbari range is also not operational (Choudhury, 2012*c*). Manas National Park calls for proper development of all the forest ranges, which will extensively enable rural tourism. As denoted by one beat officer (Named here as B2):

> *"Bhuyapara Range has been neglected since many years, all the concentration is upon Bansbari Range. Due to this attitude the infrastructure is horrible in Bhuyapara Range. No*

proper roads for tourists, even the electricity has a major problem in Bhuyapara Range, which makes it difficult for the tourist to stay. Due to lack of development andrising conflict between animals and human in this range, tourists afraid of staying here.As a result the tourism is getting affected."

7. Suggestions

Rural tourism remains underdeveloped due to inadequate marketing strategies.It necessitates enhanced expertise and training. Traditional marketing methods are insufficient in the current age of Artificial Intelligence (AI), which, despite being in its nascent stage, significantly influences tourism. The increasing use of internet technology underscores the crucial role of big data and AI in fostering rural tourism development. The potential for rural tourism growth is substantial when leveraging big data (Xie, 2022). The government should prioritize continuous promotion and marketing efforts, particularly targeting foreign tourists, as they generate significantly higher revenue compared to domestic tourists. Alterations in policies, institutions, and processes can potentially impact the dynamics of disruptions, patterns, seasonal variations and access to financial resources for individuals or groups. Consequently, strategies are imperative for achieving objectives while safeguarding means of support. The objectives of sustaining livelihoods encompass additional income, enhanced well-being, food security, sustainable resource utilization, and empowerment. Notably, the tourism industry can induce changes in livelihood systems and rural lifestyles (Dharmawan, 2007). Therefore, it is crucial for governments to be attentive to this dynamic, as exemplified in the case of Uganda's National Park, where effective communication between the government and local residents in proximity to the conservation area is deemed essential (Ahebwa, 2012).

To address the risk-taking abilities, local non-governmental organizations (NGOs) engaged in both tourism and conservation can play a pivotal role in disseminating knowledge about tourism opportunities among the local populace. Notably, organizations such as the Manas Ever Welfare Society (MEWS), Manas Mouzigendri Ecotourism Society (MMES), and Manas Souchi Khungur Ecotourism Society (MSKETS) have achieved notable success in raising awareness about engaging in tourismrelated ventures in these regions. The study found that most of the local people's income is below three thousand and their awareness level is comparatively low.They are unaware of the government schemes and other benefits which are earmarked for the local people residing near the national parks.

In the context of Financial Aids, Government and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) play a vital role in identifying small-scale financial institutions that assist local individuals in obtaining loans. ASOMI, a prominent microfinance institution in Assam, operates a branch office in Sorbhog in Barpeta District and is situated in close proximity to the Bansbari (central range) of Manas National Park.

Elimination of economic leakage can be achieved by promoting connections within the local community. The primary objective of tourism linkages is to encourage the consumption of locally

produced goods and services that exhibit competitiveness (Timms, 2011). This approach also aims to generate employment opportunities and retain foreign exchange earnings within the nation. It involves developing efficient marketing and distribution systems for locally sourced products and services needed by the tourism industry, enhancing market awareness, and increasing knowledge within targeted sectors through intensive research and analysis. The linkage initiative also aims to establish effective communication systems that facilitate relationships and trade between local suppliers and tourism entities (Sigala, 2008). Additionally, it seeks to improve the business environment for both buyers and suppliers through strategies and efforts by business associations, governmental ministries, and agencies. This initiative supports the development of sound economic and fiscal policies across various industries, thereby strengthening linkages. Furthermore, it promotes deeper integration between the entertainment and tourism sectors, enhancing networking, information sharing, and communication (Shanker, 2008). Balanced development in Manas National Park is essential, as it will enable tourists to explore various aspects of the park, increase tourism, and promote the growth of rural tourism.

8. Conclusion

The growth of rural tourism can be used as a concept of ecotourism and sustainable travel. Ecotourism focuses on preserving nature and culture, involving locals in tourism-related activities, sharing knowledge with visitors, and operating on a small scale to protect the environment. Rural tourism, as a result of its consequences, will become a consistent and low-cost tool for the village's socioeconomic improvement. As a result of the rise of rural tourism in areas such as Assam's Chirang and Baksa districts, due to Manas National Park, a large number of young people are now directly and indirectly involved in these economic activities. Due to faulty regional imbalances and lack of policies and park management the people of the villages are unable to access the opportunities that Manas National Park has brought in. Furthermore, the government and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) have placed a considerable emphasis on encouraging locals to grow their economy through rural tourism. Even though the rural sector is important to the state's economy, the government's efforts in this area are insufficient. The Park's development is critical for increasing tourist numbers, and actions must be taken to strengthen rural tourism in Manas National Park for the development of the locals in those areas.

References

1. Pearce, P. L. 2005. '*Tourist behavior: Themes and conceptual schemes'*, 27. Channel View Publications.
2. Margetts, H., & Dunleavy, P. 2002. 'Cultural barriers to e-government'. *Academic article in support of better public services through e-government. National Audit Office, Ordered by the House of Commons, London.*
3. Su, B. 2011. 'Rural tourism in China'. *Tourism management*, *32*(6), 1438-1441.
4. Choudhury, B. 2015. *Quantifying leakage of tourism revenue development of destination level*

strategies in Kaziranga and Manas National Parks (Doctoral dissertation).Das, B. 2010. 'Economics of protected area tourism'. http://hdl.handle.net/10603/272888

5. Das, B. 2010. 'Economics of protected area tourism'. http://hdl.handle.net/10603/272888
6. Chen, P., & Kong, X. 2021. 'Tourism-led commodification of place and rural transformation development: a case study of Xixinan Village, Huangshan, China.' Land, *Sustainable Rural Transformation under Rapid Urbanization*.10(7), 694.
7. Gannon, A. 1994. 'Rural tourism as a factor in rural community economic development for economies in transition. *Journal of sustainable tourism'*, *2*(1-2), 51-60.
8. Greffe, X. 1994. 'Is rural tourism a lever for economic and social development?'. *Journal of Sustainable Tourism*, *2*(1-2), 22-40.
9. Briedenhann, J., & Wickens, E. 2004. 'Tourism routes as a tool for the economic development of rural areas—vibrant hope or impossible dream?.' *Tourism management*, *25*(1), 71-79.
10. Wilson, D. B., Gottfredson, D. C., & Najaka, S. S. 2001. 'School-based prevention of problem behaviors: A meta-analysis. *J. Quantitative Criminology*, *17*, 247'.
11. Gadad, A., & Kamashetty, S. B. 2014. 'Potentiality of rural tourism in India: The socio-economic impact. *Journal of Commerce and Management Thought*,' *5*(2), 187-200.
12. Banu-Lawrence, M., Frawley, S., & Hoeber, L. 2020. 'Women and leadership development in Australian sport organizations'. *Journal of Sport Management*, *34*(6), 568-578.
13. Reddy, M. V., Boyd, S. W., & Nica, M. 2020. 'Towards a post-conflict tourism recovery framework.' *Annals of tourism research*, *84*, 102940
14. Parashar, A., & Chandel, P. S. 2019. 'The Role of Wellness in Tourism Development Process (Concepts, Applications and Challenges). *Emerging Trends in Indian Tourism and Hospitality: Transformation and Innovation*, 246.'
15. Gantait, A., Mohanty, P., Singh, K., & Sinha, R. 2021. 'Pro-poor tourism in India: Reality or hyperbole!. *Psychology and Education*, *58*(2), 9672-9682.'
16. Dashper, K. Ed.. 2015. '*Rural tourism: An international perspective'*. Cambridge Scholars Publishing.
17. Aslam, M. S. M., & Bin Awang, K. W. 2017. 'Implications of policies and procedures in Sustainable Rural Tourism Development (SRTD): A case study of Sri Lanka. *Sabaragamuwa University Journal*, *15*(1), 74-93.'
18. Raheem, I. D., & le Roux, S. (2023). Geopolitical Risks and Tourism Stocks: New Evidence from Causality-in-Quantile Approach. *The Quarterly Review of Economics and Finance*.
19. Kuzmynchuk, N. V., Dombrovska, S. V., Konarivska, O. B., Leonenko, N. A., Chernobrovkina, S. V., & Asaulenko, N. V. 2021. *Increasing marketing activity of hotel and restaurant business enterprises as a basis for the development of the tourism indus*try. Journal of Geology, Geography and Geoecology. 30(2), 306-314
20. Ahmed, S. 2015. 'Rhetorical organization of tourism research article abstracts. *Procedia-Social and Behavioral Sciences*, *208*, 269-281.
21. Ezcurra, E. Ed. 2006. '*Global deserts outlook*.' UNEP/Earthprint.
22. Nair, V., Munikrishnan, U. T., Rajaratnam, S. D., & King, N. 2015. 'Redefining rural tourism in Malaysia: A conceptual perspective'. *Asia Pacific Journal of Tourism Research*, *20*(3), 314-337.
23. Devi, M. K. 2012. 'Ecotourism in Assam: A promising opportunity for development'. *South Asian Journal of Tourism and Heritage*, *5*(1), 179-192

24. Bruner, E. M. 2005. '*Culture on tour: Ethnographies of travel.*' University of Chicago Press.
25. Smith, V. L. Ed.. 2012. '*Hosts and guests: The anthropology of tourism'*. University of Pennsylvania Press.
26. Nath, N. K., Dutta, S. K., Das, J. P., & Lahkar, B. P. (2013). Human-Elephant interaction in villages around Manas National Park, Assam, India. *Gajah*, *39*, 12-18.
27. Choudhury, B., & Goswami, C. 2012. 'Community participation in minimizing leakage: A case study in manas national park'. *International Journal of Marketing and Technology*, *2*(2), 133-147.
28. Xie, D., & He, Y. 2022. 'Marketing Strategy of Rural Tourism Based on Big Data and Artificial Intelligence.' *Mobile Information Systems*, *2022*.
29. Dharmawan, J., Kasapis, S., Curran, P., & Johnson, J. R. 2007. 'Characterization of volatile compounds in selected citrus fruits from Asia. Part I: freshlysqueezed juice.' *Flavour and Fragrance Journal*, *22*(3), 228-232.
30. Ahebwa, W. M., van der Duim, R., & Sandbrook, C. 2012. 'Tourism revenue sharing policy at Bwindi Impenetrable National Park, Uganda: a policy arrangements approach'. *Journal of Sustainable Tourism*, *20*(3), 377-394.
31. Timms, B. F., & Neill, S. 2011. 'Cracks in the pavement: conventional constraints and contemporary solutions for linking agriculture and tourism in the Caribbean'. In *Tourism and Agriculture* (pp. 104-116). Routledge.
32. Sigala, M. 2008. 'A supply chain management approach for investigating the role of tour operators on sustainable tourism: the case of TUI'. *Journal of cleaner production*, *16*(15), 1589-1599.
33. Shanker, D. 2008. 'ICT and Tourism: challenges and Opportunities'*Conference on Tourism in India – Challenges Ahead,18(17).*

Bio Profile of the Authors:

[1]Serves as a faculty member in the Management department at Pragjyotish College, Assam. His academic interests lie in the areas of consumer behavior and wildlife sanctuaries. Currently, he is diligently working towards his PhD degree at Mizoram University.
Email:gauravdasnis@gmail.com

[2]Professor of Management at Mizoram University in Aizawl. His main research interests are consumer behavior, marketing, and human resources management. He has written and published many articles in both national and international journals. Right now, he's also actively working on various research projects and helping guide several research students.
Email:lsksharma@gmail.com

The Journey of Rhythms: Copyright Protection and Cultural Significance of Limbu Ethnic Music

Purbita Das

Abstract

Recently, the major focus of Ethnomusicological research is on the study of the relationship among most of the world's cultures through music. Since Ethnomusicology follows the methodology to study the kinds of music with a socio-cultural perspective, therefore it will be more appropriate to describe Ethnomusicology as a study of Intercultural Musicology than cultural musicology. The Eastern Himalayan region is home to multiple ethnic groups and cultures. The socio-cultural study of these groups through Intercultural Musicology methodology will help in understanding some ethnic groups of this region. Limbu ethnic people are an important group residing in the hilly regions of Eastern Nepal, Sikkim, Darjeeling, Kalimpong, Bhutan, and other parts of North East India and the sociocultural study of this group in identifying their ethnic identity through Intercultural Musicology will be an interesting exploration.

Keywords : *Culture, Music, Methodology, Limbu, Ethnic*

Introduction

"*Music is the expression of the soul of a people, and copyright ensures that this expression is respected and valued.*" – WIPO Director General (Tang, Daren. Statement made during the launch of the WIPO for Creators initiative, Geneva, Switzerland, August 10, 2020. World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO, Accessed July 15, 2024. https://www.wipo.int). The traditional music of any ethnic group or region is one of the basic elements which represent the symbol of their culture and ethnicity. In this paper, an attempt has been made to discuss the history and relevance of ethnic music of Limbu ethnic people which is instrumental for their cultural and ethnic identity. The Limbu and *Yakthung* communities are integral members of the *Kirata* nation or *Kirata* Confederation, with deep roots in the hilly and mountainous terrain of East Nepal spanning from the Arun river to the Mechi rivers. They also extend into Southern Tibet, Bhutan, Sikkim, Darjeeling, Kalimpong, and various regions of North East India. Today they have been scattered all over the world. The word Limbu means an archer or bearer of bow and arrow. The Limbus are known as *Yakthung Thi-bon* or Des Limbu (Ten Limboo), from which thirteen Limbu sub-tribes have emerged. A Limbu male is called *Yakthumba* and a female is known as *Yakthungma* (Subba, 2017). Their language is known as *Yak Thung Pan* the language belongs to the Himalayan group of Tibeto-Burman eastern sub-groups of complex pronominal dialects. It is placed in the Austro-Asiatic linguistic group. Their script is called

'Srijinga Lipi'. They are also known as *Tsong* in Sikkim and *Subba* within the Nepali community (Subba, 1995).

Limbu Legacy: Cultural Heritage and Traditions

The Limbu culture boasts of a rich tapestry of folk literature, encompassing diverse forms such as *mundhum*, proverbs, folklore, and folk songs. Within Limbu folk literature, *mundhum* serves as a comprehensive repository, embracing legends, myths, folktales, historical narratives, sermons, and moral teachings conveyed through oral poetic tradition. A longstanding tradition prevails among the Limbu people of recounting *mundhums* and observing rituals and ceremonies in unique and time-honored ways. Central to their religious practices are shamans, known as *Phedangma*, who hold authoritative roles in overseeing significant rituals and societal occasions including weddings, birth ceremonies, and funerals (Limbu, 2015). It has its philosophy of life and world, its *Tumyang* tradition of organizing society, its own *YakthungPan* that is Limbu Language and *Srijings,* the Limbu script. They have their rich folklore, folk music, art and skills (Durga, S.A.K., 2017). They have their specific traditions and culture.

The Limbu communities residing in regions, such as, Sikkim, Darjeeling, Assam, Nepal, and Bhutan maintain distinct identities owing to the richness of their folk literature and cultural traditions, which remain vibrant and enduring. Among these traditions, *Yumawad* stands as a significant religious scripture, carefully preserved and passed down orally through generations by their spiritual leaders. This oral transmission of religious and cultural knowledge, termed *Yumawad*, holds a central place not only in Limbu religious practices but also finds expression in traditional music, blending social narratives, dreams, and everyday experiences (Subba, 1999). There has been a rich tradition of Limbu folk-songs like *Palam* songs, *Hakpare* songs, *Khyali,Tumhyang, Loi, Ollo* songs, etc.

The Limbu folk dances, folk songs, folk music and folk musical instruments are very simple. The Limbu folk songs and music have kept alive their original belief as the re-telling of *Mundhums* and are included in Limbu traditional music with moral and social stories related to everyday life. The word *Lang* means dance, *Samlo* means music and the words *Mukla* and *Mungsama* mean musical instruments in Limbu language.

Tradition of Celebrating Limbu Ethnic Songs and Dances

Limbu ethnic music, dance and musical instruments are the resources of Limbu culture and identity. The ethnic music of Limbus is tremendously rich. There are songs and dances in Limbu culture for occasions from birth to death. There are songs which are sung in group, as duet and in solo style. This ethnic music reflects the joy, sorrow, traditions, religious beliefs, likes and dislikes of the Limbu society. The way of conversation of Limbus is itself very poetic, musical. One noteworthy genre of Limbu songs is "*Hakpare,*" often sung by *Fehtangbas*, the religious mentors, in a style that is both poetic and exploratory.

Other types of songs include Labour songs, agricultural songs, sad songs (*hamlapwah*), songs of joy, etc. Among sad songs, there are songs for those in sick condition and death lamentation songs.

There are songs even for things left behind after death called '*Ningwahso Samlo*'. Some important Limbu songs are, namely, *Palam, Hakparey, Pangkhyali, lamri, dange or namringey, tamke, mangsamlo, mering, lori, kelang, mehngtang, kengjori, chirak, lak, tumyyang, pang etc* (Subba, 1999). Thus a detailed discussion of Limbu ethnic music can give us a lucid idea about their traditional music and its relation with their culture and identity.

Palam Samlo

The word *Palam* is the combination of two Limbu words, 'Pan' which means dialect or dialogue and 'Lam' means way or medium and *Samlo* means song. *Samlo* means song. In this way, *Palam* means a medium of talking (Subba, 2017). Today *Palam* denotes tune, poem, word, rhythm and an established form of music.

Some Limbus believe that there is a folk story behind this *Palam* song and dance. In the early days of hunting and collection from nature, foods were not enough for the people. In such a situation the leader of the Limbu group ordered a group of birds to provide the paddy seeds. During the harvesting time, these birds started to eat the ready corps. According to the agreement, people could not stop the birds. In such a situation people gathered together holding their hands started singing and dancing making a joint sound like 'ha ha ha ha....', stepping on the paddy, so that they can thresh it and can also scare the birds from coming closer to the paddy fields. This kind of song and dance developed as *Palam* Song and dance with time (Barman, 2022). At the end of each line of the song, a sound of ha ha ha... is drawn. It was in a different form in initial days. In the later days it was developed as the medium to exchange the feelings of each other. That is why *Palam* is considered as the romantic ethnic song of the Limbu.

Palam's song is sung in three parts. The first part is called '*Kai Semma'.* It is the introductory part, where one person or groups of people ask each other whether they have any blood relation or not. If the partners or group have any blood relationship they have to go through some customary obligation by touching the feet and cannot take part in song with such individual or group (Barman, J.K., 2022). If they do not have any blood relation then only they can continue with the next part of the song which is called *'Mayyapi*'. This is the main part of the song.

In *Palam* songs, there exists a poetic and rhythmic tune. These songs express personal past and present experiences, knowledgeable things, true love and affectionate relationship. This particular song cannot express any kind of vulgar or immoral feelings (Bohlman, P.V., 2002). Generally *Palam* songs are sung among young boys and girls in a verbal competitive manner or it is a kind of question-answer song between these groups. First an individual starts a line of the song then the group follow his or her line. In this way it takes the form of group song. Mainly in *Palam* there are the exchange of romantic words among young boys and girls.

In the third part of the song singers sing the *'Semmui'* (departing) *Palam*. This will be full of painful emotions to depart from one another. In this part singers use the words describing the uncertainty of life in this world. Emotions of imagination, expectation, difficulties are expressed by the singers.

They pledge to meet again to sing and dance again in any particular place, festival or in some occasion. Finally, they bid farewell to each other with love and respect.

Hakparey samlo

Hakparey is another form of Limbu ethnic song. This type of song is sung in groups, as duet or solo. Melody and rhythm are the main characteristics of this type of song. Lyrics full of joy and sorrow make this song more touching and effective. The singers take permission *(tuttummyang*) from the listeners for starting the song and take permission to end. The singers also recite *Mundhum* in the midst of the song.

According to *Mundhum, Hakparey Samlo* was introduced during the rule of Limbu king *Yehang*. The young daughter named *Idukhang* of the eldest king *Sodahang* died at a very young age. The King was immersed in grief. He locked himself in a room and did not talk to anybody for many days. People were waiting for their king to come out of this grief. One day suddenly the king came out of his palace and talked to the people (Chatterjee, S.K., 1951). There was a celebration among the people after this. People shouted *Hang Parey,* which means the King Speaks. Many people believe that in course of time this *Hang Parey* took the form of *Hakparey*.

Khyali Samlo

Khyali is also a popular song in the Limbu folk tradition. *Khyali* is much similar to *Palam* songs. But in this particular song there is no such kind of dance and songs as performed during the time of paddy harvesting. It is just like a musical competition between two young groups of boys and girls. This type of songs are simple but rhythmic and have both Limbu and Nepali words.

The origin of *Khyali* music dates back to the agricultural era when people used to work together. It was customary to assist each other's family. The families were also united during those times. Still there is tradition to help in farming called *'Parma*' in villages. It was during such gatherings that the tradition of *Khyali* originated. In Limbu traditions during the time of any social and family celebration, the guests are asked for any help through *Khyali*.

Tamke Samlo

It is believed that the *Tamke* song started during the agricultural era. The story behind the origin of this song is as follows. In the olden days, young people were too lazy. Instead of cultivating they were engrossed only with playing and hunting. The fertility of the soil and production of crops was seriously affected. As a result, there emerged the possibility of famine. An old man named *Kusarakpa* came up with a solution. He encouraged the young boys and girls to compete with each other while planting paddy by singing songs. This song is very much related with agriculture, that is the reason why Limbus called this type of songs as *tamke* which means *Tamma,* meaning to flourish and *kema* means to plant or strengthen. During the song they pray for the fertility of the soil and good production (Yakthung, M., 2015).

Pang Samlo

Pang Samlo is another popular folk song of the Limbu community. It can be entertaining and instructive depending on the time and situation. Rhythm and melody are the basis of this type of song. Through this, the feelings of love, sorrow, happiness, hope and despair; that are grown in the mind are expressed. Especially this type of song is sung in loneliness in the memory of love and close friends (Subba, S., 2018).

Nuwamphma (Lollori)

Lolori Samlo is a song for babies. A mother and another member of the family make a baby laugh, play, and sleep with this type of song. There are a variety of baby songs (lullabies) in Limbu traditions

Kesam

Ke(Chabrung) has many rhythms and dances. These rhythms and dances are believed to have been started by an old man named *Kusarakpa*. He is also believed to have sung *Kesam*. *Kesam* is sung to increase happiness, auspiciousness or joy.

Hamlakwa

In Limbu culture *Hamlakwa* is the mourning song, which is sung during the time of the death of some dear and close relatives. It is very touching and heartbreaking. *Hamlakwa* means the sound of crying (Subba, J. R., 2005).

Amubawa Hamlakwa

In life, everybody has to pass through different situations. If someone cries in a difficult situation, he or she also can cry in happiness. so, *Amubawa Hamlakwa* expresses such emotions when someone cries out of happiness.

Semui Hamlakwa

This type of song is sung during the time of taking leave of some near and dear one. This song expresses the agony and pain of parting with some loved ones.

Meringenn Hamlakwa

This song is sung when someone is on a deathbed. At the last moment of life. The crying sound in such a situation is known as *Meringenn Hamlakwa*.

Sangu Sakma Pengma Hamlakwa

Human birth is predictable. The probable date and month of birth are specified. But nobody can predict death. Life is entangled in the dilemma of life and death. *Sangu Sakma* is the outburst of such emotional expression (Yakthung, M., 2015).

Semering Hamlakwa

This particular song is the expression of grief during the time of burying some near and dear ones after death. *Semering Hamlakwa* is the emotion when the relatives of the deceased weep bitterly.

Niwangso Hamlakwa

This type of song expresses the painful emotions when someone misses and remembers dear ones who had passed away. Events, occasions or things that are related to the dead person remind the moments with him or her and make someone weep (Yakthung, M., 2015).

Kengjori Samlo

Kengjori Lang is a form of dance. *Keng* means the large hip bone and *Jori* means to knock. Thus this is a fun dance, so the songs for this also contain humour. There is a humorous question answer through songs between two groups. Dancers dance dashing their hips. The song resembles the *Palam* but it is a bit slow in rhythm.

Chirak Lang Samlo

Chiral lang Samlo is the song sung during the threshing of the paddy straw. Generally, healthy youths participate in this kind of dance. They move three steps forward and three backward holding their hands and dancing as if threshing the straw with their legs. The song related to this type of dance is also full of fun (Yakthung, M., 2015).

Chelekwa Pang Samlo

In Limbu folklore there is an abundance of songs related with imitation. Especially during festivals, gatherings Limbus perform this songs and dance for entertainment.

Limbu Tradition and Dances

Limbu culture is also rich in folk dances. To every particular music or song or occasion they have some specific dance. Among some culturally significant folk dances are as follows.

Yalang

Yalang dance originated since the time of the beginning of the ideas of the agriculture. In Limbu language '*Ya'* means paddy and *'Lang'* means dance. Thus *Yalang* means the dance performed during the time of paddy harvesting season. Limbus perform this type of dance throughout the year during the time of celebration or any festival. This is a group dance, which can be group of two persons ranging to a large group. Focus of the dance is in coordinating the footsteps. People with blood relations cannot take part in this kind of dance.

After holding hands and standing in a circle, the dance starts from the left step. Singing *palam*, the group moves forward and backward shaking hands and dancing. If someone by mistake touches the feet of anyone while dancing, the person has to apologize. In this dance, there is the tradition of

arranging the dancing partners by brothers and sisters. There is no specific time for this dance. it may be for a short while or may continue for whole night and day. Even some fall in love during this type of dance.

K Lang

K means *Chyabrung* (a musical instrument, drum) and *Lang* means dance which is performed only during some auspicious occasions. Generally, it is performed without any song. The *Chabrung* players stand in a line and dance, women also join them.

Thakmama is a kind of *K Lang* which is performed during house worming ceremony. During dance they pray for the longevity and security of house to the god *Aukwanama*. *K Lang* dance is customary performed during any Limbu wedding. There are a variety of *Chabrung* dances, especially in the name of of some animals and birds like *Yasa Lang*, *Khire Lang, Miluk Lang, Mora Lang, Muya Lang, Phungpith Lang, sawa Lang* and many more.

Limbu Folk Musical Instrument Chabrung

Limbu *Chabrung* is called *Kay* which etymologically means Tiger. *Chabrung* is a kind of drum made up of Tiger's skin. The Nepali name *Chabrung* came from the sound this instrument produces. Man who plays *Chabrung* is called *'Ke Sangla'*. In the olden days, *Chabrong* used to be made only from the trunk of a yeast tree. They used to cut out the middle portion of the tree by making holes from both sides of the trunk, which would be covered with the skin of the tiger (Limbu, 2011). Then the skin would be tightly stretched. To make the sound more melodious, a small hole is made in the middle of the *Chabrong* trunk and a small bamboo stick is inserted and the wheel is placed on its top, which is called *'Laikpa'*. However, in time, it is no longer possible to make *Chabrung* by using tiger's skin. In time, the skins of deer, chital, etc. are used to make *Chabrong*. Nowadays even the skins of goat, cow or calf are used. On the left side of the *Chabrong* is a small wooden piece called *goji.* Small woolen pieces and a bell called *'Singchangey*' is placed on the right side and is called '*Hukchangey'*.

Kom

*A*n ancient musical instrument of the Limbus is called *Binayo* in Nepali. It is made from a small type of bamboo. In a small piece of dried bamboo a small hole of about 2-3 inches is made, so that a needle is pulled out of it. In order to hold it, a short thread is tied at the base and a long thread at the top. A kind of melodious sound comes out when the thread on the top is shaken and pulled. It is placed between both the tips and the long thread of the tip is shaken to release the rhythm from the wind. This instrument cannot give a perfect melody but can help in providing rhythm to a song.

Marchunga (Fenjey Com)

In the past, the *Murchunga* instrument was widely renowned as a symbol of love, cherished by young people for expressing their affections. To play it, one would hold it between the teeth and pluck it with

a finger at its end. Unfortunately, the significance of this instrument is now fading, as younger generations show less interest in it.

Negra Mung

Known as '*Perage*' in *Mundhum* language and *'Negra*' in common parlance, this traditional percussion instrument holds significance among the Limbu Community. It is often played during weddings, ceremonial welcomes, and funerals, without any specific accompanying songs. Consisting of two parts, the male component, *Kumba*, is larger than the female component *Kumma*. Additionally, *Negra* is often accompanied by a bell. With historical roots dating back to the *Chogyal* Kingdom, it is regarded as a cherished gift to the Limbu people

Kingana

It is a bell like musical instrument, which is made up of circular of bronze leaf. A hole is made on one side and hanged with a thread. It is played by banging on the bronze leaf with a stick. It is played with the rhythm of *Negra*. In Limbu language called as *Negrare Kugamphma, Kingana* means Kingana's pair is Negara.

Limbu Tradition and Copyright Protection

Section 2(p) of the Copyright Act provides the definition of 'musical work' as follows:
"*musical work*" means a work consisting of music and includes any graphical notation of such work but does not include any words or any action intended to be sung, spoken or performed with the music;

Copyright laws can protect the original musical compositions and performances of the Limbu people, ensuring their cultural expressions are not exploited without permission. Proper copyright management can provide the Limbu community with economic opportunities through royalties, licensing agreements, and cultural tourism (Durga, S.A.K., 2017). Copyright can facilitate the sharing of Limbu music in educational and cultural contexts, promoting understanding and appreciation of their heritage.

It is crucial to approach copyright protection with sensitivity to the cultural values and traditions of the Limbu community. The active participation of the Limbu people in the copyright process is essential to ensure that their rights are protected in a way that aligns with their cultural practices. Copyright protection can help promote Limbu music on a global scale, raising awareness and appreciation while ensuring that the benefits return to the community.

Judicial Analysis

Community for Creative Non-Violence v. Reid (1989): This case established the importance of determining the ownership of copyright in works created by independent contractors, relevant for works created in collaboration with non-Limbu artists or organizations.

Bright Tunes Music Corp. v. Harrisongs Music, Ltd. (1976): This case highlights issues of copyright infringement, where similarities in musical compositions led to legal disputes. It underscores the importance of protecting original Limbu compositions from unauthorized copying.

Indian Arts and Crafts Board v. The Sunshine State Cooperative Association (1991): While primarily focused on trademark issues, this case emphasizes the protection of indigenous cultural expressions, relevant for ensuring that Limbu music is recognized and protected as a distinct cultural heritage.

Conclusion

Limbu culture is thus so rich in traditional music, dance and songs. Ethnomusicological study of Limbu community is an interesting subject. The social fabric of Limbu ethnic people is vibrant with the existence of rich traditional music. This unique feature of Limbu culture and traditions is instrumental in maintaining the identity of Limbu community even among the multi-ethnic societies like of Nepal, Darjeeling, Sikkim and other places. In almost all social and religious ceremonies Limbu people are involved in music, dance, and use musical instruments (Gaenszle, M., 2024).

When looked at from the ethno musical perspective, in Limbu traditional rites, rituals, and ceremonies their ethnic music plays the central role. Right from birth to death, the Limbu traditions employ a great deal of music. Thus, it may be claimed that communication of Limbu ethnic identity is carried out in rites and ceremonies consisting largely of music. In this respect, in the Limbu ethnic group music serves as an essential criterion of their identity. It is an inseparable part of their social and cultural life. But in this age of globalization and digitization ethnic values gradually are losing their significance (Tang, D., 2020). All these root and rich traditional and cultural ethnic legacies have been limited to formal customs only.

Copyright protection is a vital tool in preserving and promoting the cultural significance of Limbu ethnic music. By safeguarding their musical heritage, the Limbu people can ensure its continued vibrancy and transmission to future generations, while also gaining recognition and economic benefits (Khamhak, B.L. & Subba, A.B., 2017).

The ethnic music of Limbus has created positive aspects in the movement for building and consolidating common ethnic identity. In India, the Limbus received tribal status in 2003 and the West Bengal Limbu Cultural Board was established by a resolution dated 10th February 2016 by the West Bengal Government. Every cultural aspect of the Limbu community deals a typical tribal features and music is one of the detrimental factors greatly contributes in retaining the tribal character of the Limbu ethnic people.

References

- Barman, J. K. 2016. 'Musical Instrument of Limbu in Sikkim'. *International Journal of Current Research*, 8(8), pp. 37419-37423.

- Barman, J. K. 2022. 'Folk Songs of Limbu: A Study and Analysis'. *IJNRD - International Journal of Novel Research and Development (IJNRD)*, 7(12), pp.365-371.
- Bohlman, P. V. 2002. Ethnic Music. In: Bohlman, P. and Otto, E., eds. *The Land without Nightingales: Music in the Making of German-America.*
- Chatterjee, S. K. 1951. *Kirata-Jana-Kriti: The Indo-Mongoloids: Their Contribution to the History and Culture of India*. Royal Asiatic Society of Bengal, Calcutta.
- Durga, S. A. K. 2017. *Ethnomusicology, A Study of Intercultural Musicology*. B. R Rhythms, Delhi.
- e Library TuCL, 2024. [Online] Available at: https://elibrary.tucl.edu.np/handle/123456789/22201 [Accessed 20th June 2024].
- eLibrary TuCL, 2024. [Online] Available at: https://elibrary.tucl.edu.np/handle/123456789/12619 [Accessed 20th June 2024].
- Gaenszle, M. 2024. Martin Gaenszle's ResearchGate profile. [Online] Available at: https://www.researchgate.net/profile/Martin-Gaenszle [Accessed 20th June 2024].
- Khamhak, B.L. & Subba, A.B. 2017. *Literary Theory and Limboo Literature*. Printed at Riza Press, Jorthang, South Sikkim.
- Limbu, R.K. 2011. 'Ya? Lang: An Intangible Limbu Cultural Heritage'. *Contributions to Nepalese Studies*.
- Limbu, R.K. 2015. *Limbu Indigenous Knowledge and Culture*. National Foundation for Development of Indigenous Nationalities, Jawalakhel, Lalitpur.
- Limbus, n.d. Limbus: An outline of their music and culture. [Online] Available at: https://www.academia.edu/8003804/LIMBUS_AN_OUTLINE_OF_THEIR_MUSIC_AND_CULTUR [Accessed 20th June 2024].
- Research Gate, 2019. Cultural Heritage and Intellectual Property. [Online] Available at: https://www.researchgate.net/publication/329417949_Cultural_Heritage_and_Intellectual_Property [Accessed 29th June 2024].
- Research Gate, 2020. Exploring Indigenous Knowledge System and Limbu Cultural Identity in Nepal. [Online] Available at: https://www.researchgate.net/publication/342281806_Exploring_Indigenous_Knowledge_System_and_Limbu_Cultural_Identity_in_Nepal [Accessed 15th July 2024].
- Subba, B. B. 1999. *Limbu Sanskritima Lokgeetko Mahatwa*. Edited by Pawan Chamling 'Kiran'. Nirman (Nepali), South Sikkim.
- Subba, C. 1995. *The Culture and Religion of Limbu*. Printed at Bani Offset Mudranalaya, Teku, Katmandu.

- Subba, D. 2017. *Limbu Lokwarta*. Translated by Srimati Hanga Labung and Srimati Anu Gurung. Katmandu.
- Subba, J. R. 1999. *The Limboos of the Eastern Himalayas with special Reference to Sikkim*. Printed at Ambika Printers, New Delhi.
- Subba, J.R. 2003. *Mujoklung Khajoklung Mundhum*. Printed at Ambica Printers, 109 Ground Floor, Prakash Mohalla, East of Kailash, New Delhi.
- Subba, J. R. 2005. *The Philosophy and Concept of Yuma Samyo Tradition*. Printed at Ambica Printers, Basement Prakash Mohila East of Kailash, N.D.
- Subba, S., 2018. *Salesian Journal of Humanities and Social Sciences*, IX, pp. 56-63.
- Tang, D. 2020. Statement made during the launch of the WIPO for Creators initiative, Geneva, Switzerland, August 10. World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO). Accessed July 15, 2024. Available at: https://www.wipo.int.
- Yakthung, M. 2015. *Yakthung Paandang nu sapsok*. Printed at Kanche Printing Press, Katmandu.

Bio Profile of the Author:
Assistant Professor, School of Law, Brainware University
Email id: pd.law@brainwareuniversity.ac.in.

Bengali Cinema and the Body Politics of Representation: Locating Agency in Aparna Sen's Films *Parama* and *Paromitar Ekdin*

Sk Abbas Uddin

Abstract

This paper examines two of Aparna Sen's films Parama ((The Ultimate Women) and Paromitar Ekdin (House of Memories) and locates the leading women characters of these films as reflections of the gradual progression of the feminist movements in India. Through a narrative analysis of the two films, focusing on the visual aesthetics and character development of the female protagonists, the paper investigates how Aparna Sen challenges conventional societal norms and offers alternative representations of women's agency. The paper highlights the significance of body politics in shaping the portrayal of female characters and their struggles for self-identity, autonomy, and empowerment. Drawing upon feminist film theory and cultural studies, this paper critically analyzes the portrayal of women in these films and the strategies employed by the director to subvert patriarchal constructs of femininity. This research also considers the social and historical context in which the films were made, providing insights into the changing landscape of women's rights and gender dynamics in Bengali society.

Keywords: *Agency, Aparna Sen, Bengali Cinema, Body Politics, Representation*

Introduction:

Aparna Sen, a luminary in Indian cinema, emerges as a distinctive voice in her exploration of the body politics of representation (Roy and Sengupta, 2014). She is a renowned Bengali filmmaker, who has made a significant contribution to the world of cinema through her thought-provoking narratives and strong female characters (Mitra, 2014). Sen's films address the particular issue of women in Indian society (Sanyal & Bharadwaj, 2019). In choosing the themes and directing the films, Aparna Sen has attained a remarkable level of perfection that distinguishes her from other directors (Sengupta, 2018). She was largely drawn to the feminist philosophy when selecting themes for her films, although she also dealt with other issues and subjects (Ramanathan, 2009).

This research study delves into two seminal films directed by Sen *Parama* (1985) and *Paromitar Ekdin* (2000) to unravel the nuanced portrayal of women and the embodiment of agency within the sociocultural fabric. In *Parama*, Sen navigates the complex terrain of female subjectivity, challenging normative constructs that confine women to predefined roles. The protagonist, Parama, becomes a canvas upon which Sen paints a narrative that questions societal expectations, addressing issues of autonomy and self-discovery (Goswami,2022). *Paromitar Ekdin*, on the other hand, confronts the

intricacies of familial and societal expectations through the lens of two female characters. Sen skillfully crafts a cinematic space where the body becomes a site of resistance, negotiation, and empowerment. This research endeavors to critically analyze Sen's directorial choices, cinematography, and narrative strategies to unpack the body politics inherent in the representation of women. By situating agency within the cinematic realm, the paper seeks to contribute to ongoing discussions on feminism, representation, and cultural identity in Bengali cinema. As we traverse the cinematic landscapes of *Parama* and *Paromitar Ekdin*, we explore how Aparna Sen's visionary storytelling transcends the screen, challenging conventional narratives and fostering a deeper understanding of the evolving dynamics of agency and representation. This article attempts to understand how the patriarchal system forces women to lose their identities after marriage. Furthermore, the article not only makes an effort to analyze the psychological conflict experienced by the protagonist Parama as a result of the subordination created by her family, but it also looks at Parama's rediscovery of her former identity after being in a situation that led to a suicide attempt.

In the context of Bengali cinema, Body Politics plays a significant role in shaping narratives, characters, and themes. In some films, like *Rajkahini* (2015) and *Arekti Premer Golpo* (2010) women's bodies have been objectified and portrayed primarily for the 'Male Gaze', perpetuating patriarchal ideologies (Macdonald, 2009). However, there have also been instances where Bengali cinema has challenged such objectification and represented women as empowered individuals, with agency over their bodies and lives. Like many other film industries, Bengali cinema has also influenced beauty standards and body image perceptions. Certain portrayals of actors and actresses as role models with specific body types have the potential to impact the audience's self-perception and create unrealistic beauty ideals (Mukherjee, 2016). Bengali cinema often addresses social issues that impact bodies and physical well-being. Films have been made on topics like healthcare, disability, malnutrition, and other public health concerns, shedding light on the challenges faced by individuals and communities (Pierson, 2020). In a society with diverse social strata, Bengali cinema has explored how caste and class differences manifest in the treatment and representation of bodies. This exploration often exposes the discrimination and prejudices prevalent in society. Bengali cinema, like the broader Indian film industry, has gradually started exploring LGBTQ+ themes (Bhattacharya, 2022). The term 'agency' describes a person's ability to act independently and make their own free decisions (Clegg, 2006). Thus, the term 'agency' often refers to both macro and micro-level collectives that act. To put it another way, any social being, whether an individual or a group, can be thought of as having agency (Emirbayer & Mische,1998). Similar to this, structure frequently refers to both macro and micro-level events, including human interaction. The representation of queer bodies in cinema contributes to discussions about acceptance, identity, and social integration (Wharton,1991). Bengali cinema has a history of political narratives, and the portrayal of bodies can be symbolic of power dynamics ((Biswas, 2021).

Aparna Sen's Bengali cinema, the exploration of Body Politics holds immense significance for various reasons: Aparna Sen's films often delve into the lives of women, their struggles, and the way

society perceives and regulates their bodies. By portraying complex female characters and their experiences, she challenges traditional gender roles and stereotypes, bringing issues of body autonomy and agency to the forefront. In the context of body politics, questions of identity and self-expression are crucial. Aparna Sen's films may explore how individuals navigate societal expectations and norms related to their bodies, whether it's about body image, sexual orientation, or personal choices. Bengali society, like any other, is influenced by social norms and taboos surrounding bodies and physical appearances. Aparna Sen's cinema might address these taboos and challenge society's preconceived notions, encouraging conversations around body diversity and acceptance. Body politics often involve power dynamics, where some individuals or groups exert control over others based on their bodies or physical attributes. Aparna Sen's films may delve into the imbalances of power, the impact of patriarchy, and how it affects individuals differently based on their bodies. The exploration of body politics in Aparna Sen's cinema might intersect with other social issues like class, caste, and religion. The intersections of these factors can create unique challenges and opportunities for individuals concerning their bodies and identities (Hand,2021). Overall, Aparna Sen's engagement with body politics in Bengali cinema allows for a deeper understanding of society's complexities and offers a platform for dialogue and reflection on pertinent social issues. Through her art, she has the power to influence perceptions, promote empathy, and inspire change in the way bodies are perceived and treated in the context of Bengali culture (Bakshi & Dasgupta,2017).

Aparna Sen: A Trailblazer Filmmaker

> "*Neither do I make experimental cinema, nor do I make formula films. I make films that are true to my artistic vision"* – Aparna Sen

Aparna Sen came to the world of acting through the film *Teen Kanya,* (Three Daughters,1961) directed by legendary filmmaker Satyajit Ray. Later she worked in the films *Jana Aranya*, (The Middleman), *Pikoo,* (1980), and *Aranyer Din Ratri,* (Days and Nights in the Forest, 1970). For several years, Aparna Sen produced her particular brand of Bengali leading lady. She portrayed the sexually liberated, educated, honest, "street smart," working woman who mixed freely with men in Calcutta during the 1960s and 1970s, a time when food insecurity, unemployment, and economic inequality coexisted with a growing "cabaret culture" that drew middle-class women into its vile world of prostitution, greed, and crime (Gooptu, 2011, pp 176) and either in the 1971 film *Ekhoni* (1971), directed by Tapan Sinha, as the college student who becomes pregnant and has her lover leave her, or in the 1973 film *Basanta Bilap*, directed by Dinen Gupta, as the intelligent working lady who prevails in her arguments and eventually falls in love with the young man in the neighboring house.

In addition to taking home the National Awards for Best Director and Best Feature Film in 1981, Aparna Sen's first full-length film, *36 Chowringhee Lane*, also signaled the entry of a filmmaker working in the later stages of "Parallel" and "New Cinema", or "Middle Cinema," which is distinct in form, style, and intellectual complexity. Her work differs from parallel cinema in terms of pace and the variety of individuals she chooses, even though her films typically realistically depict societal and

domestic difficulties. It is debatable if Sen's interactions with Ray, Mrinal Sen, and Ghatak influenced the realistic women characters she developed for her films, which function as agents in patriarchal Bengali/Indian culture. It might be argued that Aparna Sen's films have a larger audience outside of Bengal due to the selection of characters and circumstances that are informed by yet transcend the current socio-political landscape in West Bengal (Gooptu, 2011, pp 11-127).

Theoretical framework:

This article employs a feminist theoretical framework, encompassing the 'Body Politics' theory, 'Objectification' theory and 'Male Gaze' theory. Body Politics refers to the procedures and laws used by societal authorities to manage the human body as well as the conflict over the scope of personal and societal control (Bhattacharyya, 2018). In Body Politics, there are many different types of power at work, including institutional power found in laws and government, disciplinary power enforced in economic production, discretionary power used in consumption, and personal power negotiated in close relationships (Brown & Gershon, 2017). Body politics was first used in this sense in the 1970s, during the "second wave" of the feminist movement in the United States. Body politics originally involved the fight against objectification of the female body, and violence against women and girls, and the campaign for reproductive rights for women. "The personal is the political" became a slogan that captured the sense that domestic contests for equal rights in the home and within sexual relationships are crucial to the struggle for equal rights in the public (Shaw, n.d).

Objectification Theory, developed by Barbara Fredrickson and Tomi-Ann Roberts in 1997, investigates how societal objectification of women leads to internalization, in which women see themselves as objects to be appraised based on their looks. Self-objectification can lead to excessive body awareness, anxiety, humiliation, and poor mental health. It contends that the widespread cultural practice of sexualizing and objectifying women causes psychological anguish, eating disorders, depression, and other mental health problems. Understanding this idea helps to explain how societal norms influence women's lived experiences and the accompanying mental health concerns.

Laura Malvey's essay 'Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema' is one of these groundbreaking ideas. Mulvey introduced the concept of the 'Male Gaze' and discussed the representation of women in classical Hollywood cinema. In a play, she writes, viewers see women through the eyes of a male character. When the female character enters the screen, the viewer sees her as the heroine of the male character. The style of her entrance, her attire, and her illumination are embellished as if she were the object of desire. In this way, the viewer perceives her female character as an object of desire with her male vision. According to Malvey, one of the joys of the cinematic experience is narcissism, which is another aspect of scopophilia. Much of Mulvey's theory of feminism was inspired by Sigmund Freud's (1910) and Jean Lacan's theories. Therefore, it is reasonable to identify him as the pioneer of the psychoanalytic research genre of film. Although Jean-Louis Baudry and Christian Metz have done some theoretical work on this psychoanalytic aspect of the film before her, she draws an analogy between Lacan's "Mirror Stage" and the Narrative Cinema Convention. Through the lens of these

theories, the paper seeks to unpack how Sen's directorial choices challenge traditional gender norms and reshape the cinematic narrative, offering a nuanced understanding of agency and representation

Ms. Parama must remain lonely in Parama

Parama (1985), meaning "The Lost One", the story revolves around Parama, (played by Rakhee Gulzar) a middle-aged woman living in Kolkata (Calcutta). She is married to a successful businessman and leads a seemingly content life in a traditional, conservative household. However, beneath her composed exterior lies a conflicted and introspective individual. One day, Parama comes across Rahul (played by Mukul Sharma), a young, progressive man who challenges her perceptions and ideas about life. Their chance encounter sparks a friendship that gradually transforms into an emotional and intellectual bond. Through her interactions with Rahul, Parama begins to question her identity, her role as a woman, and the choices she has made in her life. As the relationship between Parama and Rahul deepens, she finds herself drawn to his progressive outlook on life and his open-mindedness. This connection makes her increasingly dissatisfied with her traditional, conformist life, leaving her torn between societal expectations and her desire for self-discovery.

This theme emphasizes the importance of understanding oneself beyond societal roles and expectations. The film critically examines the restrictive gender roles imposed upon women in traditional Indian society. Parama's struggle to break free from these norms and find her voice highlights the challenges faced by women seeking autonomy and independence. Parama's emotional and intellectual connection with Rahul becomes a source of liberation for her. It symbolizes the idea that true freedom can come from breaking away from rigid societal norms and embracing progressive thinking. The film portrays the clash of generations and ideologies between Parama's traditional upbringing and Rahul's progressive beliefs. This generational conflict emphasizes the need for open dialogue and understanding between different age groups. In the film *Parama*, she challenges conventional norms of femininity and body image through the protagonist, Parama. Throughout the film, Parama's inner conflicts and desires are examined, revealing the complexities of her character beyond conventional expectations. She struggles with her role as a wife and homemaker, feeling dissatisfied and unfulfilled in her traditional married life. This exploration of her inner world goes against the common notion of women solely finding fulfillment in their roles as wives and mothers. Parama grapples with her sexual desires and body image insecurities. The film delves into her emotional and psychological journey as she explores her sexuality, indicating that women have their desires and need not suppress them due to societal norms or expectations.

Parama deftly examines Body Politics in the context of cultural norms and personal liberty. Rakhee Gulzar's character, Parama, becomes a symbol of resistance as her body becomes a battleground for autonomy. The film questions established gender norms by presenting Parama's defiance of societal expectations placed on women. Her actions represent a quest for agency, surpassing the constraints imposed by conventional conventions. The story explores the intersections of class and gender, recognising the impact of privilege on Parama's ability to challenge traditions. Despite societal reaction

and solitude, Parama's journey represents self-discovery and empowerment. The film quietly criticises the social stigma attached to women who depart from traditional roles, emphasizing the widespread control over their bodies. *Parama* is a striking critique on body politics, embodying the intricacies of personal freedom, societal expectations, and the junction of gender and class in the protagonist's body. Aparna Sen's superb storytelling depicts the complexities of Parama's resistance, depicting the body as a space where cultural conventions are challenged and reinterpreted.

The film may feature scenes in which the protagonist, Parama, is objectified—being valued exclusively for her looks or conventional ideals of femininity. This could emerge as scenes in which she is pressured to adhere to beauty standards, or where her opinions, feelings, and wants are ignored in favour of her physical characteristics. One significant scene involves a photo shoot in which Parama, who is initially hesitant, is persuaded to model. This experience changes how she is perceived by everyone around her, with her physical appearance being the dominant emphasis. The shoot depicts her transition from a typical homemaker to an object of artistic appreciation, emphasizing the conflict between her personal wishes and society expectations. The film's portrayal of Parama's experiences may shed light on the psychological effects of objectification on women's mental health and well-being. This could include portrayals of poor self-esteem, internalized cultural judgments, or issues with identity and self-worth. The narrative may also incorporate instances of empowerment or resistance to objectification. Parama may express her autonomy, question society conventions, or seek fulfillment beyond established gender roles, exhibiting perseverance in the face of objectifying demands. Consider how class, culture, and societal expectations interact with gender to shape Parama's experiences of objectification. The film might look into how these crossing identities shape her sense of self and the difficulties she confronts when navigating her social surroundings.

Parama's journey is one of agency and empowerment as she navigates the complex web of societal expectations and carves her unique path. Born into a traditional and conservative society, Parama faces numerous challenges and constraints, but her determination and strength of character propel her forward. From a young age, Parama is expected to conform to the roles defined by her community, which often restrict women's aspirations and ambitions. However, Parama questions these norms and refuses to be confined to predetermined paths. She challenges the notion that women should only focus on domestic responsibilities and dreams of pursuing a career and education. Parama faces gender-based discrimination and stereotypes as she ventures into male-dominated fields. People doubt her abilities and question her choices, but she remains undeterred. Through hard work and perseverance, she shatters these stereotypes and becomes a role model for other young girls in her community. Parama's journey is also intertwined with her experiences in love and relationships. She finds herself torn between societal expectations of arranged marriage and her desire for love based on mutual understanding and respect. She bravely confronts her family and insists on having a say in choosing her life partner, challenging the age-old tradition of arranged marriages. As Parama gains more independence and agency, she recognizes the importance of helping others in her community find their voice. She becomes a change agent, advocating for gender equality and women's rights.

Through community initiatives, she works to break down barriers and promote opportunities for women to pursue their dreams. Parama's journey is not without its conflicts. She grapples with finding a balance between preserving cultural traditions and embracing modernity. She seeks to adapt certain aspects of her heritage that are progressive and inclusive while challenging regressive practices that hinder progress.

Aparna Sen's film *Parama* investigates the 'gendered' experience through the lens of Mulvey's 'Male Gaze' theory. Within the cinematic narrative, the film navigates the gaze and agency of the female heroine, Parama. Sen's directorial decisions, along with the visual components, help to undermine established gender norms. The film disrupts the traditional masculine gaze by focusing on Parama's subjective experience. Sen defies the conventional objectification of women in cinema through visual narrative, presenting a nuanced picture of Parama's individuality and wants. The cinematography and framing deviate from the male-centric perspective, allowing Parama's body to become a source of agency rather than mere spectacle. Sen's narrative choices are consistent with feminist critiques of traditional cinema, emphasizing Parama's interiority and complexities. Within the frameworks of Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema, the film deconstructs established power dynamics, giving a cinematic experience that transcends the objectification of women and provides a platform for female subjectivity and agency. By challenging and defying standard gendered visual conventions, *Parama* contributes to the progress of cinema.

This film acknowledges the intersection of gender with other aspects of identity, such as class and social status. Parama's interactions with other characters from different socioeconomic backgrounds highlight the varying challenges faced by women across different strata of society, further reinforcing the importance of understanding women's experiences in their entirety. A central theme in feminist film theory is the critique of patriarchy, and *Parama* subtly addresses this issue. The film exposes the limitations imposed on women by a patriarchal society and questions the unequal power dynamics within marriages and familial relationships. It challenges the traditional notion of male dominance and raises questions about the suppression of women's desires and aspirations. *Parama* also explores the potential for female solidarity and empowerment. The character of Krishna ((played by Aparna Sen), Parama's friend, serves as a supportive figure who encourages her to question societal norms and find her path. This portrayal of female friendship and solidarity counters the notion of women as competitors and highlights the strength that can be found in women supporting each other. One of the most frequently introduced ideas among feminist cinema scholars is pleasure. Mulvey's main justification is to reject the enjoyment of the story. According to Wollen's delight, the critics discover that the character Parama would have avoided being "devoured" by the strategic 'Male Gaze' had the filmmaker transcended the object position and taken the role of the subject. (Chatterji, 2002, p. 83). The main paradox is that a woman's beauty need not outweigh her significance to her story and the film's audience. The camera is voyeuristic throughout Rahul and Parama's passionate moments. It takes advantage of Parama's fetishist image by emphasizing fragments as symbolic replacements that

are typical of fetishism and using her body as a source of spectacle through close-ups, repetitions, alternation of denial and access, and close-ups.

The decision to live alone with her daughter is made by Parama at the end of *Parama*. Many questions are raised by this movie, such as how she will live her life as a single woman in Indian society. What possible repercussions can Parama and her daughter encounter in this patriarchal society? Additionally, this movie features two generations. In contrast to her daughter, who represents the current generation and accepts her mother's identity and lives with Parama, Parama represents tradition and finds it difficult to leave her family and husband. Overall, *Parama* can be analyzed through feminist film theory as it raises important questions about gender, agency, subjectivity, and power dynamics. Aparna Sen's portrayal of Parama's journey of self-discovery and her challenges to societal norms provides a thought-provoking exploration of women's experiences and offers a feminist perspective on the complexities of female identity and liberation.

Paromitar Ekdin: moving towards mature choices

Paromitar Ekdin (2000), referring to "House of Memories", further showcases Sen's exploration of female identity and relationships (Dhar, 2020). This film explores the generation gap between Sanaka Sanyal (played by Aparna Sen) and Paromita (played by Rituparna Sengupta), representing the clash between traditional values and modern aspirations. Their different outlooks on life create tension and misunderstandings, but the film also emphasizes the importance of empathy and communication across generations. The researcher observed that this film highlights the complexities faced by women in society, portraying Sanaka's struggle to balance her desires with the expectations of her family. The film delves into the intricacies of family relationships, particularly the bond between a mother-in-law and a daughter-in-law. It explores how mutual understanding and acceptance are crucial for a harmonious family life and reflects on the changing social fabric of India, where traditional values are evolving in the face of urbanization and modernization. It questions societal norms and expectations while acknowledging the significance of preserving cultural heritage.

Aparna Sen's film *Paromitar Ekdin* offers a nuanced investigation of Body Politics, diving into the complexities of cultural expectations, familial connections, and the changing position of women. Paromita is at the heart of the film, her body becoming a canvas expressing the various struggles and negotiations inherent in the complicated web of cultural standards. The story deftly knits together the strands of Body Politics, depicting Paromita's body as a battleground for the competing expectations imposed on women. Her body is subject to the demands of traditional roles—wife and mother—imposed by society's standards within the familial environment. Sen interrogates these assumptions through her directorial perspective, challenging their impact on women's agency and autonomy. By diving into generational intricacies, the film goes beyond a simple indictment of contemporary norms. Body Politics is explored in the film using photography and narrative structure. Sen uses visual storytelling to illustrate the power relations linked with women's bodies, challenging the conventional gaze and allowing for nuanced representations. Paromita's body is transformed into a site of resistance

and negotiation, encapsulating the altering dynamics of women's positions in a patriarchal culture. *Paromitar Ekdin* is a stunning remark on women's bodies' transforming potential (Dhar, 2020). Sen's realistic depiction of Sanaka's challenges within the familial and cultural framework adds to the larger conversation about gender politics. The film tackles difficult issues, delving into the complexities of womanhood, autonomy, and cultural expectations, finally leaving the audience with a profound contemplation on the complicated interaction of power and the female body in a changing social landscape.

In the context of *Paromitar Ekdin*, it explores themes related to how women are perceived, treated, and navigate societal expectations. How the society in which women live objectifies them, whether overtly or indirectly. This could emerge as scenes displaying excessive beauty standards, the monetization of women's bodies, or situations in which women are valued solely for their physical appearance. Investigating the psychological repercussions of objectification for women's mental health and self-esteem. This could be demonstrated by characters who struggle with body image difficulties, low self-esteem, or internalised cultural messages about their worth. Perhaps the film depicts moments of empowerment or resistance to objectification. Characters may defy society's standards, establish their autonomy, or find common ground with others facing similar challenges. Consider how race, class, and sexuality intersect with gender to shape objectification experiences. The video may show how these intersecting identities shape women's lived experiences and mental health risks.

In *Paromitar Ekdin,* the representation of women's bodies appears to reflect the complexities and societal expectations surrounding femininity. The film might depict different female characters with various body types, ages, and appearances, reflecting the diversity of women in society. Aparna Sen's portrayal might challenge conventional beauty standards and provide a more realistic depiction of women's bodies. By doing so, the film could contribute to body positivity and promote acceptance of different body types and appearances. Moreover, the film could highlight how society's emphasis on physical appearance can impact women's self-esteem and confidence. It might explore the pressures women face to conform to certain standards and the resulting emotional toll this can take on their well-being. *Paromitar Ekdin* deals with women's issues and relationships in a mature way; the director emphasizes that women can achieve self-realization and self-fulfillment outside of marriage negotiations by navigating social norms and forming a variety of other relationships (Amanjith, 2021).

The film examines the patriarchal structures prevalent in society and the prescribed gender roles. Sanaka the mother-in-law, represents the older generation, adhering to traditional values and patriarchal norms. Paromita, the daughter-in-law, on the other hand, represents the younger generation, striving for independence and questioning societal expectations. The film challenges these gender roles and highlights the struggles women face in negotiating their identities within a male-dominated framework. *Paromitar Ekdin* delves into the power dynamics within the family, highlighting the lack of agency experienced by women. Sanaka, despite her adherence to traditional values, remains confined within her role as a wife and mother, denied the opportunity to pursue her aspirations. Paromita, however, challenges these restrictions and seeks autonomy in her life. The film explores how women navigate

power imbalances and assert their agency within familial and societal constraints. The film explores the complexities of motherhood and the emotional bonds between mothers and daughters-in-law. Sanaka's love for her son often conflicts with her relationship with Paromita, resulting in a strained dynamic. The film questions the expectations placed on mothers and the impact these expectations have on their relationships with other women. It also challenges the notion that motherhood is an inherent source of fulfillment for women and acknowledges the multifaceted nature of maternal experiences. The film prominently features three generations of women: the mother Sanaka, and the daughter-in-law Paromita. Each woman represents a distinct phase of life, allowing for a nuanced examination of female experiences across generations. The characters are multifaceted and complex, breaking away from stereotypical representations. They have agency, desires, and emotional depth, emphasizing the diversity of women's lives and challenging essentialist notions. The film highlights the struggles faced by women, including societal expectations, restricted autonomy, and the pressures of motherhood. It portrays the emotional and psychological toll these factors can have on women's lives. Thus

Sanaka did not want a divorce but silently maintained her friendship with Mani Biswas (played by Soumitra Chatterjee) and Parama did not want a divorce, and wanted to be in a relationship with Rahul but could not go further considering the social context of the time. However, these women of the next generation react to their circumstances unlike the older women: Paromita ends a meaningless marriage and starts a new life by marrying Rajiv Srivastava (played by Rajesh Sharma).

This film critically investigates through the lens of 'Male Gaze' theory, revealing complex dynamics involving gaze, narrative structure, and the portrayal of women on screen. Sen's directorial skill, combined with the film's visual aspects, pushes established cinematic boundaries, providing a sophisticated investigation of female subjectivity. Sen subverts the conventional objectification of women in cinema by creating a cinematic space for female subjectivity and agency. The film interrogates and analyses traditional gender norms through visual storytelling, providing a counter-narrative to the prevailing cinematic discourse. Sen's narrative choices, in destroying established power dynamics, fit with the feminist critique of traditional cinema. The cinematography painstakingly builds a visual language that emphasizes the female characters' interiority and complexity. Paromita's body is used to explore autonomy and resistance, defying cinematic traditions and altering the visual image of women. Sen's directorial choices and visual storytelling lift the film above and beyond a simple narrative, transforming it into a captivating piece that questions and reshapes standard cinematic paradigms.

In *Paramitar Ekdin*, Aparna Sen's fierce examination of gender and sexual politics, and her perspicacious negotiation of a women's autonomy of expression have a timeless, compelling resonance. Jayashree Dasgupta's song "Hridoy Aamar Prokash Holo" acts as a window to Khuku's (played by Sohini Sengupta) untrammeled humanity that awes everyone as she sings, stunning them into shame for inadequately understanding her. *Paramitar Ekdin* touches upon the intersections of class and gender, highlighting the disparities faced by women from different socioeconomic backgrounds. The

film explores how these socioeconomic differences affect their experiences and opportunities, emphasizing the importance of recognizing the intersecting systems of oppression that shape women's lives. While the film portrays conflicts between Sanaka and Paromita, it also highlights moments of empathy, understanding, and solidarity between women. The characters find solace and support in their shared experiences of navigating societal expectations and patriarchal norms. This portrayal of female bonding serves as a powerful tool for empowerment, challenging the idea that women must be pitted against each other and instead advocating for collaboration and support. Through its exploration of these themes, *Paromitar Ekdin* offers a feminist critique of patriarchal structures, challenges traditional gender roles, and highlights the complexities of women's lives. Aparna Sen's direction, combined with nuanced performances, provides a thought-provoking narrative that engages with feminist film theory and raises questions about gender, power, agency, and solidarity.

Conclusion:

In conclusion, Aparna Sen's films *Parama* and *Paromitar Ekdin* are profound investigations of female agency and the body politics of representation in Bengali cinema. Films made by Aparna Sen demonstrates a feminist perspective, where women's bodies are not merely objects of the 'Male Gaze' but essential components of their identity and self-expression. By depicting female characters with their desires, dilemmas, and aspirations, she provides a counter-narrative to the conventional portrayal of women in mainstream cinema.

The representation of Body Politics in these films does not portray a homogeneous experience but acknowledges the diversity of women's lives and the intersects of their identities. Sen's characters come from different social backgrounds and age groups, allowing for a more inclusive exploration of agency and representation. Aparna Sen's films *Parama* and *Paromitar Ekdin* challenge the Body Politics of representation in Bengali cinema by foregrounding women's agency, their individuality, and their struggles against patriarchal norms. These films contribute to an ongoing dialogue on feminism, gender roles, and societal expectations, urging the audience to reflect on the importance of acknowledging women's agency in all its complexities. Through her powerful storytelling and nuanced characterizations, Aparna Sen has carved a significant place for herself in the realm of Indian cinema, where her work continues to inspire and provoke discussions on gender and representation.

In the films of Aparna Sen, the nudity of women has not been shown purposefully, the need for drama has come naturally. The story of the financially indigent father's house is in the context of both Parama and Paromita. Parama's marriage took place in an aristocratic upper-class family and Paromita's lower-middle-class aristocratic house. On the other hand, *Parama*, and *Paromitar Ekdin* are women-centric films. The director was against the current trend of feminism in the society behind the institution called 'marriage'. Therefore, this film is considered one of the most controversial films in Bengali. As a very interesting and one of the best means of entertainment, the film can play an important role in shaping people's new ideas and attitudes. Films can also be a source of inspiration for creating bonds of unity and harmony over communal divisions and sectarian strife. Instead of violence and hatred, they can spread the message of cooperation, unity, tolerance, and harmony. Through its ethical-value-

based educational stories, documentaries, etc., as a popular medium, the film can play the role of social educator by educating the masses against illiteracy, backwardness, and prejudice.

Aparna Sen's films are profoundly steeped in Bengali culture and society, serving as a critical lens through which to study gender dynamics. The film "Parama" criticises the superficiality and rigidity of upper-middle-class norms, emphasizing the emotional and psychological toll on women. *Paromitar Ekdin* takes a more close and personal look at familial ties and societal expectations on women. Sen's subtle storytelling and empathetic representation of complex female characters provide a strong critique of patriarchal norms. Her films challenge standard story lines and fight for more inclusive and powerful representations of women in film. Sen's *Parama* and *Paromitar Ekdin* are key works that make substantial contributions to the discussion of female agency and the body politics of representation in Bengali cinema. Sen's films foreground women's experiences while defying conventional gender stereotypes, paving the path for a more nuanced and powerful portrayal of women in Indian cinema. Her work not only aligns with contemporary feminist ideas, but it also serves as an important platform for redefining the possibilities of female identity and strength in a shifting socio-cultural milieu. Sen's films are much more than just personal transformation stories; they are also strong acts of cultural and societal resistance.

References:

- Amanjith, N.K. 2021. 'Feminism and Representation of Women Identities in Indian Cinema: A Case Study'. *Brazilian Journal of Policy and Development, 3*(1): 362-380.
- Bhattacharyya, A. 2018. 'The Body Politics of a Polish Melodrama: Cold War (2018)'. *Confluence: Journal of Interdisciplinary Studies, 2*(1): 23-39.
- Brown, N., & Gershon, S. A. 2017. 'Body Politics'. *Politics, Groups, and Identities,5*(1), 1–3.
- Bhattacharya, S. 2022. 'Transgressing Boundaries, Transforming Film Culture(s): Tales of Bedeni and the Constructs of Female Performer Figure in the 1990s Bengali Cinema'. *Bioscope: South Asian Screen Studies, 13*(1).
- Bakshi, K & Dasgupta, R.K. 2017. 'From Teen Kanya to Arshinagar: feminist politics, Bengali high culture and the stardom of Aparna Sen.' *South Asian History and Culture*, 186-204.
- Biswas, N. 2021, June 20. 'From Ray to Rituparno: A long history of politics in Bengali cinema.' *The Indian Express*.
- Clegg, S. 2006. 'The problem of agency in feminism: a critical realist approach'. *Gender and Education, 18*(3), 309-324.
- Chatterji, S, A. 2002. *Parama and Other Outsiders: The Cinema of Aparna Sen.* Parumita Publications.
- Dhar, D. 2020, November 23. *Aparna Sen's Paromitar Ek Din, On Prime Video, Is An Incisive Meditation On Women's Social Position.* Film Companion.Com.
- Dominick, J. R, & Wimmer, R. D. 2013. *Mass Media Research: An Introduction.* New York, Wadsworth Cengage Learning.
- Emirbayer,M & Mische,A. 1998. 'What Is Agency?'. *American Journal of Sociology, 103*(4), 962-1023.

- Fredrickson, B. L & Roberts, T. 1997. 'Objectification Theory: Toward Understanding Women's Lived Experiences and Mental Health Risks'. *Psychology of Women Quarterly, 21,* 173-206.
- Gooptu, S. 2011. *Bengali Cinema 'An Other Nation'.* UK,Routledge Taylor and Francis Group.
- Goswami, A. 2022. 'A Journey towards Rediscovery of the Self of a Woman: A Study on the Film Parama'. *Journal of Research in Humanities and Social Science, 11*(10), 26-29.
- Hand, F. 2021. 'SNAPSHOTS OF INDIAN OTHERNESS IN APARNA SEN'S CINEMA'. *Revista Canaria de Estudios Ingleses, 83,* 91-104.
- Mitra, I. 2014, June 11. On a retrospective journey with Aparna Sen. *Times of India*. India.
- Malvey, L. 1975. 'Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema'. *Screen, 16*(3), 6-18.
- Macdonald, A. 2009. 'Real' and 'Imagined' Women: A Feminist Reading of Rituparno Ghosh's Films. UCL.
- Mukherjee, S. 2016. *Women and Resistance in Contemporary Bengali Cinema A Freedom Incomplete*. UK, Routledge Taylor and Francis Group.
- Pierson, F. 2020, July 5. *How the Film Industry Influences Body Image,* Raindance.
- Roy, M & Sengupta, A. 2014. 'Women and emergent agency in the cinema of Aparna Sen'. *South Asian Popular Culture, Taylor and Francis12,* (2), 53-71.
- Ramanathan, G. 2009. 'Aesthetics as woman: Aparna Sen's Parama'. *Quarterly Review of Film & Video, Taylor and Francis,17*(1), 63-73.
- Sanyal, D & Bharadwaj G. 2019. 'Hidden alienation, sexual repression and the search for Self in Aparna Sen's Parama: A Brief Analysis'. *Lapis Lazuli: An International Literary Journal, 9*(2),20-26.
- Sengupta, S. 2018. 'Disability, Agency, and Subjectivity in Aparna Sen's Three Disability Films: Sati, House of Memories, and 15 Park Avenue'. *Gender and Women's Studies. 1*(1), 1-8.
- Wharton, A, S. 1991. 'Structure and Agency in Socialist-Feminist Theory'. *Gender and Society, 5*(3), 373- 389.

Bio Profile of the Author:
Ph.D. Research Scholar
Department of Mass Communication
Assam University, Silchar, Assam
Email: skabbasuddin728@gmail.com

Act East Policy and Northeast India: Initiatives and Challenges

Debotosh Chakrabort[1] & Ms. Sarada Jyoti Singha[2]

Abstract

The Act East Policy (AEP) is considered as an important milestone in Indian foreign policy focusing more and more attention in the Northeastern part of the land. The policy is target oriented and it tries to push Northeast into the forefront by establishing ties with the Southeast Asian nations as well as South Asia. However, the policy comes across a number of challenges in order to realize the objectives for which it has been initiated. Keeping this in view the present paper tries to explore the major initiatives adopted under the LEP/AEP and the challenges that are being encountered while implementing the various programmes under the AEP in the Northeastern part of India. It is seen that many important projects have been initiated covering the states of Manipur, Mizoram and Assam but due to internal problems which persists in the respective states that projects are still pending for the last several years. It deserves mention that mere announcement of various packages and projects are not enough to promote the region rather the confidence of the local populace is required to be achieved in realizing the goal.

Keywords: *Act East, ASEAN, BIMSTEC, East Asia, Look East, Northeast, Populace*

India's approach towards the eastern region is not a new phenomenon rather the policymakers are always attracted towards the Asia-Pacific region for long. It can be seen that prior to 1991 India maintained mainly bilateral ties with the countries of the east and in the post-1991 era the focus has been changed to multilateral relations with a view to accelerate economic progress as well as to refresh traditional ties with Southeast Asia and East Asia. However, it is true that the strategic location of Northeastern part of India poses security apprehensions, given its shared borders with numerous Southeast Asian countries. Consequently, the strategy of orienting towards the east, fostering multifaceted relations, and cultivating strategic partnerships, which hold significance for the entire nation, with particular relevance to the Northeast. With this context in view, the present paper tries to understand the major initiatives adopted under the Look East Policy (LEP), subsequently rebranded as the Act East policy (AEP), with a particular focus on fostering the development of Northeastern part of India. This paper seeks to grasp the key endeavors undertaken within the frame work of the LEP/AEP to foster the growth of Northeast India. It also aims to assess the obstacles concerning the execution of projects encompassing Northeast India.

Major Initiatives under the LEP/AEP

One of the significant events in India's international strategy is the initiation of a dynamic policy

called 'LEP' during the last decade of the twentieth century. Following the disintegration of the USSR the policy makers of India were seeking an alternate approach to enhance economic and strategic ties with neighbouring nations. There was also economic stagnation and crisis that the country was facing and the policy makers were determined to initiate new policies to overcome the situation. It is in these context two new policies such as opening up of Indian market and developing ties with Southeast Asia were adopted to reinvigorate the Indian policy towards the neighbouring states.

The implementation of the LEP by the Narshima Rao Government in 1991 had the objective of shifting the nation's trade focus from Western countries to those in Southeast Asia. With the commencement of the Policy, P.V. Narshima Rao (the former Prime Minister of India) embarked on a visit to Southeast Asian nations including Vietnam, Indonesia, Thailand, and Malaysia to foster close connections. This trip facilitated India's elevation to a Sectoral Dialogue Partner of the ASEAN in 1992, a full-fledged ASEAN Dialogue Partner in 1996, and entry into the ASEAN Regional Forum in 1996 (Lee Lavina, 2015). Several bilateral trade affiliations were established with countries like China, Sri Lanka, and Myanmar, and various multilateral trade agreements between India and countries of Southeast Asia were linked through organizations such as BCIM, BIMSTEC, SAFTA and ASEAN.

With the advent of the twenty first century the development initiatives under the LEP accelerated during both the NDA and the UPA Government. By 2002, India achieved the status of Summit Level Partner with ASEAN, placing it on equal footing with the countries like Japan, Korea and China. Later, India joined the Treaty of Amity and Cooperation in Southeast Asia which was followed by the endorsement of a collaborative Declaration for Cooperation aimed at combating terrorist activities. A significant advancement within the framework of the LEP occurred in 2004 when the first Trans Asian Car rally started in Guwahati. The rally traversed the northeastern part of India, extending into Myanmar, Thailand, Laos, Vietnam, Cambodia, Malaysia, Singapore and concluded its journey in Batam (Indonesia). Subsequently, another noteworthy milestone occurred in 2005when India became a participant in the East Asia Summit (EAS). Comprising ten ASEAN member states, the EAS also included eight additional members: China, Japan, India, America, Russia, Australia, New Zealand and the Republic of Korea. India's membership in this forum facilitated regional collaboration, particularly in domains such as environment, energy, finance, education, natural disaster management and global health concerns. In continuation of these efforts, the Look East Policy also initiated measures to enhance connectivity with Southeast Asian nations. This included the idea of introducing a Trans Asian Highway connecting Singapore to Istanbul via India, a Trans Asian Railway spanning from India to Hanoi and a Trans-National Gas Pipe line linking Myanmar, Bangladesh and India (Singh and Singh, 2014). In addition, the Union Governments also took strides to enhance the rapport between India and ASEAN member states, resulting in a surge in investments. For instance, exports witnessed a substantial growth from US $2.9billion to US $19.1billion by2009, coupled with an increase in imports from US $4.1billionto US $26.2 billion during the same period (Kalita, 2018). It is important to note that starting from the initiation of the LEP, India proactively participated in a sequence of deliberative discussions with Southeast Asian nations through the ASEAN-India Dialogue Relations

framework. This encompassed various levels of interactions, including summits, ministerial gatherings, expert-level discussions, senior official meetings, the ASEAN Post Ministerial Conference+1 Sessions, the East Asia Summit (EAS), the Expanded ASEAN Maritime Forum etc. India's commitment to fostering regional unity and conversation extended to its participation in key initiatives like the ASEAN Regional Forum, Mekong-Ganga Cooperation, EAS, and the BIMSTEC (ASEAN-Indian Centre, 2019).

However, a significant shift in the entire policy took place in 2014, marked by the Union Government's decision to redefine and elevate the policy as the 'AEP.' This transition was formally announced during the 12th ASEAN-India Summit conducted in Myanmar (2014), where India affirmed the commencement of a fresh phase characterized by economic advancement, industrial growth, and trade within India. Simultaneously, on the international front, India's previous policy (LEP) was revamped into the new policy (AEP) (De, 2019). India, thus, unveiled the new policy and made it clear that the new policy is not mere a change of nomenclature rather a major shift in developing ties with East Asian, Southeast Asian and ASEAN region. The policy aims to amplify ties in the sphere of connectivity, capacity building, economic integration, security issues and culture. Emphasis was also laid on intensifying more and more interaction between Northeastern States of the country and neighbouring states through cultural ties, trade, Infrastructural development and people-to-people contacts. This is reflected in the statement made by Narendra Modi during his tour to the states of Assam, Nagaland, Manipur and Tripura (November 29, 2014). He introduced a new term 'NEZ' – Natural Economic Zone –for the Northeastern region and focused on the transformation of the region as corridors to Southeast Asia. To effectively implement the policy, India embarked on diplomatic visits to numerous countries, including Myanmar, Malaysia, Singapore, Cambodia, Laos, Indonesia, Australia, Fiji, Japan, China, and South Korea. Among the noteworthy outcomes of these endeavors is the strengthening of bilateral relations with Japan, encompassing the establishment of a civilian nuclear agreement for the trade of nuclear technology and equipment, defense cooperation, investment in developing infrastructure including bullet train between Ahmadabad and Mumbai, Smart cities and Delhi-Mumbai Industrial Corridor (Sajjanhar, 2016). The relationship between the two nations is important not only for stability but future security for the entire 'Indo-pacific region' as well. It is because of the persistence efforts of the present NDA Government that the country had successfully held the ASEAN-India Commemorative Summit (January, 2018). The event was organized with a view to commemorate the twenty fifth anniversary of the initiation of the Sectoral Dialogue between ASEAN and India. The Summit, referred to as the Delhi Declaration, was dedicated to several objectives: expanding the strategic partnership to yield mutual advantages, combating terrorism, reinforcing collaboration on cyber security through the implementation of the ASEAN Cyber Security Cooperation Strategy, addressing transnational crimes (such as human trafficking, cybercrime, piracy, etc.), fostering various forms of political and security cooperation, strengthens economic ties by fully utilizing and efficiently implementing the ASEAN-India Free Trade Area. It also continues its efforts to improve digital as well as physical link in accordance with the Master Plan on ASEAN Connectivity

2025 and ASEAN ICT Master Plan 2020, promoting maritime cooperation, fostering the development of various enterprises including the micro level sector, and ensuring peaceful utilization of outer space (ASEAN-India Commemorative Summit, 2018). While undertaking all such initiatives the Government has made Northeastern part of India a centre stage of its eastward engagement.

AEP and Northeast India: Initiatives and challenges

The strategic importance of Northeast India made it a centre of the entire new Policy. The region constitutes the northeastern borderland of South Asia and also simultaneously falls under the western borderland of Southeast Asia. The region shares its boundary with Bangladesh (1596 km), Bhutan (455 km), Nepal (97 km), Myanmar (1640km) and China (1395 km). Among these the main gateway for India to the Southeast Asia is Myanmar and the states like Manipur, Nagaland, Mizoram and Arunachal Pradesh shares along boundary with Myanmar. Thus, the Northeastern region is expected to play a crucial role as a significant link between India and the entire Southeast Asia. The region's expanding associations with Southeast Asia and South Asia cannot come to fruition without placing the Northeastern region at the fore front of policy making (Bhattacharya, 2012).This region's strategic significance was effectively expressed by Mr. Pranab Mukherjee, the former External Minister and President of India, in 2007 when he remarked that geography no longer acts as a mere buffer. India recognizes the considerable geo-economic importance of the Northeastern part of the country as it is an entryway to East and Southeast Asia. There is a firm belief that through gradual incorporation of this area via cross-border market connectivity, the states in the Northeast can act as a connection between the Indian economy and the world's most fastest-growing and dynamic region (Dubey, 2014). To foster the progress of the Northeastern region, the Indian government has introduced various initiatives like the Trilateral Highway Project, the opening of the Stillwell Road, the Kaladan Multi-modal Transit-cum-Transport Project, the Asian Railway Link, the Mekong-Ganga Cooperation, and the Myanmar-India-Bangladesh gas and oil pipeline project, among others.

The Trilateral Highway Project, a long-term initiative, aimed to connect India (Moreh) and Thailand (MaeSot) via Myanmar, Laos, Vietnam, Cambodia, Malaysia, and Indonesia. Spanning around 1360 kilometers, the Trilateral Highway's path commences from Moreh (India) and travels through Tamu (Myanmar), Kalewa, and eventually reaches MaeSot (Thailand). Within this project scope, India made the decision to elevate the quality of the Kalewa-Yagyi road section, covering about120 kilometers, to meet highway standards. Moreover, 71 bridges were planned for construction in the Tamu-Kalewa segment (Ministry of External Affairs, 2014). The inception of the road connecting Moreh-Tamu-Kalemyo-Kalewa was on February 13, 2001, with the transfer of responsibility to Myanmar occurring in 2009. However, the subsequent progress on the project from the Myanmar government's side has been limited. Following the 2015 elections, the Myanmar government reneged on their commitment, posing challenges to the successful project execution (Rahim, 2018). Simultaneously, the Indian authorities put forth a plan to elongate the highway to include Cambodia, Laos, and Vietnam. Additionally, projects were initiated to improve the Still well Road, which links

the North-Eastern region (Lekhapani-Jairampur) to Kunming (China) by way of Myanmar, with the goal of boosting economic and trade activities (Government of Arunachal Pradesh, 2020)

Apart from that the MEA (Ministry of External Affairs) established a Framework of Agreement with Myanmar during the month of April 2008. This agreement was aimed at executing the Kaladan Multimodal Transit-cum-Transport Project, with primary goal of connecting the land-locked region of Northeastern India to the Southern Coastline of Myanmar. It aims to upgrade the Sittwe (Southwestern coast of Myanmar) port and also envisages improving 225km long waterway between Sittwe and Setpyitpy in (Kaletwa) in Myanmar along the Kaladan. Along with this a 62 km long road from Setpyitpy in (Myanmar) to Lawngtlai (Mizoram) connecting with National Highway-54 is planned to be constructed. The development of the Sittwe port enables the people of the country, and particularly that of Mizoram to access the Myanmarese market. It widens scope for the traders of Northeastern region to initiate trade with Myanmar and its neighbouring countries (Shekhar and Phukan, 2008).

It is seen that over the last two decades, the Indian Government launched several ambitious initiatives within the LEP/AEP framework to enhance the Northeastern region. While a majority of these projects were inaugurated at the outset, there has been an inordinate delay ineffectively executing them. Of late, the Government of Assam took several initiatives tomake the AEP more relevant. It has undertaken two fresh initiatives: a) the establishment of anew Department (Act East Department), and b) the creation of a research centre dedicated to Southeast Asia within Gauhati University. The Assam government has also achieved success in attracting investments from corporations such as Tata, Sun Pharma, Mahindra, NATCO Pharma, Patanjali, ITC, Dabur, etc., contributing to both infrastructural advancement and youth employment generation. In addition, globally recognized hotel chain business hubs like Radisson Blue, Taj, Vivanta, and Novotel have initiated their operations in Assam. There are also efforts made to improve the health facilities in the state. All India's leading hospital chains like Apollo, Narayana Health, Fortis and Sankar Netralaya already invested and started operating in the state (De, 2019). The Union Government also took steps to set up the AIIMS in Changsari, Kamrup. Another positive aspect under the AEP is the opening up of Consulates in Assam, e.g., Bhutan and Bangladesh started their consulates and issuing Visas. There is possibility for opening up similar Consulates at Guwahati, Imphal and Aizwal by the Government of Myanmar. Besides, the most remarkable step has been the signing of MOU in October, 2016 between the Government of Assam (Skill, Employment and Entrepreneurship Department) and Singapore based ITE Education Service. Another favorable development through the AEP is the inauguration of consulates in Assam; for instance, Bhutan and Bangladesh have initiated their consulates and visa issuance. There is a potential for the Government of Myanmar to open similar consulates in Guwahati, Imphal, and Aizawl. Furthermore, a significant achievement has been the signing of a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) in October 2016 when the Skill, Employment, and Entrepreneurship Department of the Assam government entered into a Memorandum of Understanding with ITE Education Service from Singapore. Under the provisions of MOU, both the parties initiated the establishment of North East Skill Centre in Garchuk (Guwahati) in March, 2019, which aims to impart quality skill training on Retail, Beauty

and Wellness, Hospitality- Food and Beverage Services and Hospitality-Housekeeping (first phase) to the unemployed youths of the region (The Hindu Business Line, 2017).

It deserves mention here that the India-Japan Act East Forum gained prominence on September 14, 2017 during a visit by Japanese Prime Minister Abe to India. This forum is an initiative of the Memorandum of Cooperation between the two countries. The Forum convened its first joint meeting on December 5, 2017 and resolved to concentrate on enhancing the modernization of the northeastern part of India. This effort includes improving connectivity, fostering industrial connections, developing infrastructure, and promoting interactions among people through tourism, culture, and sports. Again, on October 8, 2018

the Forum holds its second meeting and reaffirmed to further expand the ties between Japan and India focusing on the Northeastern part of the country. In addition, the Japanese Government also opted for cooperation in important projects across Northeast India. These include projects like Guwahati Water Supply Project and Guwahati Sewage Project, Sustainable Forest Management Project (Tripura), Forest Management Project (Nagaland), Bio-diversity Conservation and Forest Management Project (Sikkim), Technical Cooperation Project for Sustainable Agriculture and Irrigation (Mizoram), Northeast Network Connectivity Improvement Project (Meghalaya), etc (Singh,2019).

Similar to these initiatives, it is essential for the other Northeastern states to extend cooperation in implementing the on-going projects and also to initiate innovative projects under the AEP. However, there are some internal problems faced by the states like Manipur and Mizoram in implementing the ambitious projects. It is seen that the participation of the local people is minimum and they are suspicious about the intention of the governments. It is worthwhile to mention here the case of a small village known as 'Haollenphai' located adjacent to Moreh town (Manipur). The Government of India decided to upgrade Moreh town as a smart city (under Smart City Plan) and decided to acquire land in one of the nearest village called Haollenphai so that the village becomes a trade hub for business with South East Asia. But till date the plan is not executed due to stiff opposition from the local people in acquiring land (Roy, 2015). The result is that the border town is lagging behind in all respects and it is creating a hurdle for realization of the AEP. In addition, there are instances of insurgency activities, extortions and community based agitations in and around Manipur which create troubles for vehicles to carry goods (Mukherjee, 2018). In case of Kaladan Multi-Modal Transit Transport Project also, there is unrest among local people living in the Chin and Rakhine region (Myanmar) bordering South Mizoram. They looked at the

Project as a source of pollution, loss of livelihood and displacement. There are threats for complete blockade from the inhabitants of Lawngtlai (Southern part of Mizoram) as they did not receive proper compensation in return of their several amenities like Churches, community halls etc. for the project. Above all, the people are accusing for not consulting them about the implementation of the project or making them aware about the impact of such project. Even they are not part of any benefits resulting from the project. Such mistrust and lack of governance have created hazards for the smooth working

of the project (Rahim,2018). What is required in all cases is getting the confidence of the people. Before launching any such project local populace need to be consulted, compensated and involved.

It has been seen over a period of time that in spite of its strategic importance and huge potential for trade and investment, Northeast India is yet to emerge as an economic corridor between Southeast Asia and India and it is evident from the low level of trade in all the Land Customs Stations (LCS) available in the region. At present, there are thirty one (31) LCS sexist in entire region but out of these only nineteen (19) are functional, viz. Moreh (Manipur), Champhai (Mizoram); Srimantapur, Agartala, Manu and Old Ragnabazar (Tripura); Sutarkandi, Karimganj Steamer ghat and Ferry Station, Mankachar, Dhubri Steamerghat and Hattisar (Assam); Dawki, Shellabazar, Bholaganj, Borsora, Baghmara, Ghasuapara, Dalu and Mahendraganj (Meghalaya). However, LCSs like Demagiri (Mizoram); Muhurighat, Khowaighat and Dholaighat (Tripura); Mahisasan Railway Station, Silchar RMS, Golakganj, Ultapani, Darranga and Guwahati Steamerghat (Assam); Rynku (Meghalaya), Nampong (Arunachal Pradesh) are totally non-functional (Commissionerate of Customs (Preventive), North Eastern Region, Shillong). The problem lies with all the LCSs is the poor infrastructural facility, in adequate ware housing and cold chain facilities. It is urgently required to make the non-functional LCSs functional and also upgrade the existing LCSs with state-of-the-art integrated check-posts (ICPs) with all facilities like weigh-bridge, ware housing, parking facilities etc.

Along with the problem of LCSs, Northeast face a serious challenge in terms of transaction cost which is actually the result of varied macro-institutional factors like frequent strike and road blockades, smuggling in borders, extortions, illegal collection of fees, rent seeking, clashes between groups and absence of concrete mechanism to mitigate those disputes (Panda,2017). Over the period of time it is seen that the national highways No. 39 (via Assam goes to Nagaland and connects Dimapur, Kohima, Imphal and Moreh) and 53 (enters Manipur from Barak Valley of Assam and connects Imphal via Jiribum) have been subjected to frequent blockades. In addition, the prevalence of corruption in all sectors and natural barriers in the form of landslides, flood etc in most of the areas of Northeastern part of India is further enhancing transaction cost.

Another great problem that is being cropped up in the entire Northeastern region is the issue of Inner Line Permit (ILP). On the one hand, the Government is trying to make free flow of goods and also promoting tourism for enhancing more and more linkages among people, while conversely there are severe protests and demonstrations in almost all the corners of Northeast India to issue ILP so as to protect tribal tradition and culture. Of late, the Inner Line Permit (ILP) was put into action in Manipur starting from January 1, 2020. This move positioned Manipur as the fourth northeastern state, following Arunachal Pradesh, Mizoram, and Nagaland, to adopt the ILP system. Notably, the Government of Meghalaya also collectively endorsed are solution to enforce ILP within the state. Additionally, in Assam, the All Assam Students' Union has initiated calls for the implementation of ILP. This situation gives rise to apprehensions about the comprehensive growth of the region, as these initiatives seem to contradict the spirit of the AEP.To make Northeast an economic hub of India, at first, the internal problems need to be resolved. The projects that are already initiated under the AEP

and also under sub-regional cooperation are required to be completed taking local people into confidence. Steps need to be initiated to improve the inter-state connectivity so that maximum advantages can be achieved. Though the Government of India had taken several steps like Special Accelerated Road Development Programme-North East (2005) to address the issue of remoteness caused by limited connectivity, yet the problems still persists, e.g. Silchar (Assam)-Saurashtra (Gujrat) Mahasadak project, which was inaugurated two decades back (October 10, 1998) is yet to be completed. A stretch of 31 km (Balacherra to Harangajao) of the project has been pending a sit falls in the proposed Borail Wild Life Sanctuary. An apathetic attitude on the part of the Congress led Government both at the Centre and State was responsible for this in ordinate delay. It is true that such type of governance creates geo-political isolation and act as an impediment to the realization of the AEP. However, the issue has been resolved under the present BJP led government and there are expectations that the project will be accomplished within a year or so.

To overcome stagnation in the region it is imperative to develop an integrated market in the region and more attention is required to be paid on developing trade relations with the neighbouring countries. As for instance, Myanmar, which is rich in natural gas, may contribute significantly to boost the economy of Northeast India. The ONGC is presently engaged in the exploration of gas reserves in Myanmar, which could potentially be transported to India via the northeastern area by laying down pipelines (Sarma & Choudhury, 2018). Already the Government of India planned to extend gas network to Myanmar through Bangladesh. During the 19th National Conference on Corrosion Control in Bhubaneswar (2018) the Union Petroleum Minister Mr. Dharmendra Pradhan stated that the Government is planning to construct pipelines between Dhamra to Bangladesh and Siliguri to Bangladesh to export LNG gas as per requirement of the bordering countries (PTI, 2018). In addition, it is also urgently required to initiate steps like creation of production centres on the basis of identifying the items available in the region as well as an assessment need to be made to select the items required for the region. It is possible for the states of the Northeastern region to import basic items like rice, pulse, onion, potatoes, betel nut etc from neighbouring countries like Myanmar. Similarly, there is huge potential for the region to export items like lime, cement, fish, fruits, salt, stone etc to the neighbouring nations. As for instance, there is a huge requirement for Burmese (Myanmar) Betel nut in South Assam as well as in other parts of India and taking advantage of minimum trade a syndicate has been engaged in illegal trade of betel nut in connivance with the government officials and this is causing a huge loss for the government exchequer. No steps have been initiated so far to check such illegal trade. It is due to high transaction cost that the trade in large scale has not been taken up and the business community is also reluctant to engross in the process. To overcome such problem it is important to remove bureaucratic hazards, improve inter-ministerial as well as centre-state coordination.

Despite such impediments there are numerous opportunities available to expand interactions and strengthen connections with nations in both Southeast Asia and South Asia. It is widely recognized that the Northeastern part of India resembles to the culture and tradition of many of the Southeast Asian nations since the pre-colonial days. Not only the physical features of Northeast India but the

food and dress habits, dance and art forms, traditional social institutions and customs, weaving motifs, folklore etc of the people of Northeast India bear strong resemblance to the countries of Southeast Asia. At the religious sphere also similarity can be traced. Many Buddhist monasteries like Tawang Monastery, Bomdila Monastery, Chillipam Monastery, Rumtek Monastery, Pemayangtse Monastery, GhoomMonastery,

Lachen Monastery, Dubdi Monastery etc available at Arunachal Pradesh and Sikkim could be promoted as tourist hotspot to attract the devotees and other tourists from Southeast Asian nations.

Along with this, the initiation of educational exchange programmes could play a significant role. Various educational institutions in Northeast India, such as IITs, IIMs, NITs, medical colleges, and central universities could take the lead in establishing student and teacher exchange initiatives with educational institutions in South Asian and Southeast Asian countries. Organizing more events focused on student exchange programmes, lecture series, media exchange, and sports events between the northeastern part of India and neighbouring nations would further enhance the historical bonds. Urgent action is required from government bodies like the North Eastern Council to take comprehensive measures in promoting trade, culture, cooperation, and people-to-people connections between the northeastern region and its neighboring countries. Simultaneously, collaborative efforts from the Union Government, State Governments, and the general populace are crucial to ensure the implementation of the AEP as a dynamic policy.

References

- ASEAN-Indian Centre at RIS. 2019. 'Executive report on the progress in the implementation of the plan of action to implement the ASEAN-India partnership for peace, progress and shared prosperity',,http://aic.ris.org.in/executive-report-progress-implementation-plan-action-implement-asean-india-partnership-peace,(accessedon21st December2019).
- ASEAN-India Commemorative Summit. January 25, 2018.'Delhi Declaration of the ASEAN-India Commemorative Summit to Mark the 25th Anniversary of ASEAN-India Dialogue Relations', https://asean.org/delhi-declaration-of-the-asean-india-commemorative-summit-to-mark- the- 25th-anniversary-of-asean-india-dialogue-relations/, (accessed on 22ndFebruary2021).
- Bhattaharya, J. 2012-13.'Northeast India in a New Asia: Possibilities and Problems', Ecohist, IV:5-8.
- Commissionerate of Customs (Preventive), North Eastern Region, Shillong. Ministry of Finance (Department of Revenue), Central Board of Indirect Taxes and Customs: http://cexcusner.gov.in/about_cusprevner.htm(accessed on 17th February 2020).
- De, P. 2019.'Act East-North East: Unlocking the Potentials', The Economic Times: https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/blogs/et-commentary/act-east-north-east-unlocking-the-potentials/ (accessedon11th February2020)

- De, P. 2019, June 1. 'Act East to act Indo-Pacific: Agenda for the new government', The EconomicTimes:https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/news/defence/act-east-to-act-indopacific-agenda-for-the-new-government/articleshow/69591279.cms?from=mdr, (accessed on16thFebruary2020).
- Dubey, R. (2014). 'North East India in India's Look East Policy: Constraints and Opportunities.' *Research Process*,2(2),120-128.
- Government of Arunachal Pradesh. 2020. 'Stillwell Road Ledo Road', https:// changlang. nic.in/ stilwell-road-ledo-road/#:~: text = Originally% 20 named % 20 the % 20 % E2% 80% 9CLedo %20 Road,of %20 Generalissimo % 20 Chaing % 20Kai %2 Dshek, (accessedon12th April2020).
- Kalita, S. 2018.'India'sacteast policy and north-east: Prospects and challenges'. *International Journal of Advanced Research and Development*, 3(1):268-270.
- Lee Lavina. 2015. 'India as a Nation of Consequence in Asia: The Potential and Limitations of India's Act East Policy'. *The Journal of East Asian Affairs*, 29 (2):67-104.
- Mukherjee, L. G. 2018. 'India's Infrastructure Development Projects in Myanmar: Game Changer for the Region', http://stsfor.org/content/indias-infrastructure-development-projects-myanmar-game-changer-region-part-2-3%20/, (accessedon12th March2020).
- Panda, B. 2017. 'Act East Policy, Transactions Costs and Development of the North East'. Research gate. in: https: //www.researchgate.net/publication/321243885_Act_East_ Policy_Transactions_Costs_and_ Development_ of_ the_ North_ East, (accessedon 17th February2020).
- PTI. 2018, December 5. 'Centre to spend Rs70,000 crore for gas pipeline network'. Economic times.com: https://m.economictimes.com/industry/energy/oil-gas/centre-to-spend-rs-70000-crore-for-gas-pipeline-network/amp_articleshow/66956215.cms#aoh=15820491418720 &referrer=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.google.com&_tf=From%20%251%24s,(accessed on12thFebruary2020).
- Ministry of External Affairs, Govt. of India. 2014. 'Q.2343 Progress of Trilateral Road', https:// www.mea.gov.in/rajya-sabha.htm?dtl/23789/Q+2343+PROGRESS+OF+ TRILATERAL+ROAD, (accessedon11th February2020)
- Rahim, S. 2018. 'India's Act East Policy: Impact on Mizoram and Manipur', Mantraya. org:https:/ /mantraya.org/analysis-indias-act-east-policy-impact-on-mizoram-and-manipur/ ,(accessedon11thFebruary2020).
- Sajjanhar, A. 2016, May 16. 'India's Act East Policy So Far and Beyond', Gateway House.in:https:/ /www.gatewayhouse.in/indias-act-east-policy-far-beyond/, (accessed on 11th February2020).

- Sarma, A., & Choudhury, S. 2018. Towards a Perspective on the Look (Act) East Policy and Northeast India. In A. S. Choudhury (eds.), *Mainstreaming the Northeast in India's Look andActEastPolicy.*PP.1-21, Palgrave Macmillan.

  https://www.in.emb-japan.go.jp/itpr_en/00_000702.html, (accessedon8thFebruary2020).
- Shekhar, V., & Phukan, P. 2008, August 27. 'Kaladan Multi-modal Project in Myanmar'. Institute of Peace and Conflict Studies:http://www.ipcs.org/comm_select.php?articleNo=2663,(accessedon13thFebruary2020).
- Singh, B. 2019, June17. 'Japanese Companies are keen to invest in Assam: Chandra Mohan Patwary'. Economic times.com: https://m. economic times.com /news/politics-and-nation/japanese-companies-are-keen-to-invest-in-assam-chandra-mohan-patwary/amparticleshow/69828522.cms#referrer=https://www.google.com, (accessedon7thFebruary2020).
- Singh, R. K., & Singh, G. C. 2014, November. 'Look East Policy: India's Motive and Opportunities & Threats Ahead'. Asian Research Consortium: https://www.researchgate.net/publication/280807355_Look_East_Policy_India's_Motive_and_Opportunities_Threats_Ahead,(accessedon14th February2020).
- The Hindu Business Line. 2018, January 9. https://www.the hindu businessline. com / news / national / assam - signs - mous - with - singapore - for - skilling - states - youth / article 9937156.ece, (accessedon 12th February 2020).

Bio Profile of the Author:

1. Associate Professor, Dept of Political Science
   Assam University, Silchar
   Email id: debotosh2022@gmail.com

2. Ph.D Research Scholar, Dept of Political Science
   Assam University, Silchar
   Email id: saradajyotisingha7@gmail.com

Activity Based Learning across the Globe after the Industrial Revolution

Somnath Hazra

"I hear I forget
I see I remember
I do I understand"- Confucius

Abstract

Activity based learning is one of the most fruitful methodologies among children. It is wide and diversified in nature. The method has a root in the period of Socrates and Humbolt. It was shaped and popularized in the hands of so many philosophers throughout the world like Froebel, Dewey, Montessori, Gandhiji and Rabindranath Tagore after industrial revolution. Psychological basis of the activity based learning depends on the constructivism and social constructiveness. Meaningful engagement of the students in learning through activity is one of the major direction of Activity based Learning. Activity Based Learning allows different types of activities in different subjects as the nature and types of learning differ according to subjects**.** It is diversified in nature. There are different types of comparisons among philosophers in respect to age division, design of activity and outcome of activity. In this paper regional comparison is made of different philosophers.Their ascent, descent together with relevance of recommended pedagogy till recent times is discussed.

Keywords : *Activity Based Learning, Pluralistic, Constructivism, Types of Activity, Pedagogy.*

Introduction

Activity Based Learning is mainly based on the term 'Activity', which has pluralistic connotations. Generally, activity may be defined as the task performed in pair or in group by an individual in conscious or unconscious manner. The famous psychologist Woodworth (1948) considered any manifestation of life as activity (Woodworth, 1948, cited in S. K. Mangal, 2002, p. 3). Our behaviour is the collection of connotative, cognitive and affective activities of life (S. K. Mangal, 2002, p. 3). Activity is practical or reasoning task in which pupils are engaged one by one, or with more pupils to enhance and enrich learning. While tasks are associated with evaluating individual pupil's performance, activity involves two or more pupil working cooperatively or collaboratively to achieve a common goal (Hayes, 2006, p.6). Prof J. C. Richards who is a famous professor of applied linguistics in modern times. He said that the term activity is more general than task and exercise. His definition is as followed, "the term activity is more general and refers to any kind of purposeful classroom procedure that involves learners doing something that relates to the goals of the course. For example singing a

song, playing a game, taking part in a debate, having a group discussion, are all different kinds of teaching activities." (http://www.professorjackrichards.com/difference-task-exercise-activity/, retrieved on 20.11.2023).

The concept of Learning from simple to complex involves a process. It is defined as, "Learning is the process of acquiring new or modifying existing knowledge, behaviours, skills, values, or preferences. Evidence that learning has occurred may be seen in changes in behaviour from simple to complex, from moving a finger to skill in synthesizing information or a change in attitude" (Wikipedia, based on Gross, 2010). Analyzing various conceptual assumptions of learning, Churchill (2003) sums up 'learning is an activity which creates unity of learning, doing and thinking.' As noted in Jonassen and Churchill (2003) (cited in Churchill, 2003, p. 1) learning became meaningful when it engages in activity.

If we define the coined term 'Activity Based Learning', we can simply say that it is a learning, which is based on organized activity. It is one of the most effective methodologies of education in modern perspective (Hariharan, 2011). Its core premises include the requirement that learning should be based on doing some hands on experiments and activities. The idea of activity based learning is rooted in the common notion that children are active learners rather than passive recipients of information. If a child is provided with the opportunity to explore learning by themselves and is provided with an optimum learning environment then the learning becomes joyful and long-lasting.

Activity Based Learning, i.e., one of the most effective teaching styles of education, is generated since the period of Socrates and Humboldt (Stößlein, 2009, p. 4) and has developed in the hands of many philosophers and has shaped itself as well. Though enlarged but the concept of active learning is associated with activity based learning (Fallon *et al*., 2012).The concept of 'Active Learning' as described by Prince (2004, p. 1) as a learning process in which students are engaged in performing meaningful activities. That way it differs from the traditional concept of classroom where students receive information passively. In activity based classroom students actively participate in the learning process rather than sit as passive listener. Activity Based Learning differs in one basic point from the traditional leaning i.e., students' engagement and their role in the learning process. A fearless, trauma free environment always provides the best learning outcomes which lacks in traditional classroom. In Activity Based Learning students are actively involved in doing or in seeing something done. Churchill, (2003, p. 1) mentions, "The goal of activity based learning is for the learners to construct mental models that allow for 'higher order' performance such as applied problem solving and transfer of information and skills."

The basic idea of Activity Based Learning finds its antecedents in the common notion that learning can be best when it is initiated by surrounding environment and motivated by providing optimum opportunities to learn. Centre for Education Innovations (2015) has defined Activity Based Learning as follows, "is a methodology where children of different ages are grouped together in one class and learn at their own pace through teacher facilitated exercises." Activity Based Learning has been termed and used in many ways in a number of research works. It is an approach of education which have constructive outlook of the students' active engagement in the learning process through

the performance of some purposeful, meaningful and goal-oriented activities under the guidance of teachers.

Philosophical Basis of Activity Based Learning

The philosophical premises of Activity Based Learning in post industrial revolution can be traced back to the occidental educational thoughts of Friedrich August Froebel (1782-1852), John Dewey (1859-1952) and Madam Maria Montessori (1870-1952). The oriental thoughts are generated by Rabindranath Tagore (1861-1941) and Mohondas Karamchand Gandhi (1869-1948).

One of the chief characteristics of Froebel's method was 'self-activity'. His activities were progressive. Froebel meant that the child should not perform the activity which is suggested by his/her parents or teacher. The child should follow his own impulses and decisions. Froebel said that the divine spirit reveals itself in the spontaneous activities. Self-activity is connected with Froebel's principles of creativeness, by which he meant that creativeness of new forms and combinations are made and expression is given to the new images and ideas. Such gifts, as the educational toys like ball, cube sphere and cylinder and related occupations were meant to stimulate activity. Froebel was the first philosopher to take the formative and creative instincts of children into account for education. The spirit of activity runs into the project method and into the whole range of experimental and creative activities of the modern activities (Taneja and Taneja, 2006, p. 32-48)

The pragmatic philosopher John Dewey considered his experimental school to be an activity school. Dewey considered pupil's activity, whether spontaneous or directed, is the best method of learning. The notion of Dewey was that pupils learn by doing and reflecting on the activities. The activities, suggested by Dewey should be carried out in natural problem solving situation. The learning should be active and co-operative, out of which students gain experience of life and society. Dewey inherited the Froebelian theory of self-activity and Herbertian theory of perception. Dewey prefers the curious mind of the children that enriches problem solving method. Dewey's idea of mental activity enriched intelligence and creative skill (Aslam *et al.*, 2015, p. 2-4).

Madam Maria Montessori, the famous Italian doctor developed the Montessori Method in the form of sense training. Her method allows the children to perform activity freely at their suitable environment. Children should choose activity from the prescribed list and follow constructive approach. Teacher is observer and facilitates them in doing activity. Materials used in the mixed aged classroom are made of wood or plastic. Montessori developed pedagogical methods and materials identifying natural tendencies of children. Lillard (2012, 2017) proved that Montessori Method is effective for different areas of learning like language and mathematics.

Rabindranath Tagore was the chief exponent of activity with nature in the Oriental perspective. According to Tagore, activities are age oriented, natural, spontaneous and creative. Activities should develop self-discipline among children. School plays an important role in developing activity among children. Tagore criticized the traditional concept of schooling. Tagore gave importance on the agricultural activity in which children should spend their time after school. They should learn under the tree and in the evening learn from sky. Up to the age of seven activities should be in relation to soil, tree, water, air and light etc. They should take fruits from trees, play in dust. Learners should have an intimate relationship with nature (Tagore, 2010, p. 245-247).

The educational method practiced by M. K. Gandhi was similar to Dewey, who emphasized activities and occupations of real life. His activity was child-centric, purposeful, productive, remunerative and educative. He believed in the harmonious development of body, mind and spirit and advocated that mind should be trained through hands (Taneja and Taneja, 2006, p. 97-124). He believed in the principles of learning by doing. "Education must revolve round vocational and manual activity at the same time; all syllabuses should be woven around vocational training" (Seetharamu, 2010, p. 172-189). Gandhiji believed in the casteless, classless and non-violent society. All kinds of physical labour are honourable according to him. He disliked hierarchy based on class or caste. The craft or productive work should be chosen from the human activities and interests and educative opportunities. Objectives of this educational scheme is "not primarily the production of craftsmen, able to practice some craft mechanically, but rather the exploitation for educative purposes of the resources implicit in craft work" (Seetharamu, 2010). Activities are the combination of intellectual work and economic self-sufficiency. The scheme also mentioned the proper training of the teachers to practice it effectively. The scheme also admits the limitations of the activity. It points that all subjects cannot be taught through craft.

Psychological Bases of Activity Based Learning

Schools of learning were mainly dominated by schools of Behaviourisms, schools of Cognitivism and the schools of Constructivism. Activity Based Learning theory is generated from cognitive learning theory but considered as a constructivist learning theory (Hein, 1991). Activity Based Learning in India simultaneously with '*Bodh Shiksa Samiti'* schools in India and 'Forest School' in Denmark came out of the learning theory of constructivism. Regarding teaching-learning strategy, Activity Based Learning bears some pedagogical principles of social constructivism. It is child centred learning which sometimes interchangeably used as child centred education. 'Child centred' has been developed with a series of educationists like Locke, Rousseau, Froebel and Dewey (Westbrook *et al*., 2013, p. 9-12). Children's active engagement in the learning process helps to explore their world as creator of their own knowledge and teacher is supposed to play the role of facilitator and sometimes the co-constructor of their knowledge (NCF, 2005, Teaching of Indian Languages, p. 8).

It is clear and obvious that Activity Based Learning belongs to constructivism as psychological school of learning and maintains the teaching-learning and evaluative principles of constructivism.

Types of Activities for Students in Activity Based Learning

Activity Based Learning allows different types of activities in different subjects since the nature and types of learning differ according to subjects. Following points show that it is diversified in nature.

- Some of the activities related to various subjects, like sequencing, sorting, measuring, predicting, testing, role playing, comparing, observing, dancing, singing, mixing, joining, painting, coloring, playing games, storytelling, paper craft, drawing, collage, outdoor games etc.

- Sometimes activities can be differentiated according to the procedure of lesson like Preliminary activity, Reinforcement activity, Practice activity, Evaluative activity and Remedial activity (Sumanjari, 2012, p. 469).
- Froebel's self-activity in the forms of 'gifts' and 'occupations' stimulate activities among children. Activities, namely, holding, dropping, rolling, swinging, hiding and revealing the balls, lead to differentiating among shapes like sphere, cube and cylinder. Assembling or reassembling of shapes, modeling, drawing, sewing, and colouring were considered as gifts and occupations, which enable the child to act out his/her observation in adult life. These activities also generate creative power among them (Baidya *et al.,* 2015, p. 136).
- Activities of Montessori involve exploration, manipulation, ordering, abstraction, repetition and communication, which aim to develop imagination, reasoning and creativity among children.
- Dewey, one of the chief exponents of activity of modern times, also believed in various types of in-house, outreached and mental activities in education.
- Activities may be classified according to the purposes of education as well as subjects, gradation of the students, need of the students and many more. Pupils usually perform activities like cooking, sewing, weaving, gardening, metalwork and woodwork etc.
- Sometimes students are considered as members of a family and school facilitate self-activity individually or with joint allocation in kitchen, garden, studio, laboratory etc. Students can integrate their activities with subjects like literature, art, history, geography, science etc. Teachers always guide the exciting and challenging activities of the students.
- Tagore used to prescribe activities in free preferences of the children. Teachers of Santiniketan were advised accordingly. Activities should have relationship with the nature and culture of the children.
- Gandhian activities were correlated and interdisciplinary in nature. Spinning, weaving, physical activities, crafting, ginning, carding, winding, reeling, twisting, mulching, watering, manuring, weeding and harvesting are some of the examples of activities suggested. Gandhiji also laid emphasis on maintenance of relationship between activity and societal environment.

Gandhiji and Froebel emphasized on spiritual development together with performance of various types of activities. Hence it appears that there is a range in various types of activities (Taneja and Taneja, 2006).

Time management and Teacher's efficiency are important considerations for learning through activity. Activity is free from all sorts of physical punishment and always joyous in nature.

The Unity and the Diversities in the Philosophies of the Proponents of Activity Based Learning

If we look into the geographical mapping of the activity, Froebel and Montessori are from European country. Gandhiji and Tagore came from Asia and Dewey was an American.

The unity and diversity can be understood in different dimensions related to activity based learning.

Age division of learners made by different philosophers:

Philosophers	Age division
Friedrich August Froebel	Froebel's activity is for infant to five or six years.
John Dewey	John Dewey encompasses their activity for elementary level and subsequent higher level.
Madam Maria Montessori	Montessori activities are also for the one to four or five years old children.
Rabindranath Tagore	Rabindranath Tagore also prefers activity for preparatory level and elementary level of schooling.
Mohondas Karamchand Gandhi	Gandhiji prescribed activity for elementary level and subsequent higher level.

Similarities in the methods of philosophers:

All of them design activities for foundational stages of life.

Differences in the methods of philosophers:

There is a major difference among philosophers regarding implementation of activity according to age group. Froebel and Montessori chose for elementary level, while Dewey, Tagore and Gandhiji for elementary and school level also.

Activity types of different philosophers:

Philosophers	Activity Types
Friedrich August Froebel	'Gifts' were used to learn how to distinguish, compare and contrast and 'Occupations' were mainly to do all activities.
John Dewey	John Dewey's activity school gives importance on the natural problem solving situation.
Madam Maria Montessori	Montessori gave importance on daily life activities, sense training and Use of didactic apparatus.
Rabindranath Tagore	Rabindranath Tagore gave importance to the activities that have spontaneous relationship with nature. Learne must enjoy the rhymes of nature.
Mohondas Karamchand Gandhi	Gandhiji developed craft centric education.

Similarities:
In all the above activities self-engagement and activity with senses are implied.

Differences:
While the activities perceived by western philosophers directly point out daily life and its problems, Indian philosophers remain silent on them. Activities of Froebel and Montessori support foundational stages of life. John Dewey and Rabindranath Tagore give more importance on multidimensional activity, which may support them throughout their life. Gandhiji is more realistic in design and practice.

Outcome of activity of different philosophers:

Philosophers	Outcome of Activity
Friedrich August Froebel	Froebel develops his activity on the philosophy of creativity and social participation.
John Dewey	Activities of Dewey generate cooperative living in the midst of problem solving situation. Real life experience has relationship with home and community.
Madam Maria Montessori	Montessori did not give importance on group activity and developed the activities through specially designed apparatus.
Rabindranath Tagore	Tagore develops his activity on the idea of freedom and spontaneous communication with nature.
Mohondas Karamchand Gandhi	Activities of Gandhiji based on real life craft centric learning which binds head, hand and heart.

Similarities:
All philosophers tried to keep learners engaged throughout the course activities.

Differences:
Froebel and Montessori strengthen basic experimental understanding of learners. The activity of Dewey and Tagore may have most joyous effect on life and learning of the learners throughout the life. Both of them tried to overcome the burden of learning. Dewey emphasizes community life which has a resonating effect on the learning today. Rabindranath's activity may slow down the learning progress partially.

Regional Comparisons of different philosophers:

European Philosophers		Indian Philosophers	American Philosopher
Friedrich August Froebel Madam Maria Montessori		Rabindranath Tagore Mohondas Karamchand Gandhi	John Dewey
Philosophy	Froebel and Montessori support foundational stages of life.	Both of them tried to overcome the burden of leaning but Tagore is more successful in that.	Dewey tried to develop an inquisitive mind among learning.
Area of activity	Classroom based learning but wide and varied in nature.	Tagore tried to develop both inside and outside of the classroom but gave more importance on outside the classroom like Playground, Trees, Soils etc. Gandhiji also developed both inside and outside the classroom.	Dewey also developed both inside and outside of the classroom. Sometimes classroom based in Natural circumstances.
Design of Activity	Self activity, Guided activity.	Rabindranath Tagore designed his activities in Natural circumstances and learners must enjoy it.Gandhiji designed according craft which had correlation with the activities of practical life.	Dewey designed activities that can be performed in kitchen, garden, laboratory, classrooms.
Support/Apparatus of Activity	Froebel uses 'Gifts' and 'Occupations'. Montessori uses 'Didactic Apparatus'.	Tagore always uses nature. Gandhiji uses different types of hands, eyes and feet related crafts.	Dewey uses all required all items to design activity.

Similarities:

All philosophers develop activity to make children more interested in learning. Leaning is joyous and harmonious with life and not idealistically set up.

Differences:

They use different types of supports/apparatus for designing the activity. Activities of Froebel and Montessori direct children towards self-activity and creativity. Activities of John Dewey and Gandhiji are more structured and expand through primary, upper primary and secondary level also. Tagore maintains harmony with nature.

Discussion:

Activity based learning is purely learner centric approach. All philosophers tried to make learning more learner centric. Activity is free from all sorts of physical punishment and always joyous in nature. Self-engagement, interest to learn and engagement between learning and community were also emphasized (Westbrook *et al*., 2013, p. 9-12)**.** The leading philosophers of activity from various countries like Germany, Italy are interlinked in that approach. The idea of learning has been developed

in various countries as well as continents of the world for the last two hundred years. Constructivism was the basic philosophical premise under which the idea of activity based learning was developed (Hein, 1991).

After the industrial revolution, some major societal changes have impacted the education system throughout the world. As for example, people became more dependent on machine.They try to relate every activity in terms of economy and output orientation and many more. Froebel's Kindergarten, Tagore's Shantiniketan, Gandhiji's Basic Education are still in force but cannot expand beyond regional localization. The philosophy of Montessori on foundational stages of education and philosophy of Dewey on primary, upper primary and secondary stages of education remain relevant through proper institutional framework (Marshall, 2017 & Aubrey, K. & Riley, A., 2016 and Wada, L.B. & Yankori, B. E. , 2023).

Rabindranath Tagore designed his activities in natural circumstances that learners can enjoy. But gradually learners become classroom centred and co-curricular activity grew in subsidiary dimension. Learners become habituated in performing designed activity according to specific subject matter. Therefore, classroom gains importance over open terrace. Learning through nature is commendable activity based learning but over emphasis on it may slow down the learning process and gain some dubious experience also.

The self-supporting concept of basic education was criticized since its debut in Wardha. Sometimes it is argued that Wardha scheme sets back the clock of civilization to medieval period. On academic level, learners in basic education become more oriented to economic output and on science and technology based learning than development in character and personality. Economically remunerative activities became more preferable than holistic development of Head, Hand and Heart. Basic schools gradually became isolated from the main school system adopted by various state governments since 1960s (NCF, 2005, Work and Education, p.5). Since independence several committees and commissions of India recommended several times to India Government to take full financial responsibility of education system of the country. Evaluating those recommendations Government gradually took financial responsibilities of education by all means and the model of Basic Education became irreverent gradually.

After Second World War, people tried to search for the security in the world. Gradual development of capitalism made the world more formal. Formal enrolment became major point of emphasis in shaping education. Global education also is contextualized with superpowers like Russia and America. Socialist countries like Russia and others also adopted the new trends. Society adopted the trends of formal education, which may be output oriented and nature becomes the constant source of joy and love.

Conclusion

This paper aims to re-conceptualize the activity based learning in all dimensions of consideration like philosophical, psychological and historical, giving a special emphasis on post Industrial Revolution. In broader sense activity exists in every sphere of life like family, religion, community etc. Activity allows engaging two or more people in a real life learning environment with the principles of cooperation

and collaboration. Innate tendencies and potentialities of children are the most focused area of activity based learning. Activity based learning considers the psychological principles of constructivism. i.e., learners remain active throughout the pedagogic process. Any kind of playful method is effective for children. The philosophical premise of Activity Based Learning is established in the 18th century with the pioneering educational thought of Froebel. Though the thought was interwoven in the period of Socrates and Humboldt but in the hands of Froebel it came out as a well established method of learning. Then with the desired modifications it becomes successfully popularized in occidental and oriental countries with Dewey and Gandhi.

Acknowledgement

Author is indebted to Prof (Dr.) Kamal Krishna De, Retired Principal, David Hare Training College and IASE, Kolkata-700 019 and Dr. Abhijit Guha, Associate Professor in Education, Ramakrishna mission Sikshanamandira, Belur Math, Howrah, for their valuable suggestions in preparing this paper.

ORCID Id

Somnath Hazra ID http://orcid.org/0009-0002-4598-6339

References

- *"Activity Based Learning to be introduced in 200 more schools."* Times of India.in Jul, 8, 2014. Retrieved in 11/11/2023.
- Akkus,Z. 2015. 'Activity Based Teaching in Social Studies Education: An Action Research'. *Academic Journals*, Vol.10 (14), Pp-1911-1921. Retrieved from https://academicjournals.org/journal/ERR/article-full-text-pdf/65CBA9354119
- Anadalaxmi, S. 2007. Activity Based Learning: A Report on an Innovative Method in Tamilnadu. Retrieved from http://www.ssa.tn.nic.in/docu/abl-report-by- dr.anandhalakshmi.pdf
- Aslam, M, Ahmed, M and Majher, U. 2015. 'Enhancing Communication Skills of ESL Primary Students through Activity Based Learning'. *European Journal of Language Studie*s, Vol. 2 (1), Pp-1-11. Retrieved from https://www.idpublications.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/05/ENHANCING-COMMUNICATION-SKILLS-OF-ESL-PRIMARY-STUDENTS-THROUGH-ACTIVITY-BASED-LEARNING.pdf.
- Aubrey, K. & Riley, A. 2016. *Understanding and using Educational Theories*. Sage: UK. Retrieved from https://uk.sagepub.com/sites/default/files/upm-binaries/75509_A_Democratic_Notion_of_Learning_%281%29.pdf
- Baidya, N, M., Mondal, A, Saha, A. 2015. 'Educational Thoughts of Fridrich, William A. Froebel: A Theoretical Study'. In *International Journal of Applied Research*. In volume 1 Issue 2 Pp-135-137.
- Centre for Education Innovations (2015). *Activity Based Learning*. Results for Development Institute, Washington DC, USA.
- Churchill, D. 2003. 'Effective Design Principles for Activity-based learning: the crucial role of

learning objectes' in *science and engineering education*. Retrieved from http://www.learnerstogether.net/PDF/Effective-Design-Principles.pdf on 12.09.2023.

- Fallon, E., Prendergast, T. and Walsh, S. 2012. *An Activity-based Approach to the Learning and Teaching of Research Methods: Measuring Student Engagement and Learning. Teaching Fellowships, Paper 30.* Retrieved from https://arrow.dit.ie/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1022&context=fellow
- Gross, R. 2010. *Psychology: The Science of Mind and Behaviour*. Hachette: UK.
- Hariharan, P. 2011. Effectiveness of Activity-Based-Learning Methodology for Elementary School Education. Paper submitted for National Child Rights Research Fellowship. Retrieved from https://www.cry.org/resources/pdf/NCRRF/Prabha_Hariharan_2010_Report.pdf
- *Haryana Launches activity based learning programme in government schools*: News Indiatoday.in 2014-02-06. Retrieved in 10/12/2017.
- Hayes, D. 2006. *Primary Education: The Key Concepts.* New York, USA: Rutledge.
- Hein, G. E. 1991. *Constructivist Learning Theory*. Retrieved in http://www.exploratoriun.edu/IFI/resources/constructivistlearning.html retrieved on 16/12/2017.
- Mangal, S.K. 2002. *Advanced Educational Psychology*. New Delhi, India: PHI.
- Marshall, C. 2017. Montessori education: A review of the evidence base. In *npj Science of Learning, Vol 2* (11). Retrieved from file:///D:/Downloads/s41539-017-0012-7.pdf
- National Council of Educational Research and Training. 2006. Position Paper, *National Curriculum Framework 2005: Teaching of Indian Languages.* New Delhi: NCERT.
- National Council of Educational Research and Training. 2006. Position Paper, *National Curriculum Framework 2005: Work and Education.* New Delhi: NCERT.
- Padmavathi, B.V.V. 2013. Activity Based Learning. *Research Journal of English Language and Literature*, Vol. 1 (3), pp.287-289. Retrieved from http://www.rjelal.com/RJELAL%20VOL.1.ISSUE.3/Dr.B.V.V.PADMAVATHI %20287-289.pdf
- Prince, M 2004. Does Active Learning Work? A Review of the Research. In *Journal of Engineering Education.* Volume-93 Issue 3 pp-223-231.
- Rathee, R and Rajain, P. 2016. Effectiveness of Activity Based Learning in Management Education. *International Journal of Advanced Technology in Engineering and Science*, Vol. 4 (3), Pp-47-56.
- Seetharamu,A.S. 2010. *Philosophies of Education*. New Delhi, India: PHI Learning Private Limited.
- Stoblein, N. 2009. *Activity Based Learning Experiences in Quantitative Research Methodology for (Time-Constrained) Young Scholars-Course Design and Effectiveness.* In POMS 20th annual Conference, Orlando, FL, 2009, 1-33. Retrieved from https://www.pomsmeetings.org/ConfPapers/011/011-0782.pdf

- Sumanjari, S. 2012. Integration of Activities in Teaching English to Primary School Students. *Language in India*, Vol. 12, pp. 464-477. Retrieved from http://www.languageinindia.com/ aug 2012 / sumanjariablfinal.pdf
- Tagore, R.N. 2010. *Siksha*. Kolkata, India: ViswaBharati.
- Taneja, V.R. &Taneja. S. 2006. *Educational Thinkers*. New Delhi, India: Atlantic Publishers and Distributors.
- Valdez, V.A., Lomoljo,A.,Dumrang, P. S., and Didatar,M. 2015. Developing Critical Thinking through Activity Based and Co-Operative Approach in Teaching High School Chemistry. *In International Journal of Social Science and Humanity*. Volume 5 Issue 1. pp- 139-141.
- Wada, L.B. &Yankori, B.E. 2023. John Dewey's idea of education: Its relevance to Contemorary Nigerian Educatinal Value. In *International Journal of Research and Innovation in Social Science*. Volume 8(8). Retrieved from file:///D:/Downloads/John_Dewey_s_Idea_of_Education_Its_Relev.pdf
- Westbrook, J., Durrani, N., Brown, R and Orr, D. and others 2013. *Pedagogy, Curriculum, Teaching Practices and Teacher Education in Developing Countries*. Pp-5-17

Bio Profile of the Author:
Assistant Professor, Department of Education,
Women's Christian College, Kolkata-700026
Email id: somnathedu9@gmail.com

Assessing the Impacts of India's Citizenship Amendment Act (CAA) on Refugee Protection: A Post-2019 Analysis

Kaushik Banerjee[1], Sudipta Adhikary[2] & Paramita Bhattacharyya[3]

Abstract:

The Citizenship (Amendment) Act, 2019, being the most contentious recent piece of legislation, sparked an unprecedented protest and controversy across the whole country. This short piece of legislation granted a fast-track mode of citizenship to six religious' groups in three neighbouring countries. The sceptic asserts that though apparently beneficial, this Act is fitted with discrimination, and deprivation and equipped with the ulterior motive of the present ruling government. The scepticism stems mostly from the exclusion of one religious' group from its legislative domain and it calls into question its cherry-picking method of selecting three neighbouring countries. Critics assert that this legislative amendment will surely fail to pass the test of the doctrine of' intelligible differentia' and hence it is unconstitutional on the grounds of violative of Article 14 of the Indian Constitution. To what extent, this contention holds water appears to be the thrust of this paper. A section of refugee law scholars also depicts this piece of legislation as 'quasi refugee law' in the Indian setting. To what extent, it serves the interests of refugees seems to be the special focus of this paper.

Keywords: *Citizenship, Refoulement, Refugee, Intelligible-differentia, Persecution, Article 14 of the Indian Constitution, The Citizenship (Amendment) Act, 2019*

Introduction

> *" The CAA is a limited and narrowly tailored legislation which seeks to provide a relaxation to...specific communities from the specified countries with a clear cut-off date."....* ***Ministry of Home Affairs, G.O.I in its Annual Report for 2020-21.***

Being derived from the Latin word "*Cavitas*," the term "*Citizen*" indicates the connection between the individual and the State under which such individual lives or participates in its functions. As a member of the political community or the State, it denotes legal status and bears certain exclusive rights and duties as well. In India, the issue of Citizenship is governed by the Constitution of India and the Citizenship Act, of 1955 (Gogoi, 2022).

Part II of the Constitution deals with the provisions concerning Indian Citizenship at the commencement of the Indian Constitution. Similarly, the Citizenship Act, of 1955 addresses the

Citizenship issue in our country after the commencement of the Indian Constitution. Without delving into the citizenship debate, the researchers keep themselves confined to the very recent 2019 amendment of the Citizenship Act of 1955 because this amendment to the Citizenship law has a specific bearing on the persecuted groups of three neighbouring countries. Here the researchers have dealt with a few important issues like whether there is any specific connection between the recent 2019 Citizenship Amendment Law and the refugees, by assessing the purpose of the Act to protect the refugees who have taken shelter in our country (Economic Times, 2024a).

It is in this socio-legal backdrop, that the authors herein have ventured to write on this topic of contemporary relevance. This paper, inter-alia, highlights the overview of the contentious Citizenship Amendment of 2019 and attempts to trace the furore underlying it. Lastly, the authors have tried to find out the role, if any, of this Central legislation towards refugee protection in India and have briefly come up with a way forward to address this crisis (Government of India, 2015b).

Demographic Overview

India, a country of over 1.4 billion people, is a mosaic of ethnic, linguistic, and religious diversity. It is home to a multitude of communities, including Hindus, Muslims, Christians, Sikhs, Buddhists, Jains, and others, each with their own distinct cultural identities. This diversity is further enriched by the presence of various tribal groups, particularly in the northeastern states, and a significant population of people who have migrated from neighboring countries over the years.

Religious composition is a key aspect of India's demographic profile. According to the 2011 Census, Hindus constitute around 79.8% of the population, Muslims 14.2%, Christians 2.3%, Sikhs 1.7%, Buddhists 0.7%, and Jains 0.4%. These figures, however, do not fully capture the complexity of India's demographic landscape, which has been shaped by historical migrations, inter-communal relations, and the influence of external political and religious movements.

The north-eastern region of India, which shares borders with Bangladesh, Bhutan, China, Myanmar, and Nepal, is particularly significant in the context of the Citizenship Amendment Act (CAA). This region is characterized by a high degree of ethnic diversity, with numerous indigenous communities coexisting alongside migrants from Bangladesh and other neighboring countries. The demographic composition of this region has been a source of tension, with concerns about the impact of migration on the cultural and political landscape of the area.

Historical Context

India's history has been marked by waves of migration, invasions, and cultural exchanges, which have significantly influenced its demographic composition. The partition of British India in 1947, which led to the creation of India and Pakistan, was a defining moment in the subcontinent's history.

The partition triggered one of the largest mass migrations in history, with an estimated 10 to 15 million people crossing the newly drawn borders to join the country of their religious affiliation. This event not only altered the demographic makeup of the region but also sowed the seeds of communal tensions that continue to affect India and its neighbors. In the years following independence, India witnessed several influxes of refugees due to political, religious, and ethnic conflicts in neighboring countries. The 1971 Bangladesh Liberation War, for instance, led to a massive influx of refugees into India, particularly in the northeastern states of Assam, West Bengal, and Tripura. The Rohingya crisis in Myanmar, the civil war in Sri Lanka, and the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan are other examples of events that have led to the migration of refugees into India.

India's approach to refugees has traditionally been shaped by its historical experience and its commitment to humanitarian principles, despite the absence of a formal legal framework for refugee protection. The country has accommodated diverse refugee populations, including Tibetans, Sri Lankan Tamils, Chakmas from the Chittagong Hill Tracts, and more recently, Rohingya Muslims. However, India's refugee policy has been largely ad hoc, relying on executive orders and administrative measures rather than comprehensive legislation.

Citizenship Amendment Act (CAA) in Historical Context

The Citizenship Amendment Act (CAA), passed in December 2019, represents a significant shift in India's approach to citizenship and refugee protection. The CAA amends the Citizenship Act of 1955 to provide a pathway to citizenship for religious minorities — Hindus, Sikhs, Buddhists, Jains, Parsis, and Christians — from Pakistan, Bangladesh, and Afghanistan, who entered India before December 31, 2014. The Act excludes Muslims, marking a departure from India's secular tradition of not linking citizenship to religion.

The CAA must be understood in the context of India's historical experiences with migration and refugee flows. The law's explicit focus on religious minorities from neighboring Islamic states is rooted in the perception that these groups face persecution in their countries of origin and therefore deserve protection. However, the exclusion of Muslims has sparked widespread criticism and protests, both within India and internationally, as it is seen as discriminatory and a violation of the secular principles enshrined in India's Constitution.

The northeastern region of India, which has historically borne the brunt of migration from Bangladesh, has been particularly sensitive to the implications of the CAA. The fear of demographic change and cultural assimilation has fueled opposition to the Act in states like Assam, where the preservation of indigenous identity has long been a political issue. The CAA has also exacerbated tensions in other parts of the country, where concerns about its potential impact on India's Muslim population and the secular fabric of the nation have led to widespread unrest.

Citizenship (Amendment) Act, 2019: An Overview

The 11 (eleven) years prerequisite for citizenship by registration or naturalisation in the 1955 Act has now been shortened to 5 (five) years for these categories of people. Here the researchers are not unmindful of the fact that the seeds of this contentious enactment were sown in 2015 itself, when the Passport (Entrance into India) Rules, 1950 and Foreigners Order, 1948 were applied to that effect. These two amendments, namely Order 3A of The Foreigners Order, 1948 and Rules 4 (ha) of The Passport (Entry into India) Rules, 1950, granted a protective umbrella to the six religious minorities (Hindu, Christians, Buddhists, Jains, Parsis, and Sikhs) of Bangladesh and Pakistan, who took shelter in India to evade religious persecution or its consequent fear. As a result, these amendments granted an exemption to those specific religious minorities from the penal consequences of the Foreigners Act, of 1946 and the Passport Act, of 1920. The only difference is that: unlike the Citizenship (Amendment) Act of 2019, these two 2015 amendments benefit illegal migrants from two countries only, namely, Pakistan and Bangladesh (Economic Times, 2024b).

Political Milieu of India: Contextualizing the Citizenship Amendment Act (CAA)

Rise of Majoritarian Politics

The political milieu in India leading up to the enactment of the Citizenship Amendment Act (CAA) in 2019 was heavily influenced by the rise of majoritarian politics. The Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP), led by Narendra Modi, came to power in 2014 with a strong mandate, advocating for a vision of India rooted in the ideology of Hindutva, or Hindu nationalism. This ideology seeks to define Indian identity primarily through the lens of Hindu culture and religion, emphasizing the primacy of Hindu values and traditions in the country's political and social fabric. The BJP's rise to power marked a significant shift in India's political landscape. The party's narrative increasingly focused on issues of national security, religious identity, and the protection of the majority Hindu community's interests. This was reflected in the party's electoral strategies, which often centered around polarizing issues such as cow protection, the construction of the Ram temple in Ayodhya, and the perceived threat posed by Muslim immigrants, particularly in the northeastern states. The BJP's approach to governance also included the promotion of policies that reinforced the idea of India as a Hindu nation. This included the abrogation of Article 370 in 2019, which granted special autonomy to the Muslim-majority region of Jammu and Kashmir, and the passage of the Citizenship Amendment Act (CAA), which explicitly linked citizenship to religious identity. These moves were seen by many as part of a broader agenda to reshape India's secular, pluralistic identity in favor of a more majoritarian, Hindu-centric vision.

Legislative Context and Passage of the CAA

The Citizenship Amendment Act (CAA) was introduced and passed in this charged political environment. The Act was first introduced in Parliament in July 2016 but lapsed after the dissolution of the 16th Lok Sabha. It was reintroduced in December 2019 and swiftly passed by both houses of Parliament, despite widespread protests and opposition.

The CAA amends the Citizenship Act of 1955 to provide a pathway to Indian citizenship for religious minorities — Hindus, Sikhs, Buddhists, Jains, Parsis, and Christians — from Pakistan, Bangladesh, and Afghanistan, who entered India before December 31, 2014. The exclusion of Muslims from this list was justified by the government on the grounds that these neighboring countries are Islamic states, and therefore, Muslims are unlikely to face religious persecution there.

The passage of the CAA was supported by the BJP's strong majority in Parliament, as well as its allies in the National Democratic Alliance (NDA). However, the Act faced stiff resistance from opposition parties, civil society organizations, and various regional groups, particularly in the northeastern states. Critics argued that the CAA violated the secular principles enshrined in India's Constitution by discriminating against Muslims and linking citizenship to religious identity.

Nationwide Protests and Political Backlash

The enactment of the CAA sparked widespread protests across the country, marking one of the most significant political upheavals in India in recent years. The protests were particularly intense in university campuses, urban centers, and the northeastern states, where the fear of demographic change and cultural assimilation fueled public anger.

In Assam and other northeastern states, the opposition to the CAA was driven by concerns that the Act would encourage further migration from Bangladesh, threatening the region's fragile demographic balance and cultural identity. The region has a long history of tensions over migration, particularly from Bangladesh, and the CAA was seen as a betrayal of the promises made in the Assam Accord of 1985, which sought to protect the region from the influx of illegal immigrants.

In other parts of India, particularly in states with significant Muslim populations, the CAA was viewed as part of a broader agenda to marginalize Muslims and undermine the secular character of the Indian state. The combination of the CAA with the proposed nationwide implementation of the National Register of Citizens (NRC) raised fears that millions of Muslims could be rendered stateless or subject to discrimination.

The protests against the CAA and NRC were marked by their broad-based nature, cutting across religious, regional, and political lines. They included a diverse coalition of students, activists, political parties, and ordinary citizens who came together to voice their opposition to what they saw as a

discriminatory and divisive law. The government responded with a heavy-handed crackdown, including internet shutdowns, curfews, and the use of force against protesters, leading to further escalation of tensions.

International Reactions and Diplomatic Implications

The passage of the CAA and the ensuing protests also attracted significant international attention and criticism. Various human rights organizations, including Amnesty International and Human Rights Watch, condemned the Act as discriminatory and a violation of India's international obligations under the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights.

Several foreign governments and international bodies, including the United States Commission on International Religious Freedom (USCIRF), expressed concern over the CAA and the potential for it to exacerbate religious tensions in India. The issue also became a point of contention in India's diplomatic relations with its neighbors, particularly Bangladesh, which expressed concern over being singled out as a source of illegal migration.

The Political Milieu Post-CAA

The political milieu in India following the passage of the CAA has been marked by increased polarization and tension. The BJP government has continued to defend the Act as a necessary measure to protect persecuted minorities in neighboring countries, while critics have remained vocal in their opposition, framing the law as part of a broader assault on India's secular and democratic values.
The CAA has also had significant implications for India's domestic and international image. Domestically, it has deepened the divisions between the ruling party and the opposition, as well as between different religious and ethnic communities. Internationally, it has raised questions about India's commitment to secularism and human rights, potentially affecting its relations with other countries and its standing in global forums.

In conclusion, the political milieu in India leading up to and following the enactment of the Citizenship Amendment Act (CAA) has been characterized by a shift towards majoritarian politics, increasing polarization, and widespread public dissent. The CAA, as a legislative measure, reflects the broader ideological and political currents shaping India today, and its impact on refugee protection, minority rights, and India's secular identity will continue to be a subject of intense debate and analysis.

Enactment of Citizenship (Amendment) Act, 2019 & Consequent Furore

This short piece of legislation triggered a heated debate and unprecedented furore across the whole country questioning the legislative intention or object behind it. We have witnessed a nationwide

controversy and massive protests against this Act. Critics have mainly attacked this Act on the grounds of discrimination against Muslims. The ruling governments' intention was vehemently attacked mainly on the grounds of elimination of Muslims from the legislative ambit. Some notable intellectuals have claimed that the CAA possesses anti-secular characteristics (Jain, Srivastava and Tiwary, 2022).

Since it has kept Muslims outside its scope and has condemned the legislative move as inherently communal on the grounds of embracing 'religion' to confer Indian citizenship. The critics and sceptic have left no stone unturned to criticise the move of the present ruling government by alleging its non-secular nature and also by accusing the current Indian government as a pro-Hindu government. The bone of contention of the opposition is that by excluding Muslims from the zone of consideration and by compromising the secular nature of the Indian Constitution, the present government of India has moved a step further in the formation of one "Hindu Rashtra". To buttress this contention, the critics and opponents have cited the NRC-based exercise in Assam, which has excluded almost 19 (nineteen) lakh people after its publication of the final list in 2019. As per the opponents, because more than 10 (ten) lakh Hindus are included in these 19 (nineteen) lakhs excluded figure in Assam, CAA deliberately stepped in to safeguard them from losing their citizenry rights. Opponents had smelled some foul in the timing of this legislative reform (Government of India, 2015a).

Citizenship (Amendment) Act, 2019 & Stand of the Government

Per contra, the Indian Government rebutted this allegation by asserting that the intended beneficiaries of the 2019 Citizenship amendment are none other than the religious minorities of three neighbouring countries of India. In these three neighbouring countries, Islam is admittedly the State religion. Owing to this, these religious groups, being religious minorities, faced severe deprivation, tremendous exploitation, and brutal persecution. To give them a place of honour and dignity, these persecuted religious groups of the specified three neighbouring countries have been given the fast-track mode of acquiring citizenship rights. Hence, by relying on the Purpose and Intent Behind the Citizenship Bill of 2019, the government contends that this recent legislative amendment is nothing but a humanitarian moves to provide ministration and succour to the religiously persecuted minorities of the above-mentioned three nations (Government of India, 2024).

Citizenship (Amendment) Act, 2019 & Tentative Grounds of Attack

With this background, the researcher considers it imperative to explore the concerns raised in it. From the perusal of numerous available literature, it appears that criticisms are mainly six-fold. Critics assert the unconstitutionality of the amendment on the grounds of breach of multiple provisions of the Indian Constitution and also of compromising its secular features it. Besides this, the choice of three neighbouring countries was also put beneath the scanner. Some have also questioned the decision to

exclusion of Rohingyas of Myanmar and Tamils of Sri Lanka. Some have also questioned that if providing soothe to persecuted victims is the only intended objective, then why Shia, Hazaras, and Ahmadiyya's are being excluded in these neighbouring countries? Thus, it appears that the CAA of 2019 came under considerable attack mainly on the following five factors. (Gumaste, 2021).

i. Contravening Articles 14, 15, and 21 of the Constitution, along with the secular ethos.
ii. Can be disputed and debated on the selection of the above-mentioned three specific neighbouring countries.
iii. Can be critiqued about the exclusion of Rohingyas of Myanmar and Sri Lankan Tamils. In short, this method of classification can be questioned for its under-inclusiveness.
iv. Can be challenged since this Act discriminates against Muslims in these neighbouring countries.
v. Can be questioned because Shia, Hazaras, and Ahmadiyya's also endure persecution in these three neighbouring states.
vi. Can also be questioned on the ground of making religion a basis for classification.

Citizenship (Amendment) Act, 2019 vis-à-vis Constitutionality & Unconstitutionality

Numerous petitions have been submitted to the Indian Supreme Court challenging the constitutionality and validity of the Act. All such petitions have been clubbed together in the seminal case of *'Indian Union Muslim League v. Union of India*'. Thus, the matter is now sub-judice and pending consideration before the Indian Apex Court. In this setting, the authors through their limited legal acumen and prudence attempt to legally explore and examine both sides of the contentious Act. (Indian Kanoon, 2024a).

Tentative arguments in support of the CAA move-

a) The contention of the critics that CAA tends to breach the mandate of Article 15 of the Indian Constitution is completely unfounded and baseless because this Article only applies to Indian citizens and by no stretch of the imagination can be held applicable to non-citizens also. In terms of violations of Articles 14 and 21 of the Indian Constitution, the researcher would prefer to argue that these prohibitions apply to individuals "who live in India or dwell in India, rather than those who wish to enter India." As a result, a Pakistani sitting in Pakistan cannot agitate about a breach of his or her rights under Articles 14 and 21 of the Indian Constitution. (Indian Kanoon, 2024b)
b) On the issue of the non-inclusion of Rohingya Muslims of Myanmar and Sri Lankan Tamils, one reasonable argument seems to be that: a legislative measure that remedies one injustice does not need to cover all the other related injustices. To answer the question of under-inclusion, it is necessary to understand what the term means in a legal sense.
c) On the issue of whether the CAA systematically discriminates against Muslims in the specified

three neighbouring Islamic nations, one could reasonably argue that someone belonging to the religious faith of the State itself cannot at least be subjected to religious persecution. Thus, the contention of discrimination against Muslims seems preposterous and ridiculous. Here the prudent contention should be: this law does not state unequivocally and categorically that Muslims from neighbouring countries would never be granted citizenship (Times of India, 2024b).

d) On the issue of Shia, Hazara, and Ahmediya's persecution in those three specified countries and their non-inclusion within the contours of the Act, it might be claimed that the goal of this amendment is not to fix all the governance-related difficulties in our neighbouring nations. India has no duty or commitment to go to its neighbouring countries and locate individuals who are being mistreated in those countries and extend protection to enable them to settle in India.
e) On the choice of three Islamic countries, it can be argued that the matter falls within the policy decision of the government and the Court would be very slow to scrutinize it unless it is patently arbitrary. Thus, the selection of three Islamic nations can be claimed to be a matter of government policy and the scope of judicial review should be very limited unless it is manifestly whimsical and capricious.
f) On the question that 'religion' cannot be a reasonable basis for classification, reliance may be placed upon the decision of the Indian Supreme Court in Mahant Moti Das's case, where the court upheld the factor of 'religion' as a reasonable basis for classification. In reality, members of religious minority communities in our country have certain specific privileges under the Indian Constitution. Thus, religious categorization is not '*ipso-facto'* unconstitutional.Judicial attention may also be drawn to the 2004 Lautenberg-Spectre Amendment of the United States that conferred refugee status upon the historically persecuted communities and consequential citizenship tag to the Jews, Christians, and Baha'is from three countries (Kumar, 2016).

Tentative arguments to counter and contradict the CAA move-

a) First of all, The Citizenship Amendment of 2019 makes a whimsical and capricious differentiation between 'illegal immigrants based on their religion by conferring entitlements to certain religious communities while eliminating Muslims (PTI, 2022).
b) For the sake of argument, even if it satisfies the test of Article 14 and 21, the 2019 Citizenship (Amendment) Act can still be vehemently attacked on the ground of violating the cherished principle of 'secularism', which has been declared as one of the indispensable and cardinal structures of the Indian Constitution in the landmark nine judges Bench decision of the Indian Supreme Court in S.R. Bommaiv. Union of India.
c) On the issue of prescribing the cut-off date of 31st December 2014, it may also be questioned what

is the justification or rationale for the insertion of such a cut-off date in the Citizenship (Amendment) Act of 2019. The petitioners may contend that here the date is chosen at random. Neither the Statement of Objects and Reasons of the Act nor the Act in its entirety, illuminate the rationale or premise for the incorporation of such a cut-off date and that's why the rational relationship with the Act's purported goal is missing.

d) The 2019 Citizenship Amendment (CAA) can still be attacked on the grounds of contradiction with the Assam Accord of 1985 and will tend to compromise the linguistic, cultural, and social identity of Assam. Assam Accord fixed 25th March 1971 as the deadline for conceding citizenship to Bangladeshi refugees in Assam.

e) CAA detractors can fairly argue that the deadline of 31st December 2014 is difficult to grasp. The incorporation of a specific cut-off date may indicate that either persecution of minorities in those countries ceased after that date or that the Indian Government was apathetic about it and did not like to bother it too much on this score.

f) On the question that the Partition of India has been made on religious lines, it can be argued that 'illegality can't be invoked to perpetuate another illegality' under the so-called equality doctrine. The equality clause is not applicable in a case where the purported act itself arises out of illegality. (Narula, 2022a).

Citizenship (Amendment) Act, 2019 & Protection of Refugees in India

It appears from the above that the issue involved in this case is multi-faceted. Presumably, it will be an arduous, challenging, and onerous task for the Supreme Court to settle this controversy and mess. However, keeping in mind that the matter is sub judice before the Supreme Court of India, it will not be a prudent exercise for the researcher to arrive at a definite conclusion. As the ball is now before the Supreme Court, it will be inappropriate and pointless to speculate further on the amendment itself. Being a sentinel of our Indian Constitution, it is expected that the Indian Apex Court will set this controversy at rest. So far as refugee issues are concerned, it is clear from the Act itself, that the Act has not specifically used the term 'refugee', but the contemplation of conferring citizenship rights is explicitly manifest in the Act to those six specified religious groups who are persecuted based on their religion only and that too only in three specified countries. Therefore, besides addressing religious persecution, the 2019 Citizenship Amendment Act does not explicitly mention other recognized grounds of persecution, including "race, nationality, membership of a particular social group, or political opinion." Consequently, it cannot be argued that the 2019 CAA fully aligns with the comprehensive provisions outlined in the 1951 UN Refugee Convention and its 1967 Protocol. Except for conferring citizenship to certain persecuted groups, this Act does not deal with refugee issues in any manner.

Conferment of citizenship would permanently put an end to the lifelong plights and predicaments of refugees, but what would be the fate of those who do not belong to the specifically mentioned three countries and who are not associated with the six specified religious groups? Thus, the humanitarian concerns and needs of all refugees are not addressed in this legislation. Critics asseverate that this short piece of legislation, in effect, would exclude the Rohingya refugees, Sri Lankan Tamil Refugees, and many other refugee groups and thereby resulting in patent discrimination and manifest indifference to the similarly situated groups. One can unhesitatingly assert that India is under no obligation to offer floodgates to all refugee groups of all religions. The process of 'how to choose' and 'whom to choose' falls within its sovereign legislative competence. This eventually comes under the purview of policy. So far as constitutionality and vires of the Act are concerned, this would hardly make any difference (Times of India, 2024a).

In terms of the NRC, it is asserted that if CAA is used in combination with the NRC, it will make it easier for the government to exclude Muslims from the garb of illegal immigrants. However, following countrywide demonstrations and protests, the government administration attempted to separate the two, stating that there are no plans to roll out or implement the NRC at this time. So, based on probability or anticipation of fear, it will not be a prudent exercise on the part of the researchers to comment on the future course of action. After all, the most widespread worry and misinformation in India is that: the CAA would result in selective discrimination and deportation of Indian Muslims, after taking their citizenship away from them. Now so far as CAA's impact on Indian Refugee Law is concerned, some had depicted it as a "quasi-refugee law", as religious persecution or its consequent fear had been made the basic parameter of granting Indian Citizenship. As a result, the government cannot be held accountable on a global scale for modifying its municipal law concerning citizenship. At best, it can be termed as a narrowly tailored law with constrained limits. As has already been mentioned in terms of persecution, the scope of this contentious Act of 2019 is very limited. Thus, without questioning the intended purpose and goal of the 2019 Citizenship Amendment and further keeping in mind that the CAA solely concerns Citizenship, the researcher feels that what India requires is: dedicated and explicit refugee-centric legislation. (State of Tamil Nadu vs National South Indian River Interlinking Agriculturist Association, 2021). Hence, a specific and comprehensive refugee-centric national legislation is to be enacted that would inter-alia cover the definition of 'refugee', stipulate all the recognised grounds of 'persecution', the issue of asylum, 'non-refoulement', exceptions to 'non-refoulement', 'non-discrimination' and would also oversee their civil, political, economic, social, and cultural rights, and more. In fine, before we conclude we must say that the enactment of specific legislation is the need of the hour to combat the refugee crisis in our country. (Narula, 2022b)

Notes and References

- Economic Times, 2024. CAA a limited, narrowly tailored law for specific reasons: MHA. Available at: https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/news/india/caa-a-limited-narrowly-tailored-law-for-specific-reasons-mha/articleshow/91099613.cms (Accessed: 28 June 2024).
- Economic Times, 2024. India to cite Lautenberg if US raises CAA religion. Available at: https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/news/politics-and-nation/india-to-cite-lautenberg-if-us-raises-caa-religion/articleshow/74275512.cms?from=mdr (Accessed: 29 June 2024).
- Gogoi, K. 2022. *Law on Citizenship, Foreigners, and Passports*. Allahabad: Sodhi Publications.
- Government of India, 2015. Notification dated 7.9.2015. Available at: https://indianfrro.gov.in/frro/Notifications_dated_7.9.2015.pdf (Accessed: 29 June 2024).
- Government of India, 2015. Notification dated 7.9.2015. Available at: https://indianfrro.gov.in/frro/Notifications_dated_7.9.2015.pdf (Accessed: 29 June 2024).
- Government of India, 2024. Available at: https://www.mha.gov.in/MHA1/ACtRule.html (Accessed: 29 June 2024).
- Gumaste, V. 2021. *The CAA-NRC: The Truth Explained*. Chennai: Notion Press.
- Indian Kanoon, 2024. Available at: https://indiankanoon.org/doc/1517833/ (Accessed: 29 June 2024).
- Indian Kanoon, 2024. Available at: https://indiankanoon.org/doc/254621/ (Accessed: 29 June 2024).
- Jain, S., Srivastava, A. and Tiwary, A. 2022. Revisiting India's Amended Citizenship Act 2019 in Light of Constitutional Ethos. Lentera Hukum, 9, p.303. DOI: 10.19184/ejlh.v9i2.28430.
- Kumar, N. 2016. *Constitutional Law of India*. Haryana: Allahabad Law Agency.
- Narula, R. K. 2022. The Citizenship (Amendment) Act, 2019 (Act 47 of 2019), s. 2(1) (b). India: Allahabad Law Publication.
- Narula, R. K. 2022. The Citizenship (Amendment) Act, 2019 (Act 47 of 2019), The Third Schedule. India: Allahabad Law Publication.
- PTI, 2022. CAA a limited, narrowly tailored law for specific reasons: MHA. April 26. Available at: https://theprint.in/india/caa-a-limited-narrowly-tailored-law-for-specific-reasons-ha/931677/ (Accessed: 12 September 2022).
- State of Tamil Nadu vs National South Indian River Interlinking Agriculturist Association LL 2021 SC 673. Available at: https://www.studocu.com/in/document/chandigarh-university/bachelor-

of-business-administration-bachelor-of-legislative-law/state-of-tamil-adu-vs-national-south-indian-river-interlinking-agriculturist-association-ll-2021-sc-673-404600/90604330 (Accessed: 28 June 2024).

- Times of India, 2024. CAA is necessary: Why the many arguments about its being unconstitutional don't hold water. Available at: https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/blogs/toi-edit-page/caa-is-necessary-why-the-many-arguments-about-its-being-unconstitutional-dont-hold-water/ (Accessed: 29 June 2024).
- Times of India, 2024. Violating basic structure doctrine: Religion-based citizenship scheme like CAA is anathema to our constitutional scheme. Available at: https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/blogs/toi-edit-page/violating-basic-structure-doctrine-religion-based-citizenship-scheme-like-caa-is-anathema-to-our-constitutional-scheme/ (Accessed: 28 June 2024).

Bio Profile of the Author's:

[1]Professor & HOD,
School of Law, Brainware University, Barasat, India
E mail id: kaushik.phd@gmail.com

[2]Assistant Professor,
School of Law, Brainware University, Barasat, India
E mail id: sudiptaadhikary24@gmail.com

[3]Assistant Professor,
School of Law, Brainware University, Barasat, India
E mail id: mailtoparamita84@gmail.com

Maritime Surveillance, Law and Order and the Indian Coast Guard: Analysing the Role of the Indian Coast Guards and Community Interest Associated

Rebant Juyal

Abstract

Maritime trade and commerce have gained importance in today's context of globalisation, resulting in bringing the Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ) to highlight. India, a nation with a vast coastline, automatically attracts a mega responsibility to protect and ensure due surveillance in its EEZ. Maritime surveillance remains an integral component in the India's security architecture. The Indian Coast Guard (ICG), the multi-dimensional maritime force responsible for securing India's maritime interests, including safeguarding coastal communities, plays a vital role in maintaining the safety of India's vast maritime domain and the socioeconomic interests of the coastal community there. This research article attempts to analyse the issues concerning the surveillance of the exclusive economic zone in India and the impact of surveillance on the coastal community in India. It further explores the socio-legal perspectives of the ICG's role in protecting the livelihoods and cultural interests of coastal communities in India.

Keywords: *Maritime Surveillance, Law and Order, Indian Coast Guard, Coastal Community, Exclusive Economic Zone, Maritime Trade and Commerce, Security of State*

I. Introduction

India persists as a major power in the Indo-pacific and Indian Ocean region. As a Result, stability and security of Indian maritime affairs emerge as central to the stability of the Indo-pacific region. Furthermore, the accelerated development and blistering growth of international trade in the current times of globalisation and the contribution of maritime trade into this sphere has made the maritime sector important for every country. Additionally, maritime security persists as a critical aspect of national security and is essential for every nation's economic and strategic interests. Therefore, an informative analysis concerning its maritime security dimensions becomes imperative in current times. Moreover, India is a state with a long coastline stretching over 7,517 km, surrounded by the Bay of Bengal in the east and the Arabian Sea on the west. The country has taken several measures to enhance its maritime security and protect its Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZs). However, despite these efforts, India is facing a law and order crisis in its maritime domain, with an increasing number of incidents of terrorism and piracy. This paper explores the measures taken by India to enhance its maritime security

and protect its EEZs and examines the challenges associated with ensuring effective maritime security surveillance in its EEZs and its impact on the local coastal community.

II. India and It's Maritime Security Strategy

India's maritime security stands paramount to protect its vast coastline, exclusive economic zone and seaborne trade. The 26/11 terror attack in Mumbai uncovered India's maritime security vulnerabilities, leading to the need for more comprehensive measures. Whilst measures at the strategic level include aircraft carriers and nuclear submarines, on the other end of the spectrum, are policing and constabulary functions which must be enforced without fail. Further taking steps to increase surveillance along its coastlines, investing heavily in technology like radar systems or satellite-based tracking systems for ships entering Indian waters, strengthening port security procedures and improving intelligence sharing among various agencies involved with maritime security operations, also remains vital for India's marine security. Thus, heightened vigilance, along with proactive measures and contemporary cutting-edge technology, must be leveraged for bolstering Indian Defence capabilities.

Additionally, involving all stakeholders, including people from the coastal community, particularly fishermen, and making them aware of their responsibilities towards safeguarding Indian coasts from potential threats, becomes necessary for our Maritime security strategy. While countering security vulnerabilities remain the foremost priority in India's maritime security strategy, China's rising capabilities significantly influence the security configurations (Times of India, 2021). In response, India is investing both in itself and its neighbors to ensure Delhi, remains the primary power in the Indian Ocean (Rajagopalan, 2021).

To counter Chinese influence in the region, India is investing in building up its own capacity. For example, India has upgraded the Car Nicobar Air Force Base with a nine-thousand-feet runway (Rajagopalan, 2021), and plans to deploy military transport, patrol, and combat aircraft there permanently. India is also building Coast Guard and naval facilities in neighbouring countries like Mauritius and Seychelles (Al Jazeera, 2021), and signing access agreements with regional powers like France, who are now allowing reciprocal access for Indian naval ships to French bases, like the brig on Réunion Island (Pandey, 2019). Réunion Island being the biggest naval facility of the French in the Indian Ocean, as a result provides extended access of the western Indian Ocean region to India (Pillai Rajagopalan, 2020).

Another key aspect of India's strategy stands on investments in commercial ports, both to head off Chinese control of those facilities and allow future Indian naval access. Investments in Chabahar Port in Iran, Sabang Port in Indonesia, Haifa Port in Israel, among others**,** are some examples of the strategy (US DOD, 2019). India's creation of a new information fusion centre to bring maritime domain awareness and radar information from all across the region remains central to the security doctrine (Pincus, 2021). Moreover, as part of this, India has started to build large radar networks across some of the smaller developing island states in the Indian Ocean, including Sri Lanka, Seychelles, Mauritius and Bangladesh (Gireesh, 2020).

While, studying and exploring the contours of India's maritime security strategy provides substantive informative consideration for the subject; exploring the meaning and dimensions of the exclusive economic zone in the maritime domain, remains appropriate.

III. Exclusive Economic Zone

An exclusive economic zone (EEZ), as prescribed by the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea, is a maritime zone wherein a state enjoys special rights over exploration as well as the usage of marine resources. The EEZ stretches from its baseline to 200 nautical miles. This boundary does not include territorial sea or continental shelf; it only grants sovereign rights to coastal states regarding what lies below the surface level while, international waters exist above it. Therefore, in these areas, the coastal state has sovereign rights to explore, use, conserve, and manage the natural resources, both living and non-living, in the waters, seabed and its subsoil.

The purpose of an EEZ is twofold. It allows countries access to potential natural resources within their jurisdiction and authorizes states to regulate activities like pollution control and shipping lanes that would otherwise occur without any oversight if these areas were considered international waters. Therefore, exclusive economic zones provide many benefits for coastal nations seeking greater control over their marine environment while allowing global commerce within reasonable boundaries mutually agreed upon by all parties involved to ensure environmental sustainability remains intact in the midst of increasing demand for marine resources worldwide.

India and Its Exclusive Economic Zone

The EEZ of India, a vital asset for the nation, encompasses both the eastern and western coasts and two island domains in its waters. If it is utilized adequately by the state, it will give India significant economic potential for benefit of its citizens. Immense potential exists within the oceanic boundaries of India's EEZ when it comes to natural resources like oil reserves, mineral deposits and others. Such resources significantly contribute towards strengthening India's economy on a largescale basis, if exploited responsibly through sustainable development practices, like deep seabed mining or renewable energy projects like wind farms located offshore coastal regions and others.

The rich marine biodiversity found within Indian maritime borders presents lucrative opportunities for tourism related activities like scuba diving expeditions, whale watching trips, among others. These activities generate employment and bring much-needed foreign exchange into local communities that depend on fishing for their livelihoods. Moreover, India's strategic location near major shipping lanes means developing ports andharbour along with other infrastructure necessary for international trade, which will open up new avenues and markets, where goods manufactured domestically can be exported abroad. Thereby creating jobs at home and simultaneously boosting export revenues (Kulshreshtha, 2021).

The EEZ being one of the largest in the world by covering an area of approximately 2.02 million square km, faces critical maritime security challenges threatening the safety and security of India's coastal community and maritime interests. Some of the significant challenges include:

1. Illegal Fishing: Illegal and unregulated fishing exists as a major concern in the EEZ, affecting not only India's marine resources but the livelihoods of local fishing communities as well
2. Smuggling: The Indian EEZ is rising as a major route for smuggling drugs, weapons, and other contraband, thereby threatening national security and maritime interests.
3. Piracy: Piracy stands as a significant threat to Indian maritime security interests, notably in the Arabian Sea and the Gulf of Aden. Piracy jeopardizes the safety of maritime channels, including those used for trading purposes, thereby not only threatening the national security domain but also imperiling Indian economic interests.
4. The proclivity of the Indian Ocean to being prone to several natural disasters, like tsunamis and cyclones, also threatens the safety and security of the zone.
5. Environmental degradation, including oil spill incidents and dumping of hazardous waste in the ocean, remains a critical concern in the zone. The acts degrading the maritime ecosystem's quality not only affect the environment but have a devastating influence on the health and livelihood of local inhabitants.
6. A good marine law-and-order stands crucially indispensable for India and its coastal inhabitants. Despite the state-sponsored efforts to improve security surveillance and monitoring in the EEZ, reports of smuggling, human trafficking, and other criminal operations in the zone are still reported, thereby making law-and-order crisis a substantial potential danger to national security and strategic interests and further raising concerns for the security and well being of the local coastal community. Thus, comprehensive and coordinated actions are necessary to improve maritime security and monitoring capabilities, the enforcement of maritime law in the zone, and sustaining efforts for engaging and partnering with the coastal population.

IV. Maritime Security and Law and Order

The vast oceanic area encompassed by the Indian maritime domain makes continuous maritime surveillance and preserves the highest standards of law and order, which is substantially challenging. Supplementary to it, the pervasive frequency and scale of marine crimes like, piracy, human trafficking, and others, further compounds the inherently complex security challenges in the maritime domain. Moreover, with the devastating impact of the recent Covid pandemic, new set of challenges has surfaced in the coastal regions. The closure of economic activities, reduced marine trade and tourist movements, travel restrictions and other strenuous restraints due to the pandemic boosted the web of poverty and unemployment in the region leading to a significant rise in crime and criminals.

Coastal law and order issues directly influence the area of maritime security. The incrementing criminal activities in coastal regions remain detrimental to maritime security interests, since it potentially threatens the safety of ports, shipping lanes and other critical infrastructure present there. Such threats patently undermine the maritime security architecture, which later can disrupt global maritime trade by hindering the free movement of goods and other trade activities in the region.

In addition to enormous challenges, instances of terrorism and insurgency in the maritime domain,

further complicates the law and order situation in India. The 2008 Mumbai terror-attacks brought the issue of maritime security to the forefront, highlighting the dire necessity for better coordination among various security agencies and consolidating as well as modernizing the existing coastal security architecture. Responsively, the Indian government adopted several measures like, adopting the Coastal Security Scheme to strengthen the infrastructural capabilities of coastal states as well as union territories, deploying more coast guards and navy patrols, establishing National Command Control Communications and Intelligence network and creating a National Maritime Security Coordinator at the National Security Council for coordinating the efforts of different security agencies and improving information and intelligence sharing.

Law-and-Order of the Exclusive Economic Zone of India

Law-and-order stands as a major challenge for the security of India's EEZ. Increasing piracy incidents in the seas complicate security configurations. Illegal fishing and waste dumping cause environmental damage, which have long-term implications for the health and productivity of the marine ecosystem and reduce India's ability to exploit and manage its natural resources effectively. These reflect the denunciation and critical state of law and order in the Indian maritime sector. The poor state of law and order in the seas sometimes make it difficult for ships to navigate safely in the region, leading to increased insurance costs, disruptions in global trade and economy, and generating fear among coastal communities.

The lack of effective enforcement of maritime laws exacerbates the law-and-order crisis in India's maritime domain. The country lacks the necessary resources and manpower to effectively patrol its EEZ and enforce maritime laws. This makes it easier for criminals to engage in illegal activities in the seas. In addition, the absence of an integrated system for maritime security surveillance, makes it difficult for India to coordinate its efforts and share information with other countries and organizations. The law-and-order crisis in India's EEZ therefore has far-reaching implications for the stability and security of the region.

V. Maritime Surveillance and Exclusive Economic Zone

The descriptive exploration concerning the poor state of maritime law and order certifies maritime security and surveillance as inherent to each other. The strategic positioning of India makes surveillance of EEZ, even during peacetime, critically intrinsic for safeguarding its assets in the zone, other security interests and conservation of the marine climate (Ministry of Defence, 2021; Milind Kulshreshtha, 2021; Baruah, 2020). The prolife rating gravity attached to maritime surveillance today is an immediate consequence of the new international marine law giving littoral and hinterland states changing levels of privileges and similarly significant obligations over the EEZ (Mukerji, 2021).

The viable reconnaissance of the Indian Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ), an exceptionally overwhelming mission, requires a wide range of assets and abilities. The EEZ covers a colossal region with restricted assets accessible to the Indian Coast Guard and Navy for observation (Bhattacharya,

2021). Adequately screening this zone requires a blend of low-and high innovation identification systems, same as using air and surface components. Later on, as dangers increase in complexity, so too will the need for more innovative advances to guarantee successful reconnaissance over such enormous space will continue to emerge.

To effectively address these challenges, it is imperative for India's military powers to put resources into cutting-edge innovation frameworks, equipped for giving realtime information about any activity taking place within its EEZ. This includes satellite observing frameworks that give global perception capacities to marine radar frameworks, which track vessels in close proximity. These essential tools are indispensable for India's maritime forces to counteract potential threats or criminal activities within their jurisdiction. Such advancements likewise help diminish human blunders related to manual surveillance strategies, while expanding reaction times, should there be any suspicious movement identified at sea (Suri, 2016).

Henceforth, effective monitoring and patrolling operations within EEZ require both technological advancements along with traditional methods employed by naval personnel on board ships or on aircraft patrolling territorial waters surrounding mainland India, ensuring safety from external threats while protecting sovereign rights over natural resources located therein. With increased investments towards advanced technologies coupled with well-trained personnel, it will become possible to enhance situational awareness and ensure quick response whenever required; thereby effectively safeguarding against illegal activities.

The Indian Coast Guard and Navy are responsible for ensuring safety and security within the Indian maritime zone. While the former is the lead agency responsible for coastal security and preventing illegal activities like smuggling, drug trafficking, and illegal fishing; the Navy ensures the security of Indian offshore assets and Indian shipping lanes.

VI. The Indian Coast Guard

Considering the critical security and economic interests associated with the ocean and EEZ in particular, a dedicated security force was necessitated to administer the EEZ (Rajya Sabha, 2021; Roy Chaudhury, 1998). Consequently, pursuant to the recommendations of the Rustamji Committee in September 1974 and with the enactment of the Coast Guard Act (herein referred to as the Act) in Parliament in 1977, the Indian Coast Guards was established as an equipped power of the state (Ministry of Defence, 2010; Roy-Chaudhury, 2000).

The Indian Coast Guard, established in 1978, ensures the safety and security of India's maritime interests, including its EEZ. The force carries out a range of activities to fulfil its mandate, including maritime surveillance, search and rescue operations, and enforcement of maritime laws. It has been

instrumental in preventing piracy, smuggling, and illegal fishing incidents and remained prompt through search and rescue operations in responding to natural disasters, like the 2004 Indian Ocean tsunami.

The EEZ, an area of strategic relevance for India, encompasses its maritime interests, including fisheries, minerals, and petroleum resources. IGC, responsible for the surveillance of the EEZ, faces several challenges hindering its ability to carry out surveillance of the EEZ, consequently threatening the safety and security of India's maritime interests. Limited resources, including financial and workforce limitations, remain major challenges before the force. Additionally, the complex intricacies of marine security threats, including the transnational character of associated security risks and the vast geographical area of the Indian Ocean, raise difficulties for the force to carry out its mandate effectively. Exploring some of the significant challenges facing the Indian Coast Guard in the surveillance of the EEZ are postulated below:

- Lack of Resources: One of the biggest challenges facing the Indian Coast Guard is the lack of necessary resources to carry out effective surveillance of the EEZ. This includes the shortage of ships, aircraft, and personnel. These limit the ability of the Coast Guard to carry out its responsibilities effectively. The Indian Coast Guard is tasked with a complex and difficult mission without adequate resources.At times making it challenging to carry out few of the missions efficiently (Chronicle, 2023; IANS, 2016).
- Illegal Fishing, Smuggling and Privacy stands as major challenges before ICG. The Indian security forces, including ICG, face severe challenges in the prevention and interception of smuggling activities due to factors like, constraints in resources with the force, the enormous size of the EEZ and others. Further, the Coast Guard while, preventing and intercepting piracy activities faces the dual challenge of securing trade routes and ships on those routes as well.
- Recurrent natural disturbances oblige the coast guard to divert its resources in search and rescues operations and for prevention of the environmental degradation like oil spills. Responding towards such events also stands as a complex challenge for the force.

To address the above challenges, following changes could be proposed:

- To increase its operational capabilities, the ICG should be provided with better defense technology, equipment, boats, and aircraft of contemporary standards. The government should also enhance the ICG's fiscal allotment to recruit additional personnel and improve their training.
- The ICG should improve its coordination with other maritime agencies. The government should establish a centralized coordination mechanism to facilitate information flow and ensure effective coordination between different agencies at domestic front.
- Considering the transnational character of maritime security risks on account of the vast geography

and virtually open-architectural connectivity of oceans. The ICG needs to develop stronger partnerships with other countries to combat transnational maritime crimes effectively. It should also explore the possibility of joint patrols and sharing of information with the neighboring countries in order to prevent maritime crimes.

VII. Role of Indian Coast Guard, Marine Surveillance and Interests of Coastal Community

Marine surveillance and security, crucial for the stability and prosperity of coastal communities and societies, protect critical infrastructures like ports and shipping lanes from maritime crime, piracy, and terrorism. It ensures a secured flow of goods and services crucial for a prosperous global trade and commerce and coastal community's interests.

Sense of Secured Order and Security in Costal Community

Maritime security measures, such as those implemented by the Indian Coast Guard, play an important role in shaping social norms and values related to maritime activity. From a sociological perspective, maritime surveillance and security measures help to establish a sense of order and stability in coastal communities. Coastal communities have long been dependent on the maritime ecosystem particularly, ocean for their livelihoods, cultural practices, and identities. However, the increasing threats of piracy, smuggling, illegal fishing, and maritime terrorism have disrupted their way of life consequently posing a threat to their safety.

The Indian Coast Guard, as the primary security force in the relevant jurisdiction, remains actively involved in addressing these challenges. Its presence in coastal areas creates a sense of safety and security among the local population, which helps deter criminal activities and establish social norms. This, in turn, reinforces the importance of law and order and respect for the law, among others, in the maritime domain. The Sense of stability and security further encourages locals to consider protecting the maritime domain from criminal activities and cooperating with the authorities to maintain intrinsically relevant order. The law enforcement agency's efforts to promote maritime security and preserve law and order positively impact on the interests of the coastal community .

Costal Engagement Programmes

The ICG efforts to promote secured environment through engagement of community initiatives have also helped in building trust and confidence between the local population and the authorities. This sense of order helps to establish social norms and values related to maritime activity, such as respect for the law and for other users of the maritime domain. It also helps in creating a sense of shared responsibility within coastal communities in order to safeguard the maritime domain from criminal activity. Moreover, the Indian Coast Guard can be instrumental in promoting community interest by engaging in activities directly benefiting coastal communities, like search and rescue operations,

disaster response, and environmental protection measures. Such activities, while promoting the security and well-being of coastal communities, supplement building trust and collaboration between law enforcement agencies and local inhabitants.

Coastal Inclusion

The ICG community engagement initiatives, wherein the force engages local inhabitants in its activities, help bring coastal inhabitants from diverse cultural backgrounds together. Thus promoting mutual understanding and respect among various coastal communities. Community engagement initiative promotes social inclusion and diversity among diverse coastal communities, fostering a sense of ownership and pride among coastal communities and strengthening their identity.

Sustainability of Livelihood and Marine Environment

Adequate measures of marine surveillance and security provide a favourable environment for flourishing maritime trade and commerce, providing economic prosperity to coastal communities. It helps create jobs and promote social mobility, thus benefiting the coastal community and ensuring their financial and social well-being.

As coastal communities derive their daily sustenance and livelihood from the marine environment, illegal fishing, piracy, and smuggling activities critically impact their direct livelihood sources. The ICG's efforts to curb illegal ocean activities help protect the coastal community's interests, ensuring that they receive a fair share of available marine resources. It henceforth reinforces values of sustainability and conservation among coastal communities, which is indispensable for our marine ecosystem's long-term health and sustainability.

Socioeconomic Interests of Coastal Community and Its Inhabitants

The Coast Guards play an intrinsic role in preserving the socioeconomic interests of the Indian coastal community. Its primary role as an agency securing the Indian maritime zone also includes protecting the life and livelihood of local coastal inhabitants. It assists distressed fishermen and also monitors fishing activities by preventing illegal fishing. During natural and other climatic disturbances, ICG conducts search and rescue operations and provides required medical assistance to people in need. The agency's mandate to defend the coastal community's cultural values stands equally essential. India's coastal inhabitants have a rich cultural past inextricably related to the maritime environment. The ICG collaborates closely with coastal communities to protect cultural heritage and develop Eco-tourism. Additionally, it teaches coastal communities about the significance and necessity of marine conservation and sustainable fishing practices.

Role	Description
Preventing Illegal Activities	The Coast Guards conduct regular patrols and surveillance for prevention of illegal activities including, illegal fishing, piracy, smuggling, and trafficking in the coastal areas of India.
Search and Rescue Operation	The force is responsible for providing timely assistance and also conducting search as well as rescue operations for boats and vessels in distress, including fishing boats and other small crafts which are used by coastal inhabitants.
Environmental Protection	The ICG plays a vital role in protecting the marine environment, including preventing oil spills and other forms of pollution that can impact the livelihoods and health of coastal communities.
Maritime Safety and Security	The ICG ensures the safety and security of maritime traffic and vessels, including small fishing boats used by coastal communities. It also monitors the movement of ships and boats to prevent maritime accidents and incidents.
Community Outreach and Awareness	The ICG engages in community outreach programs to create awareness among coastal communities about maritime safety, security, and environmental protection. It also provides training to fishermen and other stakeholders on safe fishing practices, first aid, and other relevant skills.

The table below summarizes diverse roles performed by the force to protect the sociological and community interests of individual coastal inhabitants and the community at large in the Indian maritime waters:

Dynamic Impact of Marine Surveillance on Coastal Community

Contrary to the above exploration validating the beneficence of maritime surveillance, marine surveillance and security implications on coastal communities and society are not always constructive. Implementing strict security measures sometimes creates tension and conflict between coastal communities and law enforcement agencies. In worst cases, this could be exacerbated when state agencies are perceived as acting to benefit external powers, like private corporations or friendly foreign governments.

Furthermore, strict security measures could intimidate or marginalize specific segments of coastal communities, like fishermen and other maritime workers. Based on their movements or other activities, law enforcement agencies sometimes could view them through the lens of suspicion creating distrust between them and obliging them to stringent security checks, which sometimes could be harassment for locals. This could eventually result in social unrest, undermining maritime security measures' effectiveness.

Thus, the sociological perspective analysis, indicates that maritime security measures, including surveillance, impact upon coastal communities dynamically, depending on social, economic, and

political factors. For example, drastic changes in the global economy, trade, or political landscape of a region can significantly impact upon the security measures' effectiveness. Subsequently, while adopting marine security measures, developing an integrated and holistic strategy incorporating and considering coastal communities' social, economic, and political environment within its scope is critically intrinsic. Therefore, the security approach must include community participation, consultation and efforts to build strong trust and effective collaboration between law enforcement agencies and coastal communities.

Conclusion

Maritime security means safeguarding ships, their routes, crew and cargo on the high seas and ports. It is essential for global trade and the economy, as the sea carries about 90% of world trade. At the best of circumstances, it is evident that the maritime domain is highly intrinsic to the Indian Republic, and its importance may not be over emphasized. Further, maritime security and the protection of EEZs have become increasingly important due to the growing threat of piracy, terrorism, illegal fishing and dumping of wastes in seas. Consequently, with India's long coastline and its vital economic interests in the Indian Ocean, the need for efficient and effective maritime surveillance becomes significantly crucial. However, the above exploratory study also certifies the complex and challenging nature of maritime surveillance in India.

The Indian Coast Guard, even though performing admirably, face challenges due to several constraints. As the sole organization in charge of this duty, it needs more resources, namely ships, aircraft, and personnel, to carry out its mandate efficiently (Mathew, 2019). Adding new technology, such as UAVs and sea satellites, can significantly enhance their ability to monitor the EEZ and, as a result, improve Indian security architecture. The force is effectively engaged in daily surveillance of specific regions of the EEZ vulnerable to security breaches and threats. Therefore, extra funding must be provided to the force to ensure effective EEZ surveillance. India must adopt additional steps to create a marine-specific UAV and provide the necessary sensors atop sea satellites for maritime monitoring of the Indian Exclusive Economic Zones.

However, India has adopted several enhancements to its maritime security configurations. It has incorporated advanced technology such as radars, satellites, and unmanned aerial vehicles to monitor its EEZ and prevent illegal activities. Additionally, to enhance maritime security capabilities, India has signed various international agreements like the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS), 1982 and become a member of some organizations, namely; the International Maritime Organization (IMO), 1948, Indian Ocean Rim Association (IORA), 1997. India also implemented various policies for maritime security enhancements. The 2015 Indian Maritime Security Strategy objectifies providing a comprehensive approach to maritime security and outlines various measures to enhance maritime security, including developing infrastructure, using technology, and improving coastal safety. Consequently, the policy instruments depict a promising future for the growth of the security forces.

While the study depicts the crucial necessity of security measures the sociological study concomitantly illustrates that marine surveillance and security measures profoundly impact shaping social norms and values related to maritime activity among coastal communities. Promoting law and

order, protecting coastal community interests, promoting sustainability and conservation, and fostering social inclusion and diversity; help build a sense of safety and security among the local inhabitants and reinforces the significance of the ocean towards their livelihoods, cultural practices, and identities. The Indian Coast Guard's efforts in this regard remain instrumental for promoting the well-being of coastal communities, ensuring the long-term health and prosperity of the marine ecosystem and creating a sense of shared responsibility among coastal communities.

However, the impact of marine surveillance and security on coastal communities and society remains complex and multifaceted. While effective security measures help establish social norms and deliver other benefits, they can also create tension and conflict between coastal communities and law enforcement agencies and marginalize specific segments of coastal communities. Thus, establishing an appropriate balance between security requirements and societal constraints remains paramount. Therefore, the need for an integrated approach homogenizing law enforcement mechanisms with military strength, community engagement and trade-related activities emerges patently crucial. Moreover, considering the transnational character of marine security risks, nation-states must adopt a global cooperative security framework to integrate all security mechanisms and counter possible security threats. Further, considering the social, economic, and political context of coastal communities, including community participation and consultation, as well as building trust and collaboration between law enforcement agencies and the community, stands indispensable. It would ensure that maritime surveillance and security measures are adequate, effective and sustainable, benefiting all members of coastal communities and society at large.

The above exploratory study certifies that the role of the Indian Coast Guard in maintaining law and order at sea and promoting community interest is critical for the well-being and development of coastal communities and the society.

Personal Reflexive Statement: Maritime Surveillance remains as an integral component in the security architecture of the Indian Republic. Further security mechanisms and surveillance norms significantly influences and impacts the local society in the region. Consequently, researching about the critical importance of surveillance in the Exclusive Economic Zone (region of the sea wherein state law enforcement agencies enjoy jurisdiction and interact with people involved in various economic activities) and its impact over the local coastal population attracted the interests of the author which in turn has motivated the author to prepare this research article. The author has no conflict of interests and no funding sources have been availed by the author for creating this research article.

References

Acts and International Conventions:

United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS), 1982.
Indian Coast Guard Act, 1978.
Indian Navy Act, 1958.
International Convention for the Safety of Life at Sea (SOLAS), 1974.
International Convention for the Prevention of Pollution from Ships (MARPOL), 1973.

Articles, Books and Other Resources:

- Al Jazeera (Director). 2021, August 3. *The Island of Secrets* [Al Jazeera investigations]. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wKb1nZ5YnCg
- Baruah, D. M. 2020, June 30. *India in the indo-pacific: New delhi's theater of opportunity*. Carnegie Endowment for International Peace; Carnegie Endowment for International Peace. https://carnegieendowment.org/2020/06/30/india-in-indo-pacific-new-delhi-s-theater-of-opportunity-pub-82205
- Bhattacharya, D. 2021, August 26. *India's focus on enhancing maritime security as the UNSC president: Leadership envisioning a global roadmap*. Observer Research Foundation ; ORF. https://www.orfonline.org/expert-speak/indias-focus-on-enhancing-maritime-security-as-the-unsc-president/
- Chakraborty, A. 2019. 'Exclusive Economic Zone and Maritime Security Challenges in the Bay of Bengal'. *Journal of Defence Studies,* 13(1), 51-61.
- Chronicle, D. 2023, March 25. *Indian Coast Guard faces staff crunch*. Deccan Chronicle. https://www.deccanchronicle.com/undefined
- ET Desk. 2021. Indian Coast Guard to get advanced technology to enhance maritime security. *Economic Times*.
- Ghosh, A. 2016. 'Challenges and Opportunities for the Indian Coast Guard in Ensuring Maritime Security'. *Journal of Defence Studies,* 10 (1), 115-129.
- Gireesh, T. 2020, June 9. *Maritime Threats Posed by China in the Indian Ocean Region*. Diplomatist. https://diplomatist.com/2020/06/09/maritime-threats-posed-by-china-in-the-indian-ocean-region/
- Suri, G. 2016. 'India's Maritime Security Concerns and the Indian Ocean Region'. *11(3) Indian Foreign Affairs Journal 238-252.*
- IANS. 2016, December 16. Indian Coast Guard 20% short of its force strength. *Hindustan Times*. https://www.hindustantimes.com/india-news/indian-coast-guard-20-short-of-its-force-strength/story-jK1KvRb0fupyHHpCklyrbO.html
- India Today. 2020. "Indian Coast Guard faces challenges of manpower shortage, ageing assets."
- Jha, A. K. 2016. 'Indian Ocean and Maritime Security: Challenges and Responses'. *Journal of Defence Studies, 10(2), 107-121*.
- Kapur, A. 2018. 'India's Maritime Security: Challenges and Opportunities. Maritime Affairs'. *Journal of the National Maritime Foundation of India, 14(1), 1-14.*
- Kulshreshtha, M. 2021, August 19. 'India's leadership role to enhance maritime security through international cooperation'. *Financial Express*. https://www.financialexpress.com/defence/indias-leadership-role-to-enhance-maritime-security-through-international-cooperation/2313714/

- Mathew, C. K. 2019, February 24. The Indian Coastguard: A Non Performing Asset? *Indian Defence Review*. http://www.indiandefencereview.com/news/the-indian-coastguard-a-non-performing-asset/
- Milind Kulshreshtha. 2021, April 13. Safeguarding India's EEZ: India to clarify interpretation of the sea laws and reinforce ocean surveillance. *Financial Express*. https://www.financialexpress.com/defence/safeguarding-indias-eez-india-to-clarify-interpretation-of-the-sea-laws-and-reinforce-ocean-surveillance/2232257/
- Ministry of Defence, Government of India, 'Ministry of Defense Annual Report 2009-10' (Government of India 2010).
- Ministry of Defence, Government of India. (2021). "Indian Coast Guard."
- Ministry of Defence. (2021, November 29). *Maritime security*. Press Information Bureau; PIB, Government of India. https://pib.gov.in/pib.gov.in/Pressreleaseshare.aspx?PRID=1776090
- Ministry of Home Affairs. (2008). The Indian Coast Guard Act, 1978. Retrieved from https://www.mha.gov.in/sites/default/files/Indian_Coast_Guard_Act_1978.pdf
- Ministry of Shipping, Government of India. (2021). "Exclusive Economic Zone of India."
- Mukerji, A. 2021, August 9. 'Envisioning a secure Indian Ocean'. *The Indian Express*. https://indianexpress.com/article/opinion/columns/un-security-council-maritime-security-indian-ocean-7444800/
- Nath, P. 2019. 'India's Maritime Security Challenges and Strategies for the Future'. *Journal of Defence Studies, 13(2), 17-34.*
- Pandey, Dr. P. 2019, September 24. *India-france maritime cooperation in the Indian ocean: Enhancing the strategic partnership—Indian council of world affairs (Government of India)*. ICWA; Indian Council for World Affairs. https://www.icwa.in/show_content.php?lang=1&level=3&ls_id=4782&lid=2496
- Patki, A. S. 2021, December 17. The Andaman and Nicobar Islands: New Delhi's bulwark in the Indian ocean. *The Diplomat*. https://thediplomat.com/2021/12/the-andaman-and-nicobar-islands-new-delhis-bulwark-in-the-indian-ocean/
- Pillai Rajagopalan, Dr. R. 2020, March 27. *What's behind the rising India-France maritime activity in the Indo-Pacific?* Observer Research Foundation; ORF. https://www.orfonline.org/research/whats-behind-the-rising-india-france-maritime-activity-in-the-indo-pacific-63753/
- Pincus , Dr. R. 2021. 'The indo-pacific dimension in us arctic strategy > air university (Au) > journal of indo-pacific affairs article display'. *Journal of Indo-Pacific Affairs*. https://www.airuniversity.af.edu/JIPA/Display/Article/2820744/the-indo-pacific-dimension-in-us-arctic-strategy/
- PTI. (2022, March 31). Boost to maritime security as coast guard gets 2 Dhruv advanced light helicopters. *The Economic Times*. https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/news/defence/boost-to-maritime-security-as-coast-guard-gets-2-dhruv-advanced-light-helicopters/articleshow/90572218.cms?from=mdr

- Rajagopalan, D. R. (Raji) P. 2021, January 2. *Countering Chinese assertiveness: India's changing posture in the Indian Ocean*. Observer Research Foundation ; ORF. https://www.orfonline.org/research/countering-chinese-assertiveness-indias-changing-posture-indian-ocean/
- Rajya Sabha, Parliament of India, 2021. *Three Hundredth Report Promotion of Infrastructure in India's Maritime Sector*. New Delhi: Rajya Sabha Secretariat
- Roy-Chaudhury, R. 1998. 'India's maritime security'. *India International Centre Quarterly*, *25/26*, 129–139. http://www.jstor.org/stable/23005537
- Roy-Chaudhury, R. 1998. 'Maritime surveillance of the Indian EEZ'. *Strategic Analysis*, *22*(1), 49–59. https://doi.org/10.1080/09700169808458789
- Roy-Chaudhury, R. 2000. *India's maritime security*. Knowledge World in association with Institute for Defence Studies and Analyses.
- Singh, B., & Sen, A. 2015. 'Marine Fisheries Management in India: A Sociological Perspective'. *Indian Journal of Fisheries*, 62(2), 1-11.
- Sinha, S. K. 2018. 'Blue Economy and India's Coastal Communities: Opportunities and Challenges'. *Maritime Affairs: Journal of the National Maritime Foundation of India*, 14(2), 73-87.
- The Hindu. (2021). "Indian Coast Guard gets new operational equipment to enhance surveillance."
- Times of India. (2021, August 9). Explained: What's maritime security. *The Times of India*. https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/india/explained-whats-maritime-security/articleshow/85175697.cms
- TN National Desk. (2022, June 28). *Boost to maritime security! Indian coast guard commissions advanced light helicopter mk-iii squadron*. TimesNow. https://www.timesnownews.com/india/boost-to-maritime-security-indian-coast-guard-commissions-advanced-light-helicopter-mk-iii-squadron-article-92509547
- United States Department of Defence, 'Indo-Pacific Strategy Report Preparedness, Partnerships, And Promoting A Networked Region' (Department of Defence 2019).

Bio Profile of the Author:
Faculty, REVA University, Bengaluru
Email: rb.juyal27@gmail.com

Women's participation in the freedom movement of India: a case study of North Bengal

Ratna Paul

Abstract

Women's participation in India's freedom movement extended to agitation politics and was successfully structured through policy decisions at different phases, at least at the higher levels of the action. This study aims to highlight the participation of women of North Bengal in the various phases of the national movement of India, much of which was largely outside the structured construction. Economic and social conditions dominantly dictated the methods and means adopted by the North Bengal women towards their participation in the freedom struggle. They were generally victims of suppression and deprivation under the construct of the prevalent gender inequality and social exploitation. Yet, the changing political scenario in the country encouraged them, so long solely confined to domestic activities, to come out and participate in the nationalist struggle. Their participation in the Indian freedom struggle became a broadly overlooked chronicle, despite being a noteworthy segment of the Indian freedom movement. They were active beginning from, as early as the Swadeshi movement to the Quit India crusade. It is surprising and equally interesting that in North Bengal despite women's education being far from satisfactory and aristocracy that wielded authority and financial fluidity as a rare commodity, the women of the lower rungs of the society took an active part in the movement in large numbers. How these impoverished, totally rural-based women found the will, stamina, and inspiration to keep the flames of the independence movement burning is significant enough for a recall, re-write, and a re-read.

Keywords: *Women, North Bengal, Swadeshi, Non-Cooperation, Civil Disobedience, Quit India Movement, Mahila Samiti.*

Introduction

Globally, women have a dubious relationship with history of being generally ignored and infrequently registered in the historical accounts and the problem is more pronounced in the Indian sub-continent than in most nations. A few female freedom fighters at the highest stratum of the movement have found paragraphs and pages in history but those at the lower levels who kept the campaign afloat

rarely found space even in the footnotes. There arose a steady and spontaneous necessity to record the contributions of these "lesser mortals". History, in a sense, had to be rewritten. Historians in the last few decades have shifted their focus on the neglected segments of our society broadening its ambit of research and reporting allowing for the recent new impetus. This paper reveals the untold tale of the women of North Bengal who patiently, intelligently, and continuously marched forward acquiring self-reliance against the long-standing colonial bondage to fulfill their desire for freedom.

The present study will encompass the districts of the northern part of Bengal in the Union of India.[1] In the period of the study, the Rajshahi division also formed the part of Bengal but collecting resource materials faced severe restraints since two-thirds of the division is now in Bangladesh. Nevertheless, geographical position, economic and social conditions played a vital role in the way followed by the women in participating in the war of independence. Geographically North Bengal is situated in one corner of the state with lands conducive to agrarian activity. Demographically it was the homeland of various ethnic groups and a large immigrant population. Socially and economically, they were backward in comparison to the people from the southern parts of Bengal. Political and administrative features also present distinctiveness with Cooch Behar then a native state with political and economic patterns distinct from the other districts. Jalpaiguri and Darjeeling were non-regulated districts whereas Malda and Dinajpur were a part of the regulated administrative system of Bengal. Thus, the character and scale of the national movement in Chittagong, Midnapore, Dhaka, Barishal, and Calcutta were not to be found in North Bengal. It was sustained but erratically spaced and political consciousness, particularly of women growing slowly and maturing much later.

With the 19th-century renaissance, there was an expansion of education which led to the emancipation of women. Gradually they broke away from superstition and conservatism and entered into the national political arena. Participation of Indian women in the freedom struggle started mainly after the foundation of the Indian National Congress in 1885. The changing political situation in the country encouraged women to come out and participate in the independence movement. Though the renaissance of the 19th century mainly was Calcutta-centric, the light of education for the women of North Bengal had only just begun to penetrate in the area. However, when the women participated in the freedom movement it became the first occasion in North Bengal when ordinary women, so long solely confined to domestic activities, came forward to play an active role in the politics of the country. Anxious for the independence of their country, they became vocal about the injustice meted out by an alien government. They participated in various phases of the national movements beginning from Swadeshi to Quit India and some of them, influenced by revolutionary ideas, joined secret societies and participated in revolutionary activities.

Swadeshi Movement

After the Sepoy Mutiny, the British Government adopted the policy of "Divide and Rule" in order to make a differentiation among the Indians on the basis of caste, religion, custom, etc. On 16th October 1905 Bengal was divided into - a) Eastern Bengal and Assam b) Western Bengal along with Bihar and Orissa. The government's view was that Bengal was divided in order to ensure better administrations but in reality, it was a strong blow to the unity and nationalism of the people of Bengal. They rose in protest through Swadeshi which fostered nationalism on the basis of "self-reliance" or "*Atma shakti*" and at the same time adopted the policy of boycott or passive resistance. It also led to the way for a militant form of struggle when the younger generation was attracted to the movement.

In order to suppress the Swadeshi movement, the British Government imposed the Carlyle circular which urged the school and college authorities to dissuade the students from participating in political activities pertaining to the Swadeshi movement. Against this circular National Council of Education was established in Calcutta. In Northern Bengal, the movement advanced a step forward when in May 1907 a national school was established in Jalpaiguri (Bhattacharya 1986: 24). The aim of the national school was to impart education towards nationalistic ideals. The District Magistrate of Malda issued a circular in 1905 prohibiting students from taking part in political activities (Sengupta 1969: 61). Yet in Malda the *Jatiyo Shiksha Samiti* was established on June 6, 1907 (Bhattacharya 1986: 24). From its inception the Samiti had emphasized the importance of mass education, and as regards women's education Samiti's endeavour resulted in girls' schools at Kaligram and Dharampur. At Kaligram it started with 54 students in 1908 but soon the figure came down to 40 and when the third Annual Report was prepared there were only 12 girls left (ibid: 33). The school at Dharampur was established in 1912 with roll strength of only 8 (ibid: 27). Perhaps the general masses due to their conservative attitude did not appreciate the concept of female education or the women themselves were socially not in a position to make themselves available in taking part in the formal education system. Another nationalist Baldebananda Giri established 'Mahakali Pathshala' for girls in Malda in order to spread women's education. Though it is an unfortunate fact that the endeavour of the early nationalists to introduce female education did not succeed it did create awareness that there were people or organizations willing to educate women in remote areas which did not survive but they left an immense impact on the psychological mainspring of the national movement.

One woman who took an active part in Swadeshi Movement was Sudharani Chowdhurani who belonged to a zamindar family of Kaliachak (Shershahi) in Malda. In her house, Sudharani gave shelter to many revolutionaries and Congress workers. Once the Police Superintendent of Malda went to her house in search of some political workers but despite the high rank of the policeman she

did not permit him to enter her house. Uma Roy, another woman was connected with *Anusilan Samiti* (Self-Culture Association) from her college days (Ghosh 1398 BS: 14 & 35). The Samiti followed the teachings of Bankim Chandra Chatterjee and was an armed anti-British organization in Bengal (Goldstone 2003: 183).

In Coochbehar Maharani Sunity Devi, wife of Maharaja Nripendra Narayan and daughter of the great reformer Keshab Chandra Sen, a highly enlightened lady played a very positive role in women's education in this native state. Due to her initiative first school for girls, Rati Babu's School, renamed Sunity Academy in 1888, was established in 1881 (Paul 2010: 639). She contributed funds in order to run *melas* and functions of "*Sakhi Samiti*" (Ghosh 1990: 401). This Samiti trained widows to become teachers so that they could spread education amongst women and also become self-reliant at the same time. In later days cottage industry was promoted and wares were sold in *melas*[2] which grew in size with the rise of the nationalist movement (Kumar 2006: 37). Princess Gayetri Devi wrote in her memoir that "we had our own spinning wheel and dutifully spun our cotton yarn without fully understanding what Gandhi had intended" (Devi & Rau. 1996: 204). Regardless of only a partial comprehension of Gandhiji's intention the memoir proves that even the women in the royal household were connected with the Swadeshi Movement.

In Jalpaiguri Subhasini Ghosh was the founder of the women's secret political association and organization of social workers. She took an active role in the Swadeshi Movement and was the first President of 'Congress *Mahila Samiti*' in Jalpaiguri (Roy Sanyal 2001: 465). It is claimed that among the Muslim women, the wife of Lutfur Rahaman, Bara Begam Saheba Rahimunnesa, played a very positive role. Around 1914 she was considered to be a pioneer among women in Muslim society. It is also claimed that she helped revolutionaries in various ways.

Non-Cooperation Movement

After the imposition of Rowlatt Act and Jalianwalla Bagh massacre in 1919, Mahatma Gandhi moved for Non-Cooperation with the British Government in 1920 and urged the Indians to repeal their cooperation to run the British administration by boycotting everything that belonged to the British and follow the nonviolent path to achieve Swaraj or self-rule. The movement spread to North Bengal and a notable feature of this movement was the participation of women in great numbers.

The wave of the Non-Cooperation movement had reached the district of Dinajpur, where the Congress leaders of Balurghat publicized the ideals of Swaraj throughout the subdivision. A spirit of resistance was aroused amongst the masses and Mahila Samiti and national school were established in Balurghat town (Sengupta 1965: 54). Under the leadership of Pramodasundori Debi, Subeshranjan Chattopadhyay, the Congress leader of Balurghat town, took the initiative to establish "Balurghat

Mahila Samiti" in 1920 (Dasgupta 1370 BS: 193). Inspired by her husband's ideology Prava Chattapadhyay, wife of Subeshranjan Chattopadhyay, joined in the national movement and traveled in the villages around Balurghat to promote patriotism among women (ibid).

From Kurseong, in Darjeeling district, one distinguished woman freedom fighter who played an active role in the Non-Cooperation Movement was Helen Lepcha, alias Helen *Didi*, alias Sabitri Devi. When the office of the Indian National Congress was opened in Darjeeling, many hill people joined the party, Helen Lepcha being one of them. Some Congress workers came from Calcutta and popularized the use of the spinning wheel and khadi and Helen Lepcha was so impressed that she immediately went to Calcutta to train herself to operate the spinning wheel. She excelled in her work and was sent to Bihar to propagate Gandhian ideology. Her exceptional work with the flood victims (1920) came to the notice of Mahatma Gandhi and she was invited to Sabarmati Ashram where Gandhi gave her the Indian name of Sabitri Devi (Barla 2015: 37). During the Non-Cooperation Movement a major demonstration was held in Calcutta and she took part in it by bringing about a thousand workers from the Jharia coal mines. An arrest warrant was issued against her and she went underground (Labar 2006: 400-401). When Helen Lepcha's mother became seriously ill, she shifted to Kurseong choosing the larger town of Siliguri as her base to continue her Non-Cooperation Movement calling for the boycott of foreign products and the use of swadeshi goods. In spite of the fact that the Government was brutally active in suppressing any agitation, she led a demonstration of a large number of volunteers violating section 144. She and some of her colleagues were immediately arrested. The news of her arrest reported in the Amrita Bazar Patrika ran as follows: "Smt. Sabitri Debi with the Congress secretary E. Ahmed and 12 Gorkha volunteers have been arrested" (Amrita Bazar Patrika: 31st January 1922). She was sentenced to three months imprisonment in Darjeeling Sadar Jail and upon her release was put under house arrest for another three years.

The wave of Non-Cooperation also reached in Malda district where Sudharani Chowdhurani, an ardent nationalist helped the revolutionaries in various ways. Also to be noted in Malda was Tarubala Sen, the wife of Krishnagopal Sen of Bachamari, who participated in the Non-cooperation movement.

The background and stimulus to the growth of nationalist politics in Jalpaiguri were provided by the entry of Gandhi into the political life of the country and his message and style of functioning. Jalpaiguri came to be involved in the Non-Cooperation-Khilafat movement in the years 1921 and 1922. Towards the end of May 1921, Chittaranjan Das arrived at Jalpaiguri. A large crowd assembled at the railway station where the Congress leader was garlanded and received with traditional Indian custom. Basanti Devi, the wife of Chittaranjan Das, was received by the women of respectable families including those of the landed aristocracy. They donated cash and jewelry to the Swaraj fund which amounted to Rs.2000/. (Bhattacharya 1986: 53). A women's meeting was held in the Arya Natya

Samaj Hall where apart from women of the middle class even prostitutes attended in large numbers (Dasgupta 1992: 110). Notable among those women who were connected with the Non-Cooperation Movement were Kamala Pakrashi, wife Nalini Pakrashi, Shasimukhi Ganguly, and Suniti Neogi. From the year 1921, they spearheaded the idea of charka spinning and took an active role in various social activities. The wife of Abinash Roy at Chetmari suffered a great degree of persecution after her husband's imprisonment in 1922. Non-Cooperation movement became particularly noticeable in certain remote parts of Alipurduar subdivision. Under the leadership of Magha Dewan, men and women of Kumargram and other villages started a movement in support of non-payment of revenue and rent.

In spite of the withdrawal of the Non-Cooperation Movement, nationalist ideas remained in circulation among various sections of the population. In 1923 Chittaranjan Das once again visited Jalpaiguri and attended a meeting held by the local Congress leaders of North Bengal. The meeting was attended by not only women of middle-class families but by many Rajbanshi women from rural areas. When Gandhi Visited Jalpaiguri on 9 June 1925, lots of Rajbanshi men and women from far away parts of the districts came to have a *darshan* of Gandhi (Choudhury 1985: 14). During that time, near the Ukilpara crossing, there was a girls' school and a women association named '*Matri Mandir*'. It was founded by Bimala Roy, daughter of Madhusudan Roy, a Rajbanshi leader. Mahatma Gandhi visited *Matri Mandir* and gave his blessings to Bimala Roy (ibid). In 1924 poet Mukunda Das came to Siliguri to spread swadeshi ideas through theatre. A separate mat screen (*chik*) was arranged for the female audience. On hearing his song "*Bhenge felo reshmi churi, Bangonari, Bilaiti sari ar poro na*", the women broke their bangles, and also discarded foreign dresses (ibid: 55).

Civil Disobedience Movement

The Civil Disobedience movement was launched in 1930 under the leadership of Gandhi. His Dandi march from 12 March to 6 April and the breaking of the Salt Law provided the signal for countrywide Civil Disobedience. The wave of the movement was felt throughout Bengal in diverse forms and varying degrees. It is notable that young men and women took a leading part in shaping the course of the movement in Northern Bengal. In 1925 when he came to Dinajpur, there was a huge crowd at the railway station and the people generously contributed cash to the national movement while many women donated their jewelry drawing the attention of Gandhi to the patriotism of the people of Dinajpur (Das 2012: 36). Many women in the district participated in the Civil Disobedience movement, notable amongst them were Subhasini Mukherjee, Ashalata Chakraborty, Bhagabati Sen, Ashalata Kundu, Mohantabala Sengupta, Snehlata Ganguli, Jyotsna Kundu etc. (ibid: 35). In Balurghat the women workers of the "*Mahila Samiti*" boycotted foreign goods, took to charkha and plunged deep into the Civil Disobedience Movement (Bhattacharya 1986: 163). Prava Chatterjee and Bela Chatterjee

also contributed gave leadership to the Samiti. The women workers participated in the Dinajpur district political conference toward the end of March 1930 where decisions were taken to extend the propaganda work to the interior areas (The Amrita Bazar Patrika: 29th March 1930). We find that "the members of the Balurghat Mahila Samity have been out I the streets of Balurghat, preaching boycott of British goods. The other day the shopkeepers of the Balurghat bazaar gave away British goods to the ladies who set fire to them before a large crowd. This bonfire has evoked an enthusiasm towards the boycott of British goods, the like of which has never been witnessed since the heyday of the Non-cooperation movement" (The Amrita Bazar Patrika: 4th April 1930).The Mahila Samiti volunteers of Balurghat picketed in front of liquor shops and foreign cloth stores on *haat* days. During the period of Salt Satyagraha in 1930, Pramodasundori Debi hoisted the national flag on 6th April at Balurghat where more than 1,000 women took the pledge of freedom from bondage (Dasgupta 1370 BS: 194). On 11th April there was a large procession by the women at Balurghat town where Prava Debi in her bold speech invited women to violate salt law, and on 13th April under the leadership of Prava Chatterjee, 500 women volunteers of Balurghat violated salt law (ibid). Consequently, "as a result of the picketing of the local Mahila Samiti, there was absolutely no transaction either of foreign cloths or of liquor on the last Hat day" (The Amrita Bazar Patrika: 1st May 1930). The spirit and morale of the lady volunteers of Balurghat remained unaltered throughout the period. Picketing continued even after the proclamation of prohibitory orders. As days passed by and the movement gathered momentum, the authorities became harsh to the men and women participants. Prava Chatterjee and Bela Chatterjee were arrested and imprisoned in Berhampur Jail for 13 months (Dasgupta 1370 BS*:* 194). Undeterred, many of the women volunteers of Balurghat participated in the Independence Day procession of 26th January 1932. The police ordered the procession to disperse but the volunteers did not comply resulting in many of them including the women being arrested (Bhattacharya 1986: 180). Thus women of Balurghat etched their role in the history of the Civil Disobedience movement.

In Malda district, we find Surendra Bala Roy, daughter of the zamindar of Bhaluka deeply associated with the Civil Disobedience Movement. She was married to Dyotidhar Roy, who was a Congress leader at Patnitala police station in Dinajpur district and influenced by his husband's ideology she joined the national movement (Dasgupta 1370 BS: 205). She organized women workers under great hardship. During the time of the Civil Disobedience Movement under her leadership nearly two thousand women, most of whom were Santhals and Rajbanshis, went to the Congress office and raised the national flag. They were arrested and imprisoned in Dinajpur. After some time, they were released but Surendra Bala Roy was rearrested and sentenced to jail for one year. After her incarceration in the prisons of Dinajpur, Rangpur, and Berhampur prison she was released in 1933 (ibid). But even then, she continued her patriotic activities. She came back and settled in Malda where she established

a women's organization, namely "Congress *Mahila Sangha*", in association with another famous women worker of the district, Labanyalata Chanda, where women volunteers were taught spinning and weaving (ibid:206).

Jalpaiguri too was affected by the mass nationalist movement. Aruna Dasgupta, the then-renowned leader came to Jalpaiguri in 1927. She participated in the Civil Disobedience Movement and was imprisoned in 1930 in Calcutta. In 1930 Mahamaya Devi and Indumati Devi, sisters of Charuchandra Sanyal, participated in Civil Disobedience Movement and were imprisoned. Sailabala Gurung, was the first Nepali woman who violated the law in 1930 and was also convicted. Some women who participated in the terroristic activities were Mahendra Bala Debi, Bina Chowdhuri, Sarju Sarkar, Bani Bhowmik, Kusum Kumari Bhandari, etc., and their leader was Subhasini Ghosh. With the re-launching of the Civil Disobedience Movement in early January 1932, Jalpaiguri became more involved and 26 January was celebrated as Independence Day with the hoisting of the tri-colour flag. It was followed by a procession of women workers resulting in the arrest of Hariprava Sengupta, Sailabala Guha Thakurata, Sailabasisni Devi, and Nanibala Moulik. It is worthy of note that Nanibala was arrested with her 9-month-old child in her lap (Bhattacharya 1987: 292).

The Civil Disobedience Movement was not just concentrated in the town but also spread to the villages of Jalpaiguri. In the village of Bonapara, Rajbanshi women under the leadership of Swarnamayee Roy participated in the Civil Disobedience Movement (Choudhuri 1985: 21). In February 1939 Bengal Provincial Congress Committee held its Annual National Conference at Jalpaiguri where Suniti Neogi was the leader of the women's volunteers' organization. At this Conference, the leaders of Krishak Sabha spoke about agrarian problems and thus planted the seeds of left-wing politics. As a result, the District Committee of the Communist Party of India was formed on 6 February, 1939 (De July 1981: 65).

Many women were attracted by the activities of the Communist Party. Bibha Dutta, Kalyani Chanda, Kalpana Neogi, Lila Sen, Asha Roychowdhuri, Amiya Nandi - all of them propounded communist ideas not only in the towns but also in the villages. Maili Chhetri, a Nepali woman leader of Denguajhar Tea garden was also connected with communist activities (Roy Sanyal 2001: 468).

In Darjeeling, Sabitri Devi took part in the Salt Satyagraha leading to her being arrested. During 1939-40 when Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose was under arrest in the house at Giddhapahar (Kurseong), freedom fighters and revolutionaries of hill areas made contact with Subhas Chandra Bose through Sabitri Devi. She delivered locally baked bread every day to Netaji. Oftentimes the belly of the bread contained hidden news and secret messages (Rai 2014: 123). Netaji's escape plan was hatched in the house in Giddhapahar and the Afghani shirt and trousers that Netaji wore while entering Afghanistan were tailored there (Rai 1992: 226) and in every step Sabitri Devi had a role to play. Some people are

of view that Sabitri Devi had assisted Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose to escape from captivity in Kurseong and journey to Germany through Kabul (The Better India: 12 June 1921). After independence; she was awarded Tamrapatra by the Indian government.

Quit India Movement

In the series of protests led by Gandhi during the period of struggle for freedom in India, the Quit India Movement was the most popular and dominant mass protest. One of the prominent features of the movement was that women came out of the threshold of their four walls and began to protest against the oppression of foreign rule. The participation of women in the Quit India Movement was significant in several aspects. They were, at large, endowed with a new spirit on the call of Mahatma's "do or die". In the earlier phases of the nationalist movements, women mostly followed their male counterparts but after the declaration of the Quit India Movement, the majority of men in the lead were imprisoned creating a large vacuum. Despite the Movement being rendered "leaderless", women spontaneously came forward and sustained it till the very end. Though a large number of women in the Quit India Movement were from the upper strata of society, women of villages and peripheral areas of North Bengal also took an active part in the struggle against imperialist powers.

After the collapse of the Cripps Mission, on 8th August 1942 at the All India Congress Committee session in Bombay, Gandhi announced the 'Quit India' movement. Before that, in January 1939 Subhas Chandra Bose undertook an intensive tour of Northern Bengal districts. While addressing the people Bose emphasized the establishment of many more "Rural committees" and "*Mahila Samitis*" to carry on propaganda for the attainment of full Swaraj (The Amrita Bazar Patrika: 1st February 1939). Women leaders like Prava Chatterjee who had started their political career in the twenties founded the *Mahila Samiti* of Balurghat in the Dinajpur district and participated in the movement of 1942 and one of the active participants was Ahalya Soren, a tribal woman of Balurghat. Although the police arrested almost all the prominent workers of the Congress, the women activists of Balurghat were spared (Dasgupta 1370 BS: 195).

In Malda, Surendra Bala Roy was closely associated with the 1942 movement. She was a veteran freedom struggler who joined the freedom movement at Patnitala (Dinajpur district) in the early 30s and later settled down in Malda. Though physically she had become weak she still sacrificed everything for the liberation of her country and even sent her son to trip the railway lines during the movement. Her house in Malda became the center of nationalist activities and as all the male members were arrested, she controlled the trigger of the movement (ibid: 207). Tarubala Sen, is another revolutionary Malda woman who played an essential role in the movement. Uma Roy, though she did not directly participate in the movement, had a close connection with the Congress workers and always helped

them. There were several other women workers such as Alo Mandal, Girijasundari Devi, and Shailbala Roy who worked persistently for the cause of the movement (Bhattacharya 1986: 233).

In Jalpaiguri, a large number of girl students participated in the 1942 movement. A large procession was held on 9th August under the leadership of two women - Tara Banerjee and Uma Dasgupta. The slogan in the procession was "*Engrej Bharat Charo*", "British *Sarkar dhongsho hok*". Hira Prabha Sen and Sandhya Kar were imprisoned. In the Alipurduar subdivision Surabala Ganguly, Giribala Banerjee, Gyanada Baishnabi were the notable women who led the movement (Sanyal 8th March 1981: 5 & 7).

At Kumargram in Alipurduar Mahila Swadeshi Mela was organized to promote the vision of liberation from foreign bondage. Shailrani Das & Gitarani Das of Madarihat helped the revolutionaries to attack the Police station. In Falakata, Bakularani Das, Pusparani Basu, and many others joined in the movement. In Alipurduar, Ashoka Mukherjee, Kamala Mukherjee took on the risk of maintaining correspondence with the political prisoners at the Buxa Camp (IMPACT Journal: May 2021). There were also other women in Alipurduar subdivision such as Sharatkumari Mukhpadhayay, Sahshimukhi Gangopadhyay, Kana Majumdar who were also participants in the movement (Uttarbanga Sambad: 14th August 2022). Many Rajbanshi women also joined the movement with great courage willing to sacrifice their lives for the liberation of the motherland.

In Coochbehar we find a special feature of the Quit India movement. A large number of girl students participated in the movement which is a remarkable episode in the history of the students' movement in North Bengal. Aparajita Goppi, a student of Sunity Academy gave a call to the girl students to assemble without official permission to celebrate Netaji's birthday. An annoyed government stopped the state scholarship of the girls in that school. In protest, the girls' students started the historical girl students' strike (Ghosh & Sarkar 1990: 407). The role of Aparajita Goppi in the political history of North Bengal is deeply etched for she truly was a dedicated female politician.

In the Siliguri subdivision of the Darjeeling district, the Quit India movement took a wider shape. Many of the women workers of the Indian National Congress took part in picketing, *hartal*, processions, etc. On 9 September a public procession of one thousand people was staged under the leadership of two women - Sita Basu Roychowdhury and Kalidasi Sengupta. Police fired at the procession and five persons died, 34 people were arrested and 4 women were convicted (Roy Choudhury 1994: 39). Sabitri Sengupta was another notable lady of Siliguri who participated in the Quit India movement. A noteworthy aspect of the movement in the town was the contribution of women from middle-class families (IMPACT Journal: May 2021).

Putali Devi Tamang of Kurseong was fired with the spirit of nationalism right from her schooldays and when the Congress activist Suryaprasad Poddar, from Bihar, came to Kurseong (1934-35) to organize the youths. She approached him for membership in the Congress Party but he found her too young for politics and turned her away. She would not give up and in 1936 when a unit of the Congress Party was formed in Kurseong she was enrolled as a member despite being a student of class nine

only. Her father was threatened at the cost of his job as a government peon to reverse Putali's decision. At the same time, she was promised a job as a nursing staff should she leave politics. The government failed in both accounts. In 1913 she organized the Harijan Samaj and began night classes for the upliftment of the downtrodden. In the same year, she established a female's association, *Nari kalyan Samiti* where khadi was spun and youths were enlightened on nationalism (Barla 2015: 44). Under her influence women of Darjeeling, Kalimpong and Kurseong started joining the national movement.

The day after the Quit India Movement was launched Mahatma Gandhi and scores of Congressmen were arrested. Protest rallies and demonstrations were launched all over India and Kurseong had its protest march on 12 August 1942, when Suryaprasad Poddar was taken into custody. The following day, Putali Devi and her colleagues staged another protest rally, and she and many of her friends were arrested. The prisoners were taken to Darjeeling. The government gave them the option of signing a bond to shun politics or face severe punishment. Suryaprasad Poddar and Putali Devi refused to comply and so were sentenced to rigorous imprisonment. After one and a half years she was released in January 1944 but found that the people at home were scared of police harassment and she found herself unwanted by the family. In March Suryaprasad was released and realizing the common ties between Suryaprasad and Putali Devi, as well as her forsaken condition, the Congress workers encouraged the two to be married. Consequently, she became Putali Devi Poddar. After Independence, she continued her social service activities among the women of the tea plantation in the hills. The Government of India awarded her with Tamrapatra and a freedom fighter's pension. But the greater reward came from the people she had struggled to emancipate. Right till her death, the people addressed her reverentially as "*Mataji*", a kind of reward very few people enjoy (Rai 1992: 123-127).

It is not difficult to conclude that the women of North Bengal played a very worthy role in the Quit India Movement. Though women mainly from middle-class families participated in the initial stage of the movement, in the later stages, women from all walks of life joined it. Unfortunately, the accounts of their dedication and sacrifice are generally overlooked by historians, and with that, a glorious chronicle of the women of North Bengal's contribution has almost disappeared from the memory of the people. Despite the indifference, suffice it to say that, the contribution of women of North Bengal in the freedom struggle of India is no less than that from any other part of India and it deserves much greater honour than what it has been bestowed with. It must be remembered that no matter how big or marvelous a machine may be, it is the small nuts and bolts and the tiny screws that make it whole and operational. In the context of the history of Bengal's contribution to Indian independence, the role of women of North Bengal constitutes those small nuts and bolts and the tiny screws that bind and give the final functional whole. In this fast-fading and overlooked piece of history, there is a begging necessity, an unfulfilled obligation, for future researchers and historians to replenish records and restore a rightful place to the gallant women of North Bengal.

Notes:

1. The districts of North Bengal after independence comprise Darjeeling, Jalpaiguri, Cooch Behar, Dinajpur, and Malda.
2. The Sakhi Samiti was commenced by Swarnakumari Devi, the fourth daughter of Debendranath Tagore to promote welfare of women.

References:

- Barla, Alma Grace. 2015. *Indigenous Heroines A Saga of Tribal Women in India*. Copenhegen: International Work Group for Indigenous Affairs (IWGIA).
- Bhattacharya, Malayshankar. 1987. Sangbadpatrer Darpane Jalpaiguri Jelar Jatiotabadi Andolan. In: Ajitesh Bhattacharya (ed.). *Madhuparni Jalpaiguri Jela Sankhya* . Balurghat.
- Choudhury, Nirmal Chandra. 1985. *Swadhinata Sangrame Rajbanshi Sampraday*. Jalpaiguri: Uttarbanga Anusandhan Samiti.
- Das, Satyaranjan. 2012. *Dinajpurer Gourabujjwal Adhyay*. Kolkata: Amar Bharati.
- Dasgupta, Kamala. 1370 BS. *Swadhinata Sangrame Banglar Nari*. Calcutta: Basudhara. p. 193.
- Dasgupta, Ranajit. 1992. *Economy, Society & Politics in Bengal Jalpaiguri (1869-1997)*. New Delhi: Oxford University Press.
- Devi, Gayatri and Shanta Rana Rau. 1996. *A Princess Remembers The Memoirs of Maharani of Jaipur*, Delhi: Rupa & Co.
- Ghosh, Ananda Gopal and Shekhar Sarkar. 1990. Cooch Behar Rajye Rajnaitik Andolaner Ruprekha, In: Ajitesh Bhattacharya (ed.), *Madhuparni Cooch Behar Jela Sankhya*. Balurghat.
- Ghosh, Dr. Radhagobinda. 1398 BS. *Swadhinata Sangrame Maldaher Abadan*. Malda.
- Goldstone, Jack A (ed.). 2003. *States, Parties, and Social Movements*, Cambridge University Press.
- Kumar, Radha. 2006. 1993. *The History of Doing: An Illustrated Account of Movements for Women's Rights and Feminism in India 1800-1900*. New Delhi: Juban Books.
- Labar, Jiwan. 2006. *Kehi Rajnaitik Vyaktivaharu*. Darjeeling: Gama Prakashan.
- Rai, Bhawna. July –September 2014. Active Role of Women of The Darjeeling Hills In The Freedom Struggle of India. In: Dr. Vinay Shrivastaba(ed.). *Central India Journal of Historical and Archaeological Research*. Vol. 3, No. 11. Neemuch: Career Research Institute, p. 123.
- Rai, M. P. 1992. *Bir Jatiko Amar Kahani*. Gabgtok: Aajako Sikkim Prakashan.
- Paul, Ratna. 2010. Deshio Rajya Cochbihare Nababidhan Brahmo Samajer Udbhab, Bikash O Biloy. In: Sabyasachi Chattopadhyay(ed.). *Itihas Anusandhan- 24*. Kolkata: Paschimbanga Itihas Samsad.
- Roy Choudhury, Ladlimohan (ed.). 1994. *Quit India Movement 1942: A Collection of Documents*. Vol. 1, Government of West Bengal. p. 39.

- Roy Sanyal, Ratna. 2001, Uttarbange Narimukti Andolaner Prekkhapat: Swadeshi theke Tebhaga. In: Goutam Chattopadhyay(ed.). *Itihas Anusandhan-15*, Kolkata: Paschimbanga Itihas Samsad.

Online Sources:

https://www.impactjournals.us/journals/international-journals/international-journal-of-research-in-humanities-arts-and-literature

(accessed/retrieved/updated on 5th June 2022).

https://www.thebetterindia.com/256684/helen-lepcha-savitri-devi-mahatma-gandhi-netaji-subash-chandra-bose-darjeeling-west-bengal-teenage-freedom-fighter/

(accessed/retrieved/updated on **2.12.2022).**

Newspapers, Magazine, Gazetteers:

1922. 'ARRESTS AT SILIGURI'. *The Amrita Bazar Patrika*, January 31.

1930. 'BALURGHAT NOTES'. *The Amrita Bazar Patrika*, March 29.

1930. 'BALURGHAT NOTES'. *The Amrita Bazar Patrika*, April 4.

1930. 'AT BALURGHAT'. *The Amrita Bazar Patrika*, May 1.

1939. 'Festive Scenes At Maldah'. *The Amritabazar Patrika*, February 1.

2022. 'Uttarer Agun Jagiye Tulechhilen Chandradeep-Kuldeep', *Uttarbanga Sambad*, August 14.

Mukulesh Sanyal(ed.). 8th March 1981. *Janamat* (weekly magazine in Bengali). Jalpaiguri.

De, Dr. Barun (ed.). July 1981. *West Bengal District Gazetteers, Jalpaiguri*. Calcutta: Government of West Bengal.

Sengupta, J. C. 1969. *West Bengal District Gazetteer*, *Malda*. Calcutta: Government of West Bengal.

Sengupta, J. C. 1965. *West Bengal District Gazetteers, West Dinajpur*. Calcutta: Government of West Bengal.

Unpublished Works:

Bhattacharya, Malayshankar. 1986. 'Nationalist Movement and freedom Struggle in Some Selected Areas of North Bengal (1857-1947)'. Unpublished Ph. D. Thesis. Raja Rammohanpur: University of North Bengal.

Bio Profile of the Author:

Assistant Professor

Dept. of History, Birsa Munda College

P. O. Hatighisa, Dist. Darjeeling, PIN 734429

Email: ratna.paul961@gmail.com

নদীয়া জেলার মুসলিমদের উন্নয়ন-একটি রাজনৈতিক সমীক্ষা

রবিউল ইসলাম সেখ

সারাংশ

পৃথিবীতে মানুষ বিভিন্ন ধর্মকে মেনে চলে। বিশ্বে খ্রিষ্টান সব থেকে বেশী এবং দ্বিতীয় স্থানে মুসলিম ধর্মলম্বী মানুষ রয়েছে। তবে ভারতে খ্রিষ্টান অপেক্ষা মুসলিমের সংখ্যা অনেক বেশী। ভারতের মুসলিমরা আদি মানুষ নয় বরং সপ্তম শতকে আরব থেকে ভারতে বাণিজ্যের উদ্দেশ্যে এসে সারা ভারতে মুসলমানের বিস্তার ঘটায়। বর্তমান ভারতে বিভিন্ন ধর্মীয় জনগোষ্ঠীর মধ্যে সর্ব বৃহৎ সংখ্যালঘু হল ইসলাম ধর্মলম্বী মানুষেরা। ভারতে কেন্দ্র ও রাজ্যের যে অংশে মুসলমান বেশী বসবাস করে তার মধ্যে অন্যতম একটি রাজ্য হল পশ্চিমবঙ্গ। নদীয়া হল পশ্চিমবঙ্গের এমন একটি জেলা যেখানে ২০১১ সালের জনগণনা অনুসারে মোট জনসংখ্যার ২৬.৭৬% মানুষ মুসলিম বসবাস করে। স্বাধীনতার পর থেকে নদিয়ার মুসলিমদের কি অবস্থা বা কতটা উন্নয়ন হয়েছে তা দেখার জন্য উন্নয়নের যে বিভিন্ন মাত্রা রয়েছে তার বিশ্লেষণ প্রয়োজন। উন্নয়নের মাত্রাগুলি মূলত আর্থ-সামাজিক, শিক্ষা ও রাজনৈতিক বিষয়ের সাথে গভীর ভাবে জড়িত। প্রবন্ধটিতে নদীয়া জেলার মুসলিম সম্প্রদায়ের উন্নয়নে রাজনীতি কতটা মুখ্য ভূমিকা নিয়েছে তা দেখা হয়েছে। গবেষকের সমীক্ষাকৃত জেলার নির্দিষ্ট ব্লকের মুসলিম জনগোষ্ঠীর থেকে প্রাপ্ত তথ্য, বিভিন্ন সরকারী-বেসরকারি রিপোর্ট, গ্রন্থ, প্রবন্ধ পর্যালোচনার পর মুসলিম সাধারণ জনগণের উন্নয়ন কতটা হয়েছে তা বিশ্লেষণের মাধ্যমে বোঝা সম্ভব। আর একটি বিষয় হল এখানকার মুসলিমরা কোন বিষয়গুলিতে পিছিয়ে আছে সেগুলি পরিষ্কার হয়ে উঠবে। ১৯৫৫ সালে কেলকার কমিটি, ১৯৮০ সালে মণ্ডল কমিশন ও গোপাল সিং কমিটি এবং ২০০৬ সালের সাচার কমিটি মুসলিমদের আর্থ-সামাজিক, শিক্ষা ক্ষেত্রে পিছিয়ে পড়ার এবং উন্নয়নের জন্য কিছু সুপারিশ করেন। উত্তর-সাচার কমিটির রিপোর্টে সার্চার কমিটির সুপারিশগুলি কতটা বাস্তবায়িত হয়েছে এবং কেন্দ্র-রাজ্য সরকারের যে বেশ কিছু পরিকল্পনা নেওয়া হয় মুসলিম উন্নয়নে, তা কতটা ফলপ্রসু হয়েছে, তা দেখা হয়।

শব্দসূচক — *নদীয়া, রাজনৈতিক উন্নয়ন, রাজনৈতিক অংশগ্রহণ, খ্রিষ্টান, মুসলিম, ওয়াকফ সম্পত্তি, কেলকার কমিটি, মণ্ডল কমিশন, সাচার কমিটি।*

কোনো সমাজের বা রাষ্ট্রের উন্নয়ন ঘটাতে গেলে সমাজের সকল সম্প্রদায়ের উন্নয়ন প্রয়োজন। প্রতিটি সমাজে কিছু পিছিয়ে পড়া জনগোষ্ঠীর মানুষ থাকে তা ধর্ম, জাত, গোত্র, সামাজিক শ্রেণীবিন্যাস, অর্থ ও শিক্ষা ভিত্তিক হতে পারে। আর এই রকম একটি ধর্মভিত্তিক সম্প্রদায় হল পশ্চিমবঙ্গের মুসলিম সম্প্রদায়। যখন কিছু সংখ্যক মানুষ একটি নির্দিষ্ট ভূখণ্ডে বসবাস করে এবং সামাজিক-মানসিক ভাবে একে-অপরের সঙ্গে সম্পৃক্ত ভাবে থাকে, তখন ঐ নির্দিষ্ট মানব গোষ্ঠীকে সম্প্রদায় বলা হয় (Phillips and Pittman 2009: 5-6)।[১] কোনো সম্প্রদায়ের উন্নয়নের ক্ষেত্রে ভিন্ন কর্মসূচী ও পরিকল্পনার দ্বারা বৃহত্তর পরিধি অতিক্রম করতে হয়। সম্প্রদায়ের উন্নয়নের কিছু গুরুত্বপূর্ণ উপাদান আছে। এই উপাদানগুলি হল- শিশু উন্নয়ন পরিকল্পনা, যুবক ও কৈশোর উন্নয়ন পরিকল্পনা, বালিকা-মহিলা উন্নয়ন কর্মসূচী, বয়স্ক নাগরিকদের জন্য পরিকল্পনা, স্বাস্থ্য ও পরিবার

কর্মসূচী, পারিবারিক ও প্রাতিষ্ঠানিক শিক্ষা, কৃষি ও শিল্প ভিত্তিক কর্মসূচী, সমবায় পরিসেবা এবং যোগাযোগ ব্যবস্থা। এই উপাদানগুলি সম্প্রদায়ের উন্নয়কে সম্পূর্ণতা দিয়ে থাকে (Community Developmen, Kerala, 2015: 5-6)।[২] সামাজিক উন্নয়ন দৃষ্টিভঙ্গি হল সামগ্রিক ও গতিশীল দৃষ্টিভঙ্গি যা জনকল্যাণের প্রতি আলোকপাত করে এবং সমাজের সকল স্তরের মানুষের জীবন-যাত্রার গুণ-মান পরিবর্তন মাধ্যমে সমৃদ্ধ করে (Midgley 1995: 12-13)।[৩] উন্নয়ন কথাটি বিভিন্ন শাস্ত্রে বিভিন্ন ভাবে ব্যবহৃত হয়ে থাকে। আসলে উন্নয়ন হল পূর্বের অবস্থার ইতিবাচক পরিবর্তন। এই পরিবর্তন শুধু অর্থনৈতিক ক্ষেত্রে পরিবর্তন নয়। পরিবর্তনটিতে সমগ্র সমাজ ব্যবস্থার বহুমুখী মাত্রার পরিপেক্ষিতে পরিবর্তন ঘটে। অর্থাৎ উন্নয়ন হল সামগ্রিক ভাবে ইতিবাচক পরিবর্তনের একটি প্রক্রিয়া বা পদ্ধতি (Simasinghe 2020: 52)।[৪] স্বাধীনতার পর থেকে নদিয়ার মুসলিমদের কতটা উন্নয়ন হয়েছে তা দেখার জন্য উন্নয়নের যে বিভিন্ন মাত্রা রয়েছে তার বিশ্লেষণ প্রয়োজন। উন্নয়নের বহুমাত্রিক মাত্রাগুলি মূলত আর্থ-সামাজিক, শিক্ষা-সংস্কৃতি ও রাজনৈতিক বিষয়ের সাথে গভীর ভাবে জড়িত। প্রবন্ধটিতে নদীয়া জেলার মুসলিম সম্প্রদায়ের উন্নয়নে রাজনীতি কতটা মুখ্য ভূমিকা নিয়েছে তা দেখা হল একটি উদ্দেশ্য। জেলাটির মুসলমানরা কেন্দ্র ও রাজ্যের রাজনীতিতে কতটা প্রভাব ফেলতে পেরেছে বা কতটা রাজনৈতিক সচেতন হয়ে নিজ সম্প্রদায়ের উন্নয়ন ঘটাতে পেরেছে তা পর্যবেক্ষণ করা হয়েছে। প্রবন্ধটির মূল উদ্দেশ্যে উপনীত হওয়ার জন্য পদ্ধতি হিসাবে মিশ্র পদ্ধতি, গুণগত ও পরিমাণগত পদ্ধতি নেওয়া হয়েছে। প্রাথমিক উৎস হিসাবে নদীয়া জেলার মুসলিম অধ্যুষিত করিমপুর ১নং ও ২নং ব্লকের চারটি গ্রামপঞ্চায়েত থেকে সাক্ষাৎকার পদ্ধতির সাহায্যে তথ্য সংগ্রহ করা হয়। সেকেন্ডারী উৎস হিসাবে সেনসাস রিপোর্ট, নদীয়া জেলা হ্যান্ডবুক, সরকারি-বেসরকারী রিপোর্ট, বিভিন্ন গ্রন্থ ও প্রবন্ধের সহায়তা নেওয়া হয়।

কোরআন ও মুসলিম

সাধারণ ভাবে ইসলাম বিশ্বাস ও অনুসরণকারী মানুষদের মুসলিম বা মুসলমান বলা হয়। ইসলাম পাঁচটি মূল নীতি দ্বারা পরিচালিত হয় এবং এগুলি হল - কলেমা, নামাজ, রোজা, যাকাত এবং হজ্জ। প্রকৃত মুসলিম একেশ্বরবাদে বিশ্বাসী। ইসলাম ধর্মে কোরআন-হাদিস এবং শেষ রসূল হজরত মোহাম্মদ সল্লালাহু আলাই-সাল্লামের জীবনকে অনুসরণ করে (Sekh 1994: 28-32)।[৫] কোরআন মাজিদের ১১২ নম্বর সূরা আল ইখলাসের আয়াত চারটি, রুকু একটি আছে। এই চারটিতে আয়াতে প্রকাশ করা হয়। আল্লাহ একক, আল্লাহ কারোর মুখাপেক্ষী নন, আল্লাহ কাউকে জন্ম দেননি ও কেউ আল্লাহকে জন্ম দেয়নি এবং আল্লাহর সমতুল্য কেউ নেই। এই সূরার মধ্যে আল্লাহর শ্রেষ্ঠত্ব ও সার্বভৌমত্বের ধারণা বর্ণিত হয়েছে। একজন প্রকৃত মুসলিমের বিশ্বাস এই ধারণা দিয়ে শুরু হয় (কোরআন মাজিদ সূরা নং ১১২: ৮৪৭)।[৬] হজরত মোহাম্মদের স্ত্রী আয়েশা একবার অসুস্থ হয়ে পড়ে এবং আরবে অবস্থানরত ভারতীয় চিকিৎসকের দ্বারা সুস্থ হন। এই সময় মালাবারের অন্তর্গত মালবের রাজা চেরুময়াল পেরুমাল ইসলাম গ্রহণ করে আব্দুর রহমান নাম ধারণ করেন (ইসলাম ২০১৫: ১১-১২)।[৭] স্যার যদুনাথ সরকার মনে করেন বখতিয়ার খলজি সম্ভবত ১১৭৯ সালে শাহাবুদ্দিন মহাম্মদ ঘোরীর সৈন্যবাহিনীতে চাকুরির জন্য এসেছিলেন। সেখানে তিনি প্রত্যাখ্যাত হওয়ার পর তিনি দিল্লীতে মালিক কুতুব-উদ-দীন আইবকের দরবারে আসেন (Sarkar 1948: 1-2)।[৮] সেন বংশের স্থায়ী রাজধানী ছিল নবদ্বীপে। বর্তমানে পশ্চিমবঙ্গের নদীয়াতে মুসলিমের আবির্ভাব ঘটেছিল বখতিয়ার খলজির সময়ে, নবদ্বীপের সেন বংশের রাজা লক্ষ্মণ সেনকে পরাজিত করা ফলে। তিনি আঠারো জন সৈন্যর দ্বারা নবদ্বীপ দখল করেন (Sarkar 1948: 5-7)।[৯] নদিয়ায় ইক্তিয়ারউদ্দিন বখতিয়ার খলজি রাজনৈতিক আধিপত্য প্রতিষ্ঠা হবার পর থেকে পলাশীর যুদ্ধে পতন পর্যন্ত প্রায় ৫৫০ বছর অভিন্ন ভাবে মুসলিম শাসকদের রাজত্ব ছিল। এই সময়ের মধ্যে ১৪১৪-১৪১৮ সাল পর্যন্ত

মাত্র চার বছর রাজা গনেশ স্বাধীন ভাবে বাংলার শাসন করেন (আহমেদ ২০১২: ১৪-১৫)।[১০] ২০০১ সালে ভারতে মোট জনসংখ্যার মাত্র ১২% মুসলমান ২৯টি রাজ্যে ও ছয়টি কেন্দ্রশাসিত অঞ্চলে বসবাস করতো। স্বাধীনতার পূর্বে ভারতে প্রায় ২৪% মুসলিম বসবাস করতো। ভারত ভাগের আগে অসম, সিকিম, জম্মু-কাশ্মীর, উত্তরপ্রদেশ ও পশ্চিমবঙ্গে বেশ ভালো সংখ্যায় মুসলমান ছিল (Khalidi 2004: 178)।[১১] ১৯৪৭ এবং ১৯৭১ সালে ভারত থেকে মুসলমান সম্প্রদায়ের বিরাট অংশ পাকিস্তান ও বাংলাদেশে স্থায়ী ভাবে বসবাসের জন্য চলে যায়। চলে যাবার পর যে পরিমান মুসলিম ভারতে থেকে যায় তার অধিকাংশ গ্রামে চাষবাসের মধ্যে দিয়ে জীবিকা নির্বাহ করে থাকে (ibid, 2004: 178)।[১২] ২০০১ থেকে ২০১১ সালের মধ্যে ভারতে মুসলিম জনগনের দশকীয় বৃদ্ধি হয়েছে ২১.৮% এবং পশ্চিমবঙ্গে দশকীয় বৃদ্ধি ২৫.২% (Association SNAP and Guidance Guild in Association with Pratichi Institute, 2016:20)।[১৩] ২০১১ সালের আদমশুমারি অনুসারে পশ্চিমবঙ্গের জেলাগুলিকে মুসলিম বসবাসের পরিপেক্ষিতে তিনটি স্তরে ভাগ করা হয়। নদীয়া জেলা দ্বিতীয় স্তরে অবস্থান করে এবং এই জেলায় ২৬.৮% মুসলিম, ৭২.১৫% হিন্দ এবং ১.১০% খ্রিষ্টান-শিখ-বৌদ্ধ-জৈন মানুষ বসবাস করে (ibid, 21-22)।[১৪]

উন্নয়ন ও রাজনৈতিক উন্নয়ন

উন্নয়নের ধারণাটি বিংশ শতাব্দীর দ্বিতীয়ার্ধে আবির্ভাব ঘটে এবং বিভিন্ন ক্ষেত্রে প্রয়োগ শুরু হয়। দ্বিতীয় বিশ্বযুদ্ধের শেষে মানুষ সামাজিক, রাজনৈতিক অর্থনৈতিক অধিকার নিয়ে নতুন নতুন রাষ্ট্র হিসাবে আন্তর্জাতিক স্বীকৃতি পেয়েছিল। এই অবস্থায় রাষ্ট্রগুলি অর্থনৈতিক উন্নতির উপর সর্বাধিক গুরুত্ব প্রদান করে (Gupta 2015: 35-3)।[১৫] অমর্ত্য সেন তাঁর "Development as Freedom" গ্রন্থে উন্নয়ন বলতে শুধুমাত্র জাতীয় উৎপাদন বৃদ্ধি, মাথাপিছু আয় বৃদ্ধি, আধুনিকীকরণ, ব্যক্তিগত আয় বৃদ্ধি প্রভৃতিকে বোঝাননি। সামাজিক ক্ষেত্রে সকলে স্বাধীন হওয়া এবং সেই স্বাধীনতা সমাজের সব স্তরের মানুষ উপভোগ করে থাকে—এই অবস্থাকে বুঝিয়েছেন। স্বাধীনতা নির্ভর করে বেশ কিছু আর্থসামাজিক ব্যবস্থার উপর। যেমন শিক্ষা ও স্বাস্থ্যের সুযোগ-সুবিধা, রাজনৈতিক অংশগ্রহণ এবং মতামত বিনিময়ের নিরাপত্তা (Sen 1999: 3)।[১৬] পাকিস্তানের প্রাক্তন অর্থমন্ত্রী ও প্রখ্যাত অর্থনীতিবিদ, ড. মেহেবুবুল-উল-হক ইউনাইটেড নেশানস ডেভলপমেন্ট প্রোগ্রামের মানব উন্নয়নের সূচক নির্ধারণ করেন। ১৯৯০ সালে প্রথম মানব উন্নয়নের রিপোর্ট প্রকাশিত হয়। অর্থনীতিক বৃদ্ধি কখনোই সমাজের আর্থিক বৈষম্য কমায় না বরং বৈষম্য বাড়ায়। তিনি মনে করেন, অর্থনীতিক উন্নতির সঙ্গে মানব উন্নয়নের সরাসরি সংযোগ নেই। অর্থনৈতিক উন্নয়ন দরিদ্রতা মুক্তি ঘটায় এবং জনগণকে অর্থনীতিক ভাবে ক্ষমতায়ণ করে (The Mahbul-ul-Haq Human Development Centre 2003: 15-27)।[১৭] ২০০০ সালের সেপ্টেম্বর মাসে জাতিপুঞ্জের সদস্য রাষ্ট্রগুলি উন্নয়ন বলতে "Millennium Development Goal"-কে বুঝিয়েছেন। উন্নয়নে পৌঁছানোর জন্য সদস্য রাষ্ট্রগুলি আটটি লক্ষ্য স্থির করেছিল। যেমন- ক্ষুধা-দারিদ্রতা দূর করা; সকলের জন্য প্রাথমিক শিক্ষা নিশ্চিত করা; লিঙ্গ বৈষম্য ও নারীমুক্তি; শিশুমৃত্যু হ্রাস করা; মানসিক স্বাস্থ্যের বিকাশ; এইচ.আই.ভি, এইডস, ম্যালেরিয়া ও অন্যান্য মহামারী দূর করা; এবং উন্নয়নে বিশ্ব অংশীদারিত্ব বৃদ্ধি করা (Willis 2011: 1-2)।[১৮]

রাজনীতিক উন্নয়নের ধারণাটির আবির্ভাব ঘটে দ্বিতীয় বিশ্বযুদ্ধের পর নতুন স্বাধীন রাষ্ট্রের উদ্ভব ঘটার সঙ্গে সঙ্গে। রাজনীতি উন্নয়ন বিভিন্ন ভাবে ঘটতে পারে তা রাজনৈতিক অংশগ্রহণ বা রাজনৈতিক প্রাতিষ্ঠানিক আধুনিকীকরণ হতে পারে

(Naqvi, Muhammad,Yaseem, 2021- 34)।[১৯] রাজনীতির উন্নয়নের ধারণাটি মূলত ১৯৬০ সালে লুসিয়ান পাই, ডেভিড আফটার ও মাইরন ওয়েনার প্রমুখ চিন্তাবিদের ধারণা (ibid, 2021: 35)।[২০] লুসিয়ান পাই প্রথম রাষ্ট্রবিজ্ঞানী যিনি রাজনৈতিক উন্নয়নের ধারণাটিকে পরিষ্কার সংজ্ঞায়িত করেছেন। রাজনৈতিক উন্নয়ন হল রাজনীতির সাংস্কৃতিক প্রসারণ এবং অভিযোজন; নতুন চাহিদার সাথে পুরানো জীবন নিদর্শনগুলির সংমিশ্রণ এবং সমন্বয়। জাতি রাষ্ট্র ব্যবস্থার বিবর্তন রাজনৈতিক উন্নয়নের প্রথম স্তর (Pye 1991: 496-498)।[২১] Joseph La Palombara and J. Ronald Penroch says that "Political Development is closely related to building democracy by inculcating democratic values in the people." (Naqvi, Muhammad, Yaseem, op.cit. 2021: 34)[২২] সিমুর মার্টিন লিপসেট ও স্যামুয়েল হান্টিংটন রাজনৈতিক উন্নয়ন বলতে গণতান্ত্রিক উন্নয়নকে বুঝিয়েছেন। গণতান্ত্রিক উন্নয়নের কতগুলি নির্ধারক রয়েছে এবং সেগুলি হল- গণ-সার্বভৌমত্ব; আইনি সরকার; সিধান্ত গ্রহণে জনগনের অংশগ্রহণ; সমাজের বিভিন্ন গোষ্ঠীর রাজনৈতিক স্বাধীনতা ও সহনশীলতা; সমাবেশ ও সংবাদপত্রের স্বাধীনতা এবং রাজনৈতিক দল গঠন করা; ভিন্ন চিন্তাভাবনার প্রতি সহনশীলতা এবং জনগনের আকাঙ্খার প্রতি সরকারের প্রতিক্রিয়া (Yu 2002: Chap-1)।[২৩]

নদীয়ায় মুসলিমদের রাজনৈতিক উন্নয়ন

ব্রিটিশ পর্বে ভারতে মুসলিম পিছিয়ে ছিল দারিদ্রতা, শিক্ষা ও অর্থনৈতিক ক্ষেত্রে; কিন্তু উইলিয়াম হান্টার মনে করেন বাংলার মুসলমানদের কোন প্রতিনিধি সরকারে বা সরকারী আমলাতন্ত্রে না থাকায় বাংলার মুসলিম পিছিয়ে পড়েছে। এই সময় মুসলিম পরিবারের ছেলে-মেয়েরা ইংরেজি শিক্ষার প্রাথমিক বিদ্যালয়ে উপস্থিতি ছিল শূন্য (Ansari 2007: 37-40)।[২৪] স্বাধীনতার পর পশ্চিমবঙ্গ বা নদীয়ার মুসলিম উন্নয়নে তেমন পরিকল্পনা বা কর্মসূচী গ্রহণ করা হয়নি। রাজনৈতিক দলগুলি মুসলিমদের ভাবনা ভেবে কোন রকম কর্মসূচী গ্রহণ না করার ফলে ১৯৭১ সাল পর্যন্ত মুসলিম ভোটাররা মুসলিম লীগকে সমর্থন করে। ১৯৭১ সালের নির্বাচনে সি. পি. আই (এম) ১১৩ টি আসন, কংগ্রেস ১০৬ টি আসন এবং মুসলিম লীগ ৭টি আসন দখল করে। পরবর্তীতে মুসলিম লীগের প্রায় সদস্যরা কংগ্রেসে দলে যোগদান করে এবং দলটির অস্তিত্ব হারায় (আহমেদ ২০১২: ১০৮-১১৪)।[২৫] ১৯৯০ সালে মণ্ডল কমিশন সকল ধর্মের মানুষের ভিতর জাত ও উপজাত ভিত্তিক সংরক্ষণের কথা বলা হয়। মুসলমান সম্প্রদায়ের মধ্যে পেশা ও বংশগত ভাবে জাত নির্ধারিত হয় কিন্তু এখানে রাজনৈতিক উন্নয়নের বিষয়ে নীরব ছিল মণ্ডল কমিশন (Kishnan 2012: 61-62)।[২৬] রঙ্গনাথ মিশ্র কমিটি পিছিয়ে পড়া সংখ্যালঘুর ১৫% ও মুসলিমদের ১০% সংরক্ষণের জন্য কথা বলে। মুসলিমদের রাজনৈতিক ক্ষেত্রে কোনো প্রকারের সমপ্রতিনিধিত্বের নীতি বা সংরক্ষণের কথা ছিল না (ibid-2012: 63-64)।[২৭] ২০০৬ সালে সাচার কমিটি রিপোর্টে মুসলিম সমাজের পিছিয়ে পড়ার কথা তুলে ধরে। এই কমিটি উক্ত সম্প্রদায়ের সাধারণ মানুষদের আর্থ-সামাজিক ক্ষেত্রে কীভাবে উন্নয়ন ঘটানো যাবে তার জন্য কিছু সুপারিশ করেন। এই সময় প্রধানমন্ত্রী পনেরো দফা কর্মসূচী চালু করেন এবং মুসলিম জনগনের মাদ্রাসা ও বিদ্যালয় শিক্ষা, সরকারী ও অন্যান্য ক্ষেত্রে কাজে অংশগ্রহণ, সামরিক বাহিনী প্রভৃতি কাজে অংশগ্রহণে বিশেষ গুরুত্ব দেওয়া হয়েছে (Planning Commission, Government of India 2008: 121-125)।[২৮] সংখ্যালঘু শ্রেণীর উন্নয়ন এবং কি ধরণের কর্মসূচী গ্রহণের ফলে প্রকৃত উন্নয়ন হতে পারে তার জন্য ভারত সরকার ২০০৬ সালের ২৯শে জানুয়ারী পৃথক সংখ্যালঘু বিষয়ক মন্ত্রী দপ্তর তৈরী করেন। এই মন্ত্রী দপ্তরের মূল লক্ষ হল দেশের সংখ্যালঘু সম্প্রদায়ের মানুষদের উন্নয়নের বিষয় দেখাশুনা করা ও উন্নয়নের জন্য বিভিন্ন জনকল্যাণমূলক প্রকল্প নেওয়া (ibid,123)।[২৯]

ধর্মভিত্তিক নদীয়া জেলার জনসংখ্যা ও শতাংশ (১৯৬১-২০১১)

বছর	হিন্দু	মুসলিম	খ্রিষ্টান	বৌদ্ধ	শিখ	জৈন	অন্যান্য ধর্ম	ধর্মহীন	মোট জনগন
১৯৬১	১২৮৪১৭৩ ৭৪.৯	৪১৭৭০৬ ২৪.৪	১০৮৪০ ০.৬	৪০০ ০.১	৩৮ ০.০	১২৬ ০.০	৪১ ০.০	-- ০.০	১৭১৩৩২৪ ১০০.০
১৯৭১	১৬৯৩০০৬ ৭৫.৯	৫২০৫৭১ ২৪.১	১৬৩৩৭ ০.৭	৭৭ ০.০	৫৫ ০.০	১৬৮ ০.০	৫৬ ০.০	-- ০.০	২২৩০২৭০ ১০০.০
১৯৮১	২২২৯১৭৭ ৭৫.২	৭১৩৭৭৬ ২৪.১	২০৫০৪ ০.৭	২০৪ ০.০	২৩০ ০.০	২৮২ ০.০	০৭ ০.০	৭৩ ০.০	২৯৬৪২৫৩ ১০০.০
১৯৯১	২৮৬৩৮৯১ ৭৪.৩	৯৫৯৯৯৮ ২৪.৯	২৬৬৭৪ ০.৭	৩৩৪ ০.০	২৭৯ ০.০	১১৮ ০.০	২৮৫ ০.০	৫১৮ ০.০	৩৮৫২০৯৭ ১০০.০
২০০১	৩৩৯৬০৯৫ ৭৩.৮	১১৭০২৮২ ২৫.৪	২৯৫৬৩ ০.৬	৬৯৯ ০.০	৫৩৫ ০.০	১৮০ ০.০	৫৭৭৩ ০.১	১৬০০ ০.০	৪৬০৪৮২৭ ১০০.০
২০১১	৩৭২৮৪৮২ ৭২.২	১৩৮২৬৮২ ২৬.৮	৩৩৮৫৫ ০.৭	৮৪৯ ০.০	৫১৪ ০.০	২৮১ ০.০	১৬৮৯৩ ০.৩	৪০৬৪ ০.১	৫১৬৭৬০০ ১০০.০

(Source-Nadia District Handbook, Census Report-2011, pp.45)

নদীয়া জেলার করিমপুর ১নং ব্লক ও করিমপুর ২নং ব্লকে মুসলিম অধ্যুষিত দুটি করে মোট চারটি পঞ্চায়েতে ক্ষেত্রসমীক্ষার থেকে প্রাপ্ত তথ্য নিম্নের সারণি ও চাটের দ্বারা দেখানো হয়েছে যে, পরিবারের সকল সদস্য নির্বাচনে ভোট প্রদান, নিজের পছন্দ মতন ভোট দেওয়া এবং মেয়েরা সরাসরি রাজনীতি করতে পারে তার তথ্য ভিত্তিক প্রকাশ আমরা পাই। এই বিষয়গুলি বিশ্লেষণের মধ্য দিয়ে রাজনৈতিক ক্ষেত্রে উক্ত এলাকার সাধারণ মানুষের রাজনীতিতে অংশগ্রহণ ও সচেতনতার পরিচয় পাওয়া যায়। চারশো জন উত্তরদাতার ৯৪% মানুষ নির্বাচনে ভোট দিতে পারে ও ৬% ভোট দিতে পারে না এবং নির্বাচনে হিন্দু অধ্যুষিত পঞ্চায়েত অপেক্ষা মুসলিম অধ্যুষিত এলাকার মানুষ ভোট প্রদানে আগ্রহী কম। ৮৭.৭৫% মানুষ নিজের ইচ্ছা মতন ভোট দিতে পারে এবং ১২.২৫% মানুষ ভোটে দানে নিজেদের ইচ্ছার গুরুত্ব থাকে না বরং সেক্ষেত্রে অভিভাবক বা রাজনৈতিক দলের নেতা-কর্মীদের দ্বারা প্রভাবিত হয়। অন্যদিকে ৯৭% মেয়েরা সরাসরি রাজনীতি করে না এবং মাত্র ৩% মেয়ে স্থানীয় স্তরে নির্বাচনে প্রার্থী মনোনয়ন, নির্বাচিত সদস্য ইত্যাদির ফলে সক্রিয় রাজনীতি করেন।

ক্রমিক নং	পঞ্চায়েতসমূহ	মোট উত্তরদাতা	নির্বাচনে সকলে ভোট প্রদান		পছন্দ মতন ভোট		মেয়েরা রাজনীতি করে	
			হ্যাঁ	না	হ্যাঁ	না	হ্যাঁ	না
১	করিমপুর ১নং গ্রাম পঞ্চায়েত	১০০	৯৮	০২	৯১	০৯	০৩	৯৭
২	পিপুলবেড়িয়া গ্রাম পঞ্চায়েত	১০০	৯৬	০৪	৮৬	১৪	০৪	৯৬
৩	রহমতপুর গ্রাম পঞ্চায়েত	১০০	৯৭	০৩	৮৯	১১	০১	৯৯
৪	নতিডাঙ্গা ২নং গ্রাম পঞ্চায়েত	১০০	৮৫	১৫	৮৫	১৫	০৪	৯৬
৫	মোট	৪০০	৩৭৬	২৪	৩৫১	৪৯	১২	৩৮৮
৬	শতাংশ	১০০%	৯৪%	০৬%	৮৭.৭৫%	১২.২৫%	০৩%	৯৭%

(উৎস — ক্ষেত্র সমীক্ষা)

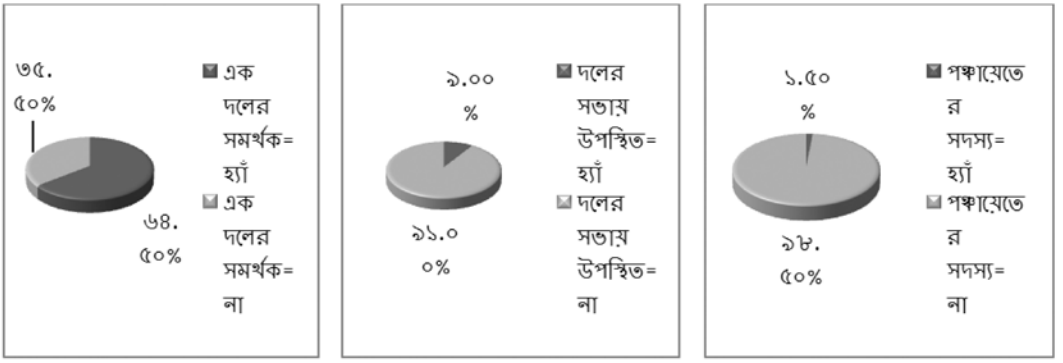


(উপরের সারণী অনুসারে প্রাপ্ত বিবরণী)

সমীক্ষাকৃত পঞ্চায়েতের অধীন গ্রামগুলির পরিবারের সকল সদস্য একটি রাজনৈতিক দলকে সমর্থক করে না। এলাকাটির ৬৪.৫% জনগন একটি রাজনৈতিক দলকে ভোট দেয় বা সমর্থন করে এবং ৩৫.৫% মানুষ বহুদলীয় ব্যবস্থায় সমর্থন ও বিশ্বাস করে। মাত্র ৯% মানুষ রাজনৈতিক দলের সভায় বা মিটিং-মিছিলে যায় এবং ৯১% মানুষ দলীয় সভায় যেতে চায় না। অন্যদিকে ১.৫% মানুষ পঞ্চায়েতের সদস্য হিসাবে ও ৯৮.৫% মানুষ সাধারণ ভোটার হিসাবে রাজনীতিতে অংশগ্রহণ করে। নিচের সারণি ও চাটে আরও পরিষ্কার ভাবে সাধারণ মানুষের দলীয় সমর্থন, সভায় উপস্থিতি ও পঞ্চায়েতের সদস্য দেখানো হল-

ক্রমিক নং	পঞ্চায়েতসমূহ	মোট উত্তরদাতা	এক দলের সমর্থক		দলের সভায় উপস্থিত		পঞ্চায়েতের সদস্য	
			হ্যাঁ	না	হ্যাঁ	না	হ্যাঁ	না
১	করিমপুর ১নং গ্রাম পঞ্চায়েত	১০০	৮৬	১৪	০৬	৯৪	০০	১০০
২	পিপুলবেড়িয়া গ্রাম পঞ্চায়েত	১০০	৬২	৩৮	০৮	৯২	০২	৯৮
৩	রহমতপুর গ্রাম পঞ্চায়েত	১০০	১৫	৮৫	০১	৯৯	০২	৯৮
৪	নতিডাঙ্গা ২নং গ্রাম পঞ্চায়েত	১০০	৯৫	০৫	২১	৭৯	০২	৯৮
৫	মোট	৪০০	২৫৮	১৪২	৩৮	৩৬৪	০৬	৩৯৪
৬	শতাংশ	১০০%	৬৪.৫%	৩৫.৫%	০৯%	৯১%	১.৫%	৯৮.৫%

(উৎস — ক্ষেত্র সমীক্ষা)



(উপরের সারণী অনুসারে প্রাপ্ত বিবরণী)

পশ্চিমবঙ্গের ১৯৫২ সাল থেকে ২০২১ সালে পর্যন্ত বিধানসভার ধর্ম ভিত্তিক ফলাফল বিশ্লেষণ করলে মুসলিম সম্প্রদায়ের জনপ্রতিনিধিত্ব সঠিক ধারণা পাওয়া সম্ভব। এই সময়ের মধ্যে বিধানসভায় ৮.৭৩% থেকে ১৭.০০% মুসলিম জনপ্রতিনিধিত্ব ছিল কিন্তু সেক্ষেত্রে মুসলিম জনসংখ্যার হার অনেক বেশী। অর্থাৎ এই সময়ের মধ্যে পশ্চিমবঙ্গে মুসলিম মানুষের পরিমাণ ২৪.৪% - ২৮.৮%। ফলে স্বাভাবিক ভাবে পরিসংখ্যানে মুসলিম জনসংখ্যার তুলনায় জনপ্রতিনিধিত্বর পরিমাণ কম। আবার এটাও দেখা যায় যে, নদীয়া জেলায় জনসংখ্যার হারের অনুপাতের থেকে মুসলিম জনপ্রতিনিধি রাজ্যের বিধানসভায় অনেক কম। ২০১১ ও ২০১৭ সালে নদীয়া থেকে ১৭জন বিধায়কের মধ্যে মাত্র দুজন বিধায়ক হল মুসলিম যা জেলার মোট বিধায়কের ১১.৭৬% কিন্তু জেলায় মুসলিম জনসংখ্যা হল ২৬.৮%। ১৯৫১ সালে নদিয়াতে কোন মুসলিম বিধায়ক ছিল না অর্থাৎ মুসলিম জনপ্রতিনিধিত্ব শূন্য। স্বাধীনতার পর থেকে আজ পর্যন্ত নদীয়া জেলা থেকে লোকসভা বা রাজ্য বিধানসভায় মুসলিম সম্প্রদায়ের জনসংখ্যার তুলনায় খুব কম জনপ্রতিনিধিত্ব গিয়েছে। ফলে আইনসভায় মুসলিম সম্প্রদায়ের দাবী-দাওয়ার কথা জানানো জনপ্রতিনিধির অভাব দেখা যায়।

ধর্ম ভিত্তিক পশ্চিমবঙ্গ ও নদীয়া জেলার এম.এল.এ (১৯৫২-২০২১ সাল) এর অবস্থা-

সাল (১৯৫২ ২০২১)	ধর্ম ভিত্তিক পশ্চিমবঙ্গে এম,এল,এ এর সংখ্যা ও শতাংশ					ধর্ম ভিত্তিক নদিয়াতে এম,এল,এ এর সংখ্যা ও শতাংশ				
	মোট এম, এল, এ	হিন্দু ও অন্যান্য এম,এল,এ	হিন্দু ও অন্যান্য এম,এল,এ শতাংশ	মুসলিম এম,এল, এ	মুসলিম এম,এল, এ শতাংশ	মোট এম, এল, এ	হিন্দু ও অন্যান্য এম,এল,এ	হিন্দু ও অন্যান্য এম,এল,এ শতাংশ	মুসলিম এম,এল, এ	মুসলিম এম,এল,এ শতাংশ
১৯৫২	২৩৮	২২৬	৯০.৭৬	২২	৯.২৪	১০	১০	১০০	০০	০০
১৯৫৭	২৫২	২৩০	৯১.২৭	২২	৮.৭৩	১১	১০	৯০.৯	০১	৯.০৯
১৯৬২	২৫২	২২৬	৮৯.৬৮	২৬	১০.৩২	১১	১০	৯০.৯	০১	৯.০৯
১৯৬৭	২৮০	২৫১	৮৯.৬৪	২৯	১০.৩৬	১৪	১১	৭৮.৫৭	০৩	২১.৪৩
১৯৭২	২৮০	২৪৯	৮৮.৯৩	৩১	১১.০৭	১৪	১৩	৮৮.৮৬	০১	৭.১৪
১৯৭৭	২৯৪	২৬০	৮৮.৪৪	৩৪	১১.৫৬	১৫	১২	৮০.০০	০৩	২০.০০
১৯৮২	২৯৪	২৫৩	৮৬.০৫	৪১	১৩.৯৫	১৫	১৩	৮৬.৬৭	০২	১৩.৩৩
১৯৮৭	২৯৪	২৫৯	৮৮.১০	৩৫	১১.৯০	১৫	১৩	৮৬.৬৭	০২	১৩.৩৩
১৯৯১	২৯৪	২৫৬	৮৭.০৭	৩৮	১২.৯৩	১৫	১২	৮০.০০	০৩	২০.০০
১৯৯৬	২৯৪	২৫৯	৮৮.১০	৩৫	১১.৯০	১৫	১২	৮০.০০	০৩	২০.০০
২০০১	২৯৪	২৬০	৮৮.৪৪	৩৪	১১.৫৬	১৫	১৪	৯৩.৩৩	০১	৬.৬৭
২০০৬	২৯৪	২৫১	৮৫.৩৭	৪৩	১৪.৬৩	১৫	১৪	৯৩.৩৩	০১	৬.৬৭
২০১১	২৯৪	২৪৪	৮৩.০০	৫০	১৭.০০	১৭	১৪	৮২.৩৫	০৩	১৭.৬৫
২০১৬	২৯৪	২৪৫	৮৩.৩৩	৪৯	১৬.৬৭	১৭	১৫	৮৮.২৪	০২	১১.৭৬
২০২১	২৯৪	২৫৬	৮৭.০৭	৩৮	১২.৯৩	১৭	১৫	৮৮.২৪	০২	১১.৭৬

Source- https://en.wikipedia.org1952, https://en.wikipedia.org1957, https://en.wikipedia.org1962, https://en.wikipedia.org1967, https://en.wikipedia.org1972, https://en.wikipedia.org1977, https://en.wikipedia.org1982, https://en.wikipedia.org1987, https://en.wikipedia.org1991, https://en.wikipedia.org1996, https://en.wikipedia.org2001, https://en.wikipedia.org2006, https://en.wikipedia.org2011, https://en.wikipedia.org2016, https://en.wikipedia.org2021

ভারতে মুসলিম সম্প্রদায়ের দারিদ্রতার জন্য জনসংখ্যা বৃদ্ধি এবং অল্প বয়সে বিবাহ, জন্মের হার বেশী ও অপুষ্টিজনিত সমস্যা। মুসলিম সমাজের উন্নয়নে বাধাগুলি দূর করা খুব প্রয়োজন (Khalidi, op.cit, 2004:178-179)।[৩০] ভারত ভাগের পর মুসলমানদের ৪০০ বছরের গৌরবের ইতিহাস, মর্যাদা এবং ভারতীয় রাজনীতিতে মুসলিমদের ভূমিকা ভেঙ্গে পড়ে। স্বভাবতই মুসলিম সম্প্রদায়ের সাধারণ মানুষ বিভিন্ন দিক দিয়ে অন্য সম্প্রদায়ের থেকে পিছিয়ে পড়ে। এরপর থেকে ভারতে মুসলিম নেতার বা লিডারশিপের অভাব লক্ষ করা যায় (Puri 1993: 2141)।[৩১] মুসলিম উন্নয়নের জন্য সরকারী প্রতিষ্ঠানের পরিকল্পনার সঙ্গে সঙ্গে বেসরকারি প্রতিষ্ঠানগুলি সহায়ক ভূমিকা নিয়েছিল। যেমন মৌলানা আজাদ এডুকেশন ফাউণ্ডেশন (এম.এ.ই.এফ) শিক্ষা ক্ষেত্রে মুসলিম মহিলাদের সাহায্য করার জন্য প্রতিষ্ঠিত হয়। ১০০ কোটি টাকার ফান্ড বিশিষ্ট সংস্থা মেয়েদের স্কুল, কলেজ, হোস্টেল এবং স্কলারশিপের মাধ্যমে মুসলিম উন্নয়ন ঘটাতে তৎপর হয়েছিল (Udin 2012: 397)।[৩২] সর্বভারতীয় স্তরে ২০১১ সালের জনগণনানুসারে ১৪% মুসলিম ছিল কিন্তু সপ্তদশ লোকসভা নির্বাচনের পর মাত্র ৫% জনপ্রতিনিধি পার্লামেন্টের নিম্ন কক্ষে পাঠাতে সক্ষম হয়েছিল। সপ্তম সাধারণ নির্বাচনে লোকসভায় ৯% মুসলিম জনপ্রতিনিধি নির্বাচিত হয়েছিল এবং এটাই স্বাধীন ভারতে সব থেকে বেশী মুসলিম জনপ্রতিনিধি ভারতের পার্লামেন্টে স্থান পেয়েছিল (Farooqui 2020: 1-5)।[৩৩]

স্বাধীনতার পর প্রথম পশ্চিমবঙ্গ রাজ্যের মন্ত্রীসভা তৈরী হয় সেখানে কোনো মুসলিম মন্ত্রী ছিল না। কিন্তু ১৯৫১ সালের ড. বিধানচন্দ্র রায়ের মন্ত্রীসভায় ড. রফিউদ্দিন আহমেদ মন্ত্রীসভায় জায়গা পান। সদ্য ভাগ হওয়া রাষ্ট্রের পরিপেক্ষিতে মুসলিমদের জন্য আলাদা পরিকল্পনা না করে নিজেদের অস্তিত্ব ধরে রাখায় লক্ষ্য হয়ে দাঁড়িয়েছিল। ১৯৬২ সালের রাজ্য মন্ত্রীসভায় পাঁচজন মুসলিম মন্ত্রী তাদের নিজ দায়িত্ব সম্পূর্ণ করলেও কিন্তু পশ্চিমবঙ্গের মুসলমানদের জন্য পৃথক ভাবনা-চিন্তা করতে পারেননি (আহমেদ ২০১২:১৫৬-১৫৯)।[৩৪] বামফ্রন্ট সরকার থাকাকালীন পশ্চিমবঙ্গের মুসলিম উন্নয়নের জন্য তেমন কোনো পদক্ষেপ নিতে পারেনি। কেন্দ্র সরকার যে সাচার কমিটির রিপোর্ট প্রকাশ করে সেখানে মুসলিমদের আর্থ-সামাজিক ভাবে পিছিয়ে পড়া বিষয়টি মেনে নেওয়া কঠিন হয়ে পড়েছিল। দীর্ঘদিন সরকার থাকার সময়ে মুসলিম বিধায়ক বা মন্ত্রী থাকলেও শুধু মুসলমান সম্প্রদায়ের জন্য তেমন কিছু হয়নি (তদেব :১৬০-১৬৪)।[৩৫] মুসলিমদের উন্নয়নের কথা বললেও বাস্তবে পশ্চিমবঙ্গ সরকার তেমন কার্যকরী হয়ে উঠতে পারেনি। ২০১১ সালে নতুন সরকার আসার পর সাচার কমিটির সুপারিশ ভিত্তিক কর্মসূচী গ্রহণ করে এই রাজ্যের মুসলমানদের উন্নয়ন করার কথা বলা হয়। কিন্তু হাজী মহাম্মদের ওয়াকফ সম্পত্তির পরিমাণ ১২৫০ বিঘা যা হুগলী, নদীয়া, মুর্শিদাবাদ, কলকাতা, চব্বিশ পরগনা, হাওড়া ও বর্ধমান জেলায় রয়েছে। রাজ্য সরকার স্বাধীনতার পর মুসলিম সম্প্রদায়ের ওয়াকফ সম্পত্তির হিসাব দেয় না এবং মুসলিম উন্নয়নে এই সম্পত্তির সঠিক ব্যবহার করতে পারেনি (আহমেদ ২০১২: ১৭৯-১৮৪)।[৩৬] পশ্চিমবঙ্গে মুসলিম সম্প্রদায়কে মূলত সংরক্ষণের জন্য দুটি স্তরে ভাগ করা হয় এবং তা হল অন্যান্য অনগ্রসর শ্রেণী-এ বা ও.বি.সি.-এ এবং অন্যান্য অনগ্রসর শ্রেণী-বি বা ও.বি.সি.-বি। রাজ্য সরকার ১৪৩ টি পদবি নিয়ে ও.বি.সি. তালিকা তৈরী করেছে এবং তার মধ্যে ৮৩ টি মুসলিম রয়েছে। এর মধ্যে ৫৭টি ও.বি.সি.-এ এবং ২৬টি পদবি ও.বি.সি.-বি। মুসলিমদের ও অন্যান্য পিছিয়ে পড়া শ্রেণীর জন্য কেন্দ্র ও রাজ্য সরকার শিক্ষা ও চাকরির ক্ষেত্রে সংরক্ষণের জন্য ও.বি.সি বা অন্যান্য অনগ্রসর শ্রেণী হিসাবে চিহ্নিত করে (Biswas 2015: 73-74)।[৩৭]

জেলার মুসলিম সম্প্রদায়ের উন্নয়নের বেশ কিছু সমস্যা রয়েছে। স্বাধীনতার পর থেকে মুসলিম জনসংখ্যার অনুপাতের সমান সংখ্যক বিধায়ক জেলাটি থেকে একবারেও বিধানসভায় স্থান পায়নি। জেলা থেকে লোকসভায় কোনো মুসলিম সম্প্রদায়ের জনপ্রতিনিধিত্ব পাঠানো সম্ভব হয়ে উঠেনি। জেলা তথা রাজ্যের যে রাজনৈতিক দলগুলি রয়েছে সেখানে মুসলিম নেতার সংখ্যা খুব কম। মুসলিম সাধারণ ভোটারদের মুসলিম লিগের অবক্ষয়ের পর অন্য রাজনৈতিক দলগুলির প্রতি ভোটারদের উদাসীনতা দেখা যায়। শিক্ষা প্রতিষ্ঠান থেকে শুরু করে বিভিন্ন ধরনের প্রতিষ্ঠানগুলি জেলার সমস্ত এলাকায় সমবণ্টন প্রয়োজন। এখানকার মুসলিম সম্প্রদায়ের রাজনৈতিক উন্নয়নের জন্য লোকসভা ও বিধানসভায় সমপ্রতিনিধিত্ব, রাজনীতিতে অংশগ্রহনের পরিমাণ বাড়ানো, রাজনৈতিক দলগুলিতে মুসলিম নেতা-নেত্রীর বৃদ্ধি করা এবং রাজনীতি সম্পর্কে সাধারণ মুসলিম মানুষের মধ্যে ইতিবাচক দৃষ্টিভঙ্গি তৈরী করা। বাস্তবে নদীয়ার দক্ষিণাংশ থেকে উত্তরাংশ সাধারণ মানুষ স্বাস্থ্য, শিক্ষা ও প্রশাসনিক প্রতিষ্ঠানের সুযোগ-সুবিধা বঞ্চিত। আর নদীয়ার এই অংশে মুসলমান সম্প্রদায়ের মানুষ বেশী বসবাস করে। ফলে জেলার সমগ্র এলাকায় সরকার ও দল ব্যবস্থার রাজনৈতিক দলগুলিকে সমান গুরুত্ব দেওয়া উচিত।

তথ্য সূত্র-

১. Phillips, Rhonda, Pittman H. Robert, 2009, An Introduction to Community Development, Routledge, New York, pp.5-6

২. Community Developmen, Social Work and Development, State Resource Center, Kerala, 2015, pp.5-6

৩. Midgley, James, 1995, Social Development Perspectives in Social Welfare, Sage Publications, London, pp.12-13

৪. Simasinghe, M. Wanninayaka, January 2020, Development What does it really mean?, Acta Polonica, Research Gate, p.52/ www.researchgate.net/publication. Accesse on 28.12.2023, 11:55pm

৫. Mondal, Rahim, Sekh, 1994, Dynamics of Muslim Society, Inter-India Publications, New Delhi, pp.28-32

৬. কোরাআন মাজিদ, ১১২ নং সূরা, পৃ.৮৪৭

৭. ইসলাম, আমিনুল, ২০১৫, হাজার বছরের বাংলার মুসলমান, এডুকেশন ফোরাম, কলকাতা, পৃ.১১-১২

৮. Sarkar, Jadunath Sir, 1948, The History of Bengal, Vol?-II, Muslim Period-1200A.D.-1757A.D., B. R. Publishing Corporation, Delhi, pp.1-2

৯. Ibid, pp.5-7

১০. আহমেদ, খাজিম, ২০১২, পশ্চিমবাংলার বাঙালি মুসলমান-অন্তবিহীন সমস্যা, উদার আকাশ, ঘটকপুকুর-পশ্চিমবঙ্গ, পৃ.১৪-১৫

১১. Khalidi, Omar, 2004, Indian Muslim Society and Economy, ‘‘Islam in South Asia’’, Anno 23(84), Nr.1, Oriente Moderno, p.178

১২. Ibid, p.178

১৩. Leaving Reality of Muslims in West Bengal: A Report, Association SNAP and Guidance Guild in Association with Pratichi Institute, Rupali, Kolkata, 2016, p.20

১৪. Ibid, pp.21-22

১৫. Gupta, Joyeeta, January 2015, Inclusive Development, Research Gate, pp.35-36/ www.researchgate.net/publication. Accesse on 15.7.2022

১৬. Sen, A, 1999, Development As Freedom. New York: Anchor books, p.3

১৭. Human Development in South Asia 2002-Agriculture and Rural Development, The Mahbul-ul-Haq Human Development Centre, Oxford University Press, New York, 2003, pp.15-27

১৮. Willis, Katie, 2011, Theories and Practices of Development, Routledges, London, pp.1-2

১৯. Naqvi, Moazma, Muzaffar, Muhammad, Dr., Yaseem, Zahid, Dr., Sept, 2021, Lucian Pye and Poltical Development: A Case of Pakistan, ''Pakistan Languages and Humanities Review'', Vol.5, No.2 (34-46), p.34

২০. Ibid, p.35

২১. Pye, W. Lucian, Sept, 1991, Political Culture Revisited, ''International Society of Political Psychology'', Vol.12, Mo.3, pp.496-498

২২. Naqvi, Muhammad, Yaseem, op.cit, p.34

২৩. Yu, Seung, Dal, 2002, The Role of Political Culture in Iranian Political Development, Routledge, New York, Chap-1

২৪. Ansari, Ashfaq Husain, 2007, eds., Basic Problems OBC and Dalit Muslim, ''Basic Problems of Indian Muslims'', Asghar Ali Engineer, Serials Publications, New Delhi, pp.37-40

২৫. আহমেদ, খাজিম, ২০১২, পশ্চিমবাংলার বাঙালি মুসলমান-অন্তর্বিহীন সমস্যা, উদার আকাশ, ঘটকপুকুর-পশ্চিমবঙ্গ, পৃ.১০৮-১১৪

২৬. Kishnan, P.S, 'Reservations for Muslims in India: A Step for Inclusive Development,' *Economics and Political Weekly,* Vol.47, No.33, 18th August, 2012, pp.61-62

২৭. Ibid, pp.63-64

২৮. Eleventh Five Year Plan 2007-2012, Planning Commission, Government of India, Vol. I, Inclusive Growth, Oxford University Press, New Delhi, 2008, pp.121-125

২৯. ibid, p.123

৩০. Khalidi, op.cit, 2004, pp.178-179

৩১. Puri, Balraj, 2nd oct, 1993, 'Indian Muslims Scienc partition,' *Economic and Political Weekly,* Vol.28, No.40, p.2141

৩২. Udin, Nazeer, January 2012, 'Dr., Muslim Minority Exclusion and Development Issues: Need for Inclusive Policy,' *International Journal of Multidisiplinary Research,* Vol.2, Issue-1, p.397

৩৩. Farooqui, Adnan, 2020, Political Representation of Minority: Muslim representation in Contemporary India, ‘‘India Review’’, Routledge, pp.1-5

৩৪. আহমেদ, প্রাগুক্ত, পৃ.১৭৯-১৮৪

৩৫. তদেব, পৃ. ১৬০-১৬৪

৩৬. তদেব, পৃ. ১৭৯-১৮৪

৩৭. Biswas, Zinarul, Haque, Md, 2015, ‘Muslim OBCs in West Bengal: Problems and Prospects,’ *Islam and Muslim Societies: A social Science Journal,* Vol.8, No.2, pp.73-74

লেখক পরিচিতি:
সহকারী অধ্যাপক, রাষ্ট্রবিজ্ঞান বিভাগ
ঋষি বঙ্কিমচন্দ্র কলেজ, নৈহাটি,পশ্চিমবঙ্গ, ভারত।
Email id: rabiulislamshaikh1988@gmail.com

BOOK REVIEW

Darwin and Human Evolution: Origin of Species Revisited

Edited by Ranjana Ray, Dhrubojyoti Chattiopadhyay and Samir Banerjee

The Asiatic Society, Kolkata. 2014, Seminar and Public Lecture Series,
ISBN: 978-93-81574-16-4, pages i-xi, 1-180. Price Rs. 920/-.

The book is an outcome of the international seminar entitled "Darwin and Human Evolution", organized by The Asiatic Society, Kolkata from February 10 to 12, 2010 on the occasion of 200 years of birth of Charles Darwin and 150 years of the publication of the book, "*On the Origin of Species by means of Natural Selection or the Preservation of Favoured Races in the Struggle for Life.*". The book is a homage to Charles Darwin and edited by three professors of Calcutta university; Ranjana Ray, Dhrubajyoti Chattopahyay and Samir Banerjee, from the departments of Anthropology, Biochemistry and Zoology respectively. Seventeen renowned Scholars and scientists from India and abroad contributed to the volume. The Editors wrote the introductory part of the book, with focus on the concepts and theories of evolution. Role of Darwin and development of Anthropology with emphasis on the findings of Charles Lyell, Wallace and Julian Huxley are pointed out. Since Darwin, with the development sciences and new methodologies, understanding of evolution has come a long way through the study of evidences provided by anthropology, archaeology, paleontology, chronology and molecular biology.

Kenneth A. R. Kennedy, an evolutionary biologist from Illinois University, discussed pre-Darwinian concepts of race in the light of Sir William Jones', the founder of Asiatic Society, pioneering work on comparative Philology, which came out in the Journal, *Asiatic Researches*, as early as 1793. Kennedy emphasized on the study of comparative linguistics and its role in biological and cultural variables in the backdrop of evolutionary concepts of race proposed earlier to Darwin by Linnaeus, Buffon, Cuvier and Rocher. He concluded that the subject Anthropology has its root in the concept of racism and human variability.

Lalji Singh, Director, Centre for Cellular and Molecular Biology, Hyderabad, delved into the *Mystery of our origin,* with the help of linguistic variability and traditional caste or social designations, tested the genetic variability of the Indian population. The variability in genetic level was only 0.01%. Joanne H. Cooper, from the Natural History Museum, Tring, UK, wrote about Darwin's study of pigeon and other domestic birds from India, which was sent to Darwin by Edward Blyth, Curator of the Asiatic Society of Bengal at the time. The stuffed birds are still preserved in the museum at Tring,

UK. Darwin's work on fancy pigeons and domestic birds played a crucial role in the development of evolutionary ideas of Charles Darwin. Detail observation and study of domestic birds especially pigeons showed the power of selection to produce many varieties from a single ancestral form.

K. Paddayya of Deccan College, Pune, focused on the ideas of evolution and the birth of Indian prehistory in combination with process of philosophy, social thoughts, religious thoughts, antiquarian studies, antiquity of man and finally the birth of Indian Prehistory after the first discovery of stone tools at Pallavaram near Chennai in May, 1863 by Robert Bruce Foote. He proposed that evolutionary archaeology in combination with Darwinian ideas helps to understand the perspective of adaptation, cultural selection, biological and cultural mode of inheritance and cognitive approach to human psychology.

Richard Pearson, from the University of British Columbia, Canada, studied the effect of Darwin's thinking on the studies of population through social evolution, social complexity and adaptation in the backdrop of Ryukyu Island, Okinawa, Japan, and their archaeology. He proposed Island Archaeology as a broad theoretical perspective considering island ecology, marine ecosystem, biogeography as the agencies of interaction and choice of cultural variability through selection.

N. C. Datta, Professor in Zoology, Calcutta University, reassessed the dialogue and debate on Darwinism with the influence of his predecessors and contemporary scientists and philosophers. He gave details about the influence of the voyage on the Beagles, genesis of *Origin of Species*, Natural Selection and Theory of descent of man, Neo-Darwinism, present status of Darwinism and its manifold influences.

Walter J. Bock from the department of biology of Columbia University, USA, wrote about the importance of organismic biology to explain the macro evolution. The study concluded that the evolutionary changes of individual attributes of organisms may not have genetic basis but result from developmental interaction and psychological adaptation. He has supported his points with facts.

Anita Sengupta, Specialist in Dental and Maxillofacial Radiology, School of Dentistry, Manchester, USA, studied the archaeological evidences of third molar tooth of fossil Hominines and remains of a number of modern men who lived in the past 4000 years in Europe. On the basis of her findings, she rejected the hypothesis of third molar being a vestigial part of human body and its evolutionary significance.

XIE Guangmao, Professor, Guangxi Institute of Cultural Relics and Archaeology, China, focused on the importance of the Guangxi region in China vis-a-vis Asia, in the realm of biology and culture, with a view to understanding human evolution. The study combines both fossil and archaeological evidences found in the region.

Francois Semah, Department de Prehistoire du Museum national d'histoire naturalle, discussed on the necessity of Palaeoanthropology to be balanced and the migration pattern of early hominids

should be viewed in the light of the Origin of Species. He emphasized on the modern research methods for reconstruction of the extant species of *Homo sapiens sapiens,* the modern man, as a part of bio-cultural evolution of man through phases of extinct Hominids.

Dominque Grimaud-Herve, Department de Prehistoire du Museum national d'histoire naturalle, has critically evaluated the position of Narmada Man among the first settlers of Asia. The position of Narmada man was studied in detail with the comparative analysis of fossil remains of Dmanisi from Georgia and other fossils from Africa and Asia. Her opinion is that there is need for further evidences in the form of fossils and cultural materials for coming to a conclusion about the position of Narmada man from India.

A. R. Sankhyan, from Anthropological Survey of India, on the basis of further findings of bones and tools from Narmada valley, considered that there were two strains of humans during Middle to late Pleistocene period in Central India. He studied the status of large-bodied Hominin and small-bodied Hominin in respect to bio-stratigraphy and archeological evidences from Narmada valley. He showed affiliation of Narmada fauna with those of Siwalik and Peninsular India; East and Southeast Asia and of Africa. He focused on the interface of Homo erectus and Homo sapiens with the help of recent genomic signatures, which indicate *in situ* evolution of the earliest mtDNA haplogroup 'M' in mainland India.

John S. Mattick, Institute of Molecular bio-science, University of Queensland, Australia, focused on the Genomic Programming which played vital role of regulating RNA in human evolution, development and cognition.

Peter D. Keightley and Daniel L. Halligan, both from Institute of Evolutionary Biology, University of Edinburgh, UK, wrote on the adaptive evolution humans at the molecular level. The cause of molecular differences between species is evaluated in the light of neutral Theory.

B. M. Reddy, from Indian Statistical Institute, Hyderabad, gave a detailed account of the origin of Austro-Asiatic population and their status among the people of India. Frequency of Haplogroups helps to identify the possible routes of entry of Austro-Asiatics into the Indian subcontinent.

V. R. Rao, Professor, Department of Anthropology, Delhi University, studied the genomic evidences like mtDNA for establishing Palaleolithic antiquity and continuity of human substratum in India. An attempt also has been made to analyze the mythical motifs about human origin with parallel evidence of Paleolithic antiquity.

N. C. Sukul, Department of Botany, Viswa Bharati University, discussed the impact of technological advancement and socio-economic conditions through time, which have direct control over the human population structure and population growth. Population growth changed the mode of natural selection in human beings. Different socio-economic factors acted as selective agents in human evolution.

Details about contributors are given at the end of the book. The book covers almost all the areas of Human evolution including the concept of race, mystery of human origin and migration, fossil evidences, antiquity, organismic biology, importance of genome and molecular biology. It gives a wide understanding of consequences of study of Human evolution in 21st Century in the light of Darwin's theory of evolution. It also shows that further modifications are needed with the advancement of methods of study. The book has great impact on understanding of the origin of Homo sapiens, population migration, problems and prospect in policy making for classification of human population of the World.

Dr. Debasis Kumar Mondal
Assistant Professor
Department of Anthropology
University of Calcutta

Acknowledgement to the Peer Reviewers

Mr. Sumit Kumar Saha
Co-Founder & CTO of Gnosis Lab

Dr. Suchetana Sengupta,
Gynecologist, and Infertility Specialist, Kolkata
suchetanas@yahoo.co.in

Professor Mita Banerjee
Vice Chancellor of Kanyashree University
Nadia, West Bengal

Prof. (Dr.) Subhranil Som
Principal, Bhairab Ganguly College,
Additional Charge as Officer on Special Duty (OSD)
Department of Higher Education,
Government of West Bengal, India
Fellow, Nikhil Bharat Shiksha Parisad, India
Honorary Fellow, International Association of Professional & Fellow Engineers Inc. USA
Sr. Member IEEE, Member IAENG, IACSIT, ISOC
Life Time Member of AUN Research Lab,

Professor Debi Chatterjee
Retired Professor, Department of International Relations
Jadavpur University

Professor Ishita Mukhopadhyay
Professor, Department of Economics, University of Calcutta
President, Indian Association of Women Studies

Dr Krishnendu Polley
Assistant Professor
Post-Graduate Department of Anthropology
Bidhannagar College
Amit Bhattacharjee

Dr. Ratna Bandyopadhyay
Professor (Retd), UGC Emeritus Fellow
Department of Library and Information Science
University of Calcutta

Professor Rahim Mondal
Professor and Head, Department of Anthropology and Sociology and
Dept. of Sociology, Centre for Himalayan Studies, University of North Bengal,
rahimanthnbu@yahoo.co.in

Dr. Deepanjana Dutta Das
Retired Professor
Department of Anthropology
Dibrugarh University , Assam

Professor Gourishankar Nag
Professor, Department of Political Science
Sidho-Kanho-Birsha University

Sanjoy Mukhopadhyay
Former Professor of Film studies
Jadavpur University

Dr. Ranjana Banerjee
President of UWAsia; Membership and Extension officer of the National Association of Soroptimist International. Member in GWIs Fellowship Committee.

Dr. Disari Roy
Assistant Professor & Coordinator
Department of Women's Studies
Diamond Harbour Women's University

Dr. Tanusree Chakraborty
Associate Professor- Academic Delivery
Globsyn Business School

Dr. Durga Basu
Former Professor Department of Archaeology,
University of Calcutta

Dr.Chandramalli Sengupta
Associate Professor,
Post Graduate Dept of Bengali
Asutosh College

Dr. Lopamudra Maitra, MA, MDMC, PhD
Visual Anthropologist, author, international columnist
Senior Researcher (History)- Centre for Studies in Legal History (CSLH)- of- West Bengal National University of Juridical Sciences, Kolkata, West Bengal.
Visiting Faculty- National institute of Design (NID), Gandhinagar, Gujarat
Former Culture Specialist- (Research)- SAARC Cultural Centre, Sri Lanka

Former Research Grant Fellow- India-Sri Lanka Foundation (Indian High Commission, Sri Lanka)
Former Assistant Professor- Symbiosis International (Deemed) University, Pune

Asmita Basu
Assistant Professor
Army Institute of Management, Kolkata.

Professor, Dr. Sucheta Sen Choudhury
DATS, Former Head and Dean, CUJ
Ranchi-835222

Dr. Srimati Mukherjee
Associate Professor, WBES
Department of Philosophy
Lady Brabourne College

Dr. Shachi Chakrabarty
Professor, Department of Law, University of
Calcutta & Dean, Faculty of Law, University of Calcutta,

Dr. B. P Dutta
M.A. (Double), LL.M (1st. Class), Ph.D)
Advocate, High Court, Calcutta

Dr. Jayanti Das
Professor, Dept. of Education, CU; Chairperson, UG
Board of Studies in Education, CU; Convenor.
Ph. D Research Advisory Committee in Education, CU,

Dr. Madhuri Sarkar
General Secretary, Academy of Folklore. Tollygunge

Notes for Contributors

We accept contributions in four categories for the Journal of Kolkata Society For Asian Studies:

- Research Articles
  The original research papers submitted for consideration should not exceed 7000 words. It includes figures, charts, tables and references and excludes the abstract, key words and the bio-note of the author/s. Papers based on scientific study, review articles written in correct English and Bangla will be considered for publication.
- Research Notes:
  Informal items of topical interest (maximum 5000 words including endnotes and bibliography).
- Reports:
  Based on any survey or field study approved by any recognised University or Authorised research organization (maximum 5000 words including endnotes and references).
- Reviews of Social Science Scholarship:
  Books, Journals and other media (maximum 800 words), are also invited for reviews in the Journal.

Style Sheet for Research Article

1. Manuscripts should be submitted in duplicate (hard copy) along with a softcopy. All correspondences regarding manuscripts should be submitted to:
   The Editor, Kolkata Society for Asian Studies.
   Postal Address: 3/25/1, R. K. Chatterjee Road, Kolkata-700042
   Phone +91 9432490361
   Email: kspublication1@gmail.com
   Copy to: ksasianstudies@gmail.com
2. Manuscripts should be typed using a word-processing program like MS. Word with .doc/.rtf extension and also in pdf. format. Type the manuscript on one side of the paper. Leave double space between the lines, extra space between the sections and keep 1 inch (2.54 cm.) margins on all four sides of the paper.
3. Abstract should be provided before the article.
4. The number of Key Words should be up to 10.
5. The contributor's affiliations and his/her complete mailing address must be given at the end of the manuscript.
6. Endnotes should follow numerical order. Try to avoid footnotes.

7. As the journal will be mainly printed in Black, the authors are requested to make the charts, graphs and tables using Black and White combination only.
8. The references should be like:
   i. Embedded references (Phillipson 1992: 144)
   ii. Multiple references placed in alphabetical order '(Ellis 1994:10; Lenneberg 1967: 7; Pinker 1994: 54)'
   iii. Multiple references of the same author published in the same year arranged serially '(Pattanayak 2000a, 2000b)'

The detailed style of referencing follows:

a. Books:

Wirsing, G. 1972. *Indian Experiment: Key to Asia's Future.* Calcutta: Orient Longman.
Liu, J., H. A. Ross and D.P. Kelly. 2000. *The Ethnographic Eye: An Interpretative Study of Education in China*. New York : Falmer Press.

b. Articles in Edited Volumes:

Atkinson, J. M. 1987. Religions in Dialogue: The Construction of an Indonesian Minority Religion. In: R.S. Kipp and S. Rodgers (eds.), *Indonesian Religions in Transition*. pp. 171-86. Tucson: University of Arizona Press.

c. Articles in Journals:

Sonntag, S. K. 1996. 'The Political Saliency of Language in Bihar and Uttar Pradesh', *Journal of Commonwealth & Comparative Politics*, 34 (2): 1-18.

d. Edited and Translated Volumes:

Zakaria, H. A. and H. A. Crouch (eds.). 1985. *Military-Civilian Relations in South-East Asia*. Singapore: Oxford University Press.
Becker, C. 1923. *Early History of the Catholic Missions in Northeast India (1598-1890)*, edited and translated by F. Leicht and S Karotemprel. 1989. Shillong: Vendrame.

e. Unpublished Works:

Kurasawa, A. I. 1988. 'Mobilization and Control: A Study of Social Change in Rural Java, 1942-1945.' (2 vols.)
Unpublished Ph.D. dissertation. Ithaca: Cornell University.
Mullins, D. 2001. 'Land reform, poverty reduction and HIV/AIDS'. Paper presented at the Southern African Regional Poverty Network conference on Land Reform and Poverty Alleviation in the Region, Pretoria, 12-14, March.

f. Primary Source Citations:

The location of the archive (the name of the town/village/city) and the country must be mentioned. Materials from personal archive should contain the name and location of the collector. If an

audio/ audiovisual material is being used, the date/time and location of the recordings should be specified.

g. Website Citation:

http://en.mastersinleiden.nl/programmes/history-arts-and-culture-of-asia/en/introduction (accessed/ retrieved/updated on 5th May 2014)

Other specifications:

i. Use double quotation marks where necessary. Single quotation marks should be used only for a quotation within a quotation.
ii. In the text, the words from a regional language other than English which appear in a commonly used dictionary must be italicized. Proper names from all the countries and terms like 'et al.', 'ibid.', 'vis-a-vis' etc. should be written in Roman alphabet.
iii. A stop should be used after abbreviations ('ed.','vol.' etc.), contractions ('Dr.', 'Prof.' etc.) and between initials (as in 'J.S. Karan'). Do not use a stop in a contraction in capital ('UNESCO', 'USA' etc.).
iv. In the text, the numbers from one to nine should be in words rather than figures. However, 10 and above can remain in figures. Use 'thousands' and 'millions', avoid 'crores' and 'lakhs'. Dates and page numbers should be in full forms (like '2002-2007' and 'pp.125-127').
v. Attach each figure and table on a separate sheet of paper at the end of the article and arrange them serially. The titles should be short and crisp.
vi. Figures, tables, charts, graphs or photographs reproduced from any other source must obtain Copyright permission before reproduction.
vii. Diacritical marks should be consistent.

Glosses and Translations of Examples:

1. Language specific examples must be provided in International Phonetic Alphabet (IPA) or in Roman alphabet.
2. Examples from various languages other than English should be translated. Some examples may require a translation along with a word-for-word or morpheme-by-morpheme gloss.
3. The translation and the gloss should be placed under the example with proper indentation and alignment (in case of word-for-word or morpheme-by-morpheme gloss).
4. The grammatical categories in a gloss must be abbreviated

   For example,

   a) adʒɔnek brʃti hoyetʃhe.
      today lot rain be-pr.pf.3rd
      'Today there was heavy shower.'
   b) boneder tʃhobi.
      sister-gen.pl. picture
      'Sisters' picture.'

5. The abbreviations must be given in a separate list.
   The paper/s submitted for consideration should not have been published before or under consideration for publication, anywhere in any language. The work must be approved by its author and the co-authors and also by the authorities of the place where the research was done. If the paper is accepted for publication in the present journal, it must not be published anywhere in any language without the proper written consent of the copyright holder.

For Papers in Bangla

The same style sheet should be followed for papers written in the Bangla language. Bangla font 'Avro – Nirmala Ul' is preferred.

Off Prints: The first author of each paper will receive 10 off prints free of cost.

ISSN 2454-5694
Volume 10 Number 2 December 2024

JOURNAL OF KOLKATA SOCIETY FOR ASIAN STUDIES

An International Bilingual Journal of
Social Science (UGC CARE)



Kolkata Society for Asian Studies

JOURNAL OF
KOLKATA SOCIETY FOR ASIAN STUDIES
Office: 3/25/1, R.K. Chatterjee Road, Kolkata-700042
Phone:+9432490361
Email: ksasianstudies@gmail.com
kspublication1@gmail.com
Website: www.kolkatasocietyforasianstudies.com www.jrksas.org

EDITORS
Ranjana Ray
Sarmistha De Basu

EDITORIAL BOARD MEMBERS

Ranjana Banerjee
Mahidas Bhattacharya
Sanjukta Dasgupta
Mita Banerjee
Sarit Kumar Chaudhuri
Tridib Chakraborti
Sharmistha Banerjee
Swati Sen Mandi
Krishna Bhattacharya
Krunoslav Mikulan
Satyabrata Chakrabarti
President, KSAS (Ex-Officio)

John Adamson
Shyam Sundar Bhattacharya
Pratiti Ghosh
Debi Chatterjee
Mina Dan
Ishita Mukhopadhyay
Sudipa Ray Bandyopadhyay
Mesbah Kamal
Suniti Pathak
Durga Basu
Arpita Basu
Treasurer, KSAS (Ex-Officio)

General Information

Journal of Kolkata Society for Asian Studies is a double blind peer reviewed publication. It is an International Journal dedicated to the development of all branches of Social Sciences with special reference to Asian Studies. The Journal accepts theoretical and empirical papers on interdisciplinary studies. The Journal occasionally publishes special issues which mediate on a single topic. It also publishes research notes, reports, book reviews, etc.

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.

Subscription and Business Affairs

	Annual Subscription	
Countries	**Institutional Subcribers**	**Individual**
India	**INR 1200.00**	**INR 1000.00**
Foreign Countries	**US $ 100.00**	**US $ 90.00**

All correspondences relating to subscription, advertisements and other business matters should be addressed to the SECRETARY, Kolkata Society for Asian Studies. Remittance should be payable to KOLKATA SOCIETY FOR ASIAN STUDIES

Copyright@Kolkata Society For Asian Studies.

Notifications

This is to inform you that the Journal of Kolkata Society for Asian Studies accepts newly published book for its Review section.

The authors, who wish to get their books reviewed, should submit their books both in hard copy and soft copy. In absence of soft copy, the hard copy needs to be submitted in duplicate.

It is essential to submit the book with a covering letter clearly mentioning the purpose of submission. Kindly note that the book submitted for review will not be returned to the Author.

Kindly send the hard copies of the book to the following address: The Editor, Kolkata Society for Asian Studies.

Postal Address:
3/25/1, R. K. Chatterjee Road,
Kolkata 700042
Phone: ++919432490361

Kindly send the soft copy of the book to the following Email Ids. prof.ranjana.ray@gmail.com
debasusharmistha@gmail.com

Copy to: kspublication1@gmail.com

RECENT PUBLICATION

Relevance of the Universal Mission of the Bengali Renaissance for a Sustainable Future for India and the World.
Editor: Kalyan Kumar Chakravarty, Sarmistha De Basu
Year 2024 Published by Kolkata Society for Asian Studies © Editor
ISBN: 978-81-955545-3-9

Banglar Nabajagaraner Prasangikata o Bishwavratrittwabodh
Editor: Kalyan Kumar Chakravarty, Sarmistha De Basu
Year 2024 Published by Kolkata Society for Asian Studies © Editor
ISBN: 978-81-955545-6-0

Traditional Clay-Arts of Bengal: A Comprehensive Museological & Folkloric Study
Author: Arpita Basu
Year 2023 : Published by Kolkata Society for Asian Studies © Author
ISBN: 978-81-955545-2-2

Exploring the Saga of India-Nepal Relations: Juxtaposing Issues of Convergence and Divergence
Editors: Tridib Chakraborti Sarmistha De Basu
Year 2023 Pub: Kolkata Society for Asian Studies © Kolkata Society for Asian Studies
ISBN: 9788195554508

Research Methodology: Tools & Techniques in Social Science
Editors: Durga Basu Asmita Basu
December, 2022 Pub: Setu Prakashani, Kolkata Delhi © Kolkata Society for Asian Studies
ISBN: 9788195706051

Cultural Exchange through Folklore
Volume 1 and Volume 2
Editors: Sarit K. Chaudhuri Sarmistha De Basu Arpita Basu
Pub: Serials Publications (P) Ltd, New Delhi
© 2022, Kolkata Society for Asian Studies & Serials Publications (P) Ltd
ISBN: 9789391844035

Indian Relations with Sri Lanka and Maldives
(A Collection of Research Articles)
Editor: Sarrrastha De Basu Pub: Kolkata Society for Asian Studies December: 2021
Paper Back Edition, ISBN: 978-81-955545-1-5
E-Book Kindle Edition, ASIN : B09N2QB2NZ

Contours of India's Act East Policy: Opportunities, Challenges and Futuristic Trend of Indo-ASEAN Partnership
Editors : Archita Ghose & Sarmistha De Basu
June : 2021 Pub: Kolkata Society for Asian Studies
ASIN : B097NL92S2
E-Book, File size: 2386 KB/ Kindle Editlon

Published by Kolkata Society for Asian Studies, Postal Address : 3/25/1, R.K. Chatterjee Road, Kolkata- 700042
Phone : +91-9432490361
Email : Ksasianstudies@gmail.com kspublication1@gmail.com
Website: www.kolkatasocietyforasianstudies.com www.jrksas.org

Printed at : The Saraswati Printing Works, 2, Guru Prosad Chowdhury Lane, Kolkata 700 006

Price: Rs.500.00