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General Information

Journal of Kolkata Society for Asian Studies is a 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 meditate on a single topic. It also publishes research notes, reports, book reviews, etc.

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Editorial Note

Volume 5 Number 1 of the Journal of Kolkata Society for Asian Studies contains ten articles on diverse subjects. The journal is of bilingual. In this issue there are two articles in Bengali language. The first article though is linguistic study of Bengali language but written in English. Mina Dan, professor in the Department of Linguistics, University of Calcutta, has delivered the fifth Suniti Kumar Chatterji Memorial lecture of the Kolkata Society for Asian Studies. We are glad to begin this volume with this valuable article. This is entitled, "Bangla Monosyllables: A Sonority based Study". The paper is a scholarly one and scholars and researchers on the subject will be benefitted from the highly technical discussion on the monosyllables of Bengali language. The article is richly illustrated with tables and diagrams.

Arundhati Das, faculty member of the department of Sanskrit of Scottish Church College, Kolkata has given an account in Bengali of some Sanskrit drama written in the backdrop of contemporary political situation of the then Indian subcontinent. Pivot of the discussion lies on Mudraraksasa written by Bishakhadatta. The drama is centred on Chandragupta Maurya's ascension and his most diplomatic minister Kautilya. The author has compared the politics based drama of ancient India with those written in relatively modern times.

Another paper in Bengali is an outcome of research on socio-economic condition of unorganised sectors of women workers, who work as domestic help. Data is collected from ward no. 109 of Kolkata Corporation. The paper is written jointly by Gautam Jatua, Rajiv Gandhi Research Fellow of Womens Studies and Research Center, Calcutta university and Debasis Kumar Mondal, assistant professor, department of Anthropology, Calcutta University. The work is done with empirical data collected by scientific methods.

Bamboo grows profusely in Dooars region of North Bengal. Worrel Kumar Bain of Anthropological Survey of India, in his article has concentrated on the inherited skill in bamboo craft of the Lepcha community living in North Sikkim. He has discussed in detail the craft and has pointed out that this indigenous skill is digressed in modern times and has urged for preservation of such heritage which is endangered at present.

Asmita Basu, a faculty member of the Army Institute of Management, Kolkata, has pointed out the necessity of heritage management for sustainable tourism in west Bengal. Tourism at present has taken a very important role in economy of a country. People not always go on pilgrimage to the temples but also to appreciate the art, architecture and sculpture. The author has given account of number places of tourist attraction and has suggested how heritage management and preservation of heritage sites will impact upon sustainability of tourism in our country.

Patuas/ chitrakars or the traditional painters of West Bengal have attracted attention of scholars both from India and abroad, especially those from the village Naya from West Medinipur. Kuntal Narayan Chaudhuri, assistant professor, department of Botany and Shreyashi Chaudhuri, lecturer, Department of History, Calcutta Girls' College,

Kolkata, had carried out research on the type of vegetable dyes used by the artists of the village. The authors have collected data from the potuas of the village and had identified botanically the plants, which are sources for the colours red, brown, orange, yellow, purple, blue, green, black and white. They have also given accounts of how the colours were prepared and used in their art work.

Soumajit Das, UGC research fellow and Debasis Kumar Mondal, assistant professor, department of Anthropology, Calcutta University, have reported findings of prehistoric tools from Dumka, Jharkhand in the vicinity of the newly established Sidhu, kanho, Murmu university. They have given account of the stratigraphic position of the tools and had described the tools so as to place them in chronological perspective. The district has reports of some sporadic findings of prehistoric tools. This work opens up possibility of wide scale research on prehistoric study of Dumka.

Child birth for any human society is an important event. Chumu Sherpa, Rajiv Gandhi National Senior Research Fellow and Pinak Tarfdar, associate professor, Department of Anthropology, University of North Bengal have written on the child birth and associated rituals observed by the Sherpas of Darjeeling district. They have selected Srikhola and Gurdum regions of the district for their study. For proper understanding of child birth in the context of the Sherpa society various aspects related to child birth are discussed.

The article by Urmi Mehra, associate professor, Shrishiksaytan College, Kolkata, focuses on India Government's policy for acceptance of foreign aid in times of natural disaster. She has commenced her discussion in the backdrop of recent flood situation in Kerala in 2018. With suitable tables she has shown that India is reducing acceptance of foreign aid. She has given a critique of the emerging policy of India in respect to foreign aid.

An article written jointly by Md. Sakhawat Hossain, Md. Azizur Rahman and Subrata Banerjee of Bangladesh has dealt with Police corruption of the country. All the three authors are from departments of Criminology and Police Science. The first author is from the University of Chittagang and the two others are from Maulana Bhasani Science and technology university, Tangail. The article started by defining corruption and its relevance in conduct of police of a country. They stressed on the public perception of police corruption.

The present volume of the journal presents wide range of information on South Asian Studies. The editors acknowledge the contributions of the authors and reviewers of articles for making this volume academically rich.

Ranjana Ray
Sarmistha De Basu

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Bangla Monosyllables: A Sonority based Study

Mina Dan

Abstract : The P Monosyllables offer the test-field for identifying legal combinations of segments in a language and, at the same time, for framing a set of laws for rejecting illegal partners in that same linguistic customs. The former is accomplished by devising a template that functions as a syllable-detector while the latter by discovering pertinent constraints or template conditions that reflect the phonotactics of the language.

Tools like template and template conditions have their foundation chiefly on the four aspects of sonority, viz. sonority value, sonority scale, sonority hierarchy and sonority sequencing generalization, as is depicted in the phonological tradition.

The present paper treats the monosyllables in Bangla, an Eastern Indic language, in terms of the (i) canonical patterns (ii) internal structures (iii) correlation between the phonetic peak and phonological nucleus (iv) template (v) template conditions and (vi) phonotactic implications of them. In the course of analysis the paper exploits the sonority factor to its fullest extent and also points out the limitations of the sonority scale as proposed in the literature as a universal yardstick.

Key words: Monosyllables, Syllables, Sonority value, Sonority Sequencing Principle, Metrical Phonology, Template

Introduction

As regards the plenteous contributions of Prof. Suniti Kumar Chatterji to the fields of knowledge Professor Bh. Krishnamurti (1997:7) puts up a concise account of his publications in print as follows – "SKC, during his over 60 years of active academic life, produced nearly 930 publications, written in four languages – English, Bengali, Hindi and Sanskrit. These include 41 books, 413 articles, 10 reviews and 321 miscellaneous items and short communications. He had five publications (excluding reviews and brief communication) on Indo-European, 32 on historical linguistics, (Indo-European/ Indo-Aryan), 93 on anthropological and ethnological themes, 10 on general linguistics, 51 on language problems and planning with special reference to India, 16 on philological studies, 19 on phonetics and phonology, 16 on morphology and grammatical topics, 15 on Hindi and Urdu, 55 on topics of literature with special reference to India, 10 on travel, 22 on art, and 102 on miscellaneous topics."

Among these we like to point to his works on phonetics and phonology, especially to the book A Bengali Phonetic Reader (1928), the pioneering study of the sounds and phonemes of Standard Bangla following the then influential methodology of phonetics. It is a known fact to all of us that until the present the researchers working on Bangla linguistics, especially on phonetics-phonology, mandatorily need to consult this book. The book chiefly describes phonetically the phonemes and some variations of them in Bangla and teaches how to transcribe them.

The phonemes along with their variants, i.e. allophones, are considered the micro units of phonology, while the phonological representation of larger units of language structure, for example, morpheme, word, phrase, clause, sentence, or from the viewpoint of poetry, verse/ poNti, clause/ pOd, foot/ pOrbo, sub-foot/ upo-pOrbo and syllable/dOl are considered the macro units of different length in phonology. Among the structural units of language the phonemes are meaningless units, while starting from morphemes to sentences - all are meaningful units. However, as macro units of phonology the meaning aspect of these units is not taken into account. Using the classical dichotomy of expression-content it may be clarified as only the expression aspect of these larger units come under the scope of phonology. A comparison with the units of verse structure makes it simpler to understand because in scansion only the phonological face of a verse is counted, not the semantic one. Amongst the macro units of phonology syllables are the smallest or lowest, thus syllables are the meaningless but not the minimum. Chatterji (1928) singles out the various phonetic aspects of Bangla phonemes, the building blocks of the macro units of phonology and opens up the way to the next generation of linguists whose responsibility is to study the nature and features of the macro units.

To start with Bangla syllables, the various aspects of them have been analysed in a handful of studies, e.g. Mallik (1960), Hai (1964), Sarkar (1979, 1986), Mallik et al. (1998), Dan (1993, 2004), Kar (2009, 2010) etc. It is to be noted that besides the field of Bangla linguistics syllables received due attention since 1922 in the works of the distinguished metricist Prabodh Chandra Sen. We shall touch upon this fact in a while.

The current deliberation, as the title indicates, concentrates on Bangla Monosyllables.

Monosyllables, as opposed to syllables, display a multidimensional identity composed of both universal and language specific traits, hence are potentially responsive to an infinite range of investigation. The present deliberation captures a phonological profile of the monosyllables in Bangla employing the metrical framework.

Bangla or Bengali, a member of the Eastern branch of the Indic subfamily of Indo-European, is typologically an inflectional language mainly spoken in the Indian sub-continent. It is the national language of Bangladesh and the regional official language of the states of West Bengal, Tripura and Assam of the Republic of India.

The metrical framework, a non-linear model of phonology, at its inception main-

ly questioned the segmental treatment of English stress as proposed in *The Sound Pattern of English* (Chomsky & Halle 1968) and offered a^+ macro unit based treatment of that in accordance with the relative prominence of syntactic and morphological constituents in terms of a hierarchical organization of phonological strings based on syllables (Liberman & Prince 1977). Then onwards the present day metrical approach gradually took shape on the basis of a good number of constructive criticisms of the various aspects of the initial proposals and attained the level of a well-developed theory (Hogg & Mccully 1987).

However, the current model of metrical phonology, both in its units and tools, is remarkably similar with one of the indigenous metrical theories of Bangla verse language sprouted as early as in 1922. The sole architect of the indigenous theory was the renowned metricist Prabodh Chandra Sen whose extensive research work extended from 1922 to 1986 independently of both the Sanskrit and the Western traditions. This fact added positively to our motivation behind choosing the metrical framework for studying the syllable structures in Bangla.

The present article deals with the hierarchical structure of Bangla monosyllables and the conditions thereof in terms of the concepts of sonority hierarchy and syllable template, the chief tools of the metrical framework. Section 1 differentiates between syllables and monosyllables, section 2 provides an overview of a few structural properties of Bangla monosyllables, section 3 sketches the phonological profile of Bangla monosyllables exploiting metrical tools, and section 4 summarizes the relevant typological statements scattered in the text.

1. Syllable vs. Monosyllable

A syllable, as is commonly understood, is a unit of pronunciation typically larger than a single sound and smaller than a word. Since at least the time of Chaucer the term ***syllable*** has been there in the English language and it is frequent in linguistic descriptions at different planes; yet a precise definition of the term is still lacking.

In effect, in linguistic descriptions the term ***syllable*** is often used in an imprecise intuitive way reflecting an intuitive reality existing in the phonological system and, in case of a language with script, also in the writing convention of a language. For example, in English a word may be pronounced *one syllable at a time*, as in /ne-va-ðɤ-les/ 'nevertheless', /ɑ:-tə-mæ-tɪk/ 'automatic', /kæl-kjʊ-leɪt/ 'calculate etc. and in writing words are hyphenated as per their *syllabic divisions*. Comparable examples from other languages are, Bangla /*kim-bhut-ki-ma-kar* <কিম্ভূতকিমাকার> 'of strange form', /*lan-ɖo-bhɔn-ɖo*/ <লন্ডভন্ড> 'disordered', /*a-kaS-pa-tal*/ <আকাশপাতাল> 'heaven and hell', and Hindi /*du:s-ra*/ <दूसरा> 'second', /*kə-bu:-tər*/ <कबूतर> 'pigeon' etc. At this level, the notion of syllable is intuitively real to native speakers.

Although this pretheoretical notion of syllables is to some extent obscure and intuition-bound, this notion seems to have become one of the indispensable and irreducible units on at least two levels of representation, the phonetic level and the phonological level. As a result attempts have been made to define the concept of syllables at both these levels. Some such attempts are examined below.

As a phonetic unit, the syllable was first defined by the psychologist R. H. Stetson in 1928. In his motor or pulse theory of syllable production he argued that each syllable corresponds to an increase in air-pressure, air being released from the lungs as a series of chest pulses. This can often be readily felt and measured, particularly in emphatic speech. But subsequent experimental work has shown that there is no simple correlation between pulses and intuitive syllables. The problem is especially obvious in cases like *going*, which is two syllables, but is usually uttered in a single muscular effort.

The prominence theory, an alternative phonetic approach, instantiated in the work of Pike (1943), argues that in a string of sounds, some are intrinsically more 'sonorous' than others, and that each peak of sonority corresponds to the centre of a syllable. Peaks are best illustrated by more sonorous sounds like vowels, whereas less sonorous sounds such as stops mark the valleys of prominence. In a more recent formulation of the theory Ladefoged (1982) defines sonority as the loudness of a sound relative to that of other sounds with the same length, stress and pitch.

This approach, in terms of peaks and valleys of sonority, gives a useful general guideline, but it does not always indicate clearly where the boundary between adjacent syllables falls.

Some other useful proposals regarding the phonetics of syllables and related units were made by J. C. Catford (1977a). Catford suggests that speech is produced in measured bursts of initiator power, or feet, which are the basic rhythmic units of a language. In English, for example, each initiator-burst corresponds to a stressed syllable, and the intervals between stressed syllables are roughly equal. So English is said to be 'stress-timed', as opposed, for instance, to French, where there seems to be one burst per syllable regardless of accent. Thus French and Spanish (and possibly Bangla - a matter to be investigated) are 'syllable-timed'.

Accepting these proposals as workable ones, it may be said that, since in syllable-timed languages each initiator-burst generally coincides with a syllable, the concept of 'phonetic syllable' seems reasonably straightforward in such languages.

Phonetic approaches of this kind attempt to provide a definition of the syllable valid for all languages. In contrast, theories concerned with the phonological aspect of the syllable focus on the ways sounds combine in individual languages to produce typical sentences. In fact, the phonological syllable requires a more precise definition, especially with respect to boundaries and internal structures.

According to Lass (1984: 250) "the phonological syllable might be a kind of minimal

phonotactic unit, say with a vowel as a nucleus, flanked by consonantal segments, or legal clusterings, or the domain for stating rules for accent, tone, quantity and the like."

Thus the phonetic syllable is a 'performance' unit, whose entire reality is phonetic; the phonological syllable is a structural unit, perhaps with non-phonetic properties as well.

Keeping in mind the phonetic and phonological aspects of syllables let us now consider the monosyllables. Based on the syllabic component words are classified as monosyllabic and polysyllabic. The self explanatory attribute 'monosyllabic' picks up the words that are composed of only one syllable. For example, English /kɪŋ/ 'king', /pleɪ/ 'play', /streɪnʤ/ 'strange' etc., Hindi /*ek*/ <एक> 'one' /do/ <दो> 'two' /dost/ <दोस्त> 'friend', /jəb/ <जब> 'when' etc., Bangla /*ma*/ <মা> 'mother', /*bon*/<বোন> 'sister', /*bhay*/ <ভাই> 'brother', /*pran*/ <প্রাণ> 'life' etc.

Monosyllables, on the one hand, like syllables, are recognized as the lowest level macro units of phonology, the micro units being the sounds/phonemes. Thus they have a phonetic representation as well as a phonological representation. Both the representations together put forward a test-field for, firstly, checking legal combinations of segments in a language, and secondly, framing a set of laws for pointing at illegal partners in that same linguistic system. For example, in Bangla, as regards legal combinations, a syllable can begin with at the most three consecutive consonants, as in the word [stri] <ষ্ট্রী#> 'wife', but never with more than that. The 'law' expressing this is *#CCCC.

In phonology the former is achieved by devising a template that operates as a syllable-detector while the latter by detecting relevant constraints or template conditions which reveal the phonotactics[1]. of the language. In the phonological literature the framing of tools like syllable template and template conditions banks heavily on the various aspects of the concept of sonority.

Monosyllables, on the other hand, are also identified as a type of word as they display at least four distinct features that are unlike syllable-features and like word-features. We would like to interpret the attribute *mono (to syllable)* in the term *monosyllable* as an acronym MONO that represents the four features as follows. M stands for meaning, O for overt structure, N for naming potentiality and O for orthography. Thus monosyllables are syllables which have meaning, overt structure, naming potentiality and orthographic implication.

Firstly, unlike syllables and like morphemes and words monosyllables have meaning – a feature that makes them morphologically relevant. For example, /rod/ <রোদ> 'sunlight', /*mach*/ <মাছ> 'fish', /*Se*/ <সে> 's/he', /*tin*/ <তিন> 'three' etc. and /*dhu:p*/ <धूप> 'sunlight', /*ris*/ <रिस> 'anger', /*saf*/ <साफ> 'clean', /*ərth*/ <अर्थ > 'meaning' etc. are morphemes as well as monosyllables with distinct meaning in Bangla and Hindi respectively.

Secondly, unlike syllables monosyllables display overt internal structures at different levels – the levels of phonology and morphology. For example, the word /kʌt/ 'cut' in the English sentence *She cut her finger with knife* is a morphologically complex monosyllable as it is composed of two morphemes, the verb cut and past tense.

Thirdly, unlike syllables and like words monosyllables can name something or some person, i.e. they are words with all privileges of a dictionary entry. One does indeed find all the monosyllables of her language in a dictionary of that language.

Fourthly, unlike syllables each monosyllable is directly linked to a particular reference point in the orthographic convention of a language that has a script and lacks spelling pronunciation. For example, in English, the syllable [si:] has no fixed orthographic reference, it may refer to <sea> as in the word 'season', to <cea> as in 'ceasing', to <see> as in 'seeded', to <sei> as in 'seize', to <ce> as in 'cedar', or to <cei> as in 'ceiling'. But the monosyllable [si:] is linked either to <sea> when it is a noun, or to <see> when it is a verb.

Based on these four features monosyllables may be treated as interface units.

In sum, these syllable-like and the word-like features, mentioned above, are the general features of monosyllables in many languages. Monosyllables also present language-specific features. Now we shall attempt to capture the language-specific features of Bangla monosyllables.

2. An overview of Bangla monosyllables

The phonemic inventory of Bangla consists of 7 oral vowels, 7 nasal vowels, 30 consonants and 4 semivowels. Following the transcription conventions of Ray et al[2] (1966) they are as follows:

Vowels

High vowels:	i	iM					u	uM		
Mid vowels: e	eM						o	oM		
Low vowels: E	EM	a	aM				O	OM		

Semivowels

High	y		w							
Mid	Y		W							

Consonants

Stops	p	ph	t	th	T	Th	c	ch	k	kh
	b	bh	d	dh	D	Dh	j	jh	g	gh
Fricatives			s				S		h	
Nasals		m	n							N
Lateral				l						
Trills/flaps				r	R	Rh				

I'll attempt to give an overview of Bangla monosyllables from five angles, viz. phonetic, phonological, morphological, syntactic and lexical.

2.1. *Phonetic*

2.1.1. *Stress*

Bangla, impressionistically identified as a syllable-timed language, like French and Spanish and unlike English and German, the stress-timed ones, has no phonemic stress. Studies (Chatterji 1928, Bykova 1981) claim that stress is not significant in Bangla so far as the individual words are concerned. It is predictable and dominantly initial in isolated words and is always subsidiary to sentence-stress (Hayes & Lahiri 1991).

2.1.2. *Length*

Bangla vowels have no phonemic length, rather they have purely predictable phonetic length (Dasgupta 2003, Dan 2011a). Vowels tend to be long in monosyllables and non-long elsewhere, e.g. [di:n] 'day', [ra:t] 'night', but [dinrat] 'day and night'; [du:d] 'milk', [bha:t] 'rice', but [dudbhat] 'milk and rice', [E:k] 'one', but [EkTa] 'one-CL' etc. So length for monosyllables in Bangla stands for the phonetic duration of monosyllables, the arithmetical aggregate of the duration of the constituent segments.

Consonantal length is a potential area for investigation as consonantal gemination has phonological relevance in the language. However, gemination is a boundary phenomenon within polysyllabic words and thus outside the scope of this paper.

2.1.3. *Aspiration*

Aspiration is phonemic in Bangla. All stop consonants have their aspirated counterparts, though word finally aspirated segments tend to lose aspiration to such an extent that they often become almost unaspirated (Dan 2011b), e.g. [ba:g] 'tiger' but [bagher] 'tiger-GEN'; [du:d] 'milk' but [dudhe] 'milk-LOC'. Thus unlike Hindi, a language in which monosyllables show perceptually quite strong aspiration word finally, e.g. [Sudh] 'pure', [dugdh] 'milk' etc., Bangla monosyllables show very mild, almost negligible amount of aspiration in their coda positions.

2.2. *Phonological*

2.2.1. *Less marked vs. more marked properties*

A structure that is avoided in unrelated languages is said to be marked relative to those structures that are not avoided. The less marked properties of the structures of Bangla monosyllables are:

i) Simple onsets are allowed, e.g. pa 'foot'.

ii) Monosyllables may be open, e.g. *ca* 'tea'. Bangle employs the principle of maximal onsets for syllabification (that syllabifies a VCV sequence as V.CV) attesting CV as the most preferred syllable pattern.

iii) Monophthongs serve as peaks, e.g. *mon* 'mind'.

iv) Complex codas are not allowed in native monosyllables.

v) Basically conforms to the Sonority Sequencing Principle.

More marked properties are:

i) Onsetless syllables are allowed, e.g. *am* 'mango'.

ii) Complex onsets are allowed, e.g. *pran* 'life'.

iii) Diphthongs serve as peaks, e.g. *teys* '23'.

iii) Closed syllables are allowed, e.g. *ghum* 'sleep'.

iv) Simple codas are allowed, e.g. *bon* 'sister'.

v) Complex codas are allowed in borrowed monosyllables, e.g. *bENk* 'bank'.

vi) s+stop, the cross-linguistically attested cluster that violates the Sonority Sequencing Principle, is found, e.g. *sthan* 'place'.

2.2.2. *More marked peaks are more controversial*

Any of the seven oral and seven nasal vowels and diphthongs can serve as the peak of a monosyllable, among which diphthongs are the more marked ones.

Often a word with the composition of a diphthong as the peak followed by a simple consonant is ambiguous between two readings, monosyllabic and disyllabic, as in it the vocalic slot reflects the phonetic length, the usual phenomenon within a monosyllable, e.g. *dewl* and *de-ul* 'temple', *gowr* and *go-ur* 'a name'.

Contrary to this, a diphthong followed by a single consonant followed by another vowel (in a disyllabic word, of course) is shorter and maintains its diphthongal character, e.g. *dew-le* 'insolvent'.

The script convention too contributes to this controversy. Bangla script has unitary graphemes for only two diphthongs, viz. [*oy*] <ঐ> and [*ow*] <ঔ>. Hence while these two are visibly single units others are not, e.g. *dowr* '*run*' <xx> (<দৌড়>) but *khewR* 'vulgar song' <xxx> (<খেউড়>).

In fact, *khewR* is more prone to a disyllabic reading.

Another interesting gap in the system is that Bangla does not have any monosyllable with [oy] as its peak followed by a single consonant, i.e. *(C)oyC. So the scope of verifying the influence of script too is restricted.

However, double reading does not assign a questionable status to Bangla diphthongs altogether, because the monosyllables with word-final diphthongal peaks categorically yield single reading irrespective of the difference in their visual representations, e.g.

bow 'wife' <x> (বৌ/বউ>), *koy* 'where' <x> (কে/কই>), *jOY* 'victory' <xx> (<জয়>), *bhOY* 'fear' <xx> (<ভয়>), *mEW* 'baby-talk item for cat' <xx> (<ম্যাও>) etc.

The point here is that we don't really know whether dowR and khewR, with reference to syllabification, behave the same way or not. That is why if we collect speakers' opinions with the following options only option 4 would have absolute rejection, while the rest would receive mixed responses.

Between *dowR* and *khewR*
1. both are monosyllabic
2. both are disyllabic
3. *dowR* is monosyllabic, while *khewR* is disyllabic
*4. *khewR* is monosyllabic, while *dowR* is disyllabic

The above issue entails a valid question: do we really know the actual range of monosyllables in Bangla? Various language games may help to find some cues in this respect. In recent times Ghosh Dastidar (2017) attempted to capture the point of deviation where the syllable based metrical rules collapse and result in irregularity in the field of Bangla verse language, especially in the syllabic metrical pattern. However, studies in this direction are too scant to give way to a theoretic position.

2.2.3. *Indigenous metrical literature*

In the indigenous metrical literature with reference to mora counting, monosyllables receive the same treatment as any other syllable. Bangla has three basic metrical patterns, viz. syllabic, moric and composite. A syllable with a final simple vowel, i.e. conventionally an open syllable, and in terms of the light-heavy dichotomy a light one, is considered monomoric in all these three patterns. But a syllable with either a diphthongal peak or a coda, i.e. a closed or a heavy syllable, is monomoric in the syllabic pattern, bimoric in the moric pattern and positionally bimoric (word-finally) or monomoric (elsewhere) in the composite pattern. So in this domain heavy syllables are of greater interest than light syllables.

In fact, monosyllables do receive some special attention in terms of foot formation, specifically in exceptional cases of elision and insertion of pauses. But this is more morphological than phonological.

2.2.4. *Interface properties*

These properties operate in the interface area between phonology and morphology.

Phonological processes, viz. vowel harmony, deletion and semivowel formation, operate even within the domain of monosyllables.

2.2.4.1. *Vowel harmony*

In this process a high vowel trigger raises the vowel height of the syllable

immediately preceding it by one degree, e.g. *So* 'sleep'+ *i* '1st PER-PRES.'= *Suy* 'I sleep'.

The pervasiveness of the process of vowel harmony in Bangla even rejects /*Ey, *Ew, *Oy, *Ow/ diphthongs as peaks of monosyllables.

2.2.4.2. *Deletion*

A suffixal vowel is deleted, e.g. *kha* 'eat'+ *en* '3rd PER-PRES-FOR' = *khan* 's/he eats'.

The process of deletion has other morphological implication too. Deletion applies to the verbal sector and always converts CV-VC into monosyllabic CVC (kha-en = khan). As a consequence of this the canonical shapes CVVC (teyS '23') and VVC (ayn 'law') of monosyllables are rightly predicted as belonging to the nominal sector of the language.

2.2.4.3. *Semivowel formation*

A simple peak becomes complex, i.e. diphthongal, e.g. *hO* 'be'+ *o* '2nd PER-PRES-ORD-IMP'= *hOW* 'you become'.

2.3. *Morphological*

Morphologically monosyllables may be simple or complex. Examples of simple forms are, *din* 'day', *powS* 'name of a Bengali month', *boy* 'book', *hat* ' hand', *stri* 'wife', *gram* 'village' etc.

Morphologically complex monosyllables are almost always of portmanteau type, where the number of morphemes exceed the number of morphs, e.g. *kha* 'eat'+ *o* '2nd PER-PRES-ORD-IMP' = *khaW* 'you eat', the monosyllable is composed of two morphs but five morphemes.

Bangla monosyllables may belong to any parts-of-speech, e.g. noun (*ma* 'mother', *kan* 'ear' etc.), pronoun (*tuy* 'you-INF', *kar* 'whose' etc.), verb (*cOl* 'let's go', *daW* 'give' etc), adjective (*lal* 'red', numerals for 1 to 10 etc.), adverb (*khub* 'very' etc.), postposition (*pOr* 'after' etc.), and others (*ar* 'and', *na* 'no', *hEM* 'yes', *chi* 'fie!', to 'so' etc.).

2.4. *Syntactic*

Morphologically monosyllables, both simple and complex, often have syntactic implication, e.g. the postposition *pOr* 'after' assigns a genitive suffix to its preceding noun.

gan-er *pOr*

song-GEN after

'after the song'

The 2nd person informal pronoun *tuy* as a subject of the sentence reflects on the verbal agreement.

tuy *ja-bi*
you-INF go-will
'you will go'

2.5. *Lexical*

Bangla has a segmented lexis. With reference to the source the words, so also the monosyllables, are commonly classified into three strata:

i) Direct adoptions from Sanskrit, traditionally termed tatsama 'equal to that' (*tat* 'that', *sama* 'equal'). Example of monosyllable, *rup* 'beauty'.

ii) Native Bangla words rooted in Sanskrit and Prakrit, termed tad-bhava 'derived from that' (bhava 'derived'), e.g. *duy* 'two', *tin* 'three', *car* 'four', *paMc* 'five' etc.

iii) Other borrowed stocks that include Turko-Perso-Arabic items and items from English, Dutch, Portuguese, French, Chinese, Gujarati, Tamil and other, even forgotten, origins, e.g. *layn* 'line', *dost* 'friend' etc.

Bangla has a very receptive nature as far as the fortification of lexis is concerned. These three strata build up the active vocabulary of the native speakers. In the borrowed stock degrees of naturalization are identified, e.g. *layn* 'line', *bENk* 'bank' do not stand out as loans, while *jerOks* 'xerox' shows semi-naturalization, and *sOfToWar* 'software' almost zero-naturalization (DASGUPTA 2003). While commenting on the lexical diversity of Bangla Dasgupta (2003) uses the numerals, a representative sector, and shows that in Bangla

i) cardinals are tatsama at 0 and 1

ii) tadbhava from 2 to 100

iii) Persian at 1000

iv) tatsama for ordinals from 1 to 10

v) tadbhava for date (1la, 2ra) and playing cards cardinals (duri, tiri), and

vi) English for ordinals in academic and other competitive contexts (1st, 2nd, 3rd).

Bangla phonology comprises reflections of all these stocks, e.g. complex onsets identify loans from Sanskrit, English etc. while complex codas loans from English and Persian. Thus the canonical shape of a monosyllable gives clue for the strata which it belongs to.

3. *Phonology of Bangla monosyllables*

The present section, after examining all the 15 canonical patterns of Bangla monosyllables, captures the phonological profile of Bangla monosyllables in terms of the

sonority value, the sonority scale, the sonority hierarchy and the sonority sequencing generalization, the basic tools of metrical phonology.

3.1. *Canonical shapes*

A number of studies have already provided various findings on Bangla syllables such as – on the segmental make up of Bangla syllables, on the clusters used therein, on the frequency of occurrence of syllables at various positions in words based on corpus (Mallik 1960, Mallik et al. 1998), on the sequences formed at boundaries and the phonetic length of syllables (Hai 1964), on the canonical shapes and the metrical relevance of syllables (Sarkar 1979, 1986). There have also been two analyses of Bangla syllables, one in the metrical framework (Dan 1992, 1997, 2004) and the other in the optimality framework (Kar 2009). Among these we shall refer to Mallik (1960), Sarkar (1986) and Mallik et al. (1998) for data and Dan (2004) and Kar (2009) for analysis, the studies relevant for the purpose of monosyllables.

Above studies attest 16 canonical syllable patterns in Bangla as shown in Table 1.

consonant final	vowel final	diphthong final
CVC	V	VV
VC	CV	CVV
CCVC	CCV	CCVV
CVVC	CCCV	CCCVV
VVC		
CCCVC		
CCVVC		
CVCC		

Table 1. 16 *Canonical patterns of Bangla syllable*

Among these CCCVV is not attested in monosyllables and thus is excluded from the present discussion and CCVVC and CVCC are attested in common loans.

The VV sequences of the shapes of the 1st and 3rd columns are the diphthongal peaks of syllables, where

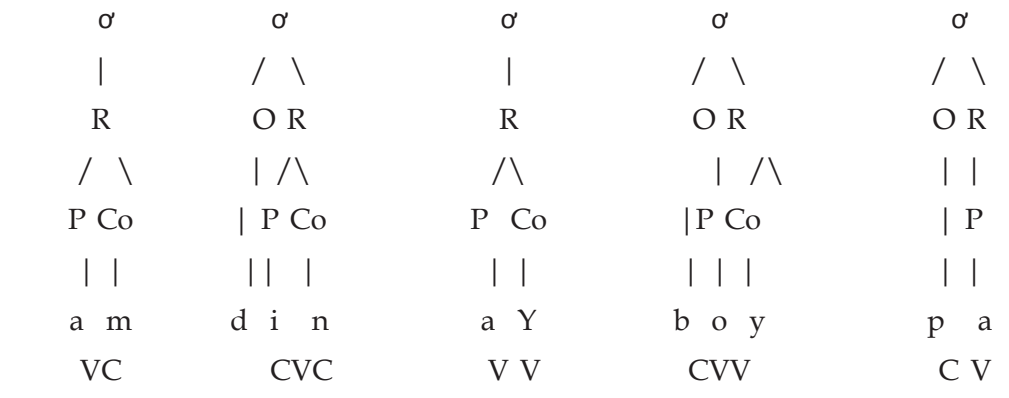
i. the 1st V is always [+syll]

ii. the 1st V is always higher than the 2nd one

iii. the 2nd V is a semivowel with the feature [-syll] (Sarkar 1985-86, Dan 2004), and

iv) the 2nd V is more like a consonant both metrically and morphologically (Sen 1986, Dan 2004).

Following the principle of metrical phonology, viz. syllables with branching rimes are heavy and those with non-branching rimes are light, syllables in Bangla may be classified into two groups, light and heavy, on the basis of their internal hierarchical structures as follows:



In the examples only *pa* 'foot' (CV) has a non-branching rime and it is a light syllable, while the others, irrespective of whether they are consonant-ending (i.e. CVC/VC) or semivowel-ending (i.e. CVV/VV), have branching rimes, branching into peak and coda, and they are heavy syllables.

The same dichotomy holds good for monosyllables and the 15 canonical shapes fit into two broad classes, light and heavy, as shown in Table 2.

Light	Heavy
V	CVC
CV	VC
CCV	CCVC
CCCV	CVVC
	CCVVC
	CVCC
	CCCVC
	VVC
	VV
	CVV
	CCVV

Table 2. Light and heavy canonical patters of Bangla monosyllables

Among these 15 canonical shapes the most preferred shape is CV, a fact that conforms to the syllable universals proposed by Jakobson (1941). Indigenous monosyllables in Bangla reject both complex onset and complex coda. Complex onsets, viz. CC and CCC, are available in words borrowed from Sanskrit (*stri* 'wife') and English (*prayj* 'prize'), while complex codas are available in words borrowed from Perso-Arabic (*dost* 'friend') and English (*lisT* 'list', *pEnT* 'pants'). Borrowed items not only add up to every speaker's lexicon but also make up the phonology of the language. For example, complex onsets and codas of monosyllables remain intact in the standard Bangla pronunciation, while in non-standard varieties they are sometimes divided between syllables using epenthesis (*geram* < *gram* 'village', *Teram* < *Tram* 'tram'), or simplified using deletion (*pEn* < *pEnT* 'pants'). But the interaction between standard and non-standard varieties is absolutely unimpeded, though, unlike Japanese where onset clusters are always simplified, e.g. Eng free > Jap. furii, the simplification processes seem to apply quite irregularly in Bangla. Maybe a strata-based study of the processes would reveal some regularity in the system.

On the basis of these canonical shapes the general structure of Bangla syllables is established as $C_0^3V_1^2C_0^2$, the optimal pattern of which is CCCVVCC, which has no exponent in the language.

3.2. *Sonority*

Pike (1943) in his prominence theory talks about sonority when he argues that in a string of sounds some are intrinsically more sonorous than others and that each peak of sonority corresponds to the centre of a syllable.

Ladefoged (1982) defines sonority as the loudness of a sound relative to that of other sounds with the same length, stress and pitch.

Bangla being a non-tone language does not possess phonemic pitch. Both stress and length, as have already been stated (in 2.1.1. & 2.1.2.), are non-phonemic in Bangla.

3.2.1. *Sonority scale*

Traditionally it is assumed that the organization of segments within and across the syllable is governed by the principles of sonority, a property that ranks segments along a hierarchy from most sonorous to least sonorous. A number of cross-linguistic tendencies on the distribution and sequencing of segments is explained with reference to the sonority hierarchy.

The relative sonority of different phones has been measured using different scales in the literature. I'll mention four such sonority scales and comment on their applicability to Bangla monosyllables.

3.2.1.1. *Sonority scale 1 (Hogg & Mccully 1987)*

On the basis of three studies on sonority, viz. Saussure (1966), Vennemann (1972) and Hooper (1976), Hogg & McCully (1987:33) propose a ten point sonority scale in terms

of which they formalize the sonority hierarchy of English monosyllables. On this scale, henceforth SS1, the most sonorous sounds are given the highest value and the least sonorous the lowest value. Dan (1992 & 2004) used this scale and assigned sonority values to Bangla sounds as follows:

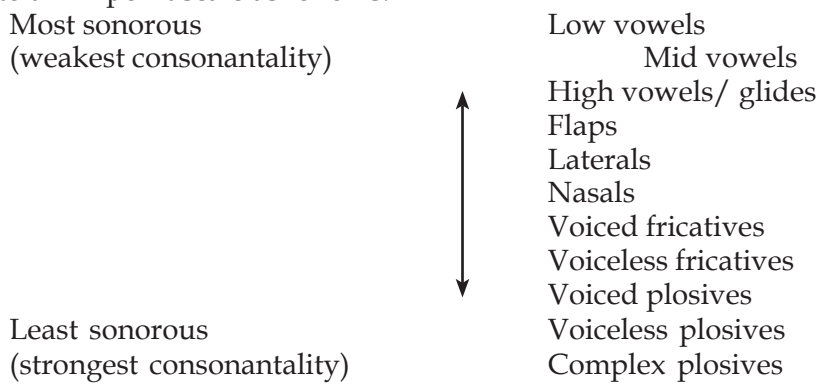
natural class	sonority value	Bangla sounds
low vowels	10	E a O EM aM OM
mid vowels	9	e o eM oM Y W
high vowels	8	i u iM uM y w
flaps & trills	7	r R Rh
laterals	6	L
nasals	5	m n N
vd. fricatives	4	H
VI. fricatives	3	s S
vd. stops	2	g gh j jh D Dh d dh b bh
vl. stops	1	k kh c ch T Th t th p ph

Table 3. Sonority values of Bangla sounds on SS1

Hogg & McCully (1987:47) assigned the same sonority values of the high vowels to their consonantal versions, the semivowels. Dan (1992 & 2004) too not only followed that for both high and mid semivowels, rather extended the principle and assigned the same sonority values of the oral vowels even to their nasalised versions as shown in Table 3. The demerits of this scale in terms of the principle of Sonority Sequencing Principle would be discussed in a while.

3.2.1.2. *Sonority scale 2 (Burquest & Payne 1993)*

The sonority scale 2, henceforth SS2, proposed by Burquest & Payne (1993), is a hierarchical statement of relative sonority of different phones, which could easily be converted into an 11 point scale as follows:



As complex plosives are boundary phenomena in Bangla, deleting the lowest point from the scale is justified for the purpose of monosyllables. This process results in a 10 point scale, identical to the SS1. Hence we won't elaborate on this one for obvious reasons.

3.2.1.3. *Sonority scale 3 (Harris 1983)*

It is a five point scale used by Harris (1983) for the sonority analysis in Spanish. The same scale is used for Bangla by Kar (2009). The relative sonority values are as follows:

Vowels (5) > Glides (4) > Liquids (3) > Nasals (2) > Obstruents (1)

Along with this scale Harris (1983) and Kar (2009) employ the related concept of Minimal Sonority Distance, henceforth MSD, between segments of a syllable. Harris has established a strict MSD value of 2 in Spanish while Kar (2009:45) rightly shows that the MSD value varies between 2 and 4 between the onset-nucleus segments, and between 2 (obstruent-liquid clusters) and 1 (nasal-liquid clusters) between the segments of complex onsets in Bangla syllables. Accordingly Kar (2009) sets the MSD value as 1, stated as MSD-1, and proposes this to be a markedness constraint, a tool of his OT analysis.

The SS1 and the sonority scale of Harris (1983), henceforth SS3, will be compared shortly.

3.2.1.4. *Sonority scale 4 (Parker 2002)*

It is a comprehensive scale grounded in physical properties of sounds such as intensity, peak intraoral air pressure, F1 frequency, peak air flow and duration and thus phonologically least biased. The hierarchical levels are as follows:

low vowels > mid vowels > high vowels > [ə] > glides > laterals & [ɻ] > flaps > trills > nasals > [h] > vd. fricatives > vd. stops > vl. fricatives > vl. stops & affricates.

Parker (2000), as stated in Pons (2008)[3] , proposes the above sonority scale, henceforth SS4, after applying these measurements of sonority on the sounds of Spanish and English along with a relevant claim: most languages in fact conflate the scale in the sense that they do not systematically exploit all intervals. This is because they either lack the respective phoneme(s) entirely, or else they collapse together two or more adjacent ranks and thus do not distinguish them in terms of their phonological processes.

The claim directly advocates a more flexible and gradient approach to the sonority scale as opposed to a universal, categorical and impermutable approach in the traditional debate of whether it is a licit resource or not to appeal to sonority conflations and reversals to justify differences across languages.

Moreover, the advocates for a universal categorical scale propose to account for the discrepancies across languages in terms of constraint rankings, i.e. in terms of the tools of the Optimality Theory, a framework I am not using in this paper.

Rather I follow the gradient approach and accordingly modify my scale of sonority citing linguistic justifications. An observation worth mentioning at this juncture is that the scale lacks any grade for voiced affricates, an apparent weakness of it. Nevertheless, the scale being a more flexible and gradient one, as opposed to a universal one, in its approach and the grades on it being notional this weakness does not have any negative effect.

3.2.2. *Sonority Sequencing Principle*

Even though there is lack of agreement on the nature of sonority itself, its phonetic correlates and the way sonority scales are constructed in the literature, its role in deriving some of the most common restrictions on segment sequencing is uncontroversial. One such restriction is the generalization that in any syllable the segment ranking highest on the sonority scale constitutes the peak of the syllable. All the segments are organized around the nucleus in such a way that the most sonorous segments are closer to the peak and the less sonorous ones are further away from it. In other words, where we find a sequence of segments preceding or following a sonority peak, the sonority values increase as one nears that peak, and decrease as one moves away from that peak. This generalization is known in the literature as the Sonority Sequencing Principle, henceforth SSP. This was pointed out by Jesperson (1904), Grammont (1933), Hooper (1976), Kiparsky (1979), Steriade (1982), Selkirk (1982), Clements (1990) and others.

With reference to the SSP the sonority values of the 15 canonical shapes of Bangla monosyllables are measured using the three sonority scales, viz. the SS1, the SS3 and the conflated SS4, in Table 4. The conflated SS4 is a reorganized SS4 that applies to Bangla. The codification of and the justifications behind the conflated SS4 will be discussed in 3.2.4. and 3.2.5. The sonority values on the SS1 and the SS3 will be examined in 3.2.3. and those on the conflated SS4 in 3.2.6.

pierns	Monosyllables	Gloss	SS1	SS3	conflated SS4
V	O	that person	9	5	9
CV	ghi	Ghee	2-8	1-5	2-8
	Na	Not	5–10	2–5	3–10
	Ke	Who	1–9	1–5	1–9
CVC	kath	wood	1–10–1	1–5–1	1–10–1

pierns	Monosyllables	Gloss	SS1	SS3	conflated SS4
	Nil	Blue	5–8–6	2–5–3	3–8–5
	Lal	Red	6–10–6	3–5–3	5–10–5
	Sukh	happiness	3–8–1	1–5–1	1–8–1
	SeS	End	3–9–3	1–5–1	1–9–1
VC	Ek	one	10–1	5–1	10–1
	aT	Eight	10–1	5–1	10–1
	uT	camel	8–1	5–1	8–1
VV	aY	income	10–9	5–4	10–7
	Uy	white ant	*8–8	5–4	8–6
	Ey	This	9–8	5–4	9–6
	Oy	That	9–8	5–4	9–6
CVV	Boy	Book	2–9–8	1–5–4	2–9–6
	Ney	Not	5–9–8	2–5–4	3–9–6
	Bow	Wife	2–9–8	1–5–4	2–9–6
	bhoY	Fear	2–10–9	1–5–4	2–10–7
CCV	Bhru	eyebrow	2–7–8	1–3–5	2–4–8
	Sri	Mr.	3–7–8	1–3–5	1–4–8
CCVC	Sthan	Place	*3–1–10–5	*1–1–5–2	*1–1–10–3
	Kles	trouble	1–6–9–3	1–3–5–1	1–5–9–1
	Gram	village	2–7–10–5	1–3–5–2	2–4–10–2
	hrOd	Lake	4–7–10–2	1–3–5–1	2–4–10–2
	Srot	Current	3–7–9–1	1–3–5–1	1–4–9–1
CVVC	powS	a Bengali month	1–9–8–3	1–5–1–1	1–9–6–1
	Mayl	Mile	5–10–8–6	2–5–4–3	3–10–6–5
	gaYn	singer	2–10–9–5	1–5–4–2	2–10–7–3
CCVV	krOY	buying	1–7–10–9	1–3–5–4	1–4–10–7
	pray	almost	1–7–10–9	1–3–5–4	1–4–10–7
CCVVC	prayj	Prize	1–7–10–8–2	1–3–5–4–1	1–4–10–6–2
CCCV	stri	Wife	*3–1–7–8	*1–1–3–5	*1–1–4–8
CCCVC`	strir	wife's	*3–1–7–8–7	*1–1–3–5–3	*1–1–4–8–4

pierns	Monosyllables	Gloss	SS1	SS3	conflated SS4
VVC	ayn	Law	10–8–5	5–4–2	10–6–3
	awS	a kind of paddy	10–8–3	5–4–1	10–6–1
CVCC	last	Last	*6–10–3–1	*3–5–1–1	*5–10–1–1
	cost	elegant	*1–9–3–1	*1–5–1–1	*1–9–1–1
	bENK	Bank	2–10–5–1	1–5–2–1	2–10–3–1

Table 4. Sonority values of 15 canonical shapes of Bangla monosyllables on SS1, SS3 and conflated SS4

3.2.3. *Sonority values of 15 canonical shapes of monosyllables on SS1 & SS3*

As regards to the SSP the values on the SS1 show disagreement in five canonical shapes, viz. VV, CCVC, CCCV, CCCVC and CVCC, while those on the SS3 show disagreement in four, viz. CCVC, CCCV, CCCVC and CVCC.

The disagreements shown in CCVC, CCCV, CCCVC and CVCC involve a particular onset cluster, viz. s+vl. obstruents, and are shared by both the SS1 and SS3 treatments.

Kar (2009) uses the SS3 and takes recourse to the provision of extra syllabicity to resolve the problem. Kar (2009: 61) treats the sibilant partner of both the s+obstruent and s+sonorant clusters as extra syllabic, occurring under a node directly connected to the prosodic word level. In the literature s+obstruent, or more specifically s+stop, clusters of complex onsets have been identified as problem cases, violating SSP, and thus are designated more marked, with cross-linguistic evidences, while the s+sonorant clusters of complex onsets are regarded less marked as they do not violate SSP. Hence treating both the types, viz. s+obstruents and s+sonorants, at par is quite questionable.

Dan (2004) uses the SS1 and following Hogg & McCully (1987: 49) handles the problem by treating /sT, st, sth/ (and also /sp/ and /sph/ in polysyllabic words) as single constituents in syllable onsets and thus adding up the sonority values of both the members. The evidences for treating /sT, st, sth/ as single constituents are, firstly, the voiceless fricative /s/ appears to have extremely close links with the following stop consonant which too is invariably voiceless, as /*sd, *sg, *sb, *sbh/ are nonexistent in Bangla, and, secondly, in Bangla /s/ is the only sibilant allowed as the first member of clusters, e.g. *snan* 'bath' but *proS-no* 'question', *smi-ta* 'a name' but *SuS-mita* ' a name', *lasT* 'last' but *bak-So* 'box'. The examples show that /s/ is the first member of clusters; whereas /S/ is the member of a mere sequence. So in Bangla /s/ as the first member of the complex onset of a monosyllable ensures close links between /s/

and its following segment. When the following segment belongs to the same natural class of voiceless obstruents the two together form a unitary segment.

The disagreement in VV appears only in the SS1 column and it concerns diphthongs. Dan (2004) suggests that the semivowels, involving a higher degree of obstruction than their vowel counterparts, need to be assigned separate sonority values of their own and a finer scale fulfilling that will be able to do justice to the problem of diphthongs.

Although the SS3 (Kar 2009) does not face this problem as it assigns a separate value, 4, to glides, the structures of monosyllables as illustrated by this scale are extremely opaque and thus remarkably insufficient for drawing any conclusion on the syllable phonotactics of the language. For example, each and every diphthong in terms of the sonority values of the SS3 carries the value 5-4.

In fact, a sonority scale with fixed universal values mostly refers to the major natural classes of sounds. A scale with fewer points, like the SS3, though useful for checking the validity of SSP, fails to capture the essential distinctions within those classes as it collapses more than one subclasses together to fit into the universal scale. However, a scale with more points, like the SS1, that depicts the natural classes in a better way, too is not without problem.

At this juncture we like to exploit the principle of a more flexible and gradient approach to the sonority scales in the place of a universal, categorical one and show the consequences. We shall fall back on the SS4 (Parker 2002), modify it in allowable directions with phonological justifications and apply it to the data.

3.2.4. *Justifications for SS4*

I repeat the hierarchical levels of the SS4.

low vowels > mid vowels > high vowels > [ə] > glides > laterals & [ɻ] > flaps > trills > nasals > [h] > vd. fricatives > vd. stops > vl. fricatives > vl. stops & affricates.

i) Bangla has three levels of vowel height, viz. low, mid and high. All these three levels are equally pertinent for the persistent phonological process called vowel harmony or more specifically vertical vowel harmony. In this process a high vowel trigger raises the vowel height of the syllable immediately preceding it by one degree. For example, *lekh* 'write'+ i '1st PER-PRES' = *likhi* 'I write' (c.f. *lekhe* 's/he writes), *dEkh* 'see'+ *un* '2nd PER-PRES-IMP-FOR' = *dekhun* 'you (FOR) see' (c.f. *dEkhe* 's/he sees'), *kOr* 'do'+ *uk* '3rd PER-PRES-IMP-ORD' = *koruk* 'let him/her do' (c.f. *kOre* 's/he does'), *So* 'sleep'+ i '1st PER-PRES'= *Suy* 'I sleep' (c.f. *SoY* 's/he sleeps'), *khuki* 'baby girl' (c.f. *khoka* 'baby boy'), *nodi* 'river' (c.f. *nOd* 'big river'), *diSi* 'country made' (c.f. *deS* 'country'), *tuy* 'you-INF-SG' (c.f. *tora* 'you-INF-PL') etc. The process is persistent as it applies to different grammatical categories like verb, noun, pronoun, adjective, adverb and so on. One degree raising in the vowel height justifies for the first three levels of the SS4 for Bangla.

ii) Bangla lacks [ə]. Hence this level is dropped for obvious reasons.

iii) Bangla uniquely possesses two pairs of semivowels, mid and high. Other languages, including English, Hindi, possess generally one pair of semivowels. We checked with twenty-seven Indian languages belonging to four major language families, viz. Indo-Aryan, Dravidian, Tibeto-Burman and Austro-Asiatic, and except for Kurux, a Dravidian offspring, in no language we found more than a pair of, i.e. two, semivowels. Kurux shows a pair of lower-high and a pair of mean-mid semivowels, while the vowel inventory of Kurux presents six vowel heights (Ekka 1985:31).

The four semivowels of Bangla are the consonantal versions of their vowel counterparts and take part in the phonological processes of diphthong formation. For example, *hO* 'be'+ i '1st PER-PRES'= *hoy* 'I become', *hO* 'be'+ e '3rd PER-PRES-ORD'= *hOY* 's/he becomes'.

The point that I want to make here is that the height of the semivowels is relevant for a right kind of substitution for vowels in semivowel formation.

Hence I reserve the next two levels on the SS4 for the semivowels, mid and high respectively, of Bangla.

iv) The next level is reserved for the lateral /l/ of Bangla.

v) Bangla /r/ has two variants. It is trilled syllable initially, and flapped elsewhere (Bhattacharya 1993:14). The retroflex flaps [R, Rh], according to Bhattacharya (1993:10), are in complementation with stops [D, Dh] respectively. [R & Rh] are also treated as phonemes with skewed distribution in the literature (Shaw 1992, Dasgupta 2003). Because of the partial flap-property of /r/, [r, R, Rh] these three could be collapsed together into the next level.

vi) The next level is reserved for the nasals, viz, /m, n, N/.

vii) Now about the last five levels, i.e. from [h] to voiceless stop & affricate. Bangla has only three fricatives, viz. voiced /h/ and voiceless /s, S/. [s] is also one of the allophones of /S/. /S/-/s/ and /h/ are not the –voiceless-voiced counterparts of each other phonologically.

There are classes of voiceless and corresponding voiced stops with ten members in each.

From the phonological point of view in the standard colloquial Bangla the consonants, compared to the vowels, offer a lot less interesting features since, at the native level at least, they are only subjected to low-level rules that are usually triggered by coarticulation (Sarkar 2004:158).

In reality, since rigorous phonological studies in this domain are still in their infancy, it becomes necessary to make tentative proposals in the areas of fricatives and stops, the classes that don't present sufficient evidence to be ranked separately from each other on the SS4. I collapse these two classes under the broader natural class ob-

struents, but distinguish between voiced and voiceless obstruents, as within this class voiced-voiceless or voiceless-voiced combinations are prohibited. Hence I reserve the next two levels, the higher for the voiced obstruents and the lower for the voiceless obstruents, on the SS4.

3.2.5. *Conflation of SS4*

The conflation of the SS4 for Bangla segments along with relative numerical values is as follows:

low vowels (10) > mid vowels (9)> high vowels (8) > mid glides (7) > high glides (6) > laterals (5)> flaps/trills (4) > nasals (3) > vd. obstruents (2) > vl. obstruents (1)

Let us call this the conflated SS4. A syllable template and the conditions thereof will be stated in terms of these relative numerical values of the conflated SS4 after examining the values of the 15 canonical shapes on this scale.

3.2.6. 15 *canonical shapes of monosyllables and conflated SS4*

The last column of Table 4 presents the sonority values of the 15 canonical shapes of Bangla monosyllables on the conflated SS4. In terms of this scale apparently the number of problem shapes has not reduced drastically, from five it has become four, which, of course, is not so convincing. Let us have an in-depth look at the specific problems rather than at the number of canonical shapes since not all forms under a particular problem shape are problematic.

To be very specific, with reference to the SSP earlier we had two types of problem cases, viz. diphthongs and s+stop clusters. The conflated SS4 takes care of the disagreement arising in diphthongs quite efficiently, which means 50% of the problem cases are accounted for. The rest comprises the s+stop clusters.

The s+stop clusters, in terms of the SS1, show a high degree of disagreement as they show a fall-rise pattern of the sonority value towards the peak, e.g. sthan 3-1-10-5, stri 3-1-7-8 etc., while in terms of the conflated SS4 these forms show a level sonority value, e.g. sthan 1-1-10-3, stri 1-1-4-8 etc., which stands for a low degree of disagreement with the SSP.

Level sonority values in complex onsets or codas are evident in languages that allow geminate onsets (Leti, Trukese, Pattani Malay) and geminate codas (Hungarian). Moreover, the s+stop clusters are cross-linguistically identified as more marked clusters as they violate the SSP.

I account for these clusters by treating them as unitary segments and thus adding up their sonority values, e.g. *sthan* 1+1-10-3, i.e. 2-10-3, so that the SSP is not violated. Maybe a condition, stating, add up level values, will take care of the matter. Thus sthan and stri will have the following structures:



The proposal has already been justified in 3.2.3.

Moreover, with such a treatment it could be claimed that phonotactically Bangla may have at the most two members in the onset of a syllable.

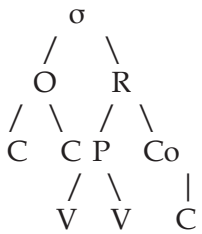
The claim, on the one hand, is supported by the observation that /str/ is the only CCC complex onset in Bangla monosyllables coming from Sanskrit and English, and on the other hand, it can explain why other CCC cluster types (*tmr, *prl, *smr etc.) are not tolerated in Bangla.

The other advantage of using the conflated SS4, rather the SS4, is that since the very inception of the SS4 is based on the principle of conflation and reversal it could be further modified on the basis of rigorous researches in phonetics and phonology and be used more efficiently.

3.2.7. *Template for Bangla monosyllables*

A template may be defined as an abstract structure which all syllables have to fit in in order to be recognized as acceptable syllables in a particular language. We shall formulate the template for Bangla monosyllables.

With the unitary treatment of the s+stop consonant the number of members of the complex onset is restricted to two. In non-borrowed Bangla monosyllables the coda consists of a single member and the peak at the most two members, i.e. a diphthong. Thus the normal maximal structure for Bangla monosyllables is CCVVC, arranged as:

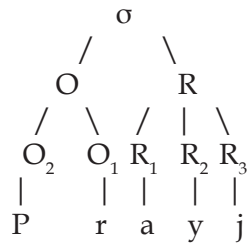


The tree structure suggests that the syllable is organized hierarchically into Onset+Peak+Coda, where the latter two form a Rime constituent. Such an organization is supported by the fact that in Bangla the weight of a syllable and the mora-count of a syllable, although crucial to the constitution of the rime components, appear to play no part in the construction or the number of segments of the onset.

The division of rime into peak and coda is rejected as a false division in the literature because the subdivisions under the rime node apparently play no crucial role, rather the rime node itself plays the crucial role, in phonology (Hogg & Mccully 1987:45).

In Bangla at least two phonological phenomena, viz. syllable weight and mora-counting, directly depend on the branching or non-branching of the rime node, rather than that of the peak or coda separately, as has been discussed in 3.1. If the subdivisions of rime are done away with then a simple and generalized statement, viz. a syllable is heavy if and only if the rime branches, can take care of the heavy-light aspect of the syllable.

So for reasons of generalization and simplicity, as stated above, we reject the subdivisions under rime and accept the direct branching of rime. Thus the above structure, along with convenient indexing, may be flattened as:



'prize'

Such flattening naturally accommodates the CVCC shape available only in borrowed monosyllables, e.g. bEnk 'bank'.

It is interesting that no native monosyllable appears to have branching of this type, using all options, though the branching under this template is not at all counterintuitive. This could be handled in terms of a global restriction on the template stating that locally the onset and the peak may branch but globally not more than four branches are allowed under a syllable template in Bangla.

3.2.8. *Template conditions*

In terms of the conflated SS4 and SSP two sets of template conditions, viz. general and specific, for Bangla monosyllables may be formalized as follows.

3.2.8.1. *General template conditions*

These conditions apply to the maximal tree structure as a whole and comment on the presence-absence status of the terminal nodes.

i) R_1 is obligatorily filled.

ii) O_1 is optionally filled.

iii) O_2 is filled only if O_1 is filled.

iv) R_2 is optionally filled.

v) R_3 is filled only if R_2 is filled.

3.2.8.2. *Specific template conditions*

These conditions apply to the specific branch of the tree and determine the sonority values, henceforth SV, of the terminal nodes.

i) SV of $R_1 \geq 8$, i.e. the SV of R_1 cannot be less than 8.

ii) SV of $O_1 \leq 5$, i.e. the SV of O_1 cannot be more than 5.

iii) SV of $O_1 \geq 3$ if O_1 is filled, i.e. the SV of O_1 cannot be less than 4 if O_1 is filled, e.g. /ml, gr, br/; but /*nd, *bb, *bm/ etc.

iv) SV of $O_1 \leq 5$ if O_2 is filled, i.e. the SV of O_1 cannot be more than 5 if O_2 is filled, e.g. /gr, pl, sl/ etc.

v) SV of $O_2 \leq 3$, i.e. the SV of O_2 cannot be more than 3, e.g. /ml, hr, sr, gr, tr/; but /*lr, *lm/ etc.

vi) SV of $R_2 \leq 7$, i.e. the SV of R_2 cannot be more than 7, e.g. R_2 can have at the most the mid semivowels, viz. Y and W.

vii) SV of $R_2 \geq 3$ if R_3 is filled, i.e. the SV of R_2 cannot be less than 3 if R_3 is filled, e.g. the nasal segment of a CC coda of a borrowed monosyllable.

viii) SV of $R_2 \leq 7$ if R_3 is filled, i.e. the SV of R_2 cannot be more than 7 if R_3 is filled, e.g. the semivowel of a diphthong followed by a consonant.

ix) SV of $R_3 \leq 5$, i.e. the SV of R_3 is not more than 5, e.g. *mayl* 'mile'.

Thus the terminal nodes of a syllable have to fulfil the above template conditions in order to be acceptable as a potential syllable in Bangla.

4. *Conclusion*

To conclude we jot down the following typological statements that have already been mentioned in the discussion in a scattered manner.

i) Bangla has four semivowels UNLIKE languages with two semivowels (English, Hindi, Gujarati, Tamil, Khasi, Manipuri, Angami).

ii) Bangla allows both open and closed monosyllables UNLIKE languages that allow only open ones (Shona).

iii) Bangla monosyllables allow restricted voicing in obstruent clusters, both the

members being either voiced or voiceless UNLIKE languages rejecting any voicing (Maori, Ainu) as well as languages allowing unrestricted voicing (Kannada, Tulu, Khasi, Georgian ([td] type clusters are allowed)).

iv) In Bangla monosyllables onsets are tolerated optionally UNLIKE languages with monosyllables with obligatory onsets (Yawelmani).

v) Bangla monosyllables allow complex onsets UNLIKE languages that disallow complex onsets (Yawelmani).

vi) Bangla monosyllables allow complex onsets and in borrowed items even complex codas UNLIKE languages that invariably reject complex onsets and codas (Japanese).

vii) Bangla monosyllables invariably reject geminate onsets and codas UNLIKE languages that allow geminate onsets (Leti, Trukese, Pattani Malay) or geminate codas (Hungarian).

viii) Bangla monosyllables (like Sanskrit and Gujarati) register a word-final deaspiration UNLIKE languages that retain word-final aspiration (Hindi).

Abbreviations :

CL	classifier
FOR	formal
GEN	genitive
IMP	imperative
INF	informal
LOC	locative
ORD	ordinary
PER	person
PL	plural
PRES	present
SG	singular

End Note :

[1] Phonotactics determines the set of permissible arrangements of sequences of speech sounds in a given language. It rejects the unacceptable sound sequences by means of phonotactic constraints which are highly language specific. For example, [st] is not a permissible cluster in Japanese, though it is a permissible one in Bangla.

[2] E is a low front vowel, O is a low back vowel (unrounded and rounded respectively). T D R Rh are retroflex, N is velar, S is a palato-alveolar. Y W are mid counterparts of y w. M indicates nasalization of the vowel immediately preceding it.

[3.] Unfortunately I did not have direct access to Parker (2000). I gather the theoretical view point of Parker (2000) from Claudia Pons' (2008) poster titled THE SONORITY SCALE: CATEGORICAL OR GRADIENT? It provides a critique of the position of Parker (2000) in the debate of sonority conflations and reversals in order to justify its own position in favour of Parker (2000)

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রাজনীতি-নির্ভর সংস্কৃতনাটক ও বাংলায় তার উত্তরাধিকার

অরুন্ধতী দাস

সংক্ষিপ্তসার :

সংস্কৃত সাহিত্যের ইতিহাসে একমাত্র রাজনৈতিক নাটক 'মুদ্রারাক্ষস'। নাটকটির ঐতিহাসিক ও সাহিত্যিক বিশেষত্বগুলি তুলে ধরার সঙ্গে সঙ্গে তুলনামূলকভাবে এই নিবন্ধে দেখান হয়েছে প্রাচীন এই নাট্যকীর্তির পদাঙ্ক অনুসরণে পরবর্তীকালে ভারতের বিভিন্ন ভাষাতে বিশেষতঃ বাংলায় রাজনীতির ইতিহাসকে উপজীব্য ক'রে কিভাবে নাট্যসাহিত্য গড়ে উঠেছে। বিংশ শতকের প্রথম দশকের নাটকগুলি এক্ষেত্রে বেশিরভাগই রচিত হয় পরাধীন ও বিচ্ছিন্নপ্রায় জাতিকে ঐক্যবদ্ধ করার প্রয়াস রূপে। তবে জাতীয়তাবাদকে অধিক গুরুত্ব দিতে গিয়ে ঐতিহাসিক সত্য বেশিরভাগ ক্ষেত্রেই প্রচ্ছন্ন বা বিকৃত। রবীন্দ্রোত্তরযুগেও রাজনৈতিক ইতিহাসকে কেন্দ্র করে অনেক নাটক রচিত হয়েছে। সব ক্ষেত্রেই মূল উপজীব্য ইতিহাস থেকে সাহিত্যকীর্তিতে উন্নীত। তবে মুদ্রারাক্ষসে আমরা কূটনীতি ও কল্পনার যে যুক্তিগ্রাহ্যতা লক্ষ্য করি তার অন্তরালে কোনো রোমান্টিসিজম্ নেই, যদিও তা পরবর্তীকালের নাটকে যথার্থ যুগোপযোগী সাহিত্যকীর্তি রচনার পথ প্রদর্শক।

মূল শব্দ : রাজনৈতিক নাটক, ঐতিহাসিক নাট্যসাহিত্য, ভারতের রাজনৈতিক ইতিহাস, সাহিত্যকীর্তি, জাতির প্রতিফলন।

সুপ্রাচীনকাল থেকে আধুনিক যুগে সামাজিক বিবর্তনের পথে রাজনীতিশাস্ত্র হল সর্বকালের এক বহুচর্চিত বিষয়। ধর্ম, অর্থ নীতিশাস্ত্রের বিষয়বস্তু যে মূলতঃ রাজনীতি শাস্ত্রকে ভিত্তি করেই তার শাখাপ্রশাখা বিস্তার করেছে, তা সুনিশ্চিত হওয়া যায় মনু, যাজ্ঞবল্ক্য, কৌটিল্য প্রমুখের রচনায়। ধর্ম, অর্থ ও রাজনীতিকে নির্ভর করে প্রাচীন ভারতে বহু স্মৃতিশাস্ত্র রচিত হয়ে থাকলেও, নাট্যকার বিশাখদত্ত প্রণীত সপ্তমাঙ্কবিশিষ্ট 'মুদ্রারাক্ষস' নাটকটি সংস্কৃত সাহিত্যের ইতিহাসে একমাত্র রাজনৈতিক নাটক। 'নাটকং খ্যাতবৃত্তং স্যাত্' অথবা 'ইতিহাসোদ্ভবং বৃত্তম অন্যদ্ বা সজ্জনাশ্রয়ম্'—এই শাস্ত্রীয় বচনানুযায়ী ইতিহাসপ্রসিদ্ধ ঘটনাকে কেন্দ্র করেই মুখ্যতঃ নাটকের কাহিনী আবর্তিত হলেও, এই নাটকটি ইতিহাসমাত্র নয়। পরন্তু ভারতীয় ঐতিহাসিক চরিত্র 'পার্থিবশ্চন্দ্রগুপ্ত'-কে কেন্দ্র করে নন্দবংশের সঙ্গে সংঘাতের কাহিনীর যে অবতারণা করেছেন নাট্যকার, তা নিঃসন্দেহে তৎকালীন সংস্কৃত সাহিত্য রচনাধারার চেয়ে সম্পূর্ণ পৃথগ্‌ধারায় প্রবাহিত একটি নাট্যকীর্তিধারা।

মুদ্রারাক্ষস নাটকের প্রধান কাহিনী—নন্দবংশের পতন ঘটিয়ে মৌর্য রাজা চন্দ্রগুপ্তের উত্থান সে বিষয়ে তাঁর প্রধান সহকারী হয়েছে কুটিলমতি মন্ত্রী কৌটিল্যের বুদ্ধিবল। প্রাথমিক দৃষ্টিতে মৌর্যসম্রাট 'চন্দ্রগুপ্ত' (যিনি মৌর্য সাম্রাজ্যের প্রতিষ্ঠাতারূপে ভারত ইতিহাসে খ্যাত) এবং 'কৌটিল্য' দুটি চরিত্রই ঐতিহাসিক চরিত্র হলেও, ঘটনার পারম্পর্য অনুসরণে বোঝা যায় যে, নাট্যকার এই চরিত্র দুটিকে সামনে রেখে পিছনে অনেক

কাল্পনিক চরিত্রের অবতারণা করেছেন, যারা নাট্যকাহিনীটির পরিপুষ্টি, গতি ও সমাপ্তির পথে প্রধান সহায়ক হয়েছে। যেমন, পার্বত্যরাজ পর্বতক, তৎপুত্র মলয়কেতু ও তাঁর বিচক্ষণ মন্ত্রী রাক্ষস এবং বিভিন্ন গুপ্তচর, দূত ইত্যাদি অন্যান্য চরিত্র। ঐতিহাসিক দিক থেকে এদের অস্তিত্বের কোনো সত্যতা নেই, তথাপি নাট্যাকারের সুনিপুণ লেখনীতে এরা সজীব; বিশেষতঃ চাণক্যের প্রতিপক্ষ রাজনীতিবিদ্‌রূপে কল্পিত 'রাক্ষস' চরিত্রটির চিত্রণে নাট্যকার যথেষ্ট সচেতন। এইদিক থেকে বিচার করলে, নন্দনের চন্দ্রগুপ্তের সংঘর্ষের ঐতিহাসিক কাহিনীর ভিত্তি করে গড়ে ওঠা যে পরবর্তী কাল্পনিককাহিনী, তা বাস্তব ভিত্তির উপর প্রতিষ্ঠিত না হওয়া সত্ত্বেও রাজনৈতিক ঘটনাবর্তের ব্যাপ্তিতে সংস্কৃত সাহিত্যজগতে দুর্লভ স্থানের অধিকারী হয়েছে।

এই নাটকের মধ্যে 'পার্থিবশ্চন্দ্রগুপ্তঃ' ও 'পার্থিবোৎবন্তিবর্মা' এই রকম পাঠভেদ দেখা যায়। চন্দ্রগুপ্ত বললে, মুরা-পুত্র ও কৌটিল্যের স্নেহভাজন মৌর্যচন্দ্রের কথাই গ্রাহ্য হয় ইতিহাসের দিক থেকে। কিন্তু, 'বন্তিবর্মা'-র ক্ষেত্রে তাঁকে কনৌজের মৌখরীরাজ অবন্তিবর্মা (খ্রিস্টিয় সপ্তম শতক) অথবা কাশ্মীররাজ অবন্তিবর্মা অথবা হর্ষবর্ধনের ভগিনী রাজ্যশ্রীর শ্বশুর—অবন্তিবর্মা (আনুমানিক ষষ্ঠ শতক)—কার সঙ্গে যুক্ত করা যুক্তিগ্রাহ্য হবে, সে নিয়ে যথেষ্ট মতভেদ হতে পারে। আবার, 'পার্থিবো দন্তিবর্মা' এই পাঠান্তরও উপলব্ধ হয়, যা যথেষ্ট সমস্যাজনক, কারণ দাক্ষিণাত্যে পল্লব, রাষ্ট্রকূট ও লাট—প্রত্যেক বংশেই একজন করে দন্তিবর্মা-র অস্তিত্বের কথা জানা যায়। যেহেতু নন্দরা ছিলেন শুদ্রা মাতার সন্তান এবং উপযুক্ত রাজাদের মধ্যে কেবল মৌর্য চন্দ্রগুপ্তই 'ম্লেচ্ছ' নিধন করেছিলেন বলে ঐতিহাসিক প্রমাণ রয়েছে, তাই এখানে 'ম্লেচ্ছ' বলতে শূদ্র বর্ণের নন্দবংশকে বোঝানো হয়েছে। সুতরাং ম্লেচ্ছনিধনকারী বলতে মৌর্য চন্দ্রগুপ্তকেই যে নির্দেশ করা হচ্ছে তা নিঃসন্দেহ। এবং এই নাটকে উল্লিখিত প্রতিটি ক্ষেত্রেই অসংখ্য মতপার্থক্য থাকলেও, কাহিনী বিশ্লেষণের মাধ্যমে এই নাটকের চন্দ্রগুপ্তকে মৌর্য চন্দ্রগুপ্ত রূপে স্বীকার করাই যুক্তিযুক্ত হবে। তাই বিশাখাদত্তের এই নাটকটি চতুর্থ শতকের কোনো এক সময়ে রচিত নাটক বলে স্বীকার করা যাবে।

সংস্কৃত সাহিত্যে এ পর্যন্ত যত নাট্যকীর্তি রচিত হয়েছিল, তা সে ভাসের, কালিদাসের, শ্রীহর্ষের বা ভবভূতির যারই রচনা হোক, তাদের বিষয়বস্তুর মধ্যে কোনো ইতিহাসবা পুরাণের আভাস থাকলেও, মূল উপজীব্য ছিল কোনো বিষয়ান্তর। বিশেষতঃ লৌকিক বা অলৌকিক প্রণয়কাহিনীই ছিল তৎকালীন নাট্যরচনার রসদ। কিন্তু গতানুগতিকতা ছেড়ে সম্পূর্ণরূপে রাজনীতি ও তৎসংক্রান্ত চিন্তাভাবনা, বাদানুবাদ, কূটনৈতিক কৌশল—কেবল এটাকেই মূল উপজীব্য করে বিশাখদত্তের লেখা এই নাটক নাট্যাস্বাদনপ্রার্থী সহৃদয়ের কাছে ভিন্ন স্বাদের সন্ধান দিয়েছিল। নন্দদের উচ্ছেদ করে মৌর্য সাম্রাজ্যের স্থাপন, উভয়পক্ষের চরম শত্রুতা, অসাধারণ প্রতিভাবান কূটনীতিবিদ্ চাণক্যের সঙ্গে চন্দ্রগুপ্তের ঘনিষ্ঠতা, প্রতিহিংসা চরিতার্থ করার অদম্য স্পৃহা প্রতিপক্ষীয় মন্ত্রী রাক্ষসের প্রখর বুদ্ধিবল, চাণক্যের সঙ্গে রাক্ষসের বুদ্ধিযুদ্ধ, পারস্পরিক চক্রান্ত, কূটনৈতিক কৌশল এবং শেষতঃ রাক্ষসকে কূটনীতির জালে জড়িয়ে পরাজিত করে চন্দ্রগুপ্তেরই সঙ্গে মিলন—সম্পূর্ণ নাটকেই রাজনৈতিক ভাবনা প্রত্যক্ষ করা যায়। তবে, এখানে অস্ত্রবল নয়, বুদ্ধিবলই রাজ্যজয়ের একমাত্র অস্ত্র। পরস্পরকে শুধু বুদ্ধিকৌশলে এভাবে পরাজিত করার প্রয়াস প্রশংসনীয়। নাটকের অঙ্গীরস বীররস, তথাপি যুদ্ধ, রক্তপাত—এসবের লেশমাত্রনেই এই নাটকে। উপরন্তু এটি নায়িকাবিহীন তো বটেই, স্ত্রীচরিত্রও প্রায় বর্জিত (একমাত্র চন্দনদাসের স্ত্রী চরিত্র বাদে) এবং বিদূষকচরিত্র-হীন নাটকও বটে।

সমগ্র নাটকটি বিশ্লেষণ করলে, এর মধ্যে রাজনীতি তথা কূটনীতির বেশ গুরুত্বপূর্ণ কিছু বৈশিষ্ট্য চোখে

পড়ে। যেমন—প্রস্তাবনা অংশে 'কৌটিল্যঃ কুটিলমতিঃ' ইত্যাদি দ্বারা সূচনার পর 'ধন্যা কেয়ং' ইত্যাদি নান্দীশ্লোকেও কুটিলগামিনী গঙ্গার প্রসঙ্গ উল্লেখ কূটনীতিরই প্রতীক বলা চলে। গুপ্তচর নিয়োগ এই নাটকে বিশেষ গুরুত্বপূর্ণ বিষয়। একদিকে যেমন, জীবসিদ্ধি, নিপুণক, ভাগুরায়ণ প্রভৃতি গুপ্তচরের মাধ্যমে অসাধারণ ধুরন্ধর বিপ্র চাণক্য দেশের সার্বত্রিক জনমত জেনেছেন, তেমনি প্রয়োজনে ভেদনীতি প্রয়োগেও দ্বিধা করেন নি। তৃতীয়াঙ্কে চন্দ্রগুপ্তের সঙ্গে কপটকলহ দ্বারা ভেদ সৃষ্টি করে রাক্ষসের দৃষ্টিতে চাণক্যহীন চন্দ্রগুপ্তকে 'অসহায়' বলে দেখানোর বিষয়টি চাণক্যের কুটবুদ্ধিসম্পন্ন রাজনৈতিক চাল ছাড়া কিছুই নয়। আবার অন্যদিকে, চরের মাধ্যমেই কুসুমপুরের বণিক চন্দনদাসের গৃহে রাক্ষসের স্ত্রী-পুত্রের গচ্ছিত থাকার ঘটনাও তাঁর দৃষ্টিগোচর হয়েছে। প্রতিপক্ষ অমাত্য রাক্ষসের চররূপে তাদের দায়িত্বপালন করেছে—আহিতুন্ডিক (প্রকৃত নাম বিরাধগুপ্ত), করভক, দৌবারিক, প্রমোদক প্রভৃতি গুপ্তচর। কখনও সাপুড়ের ছদ্মবেশে, কখনও বা স্তুতিগায়ক হিসাবে তারা চন্দ্রগুপ্ত ও তাঁর অনুগামিদের বিভ্রান্ত করেছে।

রাজাকে গণিকাদের মাধ্যমে প্রলুব্ধ ক'রে দিকভ্রষ্ট করার ঐতিহাসিক প্রমাণ থাকলেও, 'বিষকন্যা' দ্বারা রাজা পর্বতকের মৃত্যু একটি অভিনব ঘটনা। এটির ঐতিহাসিক সত্যতা নেই, তবু, নিঃসন্দেহে এই নাটকে চাণক্যের কূটনৈতিক কৌশলের শিকার হয়েছে পর্বতক চরিত্র।

শুধু চাণক্যের বুদ্ধিবল-ই নয়, প্রতিপক্ষ অমাত্য রাক্ষসের চরিত্রেও পদে পদে প্রকাশিত হয়েছে প্রত্যুৎপন্নমতিত্ব ও অসাধারণ বুদ্ধিমত্তা। কৌমুদী মহোৎসব বন্ধ করা নিয়ে চাণক্য-চন্দ্রগুপ্তের দ্বন্দ্বকালে স্তুতিগায়ক কর্তৃক চন্দ্রগুপ্তের গুণকীর্ত্তন দ্বারা উভয়ের দ্বন্দ্বকে আরও নিশ্চিত করার প্রচেষ্টা চালিয়েছে রাক্ষস। রাক্ষসের ন্যায় সমবুদ্ধিবলসম্পন্ন প্রতিপক্ষ চরিত্রটি এই নাটকে না হাজির থাকলে, চাণক্যের বুদ্ধিবল ও কূটনৈতিক কৌশল নিঃসন্দেহে বড়ো বেশি একতরফা হয়ে যেত। উভয়ের কূটনৈতিক দ্বন্দ্বেই নাটকটির নাটকীয়তা পূর্ণতা পেয়েছে। ঘটনার ক্রমান্বয়ে নাটকটিকে যেন রহস্য রোমাঞ্চ কোনো গোয়েন্দা কাহিনী বলে মনে হয় মাঝে মাঝে। আবার, অন্যান্য চরিত্রগুলির পিছনেও আছে এই দুই প্রতিপক্ষ রাজনীতিবিদেরই প্রত্যক্ষ বুদ্ধিপ্রয়োগ। তবু, যুদ্ধ বা রক্তপাত নাট্যকারের অভীষ্ট নয়। স্বয়ং চাণক্যের মুখেই তাই উচ্চারিত হয়েছে—

"অথ তব বলমুখ্যান্ ঘাতয়েৎ সাপি পীড়া।
বনগজ ইব তস্মাত্ সোৎভ্যুপায়ৈর্বিনেয়ঃ।।" (৩/২৫)

আবার, কেবল রাজনৈতিক স্বার্থে মিত্রতা স্থাপনও এ নাটকের একটি বিশেষ দিক। এখানে যেন নৈতিকতা বা চিত্তৌদার্যের কোনো স্থান নেই। রাজনৈতিক প্রয়োজনমতো মিত্রকে শত্রু ও শত্রুকে মিত্রতে পরিণত করতে চরিত্রগুলি দ্বিধা করেনি।

স্বহস্তাক্ষরে পত্র না লিখে নন্দদেরই পত্রলেখক শকটদাসের হস্তাক্ষরে পত্র রচনার মধ্যেও চাণক্যের কূটনৈতিক দূরদর্শিতার প্রকাশ ঘটেছে। তাঁর অসাধারণ মন্ত্রগুপ্তি সম্বন্ধে তাঁর গুপ্তচর সিদ্ধার্থক যথার্থই বলেছেন—

"বয়স্য! অতিমুদ্ধোৎসি ইদানীং ত্বং যদ্ অমাত্যরাক্ষসেনাপি অনবগাহিতপূর্বতম্ আর্য্যচাণ্যচরিতম্ অবগাহিতুমিচ্ছসি।" (ষষ্ঠ অঙ্ক)

রাজনীতির চিন্তা ছাড়া চাণক্যের মনে যেন কোন চিন্তাই নেই—"ন প্রয়োজনমন্তরা চাণক্যঃ স্বপ্নেৎপি চেষ্টতে।"

সাম, দান, ভেদ, দণ্ড—এই চতুবর্গের সার্থক প্রয়োগ দেখা যায় এই নাটকে। বিশেষ করে যথাকালে দানের

দ্বারা গুপ্তচরগণকে সন্তুষ্ট রাখা, বিভিন্ন রাজাদের মধ্যে ভেদনীতি প্রয়োগ দ্বারা তাদের ঐক্য বিনষ্ট করা রাজনৈতিক কৌশলের পরিচায়ক। চাণক্যের কূটনৈতিক চালের সামনে স্বয়ং চন্দ্রগুপ্তকেও কখনও বা বিভ্রান্ত হতে দেখা যায়—"অয়ে কথং সত্যমেব আর্যঃ কুপিতঃ।" বিপরীতমুখী রাজনৈতিক কৌশলের আদান-প্রদানে নাটকটি স্বভাবতই ভিন্ন মাত্রা যোগ করেছে সংস্কৃত নাট্যজগতে।

প্রাচীন এই নাট্যকীর্তির পদাঙ্ক অনুসরণে পরবর্তীকালে ভারতের বিভিন্ন ভাষাতেও রাজনীতির ইতিহাসকে উপজীব্য ক'রে নাট্যসাহিত্য গড়ে উঠেছে। এপ্রসঙ্গে বাংলা সহিত্যে বিংশ শতকের প্রথম দশকটি বাংলায় ঐতিহাসিক নাট্যসাহিত্যের সুবর্ণযুগ বলে স্বীকার করা যায়। এসময় গিরিশচন্দ্র ঘোষ, ক্ষীরোদপ্রসাদ বিদ্যাবিনোদ, দ্বিজেন্দ্রলাল রায় প্রমুখ নাট্যকার ভারতের রাজনৈতিক ইতিহাসের প্রাচীন ও মধ্যযুগ পেরিয়ে, ইংরেজদের সঙ্গে পলাশীর যুদ্ধের কাহিনীকে অবধি নিজ নিজ নাটকের মূল বিষয়রূপে নির্দিষ্ট করেছেন। অধিকাংশ ক্ষেত্রেই বিংশ শতকের শুরুতে পরাধীন ও বিচ্ছিন্নপ্রায় জাতিকে ঐক্যবদ্ধ করার অনলস প্রচেষ্টা করেছেন নাট্যকারগণ। এপ্রসঙ্গে গিরিশচন্দ্রের 'সিরাজদ্দৌলা', 'মীরকাশিম', 'ছত্রপতি শিবাজী' ইত্যাদি, ক্ষীরোদপ্রসাদের 'প্রতাপাদিত্য', 'আলমগীর', 'পলাশীর প্রায়শ্চিত্ত' ইত্যাদি নাটক এবং দ্বিজেন্দ্রলাল রায়ের—'তারাবাঈ' (১৯০৩ খ্রিঃ), 'প্রতাপসিংহ' (১৯০৫ খ্রিঃ), 'দুর্গাদাস' (১৯০৬ খ্রিঃ), 'নূরজাহান' (১৯০৮ খ্রিঃ), 'মেবার পতন' (১৯০৮ খ্রিঃ), 'সাজাহান' (১৯০৯ খ্রিঃ), 'চন্দ্রগুপ্ত' (১৯১১ খ্রিঃ), 'সিংহলবিজয়' (১৯১৫ খ্রিঃ) ইত্যাদি নাটকের নাম উল্লেখ্য। এর মধ্যে 'চন্দ্রগুপ্ত' ছাড়া সবকটি নাটকই মুঘল সাম্রাজ্যের ইতিহাসকে উপজীব্য করে গড়ে উঠেছে। ঐতিহাসিক আদর্শ বিজয়ী বীরের চরিত্রের মাধ্যমে তৎকালীন জাতি উদ্বুদ্ধ করাই ছিল নাট্যকারদের উদ্দেশ্য। তবে নাট্যকারগণ অনেক ক্ষেত্রে জাতীয়তাবাদ অথবা দর্শকের ভাবাবেগকে অধিক গুরুত্ব দিতে গিয়ে ঐতিহাসিক সত্যকে প্রচ্ছন্ন অথবা বিকৃত করেছেন। যেমন, গিরিশচন্দ্রের সিরাজদ্দৌলা ও ক্ষীরোদপ্রসাদের প্রতাপাদিত্য চরিত্র আদর্শের সুন্দর প্রতিমূর্তি হলেও, এতে ঐতিহাসিক সত্যতার অভাব রয়েছে। আবার, বিংশ শতাব্দীর জাতীয় আন্দোলনে সাম্প্রদায়িক সম্প্রীতি বজায় রাখার ইচ্ছায় হিন্দু ও মুসলমানের পারস্পরিক প্রীতি স্থাপনের আদর্শ পরিস্ফুট হয়েছে দ্বিজেন্দ্রলাল রায়ের বিভিন্ন নাটকে। এপ্রসঙ্গে কর্ণসিংহ ও সাজাহানের মিত্রতা, মহাবত্ খাঁর প্রতি কল্যাণীর নিষ্ঠা, শম্ভুসিংহের সঙ্গে মুসলমান নারীর বিবাহ হিন্দু-মুসলিম সম্প্রীতি রক্ষারই প্রয়াস। শ্রী অজিতকুমার ঘোষ তাই 'বাংলা নাটকের ইতিহাস'-এ লিখেছেন—"তাহারা প্রেমে অপ্রতিম, শৌর্যে সীমাহীন, আবার ক্রোধে প্রচণ্ড, হিংসায় দুর্বার। তাহাদের উত্থান-পতন আমাদের হৃদয়ে মৃদু কম্পন্ন জাগায় না, সজোর আঘাতে ইহাতে দ্রুত কম্পন্ন সৃষ্টি করে। ...ঐতিহাসিক ভূমিকাগুলিতে মানব-চরিত্রের এক-একটি পূর্ণ ও চরমরূপ উদ্ভাসিত হইয়া উঠিয়াছে।" প্রতাপসিংহের স্বদেশপ্রেম, দুর্গাদাসের মহত্ত্ব, গোবিন্দসিংহের সুদৃঢ় সংকল্প, মহাবত্ খাঁর কর্তব্য পরায়ণতা, কাশিমের প্রভুভক্তি—মানজীবনের এক-একটি আদর্শকে অভ্রান্তভাবে রূপায়িত করেছে। আবার, বীররসে উদ্বুদ্ধ করতে আবেগঘন বাক্যপ্রয়োগও করেছেন নাট্যকার। যথা, সাজাহান নাটকে—"উঠুন, দলিত ভুজঙ্গমের মত ফণা বিস্তার করে উঠুন, হৃতশালা ব্যাঘ্রীর মত প্রমত্তবিক্রমে গর্জে উঠুন, অত্যাচারে ক্ষিপ্ত জাতির মত জেগে উঠুন, নিয়তির মতো কঠিন হৌন, হিংসার মত অন্ধ হৌন, শয়তানের মত ক্রূর হৌন" (১ম অঙ্ক/৭ম দৃশ্য)।

নাট্যকার গিরিশচন্দ্র ঘোষের 'সিরাজদ্দৌলা, 'মীরকাশিম', 'ছত্রপতি শিবাজী', 'চণ্ড', 'সৎনাম', 'বাসর', 'অশোক'—ইত্যাদি নাটক ঐতিহাসিক কাহিনীর ভিত্তিতে সৃষ্ট।

ক্ষীরোদপ্রসাদ বিদ্যাবিনোদের লেখা 'প্রতাপাদিত্য', 'পদ্মিনী', 'আলমগীর', 'চাঁদবিবি' ইত্যাদি রচনারও উপজীব্য ভারতের রাজনৈতিক ইতিহাস।

এইভাবে বিংশশতকের প্রখ্যাত নাট্যকারদের পেরিয়ে অর্বাচীন কালে রবীন্দ্রোত্তর যুগেও রাজনৈতিক পটভূমিকায় নাট্যসাহিত্য রচনার প্রয়াস অব্যাহত। যথা—শচীন্দ্রনাথ সেনগুপ্তের 'গৈরিকপতাকা' (ছত্রপতি শিবাজীর কাহিনী), 'সিরাজদ্দৌলা', 'রাষ্ট্রবিপ্লব' (দ্বিজেন্দ্রলালের সাজাহানের অনুসরণে); মন্মথ রায়ের 'খনা' (জ্যোতিষাচার্য বরাহ ও তাঁর পুত্রবধূ খনার কাহিনী), 'অশোক', 'মীরকাশিম' ইত্যাদি; মহেন্দ্র গুপ্তের 'টিপু সুলতান', 'রানী ভবানী', 'রানী দুর্গাবতী', 'মহারাজা নন্দকুমার', 'পাঞ্জাবকেশরী রঞ্জিত সিংহ'; নিশিকান্ত বসুরায়ের 'বঙ্গো বর্গী', 'দেবলাদেবী'; হীরেন্দ্রনারায়ণ মুখোপাধ্যায়ের 'পলাশী'—এই সমস্ত নাটকই রাজনৈতিক ইতিহাসকে কেন্দ্র করে রচিত।

চতুর্থ শতাব্দীর মুদ্রারাক্ষসের সঙ্গে এদের সামগ্রিক তুলনায় বলা চলে যে, সর্বত্রই ঐতিহাসিক চরিত্র তথা ঐতিহাসিক ঘটনাকে নাটকের মূল উপজীব্য রূপে গ্রহণ করেও নাট্যকারগণ আপন লেখনীর সৌকর্যে ঘটনাগুলিকে ইতিহাস থেকে সাহিত্যকীর্তিতে উন্নীত করেছেন। তবে, মুদ্রারাক্ষসে আমরা শুধুই দুই কূটনীতিবিদের বুদ্ধিবলের সাহায্যে পরস্পরকে জব্দ করার প্রয়াস দেখি, সেখানে একটি রাজনৈতিক তথা ঐতিহাসিক ঘটনাকে উপজীব্য ক'রে ও কিছু কল্পনারও আশ্রয় নিয়ে যতটা সম্ভব যুক্তিগ্রাহ্য নাট্যকীর্তি রূপে বিশাখদত্ত নাটকটি উপস্থাপিত করেছেন; কোন জাতীয়তাবোধ বা রাজনৈতিক চেতনায় সাধারণ মানুষকে উদ্বুদ্ধ করার কোনো প্রচেষ্টা এ নাটকের রচনার পিছনে ছিল না। অপর দিকে, বাংলা নাট্যসাহিত্যের বিগত দুই শতকে পরাধীন অসহায় জাতিকে উদ্বুদ্ধ করার প্রধান হাতিয়ার রূপে যেন তাঁদের নিজ নিজ লেখনীকে ব্যবহার করেছেন এ যুগের নাট্যকাররা। তাই, ঐতিহাসিক বীরের বীরত্বের জয়গান যেন অত্যাচারিত পরাধীন জাতিকে উদ্বুদ্ধ করার সুর। তবে, কালের গতিতে ঐতিহাসিক নাটকের নায়ক চরিত্রগুলিও ক্রমশঃ যুগোপযোগী হয়েছে। নাট্যরচনার উদ্দেশ্য যাই হোক, কেন, সাহিত্যকীর্তি যেহেতু সমাজের প্রতিফলন, জাতির প্রতিফলন ও জাতিগত মননের প্রতিফলন—তাই সর্বকালেই সমান হৃদয়গ্রাহী হয়েছে রাজনৈতিক পটভূমিকায় রচিত নাটকগুলি। গতানুগতিক রোম্যান্টিসিজম্ ছেড়ে ভিন্ন পথে হাঁটার যে পথ প্রথম দেখিয়েছেন বিশাখদত্ত, তার ভূমিকা ভারতীয় নাট্যসাহিত্য জগতে প্রকৃতই প্রশংসার দাবি রাখে।

গ্রন্থসূচী :

ঘোষ, অজিতকুমার। ১৩৬৮ ব.স. (পরিবর্ধিত তৃতীয় সংস্করণ)। বাংলা নাটকের ইতিহাস। কলিকাতা (বর্তমান কলকাতা); জেনারেল প্রিন্টার্স এন্ড পাবলিশার্স প্রাইভেট লিমিটেড।

দাস, করুণাসিন্ধু। ২০০৮ (প্রথম সংস্করণ)। সংস্কৃত সাহিত্যের ইতিহাস। কলকাতা : পশ্চিমবঙ্গ বাংলা আকাদেমি।

বন্দ্যোপাধ্যায়, ধীরেন্দ্রনাথ ২০১২ (দ্বিতীয় সংস্করণ)। সংস্কৃত সাহিত্যের ইতিহাস। কলকাতা : পশ্চিমবঙ্গ রাজ্য পুস্তক পর্ষদ।

বিশাখদত্ত। ২০১৬ (চতুর্থ সংস্করণ)। মুদ্রারাক্ষস (বাংলা অনুবাদ ও ব্যাখ্যা সহ)। সম্পাদক : সীতানাথ আচার্য শাস্ত্রী ও দেবকুমার দাস। কলকাতা : সদেশ।

লেখক পরিচিতি :

সহকারী অধ্যাপক, সংস্কৃত বিভাগ, স্কটিশ চার্চ কলেজ, কলকাতা

শহরাঞ্চলে অসংগঠিত মহিলা শ্রমিক হিসেবে গৃহসেবিকাদের ভূমিকা

গৌতম জাতুয়া[১]
ড. দেবাশীষ কুমার মন্ডল[২]

সংক্ষিপ্তসার :

ভারতবর্ষ তথা পশ্চিমবঙ্গের অর্থনীতিতে অসংগঠিত শ্রমিক হিসেবে শহরাঞ্চলে গৃহসেবিকাদে একটি গুরুত্বপূর্ণ অবদান রয়েছে। বর্তমানে এদের আর্থ-সামাজিক পরিস্থিতি সম্পর্কে অবগত হওয়ার জন্য কলকাতার অন্তগর্ত ১০৯ নং ওয়ার্ডের ৩০০ জন গৃহসেবিকাদের উপর একটি সমীক্ষা করা হয়েছে। সেখানে গৃহসেবিকাদের এই পেশায় আসার কারণ, সম্প্রদায়গত, শ্রেণিগত ও জাতিগত বিভাজন, কাজের ধরন, মাসিক উপার্জন সংক্রান্ত তথ্য সংগৃহীত করা হয়েছে। এবং এই তথ্যগুলি বিশ্লেষণ করে তাদের সামাজিক ও অর্থনৈতিক চিত্র তুলে ধরা হয়েছে এই প্রবন্ধে।

মূল শব্দ : গৃহসেবিকা, অসংগঠিত, মানবসম্পদ, আর্থ-সামাজিক।

ভূমিকা :

অর্থনীতি ও সমাজনীতি একে অপরের সঙ্গে অঙ্গাঙ্গিক ভাবে জড়িত। তাই সমাজে নারীর ভূমিকা কি তা কেবল অর্থনৈতিক উন্নয়নের পরিপ্রেক্ষিতে দেখলে হবে না। সমাজে নারীর অবস্থান থেকেই কোনো দেশের অর্থনৈতিক বুনিয়াদ গড়তে নারীর অবদানের স্বরূপটি স্পষ্ট প্রতিফলিত হয়।

সমগ্র বিশ্বে তথা ভারতবর্ষে আর্থ-সামাজিক উন্নয়নে যেসব পুঁজির প্রয়োজন তাদের মধ্যে মানবসম্পদ বিশেষতঃ মহিলা বা নারী শ্রমিক একটি গুরুত্বপূর্ণ অংশ। কারণ বর্তমানে মহিলারা অসংগঠিত শ্রমিক হিসেবে দেশের বিভিন্ন উৎপাদন ক্ষেত্রে (যেমন—দিন মজুরী, পণ্য বিক্রেতা হকার, কর্মচারী হিসেবে) গুরুত্বপূর্ণ ভূমিকা পালন করে চলেছে। এক্ষেত্রে গৃহসেবিকাদের গুরুত্বপূর্ণ ভূমিকা রয়েছে। কারণ পরিবর্তিত আর্থ-সামাজিক ও রাজনৈতিক পরিস্থিতিতে এবং উদারিকরণ ও বিশ্বায়নের নব প্রেক্ষাপটে এদের চাহিদা প্রতিদিন বেড়ে চলেছে। এই নারীকর্মী বা নারী সম্পদ সামাজিক ও আর্থিক উন্নয়নে কি ভূমিকা পালন করছে তার সঠিক মূল্যায়ন সঠিকভাবে তুলে ধরা আজকের দিনে খুবই প্রয়োজন হয়ে পড়েছে।

উদ্দেশ্য :

বর্তমানে কাজটির মূল উদ্দেশ্য হচ্ছে শহরাঞ্চলে সংগঠিত শ্রমিক হিসেবে গৃহসেবিকাদের আর্থ-সামাজিক অবস্থা এবং দেশের উৎপাদন ক্ষেত্রে এদের ভূমিকা পর্যালোচনা করা।

গৃহসেবিকাদের সামাজিক ভূমিকা ও গুরুত্ব :

আমরা জানি অসংগঠিত শ্রমিক হিসেবে সমাজে গৃহসেবিকাদের গুরুত্বপূর্ণ ভূমিকা রয়েছে। কারণ বর্তমানে আমরা দেখতে পাই যে একজনের উপার্জিত অর্থে সংসার চালানো কঠিন হয়ে যাচ্ছে। তাই বাধ্য হয়ে বা কিছু ক্ষেত্রে পরিবারকে সাহায্য করার প্রয়োজনীয়তা বুঝে স্বামীর পাশাপাশি গৃহবধূরা বাড়ীর বাইরে এসে অন্যান্য বিভিন্ন পেশার মত এই গৃহসেবিকা বৃত্তি বেছে নিচ্ছে। ফলস্বরূপ প্রতি বছরই নারী কর্মীর সংখ্যা (সে দিনমজুর হোক, পণ্য বিক্রেতা হকার হোক, কর্মচারী হোক বা গৃহসেবিকা হোক) বেড়েই চলেছে।

তথাকথিত ধনী পরিবারে দরিদ্র পরিবারের মহিলাদের গৃহসেবিকা হিসেবে কাজ করা একটি পুরোনো ও প্রচলিত প্রথা। আর মফস্বলের চেয়ে শহরাঞ্চলে এই জীবিকা দীর্ঘদিন ধরে চলে আসছে। বিশেষতঃ গত কয়েক দশকে ভারতবর্ষের বড় বড় শহরের মত কলকাতার আশেপাশের জেলা, গ্রাম বা মফস্বল থেকে জীবিকার সন্ধানে, উন্নত জীবন-যাপন এবং আরও বেশি সুযোগ-সুবিধা পাওয়ার আশায় মানুষ অনেক বেশী শহরমুখী হয়েছে। সেই সঙ্গে আর্থ-সামাজিক পট পরিবর্তনের ফলে পরিবারগুলির কাঠামো পরিবর্তন হয়েছে। সংসারের আর্থিক যোগানদার হিসেবে গৃহবধূরা বা মেয়েরা যত বেশী চাকুরীজীবি বা পেশাজীবি হয়েছে ততই বেড়েছে এইসব গৃহসেবিকার চাহিদা। অন্য দিকে গ্রামে কৃষির ওপর নির্ভরশীলতা হ্রাস—কারণ পরিবারে কৃষিজমি উত্তরাধিকারীদের মধ্যে বণ্টন হওয়ার ফলে জমির পরিমান ক্রমশই কমে যাওয়া, নতুন নতুন পেশার উদ্ভব এবং গ্রাম ছেড়ে শহরে আসা খেত মজুর বা চাষিরা যখন শিল্পায়নের মন্দা, বন্ধ কারখানা বা আর্থিক বেরোজগার শিকার হয়েছে, তখনই পরিবারের মেয়েরা বাধ্য হয়েছে বিকল্প উপার্জনের রাস্তা খুঁজতে (দে ও বসু, ২০১১—১৮)।

এছাড়া চাহিদা ও যোগানের স্বাভাবিক তত্ত্ব মেনেই ১৬—৬০ বছরের বিভিন্ন মহিলারা এই গৃহসেবিকার পেশায় যোগ দিচ্ছে নানা কারণে। কেউবা অভাবের তাড়নায়, কেউ বাড়ীতে স্বামীর দ্বারা অত্যাচারিত হয়ে, কেউ নিরূপায় হয়ে অর্থাৎ স্বামী মারা যাওয়ায় বা ছেড়ে চলে যাওয়ায় বা স্বামী দ্বিতীয় বিয়ে করায় এবং অধিকাংশ ক্ষেত্রে পরিবারকে আরও বেশি আর্থিক দিক থেকে স্বচ্ছল করে তোলার উদ্দেশ্যে এই সেবিকা বৃত্তি গ্রহণ করতে বাধ্য হচ্ছে। বর্তমানে এই দ্রুতগতি সম্পন্ন ব্যস্তময় জীবনে এইসব গৃহসেবিকারা শীত, গ্রীষ্ম, বর্ষা বছরের প্রায় বারো মাসই অত্যন্ত সাধারণ পারিশ্রমিকের বিনিময়ে যে পরিষেবা আমাদের দিয়ে চলেছে তার একটু ব্যতিক্রম হলেই শহরের হিসেবী জীবন সমস্যার সম্মুক্ষীন হয়। অথচ এই সমস্ত গৃহসেবিকারা বিভিন্ন দিক থেকে অবহেলিত এবং এদের জীবনযাত্রায় উন্নয়নের ছোঁয়া আজও ঠিকমতো পৌঁছয়নি। আমরা জানি যে এইসব গৃহসেবিকারা অসংগঠিত শ্রমিক হিসেবে জাতীয় আয়ের একটা বড় জোগানদার হয়েও সমাজের নিম্নস্তরে অবস্থিত এবং বিভিন্নভাবে অত্যাচারিত ও বৈষম্যের স্বীকার (দে ও বসু, ২০১১ : ১৮)।

ভারতের অর্থনৈতিক ব্যবস্থায় মধ্যবিত্ত শ্রেণির নারীর অংশগ্রহণ ও স্বাধীন জীবিকার ইতিহাস পুরানো নয়। দ্বিতীয় বিশ্বযুদ্ধ ও দেশ বিভাগের ফলে তৈরি হওয়া অর্থনৈতিক সমস্যাই বিগত ৫০—৬০ বছরে কিছু উচ্চ ও

মধ্যবিত্ত শ্রেণির নারীকে বিভিন্ন অর্থ উপার্জনকারী কর্মে উৎসাহিত করেছে। কিন্তু দরিদ্র তথা প্রান্তিক বর্গের নারীরা বিভিন্ন উৎপাদন ব্যবস্থায় এবং নানা ধরনের অর্থ উপার্জনকারী পেশায় নিযুক্ত আছেন সেই প্রাচীনকাল থেকেই এবং আজও তারা অসংগঠিত শ্রমিক হিসেবে দেশের উৎপাদন ব্যবস্থায় গুরুত্বপূর্ণ অবদান রেখে চলেছে। (বন্দ্যোপাধায়, ২০০৯ : ৪৫)।

কেবলমাত্র ভারতবর্ষে নয় সমগ্র বিশ্বে গৃহসেবিকাদের ভূমিকা ও গুরুত্ব অপরিসীম। আমরা যদি ইউরোপের দিকে তাকাই তাহলে দেখতে পাই যে, সেখানে গরীব ঘরের অধিকাংশ মেয়েকে কৈশোর বয়স থেকেই জীবন-জীবিকার ব্যবস্থা করতে হয়। ভারতের মত এখানেও জীবিকার সন্ধানে গ্রাম থেকে শহরে আসে সাধারণ ঘরের নিরূপায় মেয়েরা। যেখানে অবিবাহিত এবং নিঃসন্তান বিবাহিত মহিলাদের জন্য একাধিক উপার্জনের দিক যেমন—কলকারখানার কাজ, জিনিসপত্র ফেরি করার কাজ, কুলিগিরির পাশাপাশি গৃহসেবিকা পেশা গ্রহণ করতে পারত। (ঘোষ, ১৯৯৯ : ৫২)।

অষ্টাদশ শতকে ইউরোপে পুরোনো সমাজ, অর্থনীতি ও রাজনীতির পরিবর্তনের মধ্যে দিয়ে ধনী ও মধ্যবিত্ত পরিবারের সংখ্যা ক্রমশই বাড়ছিল। ফলে অষ্টাদশ শতকের দ্বিতীয় ভাগ থেকে অনেক সংখ্যক পরিবার গৃহসেবিকা হিসেবে মেয়েদের রাখতে পারতেন। নতুন নতুন শিল্প স্থাপনের ফলে পুরুষের কাজের সুযোগ বৃদ্ধি পাওয়ায় তারা আর বাড়ীতে চাকরের কাজ করতে চাইত না। ফলস্বরূপ মহিলা গৃহসেবিকার চাহিদা বাড়ছিল। ১৭৫০ সাল নাগাদ যেখানে ফ্রান্সের দুই-তৃতীয়াংশ বা অর্ধেক পর্যন্ত পুরুষ পরিচারক ছিল। সেখানে ১৭৯০ সালে পরিসংখ্যান অনুযায়ী দেখা যায় যে প্রতি দশজন পরিচারকের মধ্যে ৮—৯ জন হয়ে দাঁড়িয়েছিল মহিলা। কিন্তু সংগঠিত শ্রমিকদের মত গৃহসেবিকারা সামান্য সুরক্ষাটুকু পেত না (ঘোষ, ১৯৯৯ : ৫২)।

অর্থাৎ সমগ্র বিশ্বে তথা ভারতবর্ষে সর্বত্রই গৃহসেবিকাদের কর্মস্থলে একটা অনিশ্চয়তার মধ্য দিয়ে দিন কাটাতে হয়। এইসব গৃহসেবিকাদের বিভিন্ন কারণে কাজ চলে যাবার ভয় কাজ করে। (যেমন—বেশী ছুটি নেওয়া, বোনাস নেওয়া, এবং পারিশ্রমিক বৃদ্ধির কথা উপস্থাপন করা)। এর পাশাপাশি থাকত নিত্যদিনের মানসিক ও দৈহিক নির্যাতন যা আমরা প্রতিদিনের পত্রপত্রিকা বা সংবাদ মাধ্যমের মধ্য দিয়ে জানতে পারি।

যদিও পশ্চিমবঙ্গ সরকারের শ্রমদপ্তরের উদ্যোগে পশ্চিমবঙ্গে গৃহসেবিকাদের সুরক্ষা বিষয়ে কিছু ব্যবস্থা নেওয়া হয়েছিল ২০১৩ সালে। এক্ষেত্রে এলাকাভিত্তিক শিবিরের বা আলোচনা সভার আয়োজন করা হয়েছিল। এমন একটি শিবিরের নাম ছিল—"নিজে বাঁচ এবং অন্যকে বাঁচাও"। এই শিবিরে আলোচনার শুরুতেই মহিলাদের উপর অত্যাচারের ঘটনা নিয়ে আলোচনা হয়। এক্ষেত্রে বলা হয় যে এই সমস্ত মহিলারা অনেক রাতে বা ভোরে উঠে কলকাতার বিভিন্ন জায়গায় কাজে আসায় যাতায়াতের রাস্তায় কোন ধরনের সমস্যার সম্মুখীন হলে প্রাথমিক সমাধান হিসেবে বা সুরক্ষা হিসেবে গৃহসেবিকাদের কাজের বাড়ীর নম্বর, স্থানীয় থানা, লালবাজার কন্ট্রোল রুমের নম্বর এবং নিজেদের বাড়ীর মোবাইল নম্বর নিজেদের কাছে রাখার কথা বলা হয়। এছাড়া বর্তমানে কাজের বাড়ীতে নিত্য নতুন যন্ত্র আসায় সেগুলি কিভাবে ব্যবহার করতে হয় এবং কাজের বাড়ীতে কাজের সময় চোট-আঘাত পেলে তার জন্য প্রাথমিক চিকিৎসা কিভাবে নিতে হবে সেই ব্যাপারে কিছু পরামর্শ দেওয়া হয়। এবং শ্রমদপ্তর স্বীকার করেছে যে এই ধরনের শিবির এলাকা ভিত্তিক আরো বাড়ানো হবে। (অশোক, ২০১২)।

পূর্বরচিত গ্রন্থ পর্যবেক্ষণ :

Roy, Raka (2000) কর্তৃক রচিত *Fields of Protest – Women's Movement in India*. বইটিতে কলকাতা ও বম্বের বিভিন্ন মহিলা সংগঠনের কার্যাবলী ও তাদের আন্দোলনের ও প্রতিবাদের ক্ষেত্র সুন্দরভাবে আলোকপাত করা হয়েছে।

বসু, দীপিকা এবং নির্বান বসু, অমল দাস, ইরা মিত্র ও রাখী রায়চৌধুরী (2002) কর্তৃক রচিত "সংগঠিত শ্রমিক আন্দোলনের সাত দশক"। বইটিতে ভারতবর্ষ তথা বাংলার শ্রমিক আন্দোলনের বিভিন্ন দিক পর্যালোচনা করা হয়েছে। এছাড়া শ্রমিকদের উপর শিল্প ও প্রযুক্তির প্রভাব সহ অসংগঠিত মহিলা শ্রমিকদের অবস্থা বইটিতে বর্ণনা করা হয়েছে।

চক্রবর্তী এবং সি. এন, ড. সচি চক্রবর্তী (2006) কর্তৃক রচিত *"Gender Justice"* পুস্তকটিতে মহিলা ও শিশুদের কিছু সাংবিধানিক অধিকার ও কাজের জায়গায় তাদের বিভিন্ন সমস্যার পাশাপাশি পারিবারিক কাজে নিযুক্ত মহিলাদের বিভিন্ন সমস্যার কথা আলোচিত হয়েছে। এছাড়া বইটিতে দেখান হয়েছে যে 70 শতাংশ মহিলা গ্রাম থেকে শহরে অসংগঠিত শ্রমিক হিসেবে কাজ করতে আসে।

N, Neethe (2008) রচিত *"Regulating Domestic Work"* প্রবন্ধে পারিবারিক কাজে নিযুক্ত মহিলাদের কথা এবং তাদের কর্মক্ষেত্রে সমস্যার কথা বর্ণনা করা হয়েছে।

মুখোপাধ্যায়, সোমা (2008) কর্তৃক রচিত "অধিকার থেকে ক্ষমতায়ন" বইটিতে মহিলারা বিভিন্ন সমস্যার মধ্য দিয়ে কিভাবে অধিকার প্রতিষ্ঠার জন্য লড়াই করত এবং ক্ষমতায়নের জায়গায় পৌঁছানোর চেষ্টা করত তা বিস্তারিত ভাবে আলোচনা করা হয়েছে।

Rao, D. Paulla কর্তৃক রচিত *Empowerment of Women Through Higher Education in India* প্রবন্ধে একবিংশ শতাব্দীর নারী উন্নয়নের ইতিবাচক দিক হিসেবে উচ্চ শিক্ষায় মহিলাদের অংশ গ্রহণের কথা বলা হয়েছে।

বন্দ্যোপাধ্যায়, কল্যাণী 2009 কর্তৃক রচিত নারী, শ্রেণি বর্ণ—"নিম্নবর্গের নারীর আর্থ সামাজিক অবস্থান", বইটিতে আর্থ-সামাজিক ও পারিবারিক নিম্নবর্গের নারীর অবদান ও তাদের শোষণ ও বঞ্চনার চিত্রটি তুলে ধরা হয়েছে। এছাড়া বিভিন্ন ক্ষেত্রে যেমন—শিক্ষায়, কৃষি-অর্থনীতি, সংগঠিত ও অসংগঠিত ক্ষেত্রে, সেবা বৃত্তিতে, রাজনীতি, পরিবারে নারীর অবস্থা ও তাদের সমস্যার বিষয় বর্ণিত হয়েছে।

ব্যানার্জি, আশা ও সমরাজিতা জানা (২০০৯) কর্তৃক রচিত—"গৃহসেবিকা একটি সমীক্ষাভিত্তিক প্রতিবেদন" মাসিক পত্রিকাটি গৃহসেবিকাদের আর্থসামাজিক, রাজনৈতিক, সাংস্কৃতিক, পারিবারিক জীবন নিয়ে আলোচনা করা হয়েছে।

দে, ভারতী ও তরুণ বসু (২০১১) কর্তৃক রচিত—"নারী ভাবনার বাইশ কথা" বইটিতে অনিয়মিত শ্রম ও গৃহভিত্তিক কাজের ফলে কিভাবে অসংগঠিত ক্ষেত্রে মহিলারা সংখ্যাগরিষ্ঠতা হচ্ছে তা বর্ণিত হওয়ার পাশাপাশি গৃহসেবিকা, সাফাইকর্মী, নির্মাণকারী, মাছের ব্যবসায়ী, কৃষি-বাগিচা শিল্পে নিযুক্ত অসংগঠিত মহিলা কর্মীদের কথা আলোচনা করা হয়েছে।

রায়, বিনা (২০১১) কর্তৃক রচিত "ভারতের আর্থ-সামাজিক উন্নয়নে ভূমিকা" বইটিতে নারী নির্যাতনের কারণ হিসেবে পণ প্রথা, ভ্রূণ হত্যা, কর্মক্ষেত্রে বিভিন্ন সমস্যা সহ শ্রমের বিন্যাস সম্পর্কে আলোচনা করা হয়েছে। এছাড়া ভারতের অর্থনৈতিক উন্নয়নে নারীর অবদানের পাশাপাশি শিক্ষিত নারী অর্থনৈতিক উন্নয়নে অতীত থেকে বর্তমান কাল পর্যন্ত কিভাবে গুরুত্বপূর্ণ ভূমিকা পালন করেছে তা তুলে ধরা হয়েছে।

উপরে উল্লিখিত গ্রন্থ, প্রবন্ধ ও পত্রিকা ছাড়াও বহু গবেষক, লেখক তাঁদের চিন্তাধারা ও গবেষণা বিভিন্ন পত্রিকা ও গ্রন্থে ফুটিয়ে তুলেছেন। যেমন—(১) "দায় বেড়েছে পরিবারে ক্ষমতা নয়"—আনন্দবাজার পত্রিকা ২৯ ডিসেম্বর ২০১২, (২) সেনগুপ্ত, অশোক "গৃহসেবিকাদের সুরক্ষা শেখাল শ্রমদপ্তর"—আনন্দবাজার পত্রিকা ২৯ ডিসেম্বর ২০১২, (৩) বসু, পূরবী—নারী, মাতৃত্ব, সৃজনশীলতা (৪) পাণ্ডা, ঝর্ণা—"যে সব মেয়েদের কাজে আইনি কবজটুকুও নেই—এই সময় ২৭ নভেম্বর, ২০১৮।

গবেষণা পদ্ধতি:

এই কাজটিকে বাস্তবায়িত করার জন্য আমি ক্ষেত্র সমীক্ষার পাশাপাশি বিভিন্ন গৌণ তথ্য ব্যবহার করেছি। গৌণ তথ্য সংগ্রহ করার জন্য বিভিন্ন বই, পত্র -পত্রিকা ও সংবাদপত্রের সাহায্য নেওয়া হয়েছে। এছাড়া এককভাবে এবং গোষ্ঠীগতভাবে সাক্ষাৎকারের সাহায্য নিয়েছি। ক্ষেত্রসমীক্ষার জন্য প্রশ্নপত্র ব্যবহার করেছি। এই কাজটি সম্পন্ন করতে গিয়ে পরিসংখ্যানগত, বিশ্লেষণাত্মক ও তালিকা পদ্ধতি ব্যবহার করেছি।

সমীক্ষার ক্ষেত্র :

এই কাজটিকে সম্পন্ন করার জন্য কোলকাতা কর্পোরেশনের অন্তর্গত মোট ১৪৪টি ওয়ার্ডের মধ্যে ১০৯নং ওয়ার্ডটি নির্বাচন করেছি। ১০৯নং ওয়ার্ডের অন্তর্গত শহিদ স্মৃতি কলোনীতে (থানা—পঞ্চসায়র) A. B. C. Block এর ৫৩৭টি প্লট-এর মধ্যে ৩০০টি পরিবারের গৃহসেবিকাদের উপর ক্ষেত্র সমীক্ষা করা হয়েছে। যাদের মধ্যে অধিকাংশ ভাড়া বাড়ীতে বা নিজের বাড়ীতে বসবাস করে এবং এই বস্তির নিকটবর্তী ফ্ল্যাট বাড়ীতে গৃহসেবিকার কাজ করে। এরা অধিকাংশ ক্ষেত্রই দক্ষিণ ২৪ পরগণা জেলার বিভিন্ন গ্রাম থেকে এখানে বসবাস করছে। উক্ত ক্ষেত্র সমীক্ষার ফলাফলের উপর নির্ভর করে অসংগঠিত শ্রমিক ও গৃহসেবিকা বিষয়টি পর্যালোচনা করা হয়েছে।

বিশ্লেষণ ও ফলাফল :

ক্ষেত্র সমীক্ষার মাধ্যমে প্রাপ্ত তথ্য থেকে জানা যায় যে মূলত সংসারের অভাব-অনটন মেটাতেই চেনা-জানা সূত্র ধরেই অথবা নিজ থেকেই গৃহসেবিকা হিসেবে তারা এই পেশায় যুক্ত হয়েছে। অবশ্য এই অভাব-এর পেছনে বহুবিধ কারণ বর্তমান। সমীক্ষার মাধ্যমে প্রাপ্ত তথ্য থেকে জানা যায় যে কারো স্বামী মারা যাওয়ার কারণে বা ছেড়ে চলে যাওয়ার কারণে বাধ্য হয়ে গৃহসেবিকা হিসেবে মহিলারা এই পেশাকে বেছে নিয়েছে। কিন্তু বেশীরভাগ মহিলা পারিবারিক স্বচ্ছলতা ফেরাতে গৃহসেবিকা বৃত্তি গ্রহণ করেছে। নিম্নে সারণিচিত্রের মাধ্যমে বিষয়টি উপস্থাপন করার চেষ্টা করা হয়েছে।

সারণিচিত্র১ : গৃহসেবিকাদের কর্মে নিযুক্ত হওয়ার কারণ

কারণ	সংখ্যা	শতাংশ
স্বনির্ভরতা	২৬৪	৮৮
আর্থিক অনিশ্চয়তা	৩৬	১২
মোট সংখ্যা	৩০০	১০০

১নং সারণিচিত্রের মাধ্যমে গৃহসেবিকাদের এই পেশায় যুক্ত হওয়ার কারণ সম্পর্কে আলোচনা করা হয়েছে। পরিসংখ্যান অনুযায়ী দেখা যায় ৩০০ জন গৃহসেবিকার মধ্যে ২৬৪ জন স্বনির্ভরতা এবং পরিবারকে আর্থিক দিক থেকে সহযোগিতা করার জন্য এই পেশাকে বেছে নিয়েছে। যদিও এদের মধ্যে অনেকের স্বামী অসুস্থতার কারণে কাজ করতে অক্ষম। আর্থিক অনিশ্চয়তার জন্য ৩৬ জন (১২ %) মহিলা এই পেশায় নিযুক্ত হয়েছে। এই অনিশ্চয়তার পেছনে স্বামীর মৃত্যু এবং বিবাহ বিচ্ছিন্নতার কারণ রয়েছে।

ভারতের মতো জনবহুল দেশে শ্রমের মূল্য স্বাভাবিক ভাবেই কম হওয়ায় এইসব গৃহসেবিকারা কম বেতনে কাজ করতে বাধ্য হয়। আর এর সঙ্গে যুক্ত হয় কাজবাড়ীতে নানা ধরনের অমানবিক ব্যবহার যা কোনোভাবেই অস্বীকার করা যায় না। পাশাপাশি গৃহসেবিকাদের ক্ষেত্রে জাতি-বর্ণের সমস্যাটি জড়িয়ে আছে। এ বিষয়ে কোনো সন্দেহ নেই যে গৃহসেবিকাদের মধ্যে অধিকাংশই অতি নিম্নবর্গুক্ত।

সারণিচিত্র ২ : গৃহসেবিকাদের শ্রেণিগত বিভাজন

জাতি	সংখ্যা	শতাংশ
তপশিলি জাতি	২০৫	৬৮.৩৩
সাধারণ	৮৭	২৯
ও.বি.সি.১	০২	০.৬৭
জানে না	০৬	০২
মোট সংখ্যা	৩০০	১০০

আলোচ্য ২ নং সারণিচিত্রের মাধ্যমে গৃহসেবিকাদের জাতিগত বিভাজন সম্পর্কিত বিষয়বস্তু তুলে ধরা হয়েছে। সমীক্ষায় দেখা গেছে ৩০০ জন গৃহসেবিকার মধ্যে তপশিলি জাতিভুক্ত গৃহসেবিকার সংখ্যা ২০৫ জন (৬৮.৩৩ %)। সাধারণ ৮৭ জন (২৯ %) । ও. বি. সি. ১ অর্থাৎ মুসলিম সম্প্রদায়ের ২ জন (০.৬৭ %) আর ৬ জন (২ %) গৃহসেবিকা বলতে পারেনি তারা কোন্ জাতিগোষ্ঠীভুক্ত। তবে আশ্চর্যের বিষয় ৮৯ জন সাধারণের গৃহসেবিকার মধ্যে মাত্র ২ জন মুসলিম সম্প্রদায়ভুক্ত; অথচ এদের মধ্যে তুলনামূলকভাবে দারিদ্র্য সবচেয়ে বেশী।

সারণিচিত্র ৩ : সম্প্রদায়গত বিভাজন

সম্প্রদায়	সংখ্যা	শতাংশ
হিন্দু	২৯৮	৯৯.৩৩
মুসলিম	০২	০.৬৭
মোট সংখ্যা	৩০০	১০০

৩নং সারণিচিত্রে গৃহসেবিকাদের সম্প্রদায়গত বিভাজন তুলে ধরা হয়েছে। যেখানে ৩০০ জন গৃহসেবিকার মধ্যে ২৯৮ জন (৯৯.৩৩ %) হিন্দু সম্প্রদায়। আর ২ জন (০.৬৭ %) মুসলিম সম্প্রদায়।

সারণিচিত্র ৪ হিন্দু সম্প্রদায়ের জাতিগত বিভাজন

হিন্দু সম্প্রদায়	সংখ্যা	শতাংশ
পৌণ্ড্র	১৯৮	৬৬.৪৪
কৈবর্ত	৬০	২০.১৩
ব্রাহ্মণ	১২	০৪.০২
বৈষ্ণব	১১	০৩.৬৯
ধোপা	০৯	৩.০২
নাপিত	০২	০.৬৭
সন্ন্যাসী	০১	০.৩৩
কামার	০১	০.৩৩
জেলে	০১	০.৩৪
কুমোর	০১	০.৩৩
মুচি	০১	০.৩৩
তাঁতি	০১	০.৩৪
মোট সংখ্যা	২৯৮	১০০

৪ নং সারণিচিত্রের গৃহসেবিকাদের হিন্দু সম্প্রদায়ের মধ্যে জাতিগত বিভাজন আলোচনা করা হয়েছে। যেখানে দেখা গেছে ২৯৮ জন হিন্দু সম্প্রদায় পরিবার ভুক্ত গৃহসেবিকার মধ্যে ১৯৮ জন পৌণ্ড্র সম্প্রদায় ভুক্ত

অর্থাৎ (৬৬.৪৪ %) শতাংশ। ৬০ জন (২০.১৩ %), কৈবর্ত সম্প্রদায়ভুক্ত। ব্রাহ্মণ ১২ জন (৪.০২%), বৈষ্ণব ১১ জন (৩.৬৯%), ধোপা ০৯ জন (৩.০২%), নাপিত ০২ জন (০.৬৭%), সন্ন্যাসী ০১ জন (০.৩৩%), কামার ০১ জন (০.৩৩%), জেলে ০১ জন (০.৩৪%), কুমোর ০১ জন (০.৩৩%), মুচি ০১ জন (০.৩৩%) এবং তাঁতি ০১ জন (০.৩৩%)। যদিও সম্প্রদায়গত ভাবে এরা এদের পেশা ছেড়ে অধিকাংশ ক্ষেত্রে ভিন্ন পেশায় বর্তমানে নিযুক্ত। ৪নং সারণিচিত্র থেকে একটা গুরুত্বপূর্ণ তথ্য উঠে এসেছে। যেখানে দেখা গেছে ব্রাহ্মণ মহিলারাও বর্তমানে এই পেশায় নিযুক্ত হচ্ছে।

আমরা দেখতে পাই যে সামাজিক প্রয়োজনে এই সব মহিলাদের চাহিদা প্রতিদিন বৃদ্ধি পাওয়ার পাশাপাশি দরিদ্র পরিবারের মহিলাদের কাছে এই পেশা অর্থ-উপার্জনের একটি গুরুত্বপূর্ণ উৎস হিসেবে দেখা দিয়েছে। কারণ এই পেশায় যোগ্যতা বলতে তেমন কিছু লাগে না। এখানে কাজের ধরন অনুযায়ী গৃহসেবিকাদের মজুরী নির্ধারিত হয়। অধিকাংশ ক্ষেত্রে বাসন মাজা, ঘর পরিষ্কার করা, জামাকাপড় পরিষ্কার করা যেগুলিকে ঠিকের কাজ বলা হয় সেখানে গৃহসেবিকারা বেশি যুক্ত।

কাজের ধরন	সংখ্যা	শতাংশ
রান্নার কাজ	৯২	৩০.৬৭
ঠিকের কাজ	১২৬	৪২
রান্না ও ঠিকের কাজ	৭১	২৩.৬৭
গৃহস্থলীর বিভিন্ন কাজ	১১	৩.৬৬
মোট সংখ্যা	৩০০	১০০

আলোচ্য ৫নং সারণিচিত্রের মাধ্যমে গৃহসেবিকাদের কাজের ধরন সম্পর্কে আলোচনা করা হয়েছে। দেখা গেছে যে ৩০০ জন গৃহসেবিকার মধ্যে ৯২ জন গৃহসেবিকা রান্নার সঙ্গে যুক্ত। ঠিকের কাজ করে এমন গৃহসেবিকার সংখ্য ১২৬ জন। রান্না ও ঠিকের কাজ একসঙ্গে করে এমন গৃহসেবিকার সংখ্যা ৭১ জন। আর বাড়ীতে সব ধরনের কাজ করে এমন গৃহসেবিকার সংখ্যা ১১ জন। এছাড়া গৃহসেবিকাদের বেতন কাঠামো, তাদের কাজের বাড়ির সংখ্যা, বয়স প্রভৃতি বিষয়ে সমীক্ষা করা হয়েছে।

সারণিচিত্র ৬ : গৃহসেবিকাদের মাসিক উপার্জন

মাসিক উপার্জন (টাকা)	সংখ্যা	শতাংশ
< ১০০০	০৫	১.৬৬
১০০১—৪০০০	১৫৬	৫২
৪০০১—৭০০০	১১৯	৩৯.৬৭

মাসিক উপার্জন (টাকা)	সংখ্যা	শতাংশ
৭০০১—১০০০০	১৮	৬
১০০০০ >	০২	০.৬৭
মোট সংখ্যা	৩০০	১০০

৬ নং সারণিচিত্রে গৃহসেবিকাদের মাসিক উপার্জন সংক্রান্ত বিষয় আলোচনা করা হয়েছে। দেখা গেছে ১০০০ টাকা বা তার কম উপার্জন করে এমন গৃহসেবিকা ০৫ জন (১.৬৬%), ১০০১—৪০০০ টাকা উপার্জন করে ১৫৬ জন (৫২%), ৪০০১—৭০০০ টাকা উপার্জন করে এমন গৃহসেবিকার সংখ্যা ১১৯ জন (৩৯.৬৭%), ৭০০১—১০০০০ টাকা উপার্জন করে ১৮ জন (৬%), এবং ১০০০০ টাকার বেশি উপার্জন করে এমন গৃহসেবিকার সংখ্যা ২ জন (০.৬৭%)।

সার্বিক ফলাফলের উপর ভিত্তি করে বলা যায় বর্তমানে এই পেশা একটি অর্থকরী পেশায় পরিণত হয়েছে। এরা বর্তমানে কাজবাড়ীতে দরকষাকষি করে থাকে। কারণ সাম্প্রতিক কালে এদের চাহিদা বহুগুণ বেড়ে গেছে। কারণ একদিকে কাজের প্রয়োজন এদের যেমন আছে তেমনই কাজের বাড়ীতে এদের প্রয়োজনীয়তা খুবই গুরুত্বপূর্ণ। যেহেতু কলকাতা শহরে অধিকাংশ বনেদী বাড়ীতে স্বামী-স্ত্রী উভয়ের চাকুরী বা অন্য কোনো কাজে যুক্ত থাকে। এদের ছাড়া যেন শহরের বাঁধাধরা জীবন ওলট-পালট হওয়ার উপক্রম।

উপসংহার:

উপরোক্ত আলোচনা থেকে বোঝা যায় যে সাংসারিক আর্থিক অনিশ্চয়তা দূর করার জন্য মহিলারা এই পেশা বেছে নিচ্ছে। তাদের শিক্ষাগত যোগ্যতা কম হওয়ার জন্য অন্য পেশায় যেতে পারে না। তাই বেশির ভাগ ক্ষেত্রেই তাদের এই গৃহসেবিকার কাজ বেছে নিতে হয়। এছাড়াও তাদের মধ্যে রয়েছে আর্থিক ভাবে সাবলম্বী হওয়ার ইচ্ছা। সর্বোপরি একথা বলা যায় যে, সামাজিক, রাজনৈতিক, অর্থনৈতিক এমন সাংস্কৃতিক সকল ক্ষেত্রে এরা এদের প্রাপ্য মর্যাদা থেকে বঞ্চিত। কারণ এরা অসংগঠিত শ্রমিক। একটি নারী পুরুষের পাশাপাশি পরিবারে প্রত্যক্ষ অথবা পরোক্ষভাবে অর্থনৈতিক অবস্থার উন্নতিতে গুরুত্বপূর্ণ ভূমিকা গ্রহণ করে থাকে। জীবনধারনের মান বজায় রাখে। সবচেয়ে গুরুত্বপূর্ণ বিষয় এর মাধ্যমে জাতীয় আয় বাড়ে। জাতীয় ক্ষেত্রে সামাজিক উৎপাদনে নারীকে আরও বেশী অংশ গ্রহণের মধ্য দিয়ে জাতীয় আয় বাড়ানো সম্ভব। তাই নারীকে কাজের সর্বক্ষেত্রে অধিকতর সুযোগ দিতে হবে। শ্রমজীবী নারী তথা গৃহসেবিকাদের সমস্যার দিকে নজর দিতে হবে। পাশাপাশি সমাজের কল্যাণ ও প্রগতির স্বার্থে সমষ্টিগত ভাবে যেমন সরকারকে দীর্ঘমেয়াদী ও স্বল্পমেয়াদী নীতি গ্রহণ করতে হবে, তেমনই ব্যক্তিগত ও সম্প্রদায়গতভাবে যারা এই সমস্যার দ্বারা পীড়িত তাদেরকে এ বিষয়ে সচেতন ও দায়িত্বশীল হওয়ার পাশাপাশি সক্রিয়তা অর্জন করতে হবে।

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লেখক পরিচিতি :

১. জুনিয়র রিসার্চ ফেলো
ওমেনস্টাডিস রিসার্চ সেন্টার
কলিকাতা বিশ্ববিদ্যালয়

২. অ্যাসিস্টান্ট প্রফেসর
অ্যানথ্রোপলোজি বিভাগ
কলিকাতা বিশ্ববিদ্যালয়

Bamboo Craft and Associated Knowledge System of Lepcha Community of North Sikkim: An Endangered Cultural Heritage

Worrel Kumar Bain

Abstrat

Bamboo, one of the precious plant resources of the earth, plays a cardinal role in influencing the pattern of civilized life in Southern and Eastern Asian countries, where they found in abundance. It has a long history in people's life as a cultural material. Since ancient times the extensive use of bamboo is evidenced in hunting–gathering, fishing, agricultural activities, warfare, and transportation etc. India is the second richest country in the bamboo generic resources after China. In India, bamboo is one of the most important forest species and having wide distribution throughout the country and has major contribution to the rural economy. In this country bamboo is specific as far as their properties and uses are concerned. North – Eastern portion of India is considered to be the potential area in the country as far as bamboo resources are concerned. The states of this region are inhabited by over sixty major tribal populations belonging to different territorial groups. In this region, bamboo forms one of the important subsistence resources of tribal folk to a greater extent. Tribal communities of this area are masters in the skillful tradition of bamboo craft.

Lepcha community of North – Eastern state of Sikkim has rich cultural heritage of art and crafts. From the time immemorial Sikkim is inhabited by Lepcha community. For long Dzongu Reserve area of North Sikkim District has been the homeland of them. Bamboo is an indispensable part of their livelihood mostly in form of food, shelter, household item, medicine, furniture and other various ethno-religious purpose. Various bamboo craft traditions of the community get the most creative expression through craftsmanship. Out of different type of bamboo they make basketry, musical instruments (Po- potek, Pun- tang), fishing net (Wookdu), traditional Lepcha cap (Sumok- thyak), hunting cap (Papri), strainer (Tuk- sheor) etc. The spectacular variety and diverse range of the bamboo craft clearly exhibits the skill as well as the traditional knowledge of the craftsmen. This knowledge is essentially community specific and restricted within the

community and is accumulated through long interaction with the environment. Such knowledge system is preserved, maintained and transmitted over generations. It forms the cultural heritage of the Lepcha.The present study had been carried out among the Lepcha community in the Dzongu Reserve of North Sikkim. Four villages of different altitudes have been selected for the present study. During study standard anthropological methods have been used. The paper is based on the empirical findings of the author and it probes into their cultural heritage of bamboo craft which are governed by traditional knowledge and skills through empiricism.

Keywords: Bamboo, Sikkim, Lepcha Community, Bamboo craft, Myth and Legends, Craftsmen, Knowledge system, Cultural Heritage

INTRODUCTION

Craft is the earliest expression of man. In craft object one can see a repertoire of the symbolic abstraction which is expressive of man's beliefs, fear and aspirations. It is the integral part of the lives of the people who created and used them. More importantly perhaps, craft is an expression of culture and of the lives of the people at a given time. The people of the past, just like those of today, did not always lead lives of grand adventure of excitement but still had stories to tell of great passion and enduring fascination. Those stories were told through the crafts they created and today many thousands of years later one may read the stories still and admire the works of the early artists. The term 'craft' is derived from the Anglo – Saxon word 'Craeft' meaning strength, skill or cunning. Craft includes all activities that produce or modify objects by manual means with or without the use of mechanical aid. The crafts are basically utilitarian in which efforts have been made to introduce aesthetic appeal. The craft in a society is the sign of sensitivity and the stirring and mellowing influence of humanity. Craft is as old as civilization itself. Crafts in the ancient world, both in their purpose and how they were manufactured were as varied as cultures which produced them. The oldest human art that has been found dates to the Stone Age, when the first creative works were made from stone, bone, shell and paint. It is said that manufacturing of stone tools was the first craft in the history of human evolution. The manufacture and development of Stone Age tools has a great impact in the process of human's bio-cultural evolution. The earliest stone tool making developed by at least 3.3 million years ago (Sonia et.al. 2015). The Early Stone Age includes the most basic stone toolkits made by early humans. So it is clear that before writing was developed, technology began with the earliest hominids who used stone tools, which they might have used to start fires, hunt, cut food, and bury their dead. Production of crafts like boat/raft by prehistoric people for migration was one of the important chapters of human evolution. Pottery is the first synthetic material ever created by human. Due to abundance of clay and its durability, pottery is one of the important crafts productions by our ancestors during remote past. The oldest evidence of pottery

manufacture has been found from Japan which has been dated to about 16500 to 14900 years ago (https://www.ancient.eu/pottery/, retrieved 19.09.2018). During the Upper Paleolithic period, making of flute with the help of bones was one of the most beautiful creativity by our early ancestors. This evidence has been reported from various sites of Europe. In ancient Mesopotamia, crafts were produced both by order of state and privately. As early as 6500 BCE flex textiles were in use in the region known as Tape Sabz (modern day Iran) and flex was woven both privately and by state workers prior to the rise of wool. As early as 6200 BCE copper was being smelted in Anatolia in the south of the Mesopotamian region and copper grew in importance as it became more readily available. It would eventually prove to be an increasing valuable commodity in trade as well as domestic use. In ancient Egypt the most important craftsmen were the metal smiths who produced the bowls, vases, cups, statues and figurines even the swords, one see today in museums around the world. The cradle of mankind is a treasure- trove of ancient craft which gives an insight into grandeur and indigenous craft traditions. Up to pre-industrial era craftsman and his task formed a viable socio-technical unit. Exclusiveness and occupational compartmentalization by and large gave rural crafts in pre-industrial era an ethnic character. Traditional craft is thus an expression of human sprits in material form which gives delight to humankind. In the world of craft there is no hiatus between utility and aesthetics. In a work of good craftsmanship the article is useful; it would also be beautiful in appearance and also bring joy. The craftsman is a person who has a knack or amplitude for the craft and knowledge regarding the skill. The craftsmanship is an attitude of mind. It is a means by which a craftsman expresses his/her innermost feelings. The craft specialization is the age old heritage of human. The process of transmission of hereditary skills from generation to generation as well as knowledge on environment and ecology were the important factor in the history of craftsmanship. Traditional craftsmanship is perhaps the most tangible manifestation of intangible cultural heritage. There are numerous expressions of traditional craftsmanship: tools; clothing and jewellery; costumes and props for festivals and performing arts; storage containers, objects used for storage, transport and shelter; decorative art and ritual objects; musical instruments and household utensils, and toys, both for amusement and education.

Craft is a vibrant aspect of Indian culture and society. India has been greatly blessed by having a many layered culturally diverse rich heritage of craft skills embedded through the ebb and flow of historical events that rest upon social practices and religious belief. History of Indian crafts goes back to almost 5500 years ago. Crafts have been mentioned in Vedas and Upanishads as well, and even religious scriptures. Folk arts and crafts are the integral part of life in India, despite rapid social and technological changes taken place (Jaitly, 2012). Crafts and handicrafts have long being a part of India's history, and also provide a means of employment for many people. The diversity of cultures throughout India means that there are many different crafts forms and each one of them is distinctive and unique. Over thousands of years the process of

transmission of knowledge system from one generation to another generation perhaps evolved into perfection. Thus most of the crafts in the traditional Indian context are community specific. For this reason the community specific occupation have evolved where hereditary transmitted as well as skill and wisdom are the main guiding force for the continuation of Indian craft tradition. The crafts of India have its rural roots. They have originated and evolved from the rural India. The rural crafts of India are the crafts of the settled villages and countryside where people's life tuned with the rhythm of nature and its laws of cyclical change. In the rural sector craft was the product of the needs of the rural folks. The rural craft of India are the visual expression and technological processes of people living at several cultural, religious and sociological levels. Crafts based on archaic technological processes and skills created by artisan communities to fulfil the functional needs of village societies; processes that, until recently, had remained static for over two thousand years. Rural craft includes the visual expressions of nomadic people, culture of wanderers, people exposed to changing landscape, who travelled over the valleys and highlands of India, at times forming settled communities, establishing kingdoms carrying with them the traditions and memories of vast spaces (Jayakar, 1989). The tribal arts and crafts of India are very ethnic and simple and yet colourful and vibrant enough to speak volume about the country's rich heritage. The tribal handicrafts are the production of specialized skills which are passed on from one generation to another and somewhere these handicrafts are need based and some where they are the means of livelihood of the craftsmen. Tribal communities of India have been producing different handicrafts both utilitarian and decorative over centuries. The tribal populations over generations inherited their traditional art. This art is still continuing despite all odds faced by them. The craftsmen produce a variety of utilitarian items using natural materials like cane, bamboo and grasses. Not only these materials readily available, they are also easy to work with other materials and hardly require the use of specialized tools or equipments. Production of handicrafts in different areas by tribal communities is linked with the availability of raw material locally. In North-East India wool, bamboo and cane are the important raw materials for the tribal craftsmen. Those are locally available also. In Chhattisgarh, Madhya Pradesh, Odisha and Rajasthan iron, brass and copper are locally available and these materials are important for the metal smiths of those areas who are engaged with metal crafts through generations. In these areas the tribal communities have deep integration with the forest because most of the tribal communities of these areas live with the close association of nature. Their spatial association with all forms of nature have enabled them to retain different style of making crafts. They possess enough knowledge regarding metal crafts.

The bamboos are evergreen perennial flowering plants in the subfamily Bambusoideae of the grass family Poaceae. The word "Bamboo" comes from the Kannada term Bambu, which was introduced to English through Indonesian and Malay. Bamboo is widely used as a material in Asia, South America and Africa, where abundant

different species of bamboo grow. Bamboo, one of the precious plant resources of the earth, plays a cardinal role in influencing the pattern of civilized life in Southern and Eastern Asian countries, where they found abundance. Bamboos are of notable economic and cultural significance in various countries of Asia, being used for building materials, as a food source, and as a versatile raw product. Bamboo has a higher specific compressive strength than wood, brick or concrete, and a specific tensile strength that rivals steel. Bamboo has a long history in people's life as a cultural material. Nowadays, over 2.5 billion people worldwide use or trade in bamboo worth 4.5 billion US Dollar every year (INBAR, 1999). In India the products of bamboo are of two types, namely articles required for day to day use and of medium quality, that are more suited to local requirements; and another type is articles of finer quality, both decorative and functional, to meet the requirements and tastes of more sophisticated markets. It has been the friend of most of the tribal craftsmen In India. As a friendly 'wood' that offers itself to a range of uses from making houses, fences and boats to tea strainers. Fishing traps, musical instruments, floor mats and various types of baskets and containers. Strips of bamboo are used by artisans in almost every state of the country. It has been observed that in India mongoloid people are largely involved with bamboo crafts. They are specialized and inhabited in the North – Eastern part of our country where they can access a large range of bamboo forests. This racial group links itself culturally and biologically to the people of Mayanmar, Thailand, Tibet, Indonesia, and Vietnam where bamboo craft displays some of the finest hand skills in the world.

BAMBOO CRAFT – A SPECIAL REFERENCE TO INDIA

Bamboo crafts, like any other traditional crafts in the world, have been developed into a kind of applied art which have served people's everyday life from one generation to another and at the same time recorded the history and culture of the local people. They are themselves a traditional regional culture. Because bamboo is a local material with the connection to its geographic conditions, the developments of bamboo crafts also represent the changes of the local cultural events so that bamboo crafts have already represented this kind of culture. Bamboo weaving is a type of bamboo working in which two distinct sets of bamboo strips are interlaced at normally right angles to form an object. The longitudinal threads are called the warp and the lateral threads are the weft or filling. The methods in which these strips are inter – woven affects the characteristics of the fabric. Especially in South –East Asia and East Asia through the natural abundance of bamboo as material, the art of bamboo weaving has been developed since century. Bamboo basketry is one of handicraft reflecting human intelligence on how they create their daily used utilities for different purposes. In general, basketworks were made in various characteristics in association with geography, traditions, belief, religions, and local materials. Originally, basketwork was regarded as local handmade products which can be seen in terms of splitting, weaving, knitting,

and weaving. Due to its low cost and its strongness and durability it can be used for just about anything from house building to functional and decorative objects such as bamboo pots. Among some of the artefacts in daily use that are crafted from this material are bamboo rice steamer, chairs, stools, fountains, hats, baskets, mats and rugs, beds, cups, bowls, pots, eating utensils, chopsticks, fishing traps and rods, boats, carts, musical instruments such as flutes, and toys. Bamboo baskets and woven mats are the oldest and most diverse plant-based crafts found around the world. The skill required in the production of these objects is often associated with factors such as people's perceptions of the environment, conceptions of the self and modes of economic interaction, social hierarchy, and division of labour. The knowledge of basketry has also significant ecological ramifications, as it includes specific strategies for the sustainable management of plant resources. Basket weaving is the process of weaving or sewing pliable materials into two- or three dimensional artefacts, such as mats or containers. Craftsmen specialised in making baskets are usually referred to as basket makers or basket weavers. The use of bamboos goes back to 5000 years ago and found from China. The pictographic symbol for "bamboo" was found on the pottery unearthed in the Yangshao cultural relics of Banpo Village, Xi'an in 1954, and the symbol was also discovered in oracle bone inscriptions and inscriptions on ancient bronze objects. Between the Warring States Period (475-221 BC) to the Jin Dynasty (265-420 AD), the people wrote on "bamboo slips". It is also not surprising that during the long time of being with human beings the bamboo is not only a plant but becomes more and more like the horse, the cow, wheat and cotton, which are responsible for man's own evolution (Farrely, 1984). They take bamboos as their friends in their lives; bamboos have often been taken as favourite themes in the painting arts, calligraphy, and in poems (Wang, 2001). The widely uses of bamboo have been recorded in historical literature. In the Jing dynasty (265 - 316 A.C) Kaizi Dai wrote the book "Bamboo Encyclopedia" which is regarded the first book on bamboo research in the world. The evidence of widely using bamboo in the human society can be found in the Chinese characters. In China the literature on traditional uses of bamboo often range into the bamboo culture. In Song Dynasty (960 A.C. – 1279 A.C.) bamboo utilizations in building have been categorized in the "Ying Zhao Fa Shi" (approx. 1102.A.C), one of the oldest building lexicons in China. Another important branch of bamboo utilizations in construction is the bamboo woven crafts, in which bamboo works not only as the functional structural elements, but also represents a high aesthetic value.

From times immemorial down to the present day, cane and bamboo have been an integral part of the lives of people in India. Bamboo is a well known plant to Indians since epic era. Lord Krishna is associated with bamboo. His flute was made of bamboo. The introduction to Mahabharata mentions about groves of bamboo. It is said that the Buddhist monks who went to Japan from India to propagate Buddhism have carried the seeds of bamboo with them (Ghosh, 2014). This account suggests that bamboos were serving many purposes in those days and that it was a necessary part of the life of the people. Bamboo crafts in India are very popular due to its eco

friendly attributes. Since ancient times, bamboo crafts had been occupying a significant position as India produces a huge amount of bamboo and cane. The bamboo craft is associated with bamboo and cane, and had been a part of Indian crafts giving rise to the expression of tribal art and provided them livelihood. In the tribal belts of India, bamboo is one of the most common and important natural items which is easily available in local level. The Indian artisans are dexterous in creating bamboo crafts and arrays of bamboo items are famous in India as well as in abroad. Basically the artisans create variations in their creations. The craftsmen create different items with the help of different bamboos and canes. In India the products of bamboo are of two types, namely articles required for day to day use and of medium quality, that are more suited to local requirements; and another type is articles of finer quality, both decorative and functional, to meet the requirements and tastes of more sophisticated markets. Items like baskets, Chalani, Crossbows, Kula, Khorahi , Dukula or Tukuri, Dala Dukula or Tali, Doon or Kathi, Bamboo Mats etc are used in daily life . Some of the Indian states are famous for creating beautiful bamboo items like mugs for rice beer, hukkas, musical instruments, floor mats, fishing devices and handles. This traditional craft has received great success in making winnowing baskets, special pitaras, oval boxes, oblong caskets, and flower baskets. Bamboo craft makes a vital part of the northeast Indian economy. The vigorous bamboo craft tradition of NE gets the most creative expression through the craftsmanship of the various North-eastern tribes. The spectacular variety and diverse range of North-eastern bamboo crafts clearly exhibit the skill of the artisans in working with canes and bamboos. The dexterous hands of the northeast India artisans can transform a dull, drab piece of bamboo or cane into a real artistic masterpiece. Intricate structures and myriad types of cuts & profiles made from myriad types of chisels are richly illustrated through the various types of bamboo crafts that these artisans make.

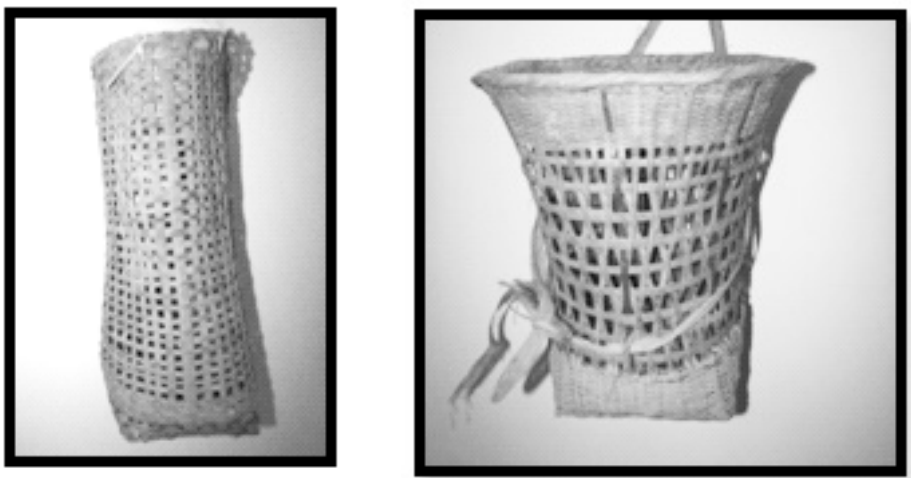


Fig- 1: Bamboo basketry of Jamatia Community, Tripura



Fig- 2: Bamboo Basketry for fishing purpose, Rabha community, West Bengal

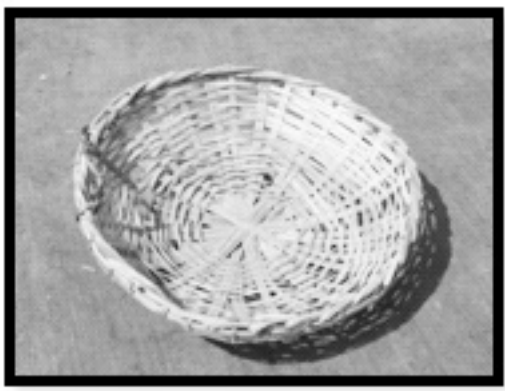


Fig-3: Bamboo Basketry of Santal community, West Bengal

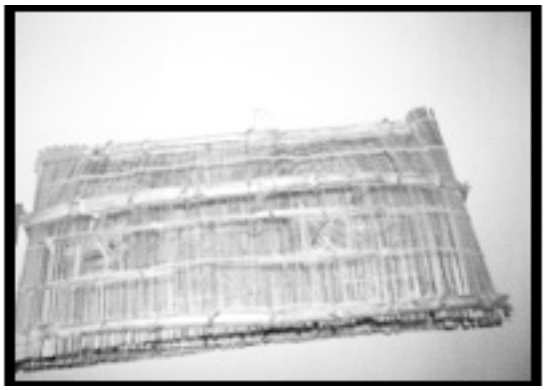


Fig- 4: Fishing trap (Dhir) of Muria community, Chhattisgarh (Photo Courtesy: Anthropological Survey of India)

STUDY AREA AND PEOPLE

The present study had been carried out among the Lepcha community in the Dzongu Reserve of North Sikkim. The Dzongu is bounded to the south-east by Teesta river and north-east by Rongyang chu (river) and to the west by rising mountain leading to Khangchendzonga, the house of five treasures "Kingtsoom Zaongboo Choo", Lepcha name for Mt. Khangchendzonga (3rd highest mountain in the world) meaning 'bright auspicious forehead peak' that borders the Khangchendzonga Biosphere Reserve (KBR) at north.



Fig-5: Map showing the location of Dzongu Tribal reserve area (DTRA)

The KBR was officially notified in the year 2000, covering 2, 61,992 hectares area; the Dzongu valley people have traditional association with the reserve for their resources and religious affinity, and currently promoted eco-tourism by the state government. A fairly triangular shaped Dzongu landscape covers approximately 78 km2 geographical areas extending between 27°28′ – 27°38′ N latitude and 88°23′ – 88°38′ E longitude along the 700 msl to 6000 msl altitude. Dzongu further extends from Sheep-Gyer in the east to Sakyong-Pentong village in the west and Kishong Cho Lake in north to Lum village in the south. The land used for habitation and farming by the Lepchas is located on a relatively narrow strip above the two rivers, between 1000 mt. and 2300 mt. above sea level. The Lepcha Reserve of Dzongu in North Sikkim has a population of 9299 heads, with 4856 males and 4,452 females in an area of 15, 845, 95 hectares (2001 Census report). The reserve also houses a shifting (or floating) population of migratory Nepali laborers who came here drawn to the lucrative cardamom trade. The locals segregate the reserve into upper and lower Dzongu. This separation is not so much of the altitude of the habitations, but on the basis of the location of the sections situated on either bank of a tributary of the Teesta named Rongyong that flows through the area. Dzongu is located about 15 km towards south from the district head quarter, Mangan. Four villages have been selected for the study such as Passingdong, Lingthem, Sankalan and Lingdong. These villages are situated at different altitudes. Sikkim, one of the states of North-Eastern India is rich in bio- diversity. The lower mountain slopes of the area are suitable for bamboo. In this area different varieties of bamboo are available including cane. The Lepcha belongs to Tibeto – Burman race living on the southern and eastern slopes of Mount Kanchendzonga. They called themselves ‘Rongkup’ or ‘Mutanchi Rangkup’ which translates as mother’s loved one.

Lepchas are also known as 'Mongpa' by the Tibetans while the Bhutanese call them 'Maris'. From the time immemorial Sikkim is inhabited by Lepcha community. For long Dzongu Reserve area of North Sikkim District has been the homeland of them. The Lepcha community is considered the original inhabitants of this land. According to the Lepcha people, the very name Lepcha with which they are now identified is not the original name of the community. It was the British people who used to call them as Lepcha. In their usage 'Lapcho' means the holy space on their wayside from where they can pay their homage to their deity Khangchendzonga, if visible; if not visible they make the space by placing a piece of rock representing the deity. They follow Tibetan Lamaism along with their traditional Mun religion. Tibetan Lamaism was introduced in Sikkim during 17th Century. Lamaism is the amalgamation of several elements from different religious doctrine. The chief element is Mahayana Buddhism with an admixture of Tantric Hinduism and Tibetan Bon religion. Lepcha community has rich cultural heritage of art and crafts. Bamboo is an indispensable part of their livelihood mostly in form of food, shelter, household item, medicine, furniture and other various ethno-religious purpose. Bamboo is used in many ways to make several articles which are required in their daily life. Various bamboo craft traditions of the community get the most creative expression through craftsmanship. Their traditional hat recognized as one of their oldest craft form is exclusive to them. The spectacular variety and diverse range of the bamboo craft clearly exhibits the skill as well as the traditional knowledge of the craftsmen. This knowledge is essentially community specific and restricted within the community and is accumulated through long interaction with the environment. Such knowledge system is preserved, maintained and transmitted over generations. It forms the cultural heritage of the Lepcha people.

BAMBOO CRAFTS OF LEPCHA AND ASSOCIATED KNOWLEDGE SYSTEM

The material culture of the Lepchas is nature based. Lepcha use wood, bamboo and cane in construction of house, bridge, utensils, ornaments, agriculture and hunting implements, baskets and musical instruments and so on. Bamboo is deeply rooted in the culture and tradition of Lepchas. The abundant availability of bamboo has made them heavily dependent on it for their survival. Bamboo is an essential resource for them. Lepcha bamboo and cane bridges are the typical example of Lepcha knowledge of engineering and architectural skill. The bond between bamboo and Lepcha is strong. They born with bamboo and die with bamboo. They believe that they are the younger brother of bamboo. Throughout their life bamboo plays very important role. In the Dzongu reserve area there are few specialized craftsmen who are engaged with bamboo crafts for a long time. The use of bamboo is also mentioned in their myth. There are various types of bamboo crafts produced by Lepcha. Those vary according to their size and shape. Their pattern of weaving also varies. Among the Lepcha this craftwork is ideally supposed to be the men's work. They have rich tradition of

bamboo craft. Locally available bamboo is the raw material for their craftwork. There are various types bamboo species found from Sikkim. These are as follows-

SL. NO.	SCIENTIFIC NAMES	LOCAL NAMES	DISTRIBUTION IN SIKKIM	ALTITUDE
1	Arundinaria recemosa	Sanu maling(Nepali), Phyum, Miknu (Lepcha),& Pheong, mheem (Bhutia)	North , West and East district	2600-3600m
2	Bambusa multiplex	Chinese bans	East district	600-1200m
3	Bambusa nutans	Mala bans(Nepali), Mahlu (Lepcha) & Jiu (Bhutia)	Common up to 1600m	300 – 1600m
4	Bambusa Pallida	Deo bans (Nepali), Pshi/ pashipo (Lepcha) and Bongshing (Bhutia)	East district	350-900m
5	Bambusa tulda	Sigray bans (Nepali), Paoshiding ying (Lepcha)	Common up to 1500m	400-1500m
6	Bambusa vulgaris var. vittata	Telai bans	East district	300-15000m
7	Bambusa vulgaris var. waminii	Lota bans	East district	300-1500m
8	Dendrocalamus asper	Sweet bamboo (English)	East district	800-1800m
9	Dendrocalamus giganteus	Dhungre bans (Nepali), Giant bamboo (Nepali)	East and South district	600-1200m
10	Dendrocalamus hamiltonii var. hamiltonii	Choya bans, Tama(Nepali), Pao (Lepcha), Pashing (Bhutia)	Common up to 1500m	300-1500m
11	Dendrocalamus hamiltonii var. edulis	Guliyo tama bans	Common up to 1500m	300-1500m
12	Dendrocalamus hookeri	Tili bans(Nepali), Patu (Lepcha)	North, South and East district	900-1800m
13	Dendrocalamus patellaris	Neba bans(Nepali), Pagjiok (Lepcha)	Common between 800 – 1500m	800-1500m

SL. NO.	SCIENTIFIC NAMES	LOCAL NAMES	DISTRIBUTION IN SIKKIM	ALTITUDE
14	Dendrocalamus sikkimensis	Bhalu bans(Nepali), Pagriang (Lepcha)	North , West and East district	1000-1800m
15	Dendrocalamus strictus	Latthi bans (Nepali)	East district	300 – 1000m
16	Melocanna baccifera	Lahure bans (Nepali)	East and West district	900-1500m
17	Phyllostachys aurea	Kata bans (Nepali)	East and West district	600-1200m
18	Phyllostachys nigra	Kalo nigalo (Nepali)	East district	800-1400m
19	Schizostachyum capitatum	Gobia, Gope (Nepali), Payong (Lepcha)	North, West and East district	1000-2400m
20	Schizostachyum dulloa	Tokre bans (Nepali), Pogslo, Puksalu (Lepcha)	East district	600-1500m
21	Schizostachyum fuchsianum	Palom(Lepcha)	North district	900 – 1600m
22	Schizostachyum polymorphum	Pheling bans (Nepali), Parohoik (Lepcha)	East and North district	600-1200m
23	Schizostachyum sharmae	Palom(Lepcha)	North district	900-1700m
24	Sinarundinaria hookeriana	Parang, Singhani (Nepali), Prong (Lepcha)	Common between 800-2000m	800-2000m
25	Sinarundinaria intermedia	Titay nigalo(Nepali), Parmoik(Lepcha)	East and North district	1200-3000m
26	Sinarundinaria maling	Malingo (Nepali), Phum (Bhutia) aand Phuem miknu (Lepcha)	All district above 1800m-3600m	1700-3600m
27	Sinarundinaria microphylla	Deonigalo (Nepali)	East and West district	1800-3300m
28	Sinarundinaria pantlingii	Rani malingo (Nepali)	East district	1800-3000m
29	Sinarundinaria falconeri	Pummon(Lepcha)	North district	1000-1800m
30	Thamnocalamus aristatus	Rato nigalo (Nepali)	West and East district	2200-3600m
31	Phyllostanchyus pubescens	Gyansi bans	All district	900 – 3500m

All the species which have been mentioned in the list are not good for bamboo crafts. Lepchas use Bambusa nutans (Mahlu), Bambusa Pallida (Pshi/ pashipo/Podiyang), Bambusa tulda (Paoshiding ying), Dendrocalamus hamiltonii var (Poh). Cephalostachyum capitatum (Payong), Schizostachyum capitatum (Palom), Schizostachyum fuchsianum(Prong), Sinarundinaria hookeriana (Parmoik) and Phyllostanchyus pubescens (Gyansi) for their bamboo crafts.



Fig-6: Some of the Bamboo varieties of North Sikkim (Podiyang, Poh, Prong, Porphok)

The Lepcha people make only those things from bamboos which are required in their day to day life. One cannot imagine the cultural life of the people of this region without bamboo and their products. In Lepcha society bamboo plants are related to a person's life, in one way or other even in death. They use a bamboo structure to carry the dead body and keep a bamboo container full of Chi, the holy drink on the structure along with the corpse. They have some selective places from where only they are to collect bamboo for the rituals related to death. There can be not end to the uses and utility of bamboo. In their society the utility of bamboo extends over a much wider range. They make the objects for their agricultural purpose, cooking utensils, household purposes, fishing, ritual purposes etc.

The term 'Traditional Knowledge' (TK) also used reciprocally with the indigenous knowledge, innovation or custom, tradition of local communities that is important in protection, conservation of environment, sustainable use of Biodiversity and various traditions. TK is vital to the food security and health of millions of people and is developed and passed on from one generation to another in the form of accounts, songs, cultural values, local languages, customs and contemporary practices, healing arts etc.

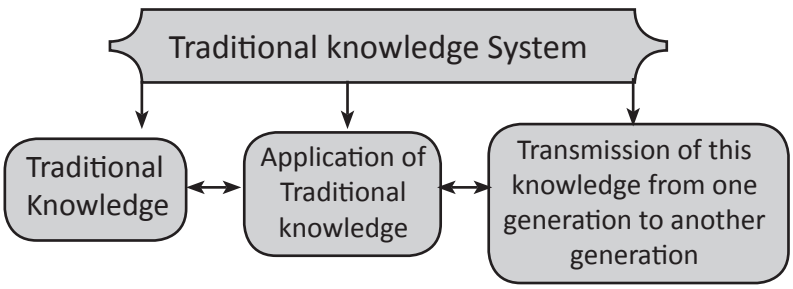


Chart -1: The chart shows the schematic diagram of Traditional Knowledge

Traditional knowledge system is the mother of all sciences and innovation as the indigenous peoples had close ties with the environment, which was not something out there but part of their being. Traditional knowledge of ecology is important not just for its own sake but for its potential to help design more effective conservation of biodiversity and for ecological system in general through the knowledge possessed by a group of individual about an environment. Such knowledge is often adapted to a local culture and environment and plays a significant role in the daily life of the majority of people nationally as well as globally and is considered to be an essential part of cultural identities (Berkes, 1995). The traditional communities such as hunters, gatherers, agriculturalists, herders often have a profound understanding of their environment and its ecology, forming a sustainable basis for the conservation and for sustainable use of global biodiversity, closely interlinked to cultural and biological diversity (Berkes, 1999). All the traditional knowledge and wisdom ultimately flow from practice, but their organization and management differs from the different streams of knowledge. It is preserved; passed and improved almost entirely in the course of applying it in practice, and therefore, is highly sensitive to changing relationship between people and their ecological resource base.The knowledge regarding bamboo craft is highly skilful. Lepchas believe that mother nature especially given this skill to some of the people and they are specialized for this work due to the blessings of Mother Nature. According to Chapal Lepcha (one of the craftsmen of Dzongu), "I get knowledge from my father. He was specialized craftsman. He knew to make every type of bamboo basket. Still now no one in Dzongu can make all the types of bamboo basketry even I am also unable to do all. It requires special talent and my father had that talent". According to Jeje Lepcha, "Grandfather transmits his knowledge to father and father transmits his knowledge to son. Knowledge of bamboo handicraft is not being transferred to daughter. It is male's domain. Male learns how to make baskets from their father, grandfather. But it is not like that in a craftsman family where father is a specialized craftsman; his son should be a craftsman. Any male member can learn". The young generation or the interested persons gather the knowledge of weaving as well as regarding the bamboo basketry through learning.



Fig-7: Craftsmen at Lingthem and Passingdong Villages, North Sikkim

The older generation as well as specialized craftsmen teach them and show them how to make baskets, how to make the strips the thickness, the length of the strips - all the things they learn. They also learn how to select and cut the bamboo. Through observation they learn which types of bamboo is to be selected and in this way the traditional knowledge gets transferred from one generation to another generation orally. Another important knowledge is the time. The older generation knows which should the ideal time for cutting bamboos for basket making. They also transmit this knowledge to the younger generation as well as to interested persons. They believe that if they cut bamboos in wrong time or in the wrong day then the durability of the bamboo baskets will be hampered and they will not last long. It will be eaten by the pests. The basket makers have a particular time in a day for weaving.

USE OF BAMBOO AMONG THE LEPCHAS

Bamboo is used in every possible way such as construction of house, making of household items for day to day use like various types of baskets, containers, cooking utensils, making of musical instruments, making of agricultural and hunting implements, making of fishing gears etc. Bamboo is also used as a food. It is used as a cook ware as well. They make food in the bamboo also. They use the bamboo extensively during their rituals and ceremonies such as birth ceremony, marriage ceremony as well as during death.

1. Construction purpose

Bamboo was traditionally used in architecture among the Lepchas. During modern days they have switched over to other modern materials but still some houses made of bamboo are found in Dzongu area. Because of its easy availability, workability and low cost, bamboo is employed for columns as well as walling and roofing. Cane is generally used for keeping the joints together. When the floor of the house is much higher than the ground, a ladder made of bamboo is placed at the intervening space between the floor of the house and the ground as staircase. They also make sheds out of bamboos for cow and pigs. Mainly Podiyang (Bambusa Pallida) bamboo is used for pole and Mahlu (Bambusa nutans) bamboo is used for structure.



Fig- 8: Use of bamboo for construction, Lingthem and Sankalan village, North Sikkim

2. Agricultural implements

The bamboo rhizome, culm or combination of culm and rhizome are mostly used by Lepcha people as handles for small hoes, axes, sickles, daos etc.

3. Hunting implements

The Lepchas were hunter previously. So that they have age old association with hunting implements such as bow and arrow. Nowadays due to settled agriculture, hunting is ceremonial for them. They also use bow and arrow for rituals. They prepare bow and arrow from the bamboo. Poh variety (Dendrocalamus hamiltonii var) is basically used for making the hunting implements. The bow is prepared after cutting the bamboo from top. The arrow is made of the branches of Poh. The tip of the arrow is made of iron. The arrow container (Sulu) is also made of hollow bamboo tube.

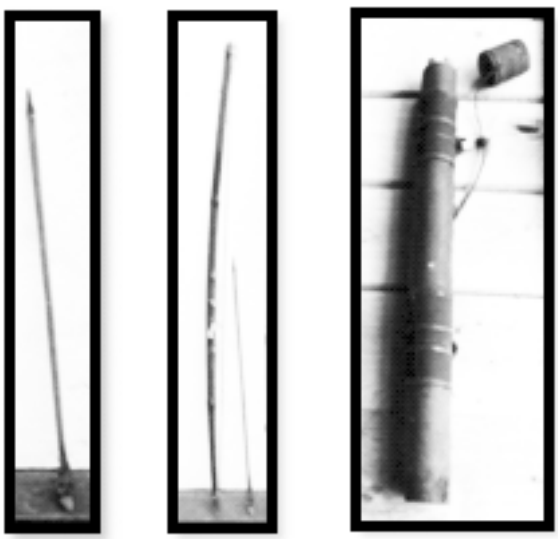


Fig- 9: Hunting implements along with arrow container

4. Musical Instruments

The Lepchas are very fond of music and song. They use various musical instruments during various occasions. Bamboo is used for making musical instruments that makes their songs and dance more attractive. They have wide range of wind instruments made of bamboo. Among them the most common and important one is flute. This instrument has different sizes and holes on it vary 3 to 6 in numbers.

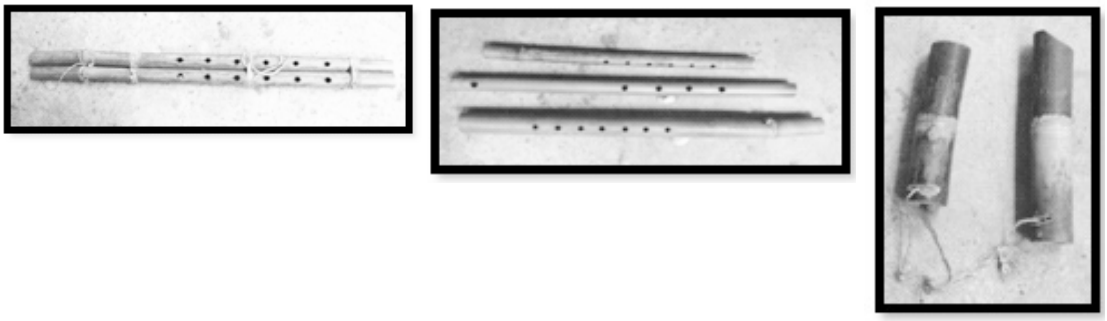


Fig- 10 : Some of the musical instruments of Lepcha community

5. Fishing equipments

They make various types of fishing equipments from bamboo strips. These are closely woven and the weaving patterns are varied. Most of the fishing equipments are made for running water fishing. Baskets of varied shape and size have been in use for fishing in the streams as well as in flowing rivers since time immemorial. The baskets use for fishing purpose can be broadly classified into two groups – (1) baskets with which fishes are caught and (2) Baskets that are used to keep the catch. They also use bamboo rods for fishing in stagnant water. The baskets used for containing the fish usually have an elongated neck and narrow mouth. This type of baskets is generally single woven.

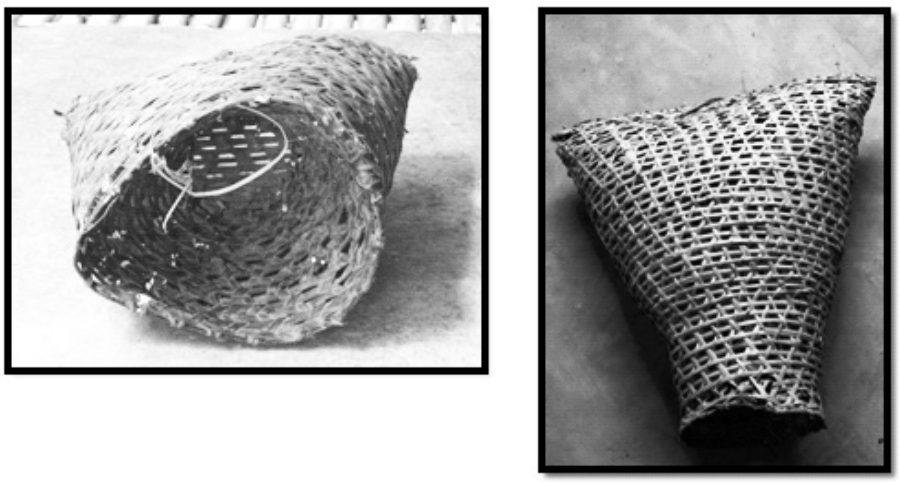


Fig- 11 : Fat- Fishing basketry

6. Fencing

For putting the fencing around their houses and their kitchen gardens as well as the stairs side in monastery, they use mainly bamboo. Gaysi bamboo (Phyllostanchyus pubescens) is mainly used for this purpose.



Fig- 12: Fencing around the house and kitchen garden

7. Water pipes

Podiyang bamboo is specially used as pipe for rain water collection from the roof top as well as for collection water from waterfalls or small river channels. Hollow bamboo tubes are used for it.

8. Making of rain shade

Like other tribal communities Lepchas also make rain shades for their heads when they work at agricultural field mostly in rainy season. These shades are made of bamboo strips. The inner portion of the shade is covered with leaves. Since it is to be placed on head, it does not have any handle like an umbrella.

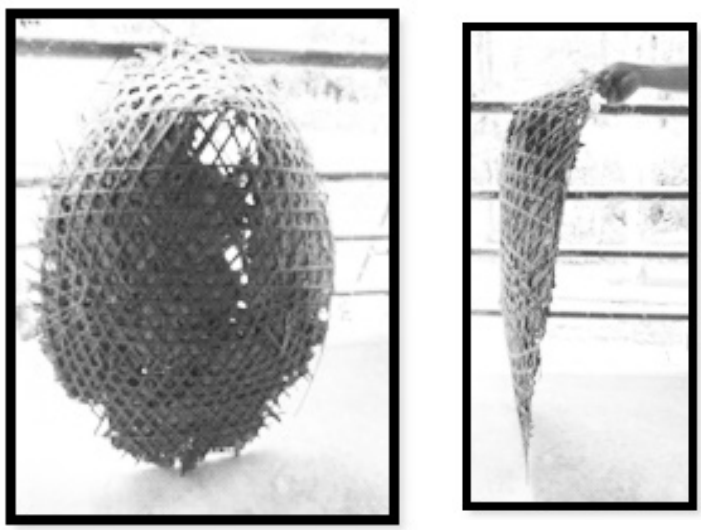


Fig- 13 : - Tuk (Rain shade)

9. Bamboo in textile operation

Bamboo have important role in various textile operations in Sikkim. Among Lepchas many of the parts of their hand loom are made of bamboo. During weaving for design purpose they use bamboo made sticks of different sizes (Achung Puting). Their spinning wheel is made of bamboo along with wood.



Fig- 14: Handloom weaving by Lepcha

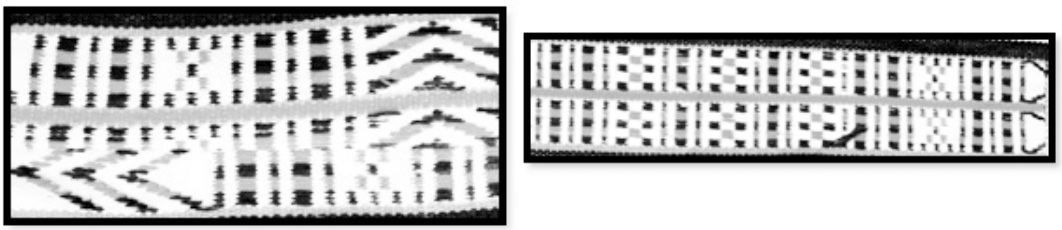


Fig- 15 : - Designs on their traditional dress

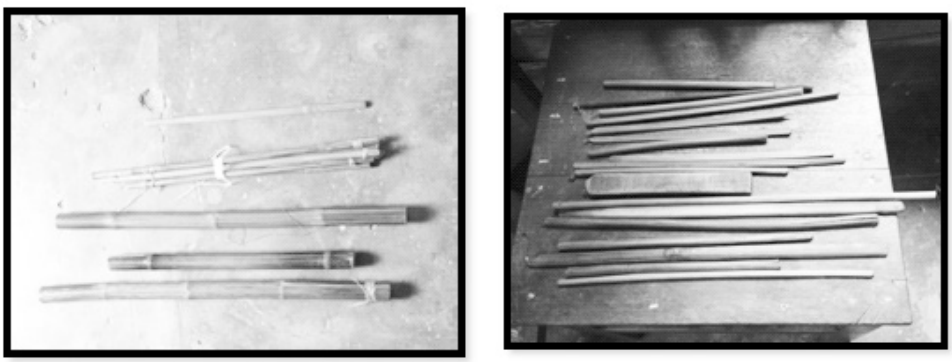


Fig- 16: Tools made of bamboo used during weaving (Pulhyom , Sungsup and Achung Putting)

10. Ritual purpose

Lepcha livelihood is totally dependent on their natural surroundings. They live in nature with harmony and accommodated themselves in nature by using and preserving it. This makes a two way interconnectedness between the people and the nature. In Lepcha society, religion and nature are linked very closely. They worship almost all natural objects of the region. Worship of nature is an integral part of their society. Lepchas observe various ceremonial and ritual occasions. The Bongthings and Muns perform these ceremonies and rituals. In these ceremonies bamboo plays an important role. There are many small bamboo baskets used in these occasions. According to an old Lepcha person, "for the ritual purpose Poh variety is used. It is the most important bamboo variety because from the time of Lepcha creation it is with Lepcha culture. For each and every ritual related to Mother Nature we use Poh bamboo. If the Poh is not available we use 'Puthu bamboo' (a sub type of Poh)." In the Cherim ceremony a large bamboo basket half filled with soil and covered with banana leaf is placed by the side of the altar. The basket contains some symbolic articles like a few bamboo sticks representing demon's walking sticks (Kir Patang) decorated with flowers of marigold and chrysanthemum (Chandramallika). Two colours, yellow and white are auspicious to them and therefore they use yellow marigold and white chrysanthemum for decoration. Associated articles include a bamboo container (made of Podiyang bamboo) full water, milk, chi (brewed country liquor), fresh egg, boiled meat, grain, dried bird, dried fish, ginger, flower (Tuknil Rip) and bamboo lamp.

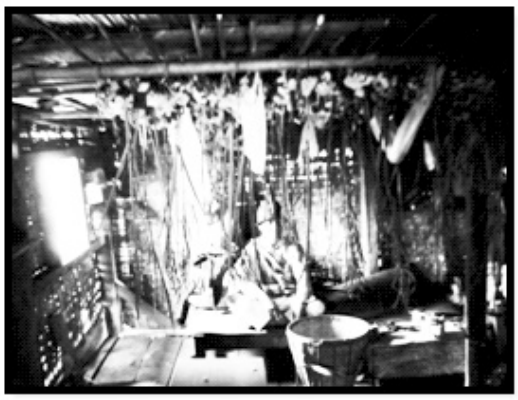


Fig- 17: Bongthing during Cherim ceremony



Fig- 18: Offering items placed on a circular bamboo tray

The sacred specialist sits under a bamboo made small shed decorated with flowers and leaves which gives an elegant look. The shed is constructed with four bamboo poles called 'rip-dong' (more or less 4 ft. in height). Offering is made through chant to invoke the spirit (Rum). In this 'rip-dong' there are few small bamboo baskets which are used for offering. A rounder flat bamboo basket (Tukbar Taliyung) full of offering items are

placed in front of the Bongthing. The ritual is supposed to be performed by Bongthing. Their other ceremony called 'Tsandong' where they use bamboo made containers for offerings. During 'Mardrum' ceremony a patch of earth is cleared of undergrowth, where a small structure is erected on four bamboo poles with thatched roof made of bamboo splits and leaves adorned with flowers. A small quantity of each of rice, ginger, fish, duck, millet and 'chebuk' (traditional intoxicant drink) is given as offering to the deity. Bongthing chants prayers and ritualistic couplets devoted to Madrum who is believed to be of aid for fights, headaches, madness and outbursts of temper. During 'Pang Lhabsol' festival they also use bamboo basketry. This festival is unique in Sikkim and commemorates the consecration of Mount Khanchendzonga as the guardian deity of Sikkim. It is believed that the mountain god played an active role in introducing Buddhism into this former kingdom. In this festival they make and use various tiny bamboo baskets (Tungdyong) for offering to Mount Khanchendzonga. They make a bamboo structure with seven bamboo sticks (Puchug Pake) which represent Mount Khanchendzonga and her sacred peaks. These sticks are also designed with the help of banmok knife. These are their traditional designs and all dedicated to Mount Khanchendzonga to appease her.

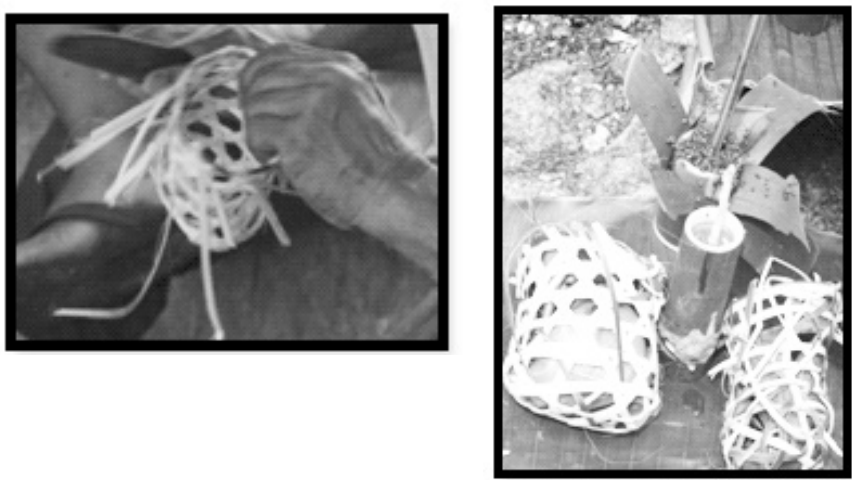


Fig- 19: Tungdyong (small basket for offering)

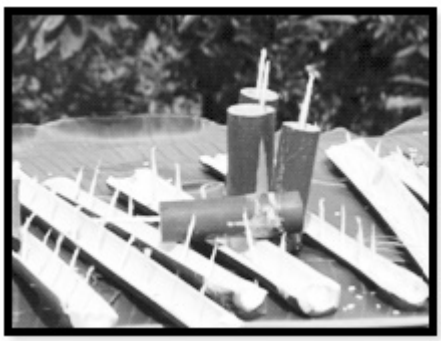


Fig- 20: Pattery (traditional bamboo lamp)

In the birth ceremony also Lepchas use bamboo and bamboo articles. The ritual begins with the erection of a small loft like structure standing on bamboo poles and thatched with bamboo splits and leaves, followed by tying of threads of five colours around the new born baby's arm. Then, three stones are placed in a box open on the top to resemble the traditional 'lapcho', the place for worship of their guardian deity. Out of the three stones, the middle one represents Khangchendzonga and other two stones represent the residing deities of the region. After this, the Bongthing commences the ritual with the omnipresent chi and rice and establish communication with the spirit of the child. After the birth ceremony the parents of the baby keep a hen's feather into a small bamboo basket and place it into their room. It is for the long life of the new born.

PROCESS OF MAKING BAMBOO BASKET AMONG THE LEPCHAS

Basket among the Lepchas is a delicate work. They are expert in making different shapes and sizes of artifacts, in several models like oval, square, flat structure etc. The bamboo basketry is one of the oldest crafts among the Lepcha. Weaving of bamboo basket is done manually by craftsmen. The craftsmen require bamboos one to two years old. Before coming out of the branches from the body of the bamboo, it has to be selected for basketry weaving because after the branching of the bamboo, it is not considered good for making basketry. They collect the bamboo from their local area generally. The selected bamboos are cut with the barmok (long knife – a multipurpose tool). The bamboo is cut in such a way that the lower portion has no nodes. While splitting, the purpose for which the splints are put into is also taken into account. As for example, in case of mats, the splints are made out of one of one inter node only, for the baskets two inter nodes are splinted together according to the size of the baskets. They cut up whole bamboo poles into several pieces, usually about a meter long, according to the requirements. The next step is of cutting of the bigger splints into conveniently smaller ones with the help of knife. The split halves are again split vertically to get the strips. The strips are made thinner by peeling top layer. This process is done with the barmok. The cutting edge of the barmok is kept pressed against the strips with the angle of 30°—45°. This is repeated several times on both sides and at the both ends of the strips. While the bamboo is still wet, the hard outer layer or skin is removed by scraping. Craftsmen arrange the strips in circular manner to make the base of the basket. Strips of the bamboo are woven alternatively and run through the arranged strips. Once the base is completed, the strips are bent slightly to weave the side walls. Bamboo strips are continuously added and woven until the required size of bamboo is acquired. For the rim portion the craftsmen sometimes use cane to bind the rim portion of baskets.

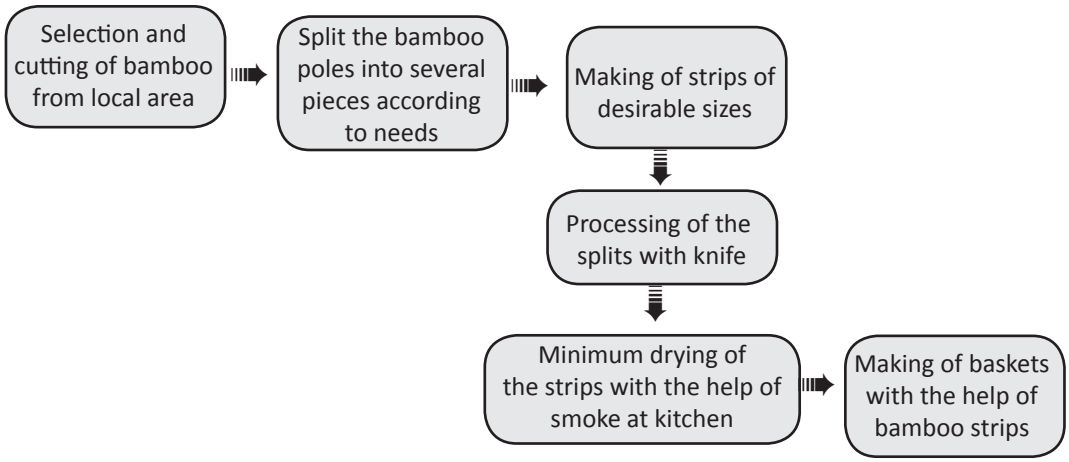
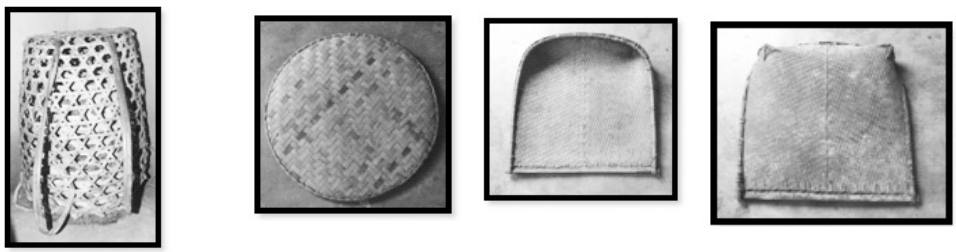


Chart- 2: Schematic diagram of the entire process of making Bamboo basketry

Patterns

There are two general patterns in their basketry such as closely woven baskets and loosely woven baskets. In the loosely woven baskets there are also two types of pattern. One is with 'big eyes' (hole) and the other is with the 'little close eyes' (hole). Even more 'closer eyes' types of pattern have been used during basket making. The most 'closer eyes' type of patterns are being used in the bamboo mats which is used for drying up of their things, mainly the grains. The winnowing trays are also closely woven. The pattern used in winnowing tray and the pattern used in the close woven baskets are different. Even among the carrying baskets there are also differences in patterns. 'Sumok Subok' is the earliest bamboo basketry pattern. It is derived from their traditional hat 'Sumok –thyaktuk'. 'Sumok' is male and 'Subok' is female. There is another pattern that is 'Sumocup'. They believe that 'Sumocup' is the baby of 'Sumok Subok'. Other patterns are 'Emik', 'Rungpung', 'Thasip' and 'Mikliyong'. According to Lepchas, 'Sumok Subok' pattern was first time made by the Bongthings. This pattern is quite common when they make design in their traditional dress as well as it is also used during the rituals when bongthings make designs on bamboo. They believe that bongthings use this pattern on bamboo to protect them from evil spirits.



Mikliyong Pattern Sumok Pattern Thasip Pattern Rungpung

Fig- 21: Different types of pattern used in bamboo basketry of Lepcha

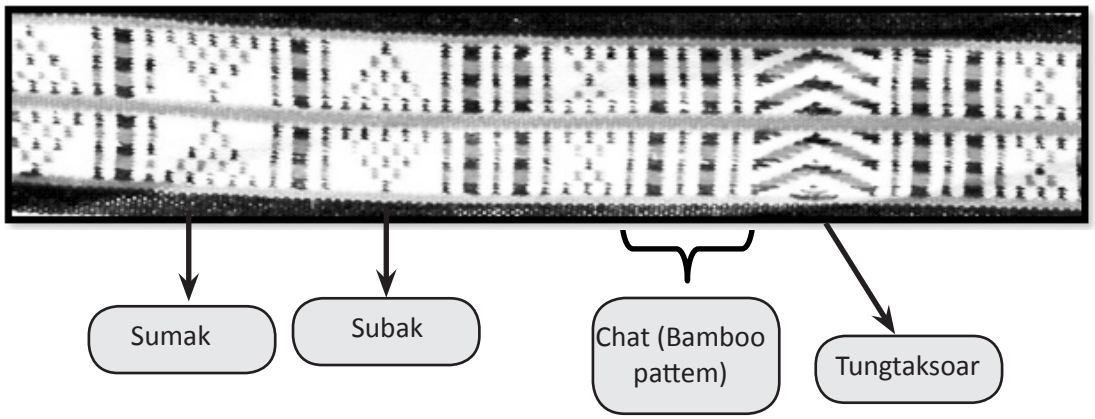


Fig-22 : Patteras on their traditional dresss

OBSERVATION

The Lepchas of North Sikkim have a rich cultural heritage in bamboo crafts. They have mastered in the art of bamboo weaving to make baskets. Their bamboo craft portrays the artistic calibre and creative imagination of the local craftsmen. Lepchas take pride in their tradition of basket weaving. The best part is that basket weaving is considered an intrinsic part of their lives. It has been observed that nowadays certain changes have taken place in the field of traditional bamboo crafts of the Lepchas. It is almost losing its real meaning to the new generation. Due to modernization as well as industrialization, this craft work is in the verge of extinction. In most of the Lepcha households they use the aluminium utensils as well as Chinese crockery instead of using their own ethnic items. According to the local people, "the modern things are more comfortable in terms of cleaning and washing and thus hygienic too. Bamboo items cannot be cleaned properly; say the bamboo cups, it bears the stain of tea even after washing and due to regular use there will be a clearly visible black coating which is not hygienic at all. But in case of Chinese crockery you won't find such things". Another point is that the modern utensils are easy to use and cheap for buying. According to Sonam Lepcha, "basketry making is time consuming; these things are purely need based. These are not for consumerism. So the craftsmen get nominal money from their neighbourhood when they are requested to make basketry for them. But they are to invest a lot of time and energy. If they use this time and energy in other work then can earn some money." It is also observed that religious conversion into Lamaism has greatly replaced their bamboo handicrafts. Because there is very limited bamboo works in Buddhism. It is important to note that the young generation is losing interest towards the indigenous knowledge pertaining to the properties, utilization aspects of natural resources. According to Ugden Lepcha, "Young generation is engaged with modern amenities as well as modern gadgets such as mobile, laptop etc. They may see the bamboo crafts in their house but they don't know how to

make it. Even very few of them are aware of the bamboo types in this area. They do not feel pride for their traditional cultural attributes. They don't feel pride for their own ethnic values also. All of them are running after the modernity. It is the reality here." According to Namgyal Lepcha, "most of the children go to Mangan (North district city of Sikkim) or Gangtok for schooling and stay there at boarding hostels. After the school they join at college. There is a gap between the child and the village environment." So for these reasons the specific knowledge regarding the bamboo craft is restricted to a few specialized craftsmen only. At present in Dzongu Reserve area there are not more than ten specialized craftsmen. It has been observed that use of local bamboo species by the Lepchas ensures the continuity of indigenous knowledge associated with the species which are found in different altitudes. According to Jeje Lepcha, "our traditional things are already faded. We have lost the knowledge system also. But now we are trying to bring all those things back either by giving training to young generation or either by creating some awareness regarding our age old cultural heritage. Thinking to this point two years ago we have planned to organize some handcraft training programmes where we involved the people who have the traditional knowledge and also involved the young people to learn about the making or weaving the bamboo baskets, bamboo mats and all. We have done it successfully and now few of them can weave. We feel that we should make some professionals who can make the baskets regularly so that it can bring some economic sustainability to the particular craftsmen. On one hand they will earn and on the other hand they will help to keep our culture alive. " According to Omkit Lepcha, "we should have to move along with modernization, but at the same time we have to carry forward our traditional culture. Even though we have some modern amenities at the same time we have to keep our traditional knowledge alive and that should bring back into the practice."

This is the high time to protect this traditional knowledge system. There is an urgent need to properly document this knowledge system and integrated with modern scientific values before it is lost forever. Also, preservation of vast knowledge – reservoir demands an essential belief in indigenous people's life style and culture. There need to plan to revive their cultural heritage and they also need governmental help to protect it.

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Heritage Management for Sustainable Tourism

Asmita Basu

Abstract

Most conventional tourism plans are dominated by the growth requirements of the tourism industry. Sustainable tourism plans are based on a wider, more holistic, regional analysis. In the present scenario sustainable development has become an important challenge to deal with particularly in the age of modernization. Heritage in fact is regarded as one of the most valuable and fastest growing components of tourism. Conservation of heritage sites is considered to be a vital component of their management since they are irreplaceable resources for the tourism industry. The present study aims to highlight the factors to be considered for developing sustainable tourism specifically in the heritage sites through a case study of the culturally rich and significant temple town of Birbhum district in West Bengal. This paper discusses the reasons for writing these strategies, their main features, and how they can best be implemented.

Key Words: Heritage sites, Sustainability, Management

INTRODUCTION

Tourism has been considered as a stimulant for rural economic re-generation and conservation. The rural environment is, very delicate in nature. It can be easily changed or damaged by external factors causing rapid changes and tourism can be a powerful agent for such a change. Such detrimental effects are of immense concern because of the role rural areas play as repositories of both natural and historical heritages. It also holds equal significance commercially.

The word Heritage, has become a 'buzz' since 1990s (Palmer 1999:315). It is in fact regarded as one of the most significant and fastest growing elements of tourism (Alzua, O'Leary and Morrison 1998; Herbert 1995). Nowadays heritage is referred to

as something which requires being managed (Cheung 1999) and uniquely marketed (Bennett 1995).

It is indeed a fact that heritage attractions are irreplaceable resources for the tourism industry. So conservation is considered to be a vital component of their management. Heritage sites must have their own unique attributes which should be emphasized and the interpretation and presentation of the attraction should be able to accommodate the needs of the visitors. Moreover the heritage management authority should undertake the responsibility to the community to preserve the site for posterity (Millar 1989).

The debates and discussions over the two burning issues pertaining to development namely the desire for economic progress and the need of conserving the environment led to the emergence of the concept of sustainable development (Bramwell & Lane 1993).

In order to confront the threats of unmanaged tourism the concept of sustainable tourism has been developed through the discussions and research over the last few decades. The figure (Fig-1) denotes the relationship among the elements of tourism. As a matter of fact sustainable tourism identifies tourism within destination areas through a triangular relationship among the habitats and people of host areas, holidaymakers, and the tourism industry.

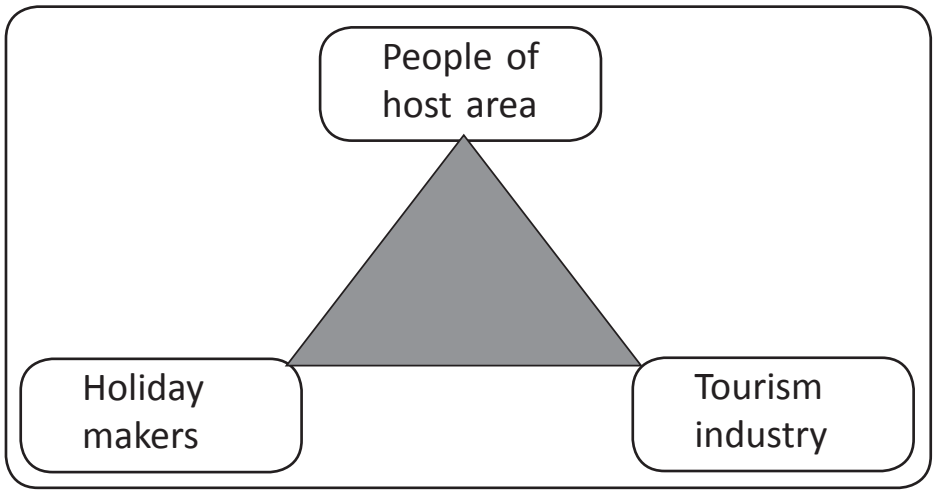


Figure 1: Relationship among the elements of tourism

It has been observed that the tourism industry primarily dominated the triangle in the past. The holiday makers have been seen to be strongly connected to motivation, attraction at the holiday destination, use of different types of media, and the general characteristics of touristic area. It may be observed that tourist destinations function as units at different geographical levels, without having any definite geographical boundary. The content of the destination consists of a dynamic assemblage of tourist attractions, culture, landscapes, events, services and the people of the host area. The

tourism industry consists of the service providers for different facilities. Accommodation and logistics services are provided by Government and private agencies. Tour operators have been functional in different destinations for facilitating mass tourism. In the present scenario the trend follows flexibilization of the tourist product which is done by way of customization, despite the demands of tour operators who still advocate and advertise packages of mass tourism (Stamboulis & Skayannis, 2003).

In order to reconcile the tensions between the three factors in the triangle (Fig-1), and to maintain the equilibrium in the long term, sustainable tourism comes into play.

Literature Review

The main objective of Sustainable tourism is to minimise the damage on environment and cultural objects, optimise visitor satisfaction, and maximise the economic growth of the region which can be sustained in the long-term(Lane 1994).The social and cultural aspects of a destination are very critical in attracting tourists and augmenting the significance of the destination. A destination may be an economic dwarf or bounded by political hindrances, yet it can be one of the most visited places (Ritchie & Crouch 2003). The socio cultural competitiveness plays a very vital role in developing sustainable tourism strategies.To sustain the longevity of a particular destination it is important to respond to market demand and address the competitive challenges. Sustainability of a destination in present scenario is critical for future destination development plans which should be compatible with market needs and environment integrity so that economic viability can be maintained (Hassan 2000). Hunter suggested that the concept of sustainable tourism should be redefined in order to incorporate a range of approaches to the tourism/environment system within destination areas (Hunter 1997).Any country can increase its development potential by harnessing its natural and cultural resources without, at the same time, destroying them. It is to be noted that without proper understanding of underlying factors, careful planning and management, rural tourism may usher in unsustainable elements (Cater 1993).

In order to make the concept of sustainability in rural tourism a success, it must be a multi-faceted framework. A practical way forward lies in the creation of Sustainable Management and Development Strategies (Lane 1994). In the present scenario sustainable development has become an important challenge to deal with particularly in the age of modernization.

Indian tourism, despite of its immense potential, has witnessedslow development, and shortcomings. A comprehensive and strategic approach is required to cater to the training and education needs of Indian tourism at various levels for the major target groups particularly in the rural areas (Jithendran & Baum 2000).

Research Gap

After reviewing the various literatures on sustainable heritage tourism, the research gap which has been identified is primarily related to the studies of sustainable heritagel tourism cases in India. There has been no significant research on sustainable tourism in rural areas , focusing on regional analysis, particularly the areas which are highly potential due to their cultural heritages of both tangible and intangible nature.

Objective of the study

Conventional tourism plans are dominated by the growth requirements of the tourism industry while sustainable tourism plans are based on a wider, more holistic and regional analysis. This paper will highlight the reasons for development of these strategies, their main features, and how they can best be implemented.The present study aims to highlight the factors to be considered fordeveloping sustainable tourism specifically in the heritage sites through a case study of the temple sites in the Birbhum district.

Methodology

The present study is mainly based on qualitative method using field research approach. This approach focuses on the observation of the phenomenon and condition in natural state and collection of qualitative data for analysis. The temple sites in the Birbhum district has been chosen for the case study since it can contribute towards potential rural development with the help of cultural resources.Such research is required to identify the cultural elementsof this region and highlight the present condition as well as the progress of community activities in temple sites in the Birbhum district.

Case study of the temple sites in the Birbhum district

Birbhum District:

Geographically the district of Birbhum is positioned between 23° 33′ and 24° 35′ north latitude and between 87° 10′ and 88° 2′ east longitude. It stretches over an area of 1752 square miles. The district shares its boundaries with two other districts of West Bengal itself viz. Murshidabad and Burdwan and the Santhal Pargana of the neighbouring state of Jharkhand as well. It is a triangular tract of land being bordered on the north and west by SanthalPargana (Jharkhand) and the district of Murshidabad, on the east by the districts of Murshidabad and Burdwan. The southern part of Birbum district shares its boundary with the district of Burdwan. It is indeed a land of heritages bearing the rich history of different cultures and sects. There are a number of archaeological sites in this region. A few of the important sites of this region can be located at Nanur, Ghurisha, Supur, Surul, Kenduli, Itanda etc. Some of these sites are protected by ASI and state Government while some are private temples, unprotected till date. For the purpose of the present study some of the important temple sites have been selected namely- the Temple sites of Supur, Ghurisha and Jaydev –Kenduli on the bank of the Ajay river (Fig. 2(a) ,2 (b)).



Figure-2(a) : Map showing temple sites in Western part of Birbhum (Courtesy of P. Mukherjee)



Figure-2(b) : Map showing temple sites in the Eastern part of Birbhum (Courtesy of P. Mukherjee)

Temple site of Supur : The village of Supur is located on the eastern part of Birbhum district, 5 kms south of the small but famous town of Shantiniketan, the abode of the great poet Rabindrath Tagore. In this small village we come across the twin terracotta Shiva temple (Fig.-3) which dates back to 1717A.D.



Figure-3: Siva Temple at Supur.

Temple site of Ghurisha : Ghurisha is a small village in the district of Birbhum lying on the western side. It is situated at a distance of 30 kms from the town of Shantiniketan. Remarkably in this village we find a beautifully adorned terracotta temple. This temple is unprotected and privately maintained. The temple is locally known as the Gopal Mandir which is a ratna temple (Fig-4).



Figure-4: Gopal Mandir (Temple) at Ghurisha

Temple site of Jaydev–Kenduli : Jaidev-Kenduli is a village on the bank of Ajay river, on the western side of Birbhum. It is 35 kms south-west of Shantiniketan.). An exquisite Navaratna temple known as Radha-Vinod temple is housed in this village (Fig.- 5). It is a protected site by Archaeological Survey of India.



Figure-5: Radha-Vinod temple at Jaydev-Kenduli.

Ecology and present tourism infrastructure of the region under study

The district of Birbhum is one such potential area which is struggling hard to promote its cultural and heritage attractions in rural areas and generate its tourism products for the customers visiting the region. Marketing becomes a major problem for promotion of Heritage Tourism in West Bengal. Different constraints lie in the path of development of tourism or primarily due to insufficient financial assistance and poor awareness of the perceived value of heritage tourism in the areas beyond the popular and commonly visited destinations. While marketing a heritage tourism destination (village or heritage sites) there is a need of strategic approach on the following aspects: -

- Attractions – like promotion of cultural tourism around a heritage site
- Infrastructural development – such as accommodation, hygiene, clean water , cuisine, basic amenities.
- Accessibility – i.e., development of roads, modes of transportation
- Environmental aspects – monitoring pollution, eco- fragility of the surrounding region.
- Safety, security of the tourists
- Continuous maintenance and preservation of the heritage attractions.

The temples sites of Supur, Ghurisha and Joydev-Kenduli are remotely located in the interiors of rural area of Birbhum.

Factors	Temple site of Supur	Temple site of Ghurisha	Temple site of Joydev-Kenduli
Ecology and environmental aspects	Natural , less polluted environment but eco-fragility may exist	Pollution free, eco-fragile environment	Pollution free, picturesque landscape having the meandering river Ajay in the centre
Heritage Attractions	Twin terracotta Shiva temple	Gopal Mandir , other terra-cotta temples in the vicinity	Radha-Vinod temple
Accessibility	Moderately accessible by road. Located in the interior of the village.	Less accessible as the temple is located in the middle of the village ground.	Accessible by road connected through the surrounding village.
Preservation and maintenance	Heritage site is protected by ASI, lack of proper maintenance	The temple is unprotected and privately maintained, lack of proper maintenance	Heritage site is protected by ASI, Well maintained temple complex.
Infrastructural development	No infrastructure related to tourism products.	No infrastructure related to tourism products.	Considerable amount of tourism infrastructure such as well connected roads, local shops and guides.

Potentials of the region under study

The potentials of the region under study can be well understood after conducting the SWOT analysis of the temple sites.

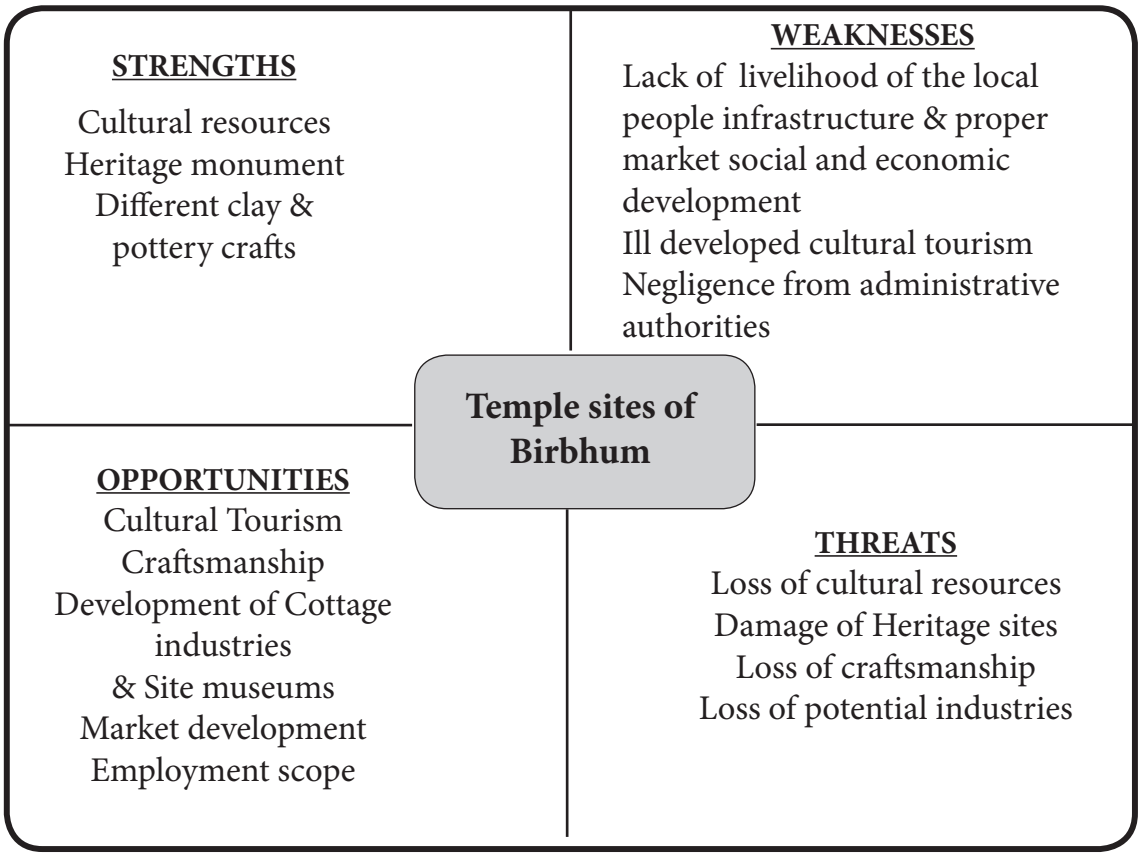


Figure-6 : SWOT analysis of the temple sites of Birbhum

By analyzing the SWOT matrix we can get an idea about the strengths and weaknesses of this region particularly of the temple sites chosen for this study. This analysis is conducted at the preliminary stage which helps to develop the strategic plan and competitive advantages for the heritage sites specifically chosen for this study. Furthermore the information obtained on the opportunities that are available, will help us to take adequate measures and construct a sustainable framework. This framework is not only meant for the sustainability of the temples but also the surrounding region and more importantly the people residing in that region. Since these villages are remotely located the transportation and communication networks are not well developed. People specially the tourists are hardly aware of such archaeological gems located in these villages. The SWOT analysis (Fig.-6) also indicates the requirement of collecting the

information regarding the two prospective areas- industrial development and tourism.

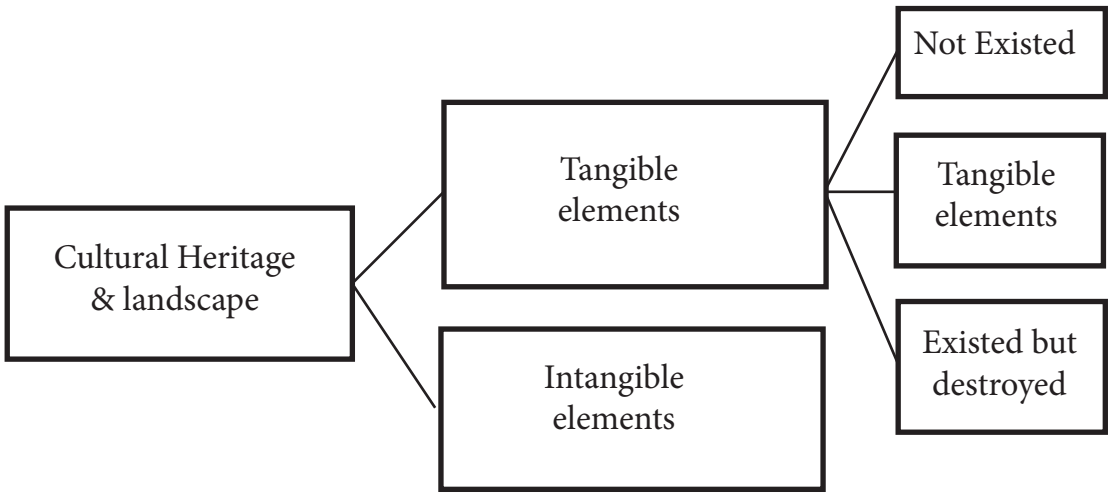


Fig -7:Diagram showing the Cultural elements before conducting heritage tourism activities.

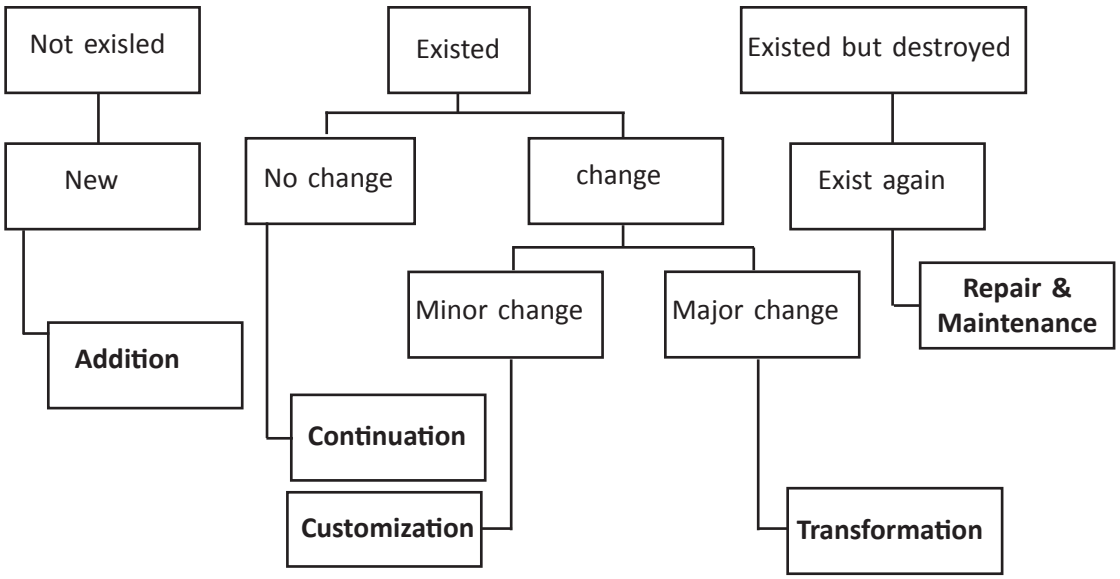


Fig -8:Diagram showing impacts of changes after conducting heritage tourism activities.

The impact of rural tourism activities can induce five categories of change of cultural element particularly the tangible elements. (fig 788).

1) Addition -The process of adding something new to the current object in order to fulfill some requirements or to make something functionally better,
2) Continuation- This implies a step to keep things as they are without any changes.

3) Customization -It is a process of making minor changes something to fit any requirements.
4) Transformation- It is a process which involves major alterations in an object.
5) Repair and maintenance –Sometimes an existing object that is damaged or out of date needs to be repaired or renovated. This is necessary to ensure that the object is able to carry out its function properly.

Need for developing sustainable tourism strategies

Almost all successful businesses harp on carefully worked out business plans and strategies. The plans seek to reconcile changing demands, to avoid wasteful investments and duplication of effort, and to research and seek out niche markets where leads to success. The study reveals that Birbhum has ample number of heritage sites which can be used as a base for sustainable development of the region. In order to achieve success in regard to sustainable tourism and rural development, formulation of strategies would be the key factor. It should be noted that the process of sustainable development needs a multi-disciplinary approach and cannot achieve its goal by a solitary endeavor.To sustain this unique cultural identity of the region, we need to develop a sustainable framework with the help of cultural resource management

The basic features of such strategies should pertain to the following conditions-

- Tourism businesses should gain in security and can invest for the long term-because they can develop in a more stable environment.
- Nature Conservation, the Arts and Cultural Activities can be drawn into thestrategy-making process. They will gain in stature from being recognised and valorised by being part of that process. The process should see conservationas a positive rather than a negative viewpoint. The human and politicalenergies behind the Arts and Nature lobbies should be used to guide tourism, not simply to protect their position against tourism of any kind.
- The strategy can protect the special scenic, historic and cultural heritage ofan area, thus preserving tourism's future seed corn. It should help to establishthe financial and political interdependence between conservation and tourism. (Lane, 1994)

Sustainable Tourism Strategies

The strategies developed for a similar study in Berwick Borough council in UK by Beranard Lane suggested various strategies (Lane 1994). The district of Birbhum being a potential area similar strategies with regional modifications can be implemented.

1. Developing technological competitiveness: Use of internet represents the impact of modern technology on the competitive advantage of the destination. Previously published materials used to be the only source of information about any destination. The access to internet has helped the visitors to search through a wide range of choices which were not available. The other benefit would be for the lesser known places which would have a global market and wide range of visibility to the tourists.
2. Regional analysis highlighting social, economic, ecological and cultural needs.
3. Identification of an area's tourism and cultural assets and the constraints on future tourism development.
4. Focus on how best tourism could be used as a tool for social, economic, ecological and cultural regeneration.
5. Community involvement and participation of local authorities in both the plan-making process and in any ongoing decision-making.
6. A meticulous consideration and analysis of the visitor carrying capacities, and the type and scale of developments suitable for each part of the region..
7. A market survey to establish opportunities and a marketing strategy. This strategy should both explain and use the Sustainable Tourism Strategy as part of its campaign.
8. Training programme aiming to encourage new localbusinesses in the tourism sector and help the local people to develop their business plans.
9. Awarenessprogramme designed to develop visitor knowledge of the area, increase insight and satisfaction, improve customer care and help ensure repeat visits.

(9) The setting up of local groups to monitor, advice, and assist future management.

(10) Apart from tourism industry , agriculture and cottage industries should be highlighted.

(11) To have effective strategies they should be long term in their approach. There must be quantifiable targets, prioritization of goals and regular evaluation process and regular up-dating of objectives.

Conclusion

Heritage tourism activities in the temple sites in the Birbhum district have great potentials to attract tourists and improving present condition of tourism in this region. The

identification of the cultural assets in the present state and implications after activities may bring some transformation on cultural landscape elements in the area, which influence the whole cultural landscape sustainability. Five types of changes are found: addition, continuation, customization, transformation and repair and maintenance. If these changes are effected then they will not only improve or increase the value of landscape elements, but will also harmonize the cultural landscape sustainability. Meanwhile, we should take the help of modern technology to make the visitors, local people and local authorities aware about the uncontrolled tourism development that will lead to the character changes. It is of utmost concern to sustain the rural environment, its cultural heritages, assets therebymaintaining the balanced relationship between human culture and nature systems to achieve the goals of sustainable development.

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Traditional Vegetable Dyes: An Insight into a Neglected and Endangered Facet of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of the Patuas of Naya, Paschim Medinipur

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Abstract :

The Patua (or Chitrakar) communities of the Rarh region of Eastern India are folk painters-singers whose traditionally livelihood is centred around their intangible cultural heritage of publicly performing Hindu or Muslim legends or tribal folklore by chanting or singing them with the help of the frames of brightly-coloured painted narrative scrolls called patachitras. Unfortunately, competition from other contemporary media is significantly eroding this traditional way of life. In response to this cultural crisis, and as a novel means of supplementing their family incomes, a group of women of Naya, a small Patua community in the Pingla block of Paschim Medinipur district, West Bengal, have formed a rural craft-hub for marketing their traditional products across India and even abroad. Thus, the Patuas of Naya are significantly contributing to the conservation of their multi-faceted intangible cultural heritage. Preparing the paints is perhaps the most important precursor to the creation of a patachitra painting. Although readily-available synthetic chemicals are becoming increasingly popular, however some of these Patuas are still holding on to their age-old traditional knowledge and skills in sustainably using their local natural resource bases for obtaining the raw materials that are used to make their indigenous paints. Like many other folk art traditions of Bengal, the bright hues used in this art form are largely vegetable (occasionally mineral) dyes that are extracted from the local plant resources, using diverse plants and their parts such as bark, wood, roots, leaves, flowers, fruits and seeds. This article documents the local dye-yielding plants and the traditional process of preparing the natural dyes that are used in the patachitra paintings of Naya, Paschim Medinipur. This study also shows how these natural colours as an integral part of the patachitra paintings expresses the artisans' innate union with nature.

Keywords: Intangible Cultural Heritage, Naya, Patachitra, Patuas, Vegetable Dyes

Introduction

The innate human need to express the essence of socio-cultural values has resulted in visuals being an important element of human communication through the ages. Paintings, as one of the richest forms of visual communication, is reflected in human surroundings, employing diverse natural themes from nature into everyday life. This involves the portrayal of nature in visual motifs on the walls, roofs and boundaries of natural caves or man-made shelters across the world. Historically, the society, culture and art of Bengal have been syncretic, bringing together disparate ideas while holding on to aesthetic manifestations with identifiable local features. Over the last two millennia, indigenous beliefs, Hinduism, Buddhism, Jainism, Islam and Christianity have been practised in Bengal and diverse communities have contributed to the area's complex aesthetic heritage (Chaudhury 2013: 7). The synthesis of diverse influences has contributed to the rich culture of Bengal which is the perfect blend of modernity and tradition. This matchless syncretism in the art of Bengal is also reflected in its timeless folk art. The folk artists have drawn on different aspects of traditions at different times in attempts to reflect and create new identities. What imparts distinction to their art is their immense imagination, a passion for embellishment, an inborn ability to render symbolic dimensions to a routine form, and to give the things scattered around the status of art imagery—all transformed by the artists, not just individuals, but communities in their entirety, generations after generations. In a world where every minute seeks means to distort and destroy, they have kept singing the notes of their minds, dancing to the beats of their hearts, and discovering in the jumble of things, rough crude lines, raw colours and incoherent motifs, a world that breathed purity, harmony, respect and concern for the rhythmic patterns of life as a whole.

Our world teems with a wide array of colours that fascinate the human mind. From time immemorial, human beings who delight in such perceptions have tried to imitate these colours in our everyday surroundings. Plants, since the dawn of human civilization, are important to all of us in infinite ways. They provide us our basic necessities such as food, fodder, fibre, timber, fuel and medicine. They make our lives beautiful with colour and aroma. The traditional knowledge and skills involved in the extraction and use of natural dyes is an important, but now neglected and endangered, intangible cultural heritage common to all artisan communities. The use of vegetable dyes from local plant resources is ubiquitous among the traditional painters of India that includes a multitude of folk art forms such as Madhubani (Bihar), Patachitra (West Bengal and Odisha), Phad and Pichhwai (Rajasthan), Pithora (Gujarat), Warli (Maharashtra), Mandana (Madhya Pradesh), Nirmal (Telengana) and Kalamkari (Andhra Pradesh). However, in today's globalized reality of mass production with cheap synthetic chemicals, these age-old practices have been diluted and are slowly disappearing due to their higher costs and depleting markets (Saxena and Raja 2014: 77). This article focuses on a neglected and endangered facet of the intangible cultural heritage of a prominent community of patachitra painters of West Bengal. This is an endeavour to document and therefore preserve the knowledge and skills involved in the traditional preparation of vegetable dyes

from local dye-yielding plants for use as paints in their traditional folk art of the Patuas of Naya, Paschim Medinipur. This endeavour focuses on how the visual music of these natural colours, conjured up by the deft brushwork of the artisans, produces not merely folk paintings, but, rather, are ultimate expressions of the rural artists' profound and joyous connection with the nature world.

The Patua community of Naya

Patachitra folk art tradition of Eastern India is in the form of painted narrative scrolls. This is a unique art form where oral tradition meets visual art. In both Sanskrit and Pali, pata (derived from the word patta) means "cloth" and chitra means "picture," thus, patachitra literally means "pictures painted on a piece of cloth." These patachitras paintings are a mix of folk and classical elements. In Bengal, this is essentially a folk tradition with the subjects ranging from Hindu or Muslim legends or tribal folklore, but in neighbouring Odisha, the subjects are largely from classical Hindu mythology. This patachitra painter community is thus called Patua. All of them bear the last name Chitrakar, meaning "painter. These painters are mostly Muslims in Bengal, but all Hindus in Odisha. In the Rarh region of Bengal that lies between the Chhotanagpur plateau and the Gangetic delta, they publicly present the story of folk deities like village bards, by unfurling the rolled scrolls of up to 20 feet or more called pat khelano (playing with the pata) and performing the song called pater gaan (song of the pata) in Bengali to create an intricate tapestry of storytelling, music and art (Bhattacharya 2001: 5). Thus, this unique community of folk artistes are painters, lyricists, singers and performers all rolled into one. Although their precise origin is still undated, yet it has been estimated to be a tradition in Bengal that spans a millennium (Maitra Bajpai 2015: 2). Traditionally, Patua artists would travel from village to village, especially to the households of the rural elites, for their sacred traditional performances to receive food or money out of piety from the patrons and spectators. Today, they travel to various art and craft markets in the larger city centres or to local fairs to sell their paintings. Another interesting aspect of their intangible heritage is that it carries the essence of a traditional mass media. Unfortunately, the loss of traditional values and competition from contemporary media has significantly eroded their traditional way of life. In response to this cultural crisis, and also as a novel means of supplementing their family incomes, a group of women of Naya, a small Patua community living in the Pingla block of Paschim Medinipur district, West Bengal, have formed a rural craft-hub for marketing their traditional products across India and abroad. Located in the heart of the arid Rarh region of West Bengal that lies between the Chhotanagpur plateau and the Gangetic delta, this tiny village with an ancient heritage of painting narrative scrolls is home to around ninety Muslim families with around 400 Patuas. About five years ago, Naya became the site of its own art festival—the Pot Maya, which is a festival featuring the scroll paintings, music, dancing and singing. The life of the Patua artist is centred on the many aspects of painting—collecting materials for making their vegetable paints and handmade brushes, painting their scrolls, and travelling to sing the stories of their scrolls and to sell their paintings. The theme of the paintings and its songs are both traditional ones handed down the generations as well as

original interpretations related to contemporary society (Palit and Dutta 2016: 221). This art tradition was customarily passed from father to son, but today it is also being taught by fathers to daughters and mothers to daughters (Chattopadhyay 2004: 16). Thus, the Patuas of Naya are significantly contributing to the conservation of their multi-faceted intangible cultural heritage. The data presented in this study was primarily collected through surveys around this village during the pre-monsoon (April 2017), monsoon (August 2017) and post monsoon (February 2018) to record the local flora alongside the interviewing of local artisans to document their dye-yielding plant resources and the traditional techniques used in preparing natural dyes used in their patachitra paintings.

Traditional Vegetable Dyes

Natural dyes are colorants obtained from plants, insects or minerals. These have been used since the ancient times for adding colour to the body, food, wall, textile, paper, leather and numerous other objects of daily use (Kierstead 1950: 2). These dyes are usually water-soluble and are generally applied in an aqueous solution, and may require a dye fixative or mordant to improve its binding on the substrate such as fibre, fabric or paper. Most natural dyes are vegetable dyes that are derived from the aerial or underground vascular plants, as well as from fungi and lichens. The making of natural dyes is one of the oldest skills known to humanity (Křížová 2015: 59). However, most modern dyes, since the middle of the nineteenth century, are artificially manufactured from synthetic chemicals (Gulrajani 2001: 194).

The artisans of the village of Naya were interviewed to document the traditional dyes prepared and used by them for painting their patachitras. The pertinent literature was also surveyed for any already documented information. Das and Mondal (2012: 166-69) had reported several dye-yielding plants from this region but their report lack the details of the dye extraction methods. This study documented the use of 20 dye-yielding plants to obtain a wide range of dyes. The dyes were extracted from their roots, rhizomes, stem, leaves, bark, wood, flower, fruit, and seeds. These dyes represent a wide range of colours including the three primary colours, red (magenta),yellow and blue (cyan). Only for the colour white, kaolin (a mineral) was used. Plant products were also traditionally used as accessories and additives during the process of preparation of these natural dyes. These traditional method are briefly described as follows, the preparation of vegetable (and one mineral) dyes for creating the myriad hues on the painted scrolls. Paper, deftly fixed with gum on cotton cloth to render stability, is used as a canvas for the paintings. The hand-made brushes are traditionally made from the tail whiskers of squirrels and mongoose, tied to slender bamboo sticks. The colours are prepared and mixed in empty coconut shells that are used as palettes. Table 1 is a summary of the following brief account of the preparation of the myriad hues used in the patachitra paintings of the Patuas of Naya, Paschim Medinipur.

Red

The young leaves of teak or segun (*Tectona grandis*) is used. Fresh leaves collected from

the trees growing in dry deciduous forests are crushed with stone mortar and pestle. Alternatively, the heartwood of catechu or khoyer (*Acacia catechu*), bought from the market, is similarly crushed along with lime water (chun), or is chipped and boiled in water. The pastes are squeezed or the decoction is strained to extract the bright red colour. The colour is darkened by sun drying the extract in coconut shells. Finally, the fruit gum of wood apple or bel (Aegle marmelos) extracted from the fruit pulp, a well-known binder, is added and mixed to prepare as a watery paste.

Brown

For preparing the brown dye, mature teak leaves are used instead. Otherwise, the bark of madar (*Erythrina indic*a) is used. Both are collected from trees in the local forests. The fresh leaves or bark are crushed as described above. The extracted brown colour is also processed as above.

Orange

The seeds of latkan (*Bixa orellana*) are only used. The fruits of this exotic shrub are collected and sun dried. The soft seeds are then removed and crushed by rubbing with the hands in a coconut shell or pot. The extracted bright orange colour is darkened and mixed with the natural gum.

Yellow

Yellow dyes are prepared from many sources. The most common source is the rhizome of turmeric or halud (*Curcuma longa*). The fresh rhizomes of this widely cultivated herb are collected, washed and crushed as above. This colour can also be similarly extracted from fresh flower—the petals of marigold or genda (*Tagetes patula*) or flower tube of seuli (*Nyctanthes arbor-tristis*). The dried fruit rind of wood apple is boiled in water. The softened materials are squeezed or the decoction is strained to extract the bright yellow colour and further processed as described above.

Purple

Fruit of or kalojam (*Syzygium cumini*) is the source of the purple colour. The ripe fruits are collected, crushed with the hands in a coconut shell and the soft pulp is squeezed out and the purple colour is mixed with the natural gum. Sometimes, the kalojam fruit pulp is directly rubbed onto the paper.

Blue

Predominantly the flowers of aparajita (*Clitorea ternatea*) and sometimes seeds of babla (*Acacia nilotica*) are used as the source of the blue dye. The flowers are collected from this common creeper, the soft petals are separated and crushed with the hands in a coconut shell. Similarly, the seeds are also collected from the ripe pods and crushed. The bright blue colour is squeezed out, darkened and mixed with the natural gum. Sometimes, the aparajita petals are directly rubbed onto the paper.

Green

Green dyes are also prepared from multiple sources. Leaves of commonly found

creepers such as talakucha (*Coccinia grandis*), yard-long bean or borboti (*Vigna unguiculata*), hyacinth bean or seem (*Dolichos lablab*), and shrubs such as bharenda (*Jatropha gossypifolia*), or herbs such as keshut (*Eclipta prostrata*), are used. The fresh leaves are collected from the wild or gardens, and crushed to squeeze out the bright green colour, darkened and mixed with the natural gum as described above.

Black

The plant sources of the black dye are the charred grains of rice or dhan (*Oryza sativ*a) or the burnt stem of bamboo (*Bambusoideae*) including the locally available species such as Bambusa tulda. Other alternative sources include, conventionally the soot from oil lamps, cooking fires, or, as currently popular, the exhaust pipes of automobiles with the help of a stick. The black lumpy mass is first crushed with the fingers into a fine powder in a coconut shell or pot, and then mixed with the natural gum to prepare a watery paste.

White

This is the only recorded mineral source. Kaolin or kusum mati is bought from the market. The soft, white lumps of clay are selected, crushed with the fingers in a coconut shell or pot, dried in the sun and finally the natural gum is added.

Conclusion

Colours derived from nature have depth and unique characteristics not found in synthetic chemical, however sophisticated be the formulations. Working with natural colours, unlike with synthetic dyes, is not a simple process as the desired hue is not easily and predictably achieved with uniformity. Even dyes extracted from the same plant inevitably varies, as the dye-yielding plant product is influenced by age, variety, soil and climatic conditions. While these can cause difficulty in standardization, but these very factors naturally render beauty and character that sets it apart from synthetic dyes. India has a rich heritage of the extraction and use of natural dyes from plants (Gokhale et al., 2004: 229-232). The extraction of traditional vegetable dyes for their use in the patachitra paintings is a highly specialized craft in itself. This knowledge about the dye-yielding local plants and the skills involved in extracting the dyes is a key facet of the intangible cultural heritage of these traditional artists. Besides, the artists have to correctly identify the plants and their parts used, and also find their local natural habitats for collecting the raw materials. Since this is an oral, and therefore poorly documented, tradition, with cheap, synthetic alternatives easily available, it is now precariously poised on the verge of extinction. Proper documentation and conservation of this traditional knowledge and skills would require the integrated effort of botanists, chemists and anthropologists along with the local artist community. This study shows that the traditional artists of the the Patua community of Naya, Paschim Medinipur, which is located in the heart of the Rarh region of Bengal, their traditional livelihood still depends on the sustainable use of local natural resource bases. In addition to the subjects of their art itself where nature abounds as in their pristine natural surroundings, the rich application of traditional vegetable dyes by this Patua community in their paintings also reflects the ancient Indian

ethos of living in complete harmony with nature. Now lingering among the elderly and the womenfolk in the contemporary socio-economic context, there is an urgent need to appreciate, preserve and nurture this rapidly fading timeless traditional use of the vibrant hues of natural dyes.

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Table 1: Sources of the natural dyes and their binder used by the Patuas of Naya, Paschim Medinipur.

Colour	Source of Natural Dyes
Red	Young leaves of teak or segun (Tectona grandis Heartwood of catechu or khoyer (Acacia catechu)
Brown	Mature leaves of teak or segun (Tectona grandis) Bark of Indian coral tree or madar (Erythrina indica)
Orange	Seeds of lipstick tree or latkan (Bixa orellana)
Yellow	Rhizome of turmeric or halud (Curcuma longa) Flowers of marigold or genda (Tagetes patula) Flowers of night-flowering jasmine or seuli (Nyctanthes arbor-tristis) Fruit of wood apple or bael (Aegle marmelos)
Purple	Fruit of or Java plum or kalojam (Syzygium cumini)
Blue	Flowers of blue pea or aparajita (Clitorea ternatea) Seeds of Indian gum arabic tree or babla (Acacia nilotica)
Green	Leaves of ivy gourd or talakucha (Coccinia grandis) Leaves of yard-long bean or borboti (Vigna unguiculata) Leaves of hyacinth bean or seem (Dolichos lablab) Leaves of black physicnut or bharenda (Jatropha gossypifolia) Leaves of false daisy or keshut (Eclipta prostrata)
Black	Roots of Chinese wedelia or bhringaraj (Wedelia chinensis) Grain of rice or dhan (Oryza sativa) Stem of bamboo or bans (Bambusoideae)
White	Kaolin or kusummati
Binder	Fruit gum of wood apple or bael (Aegle marmelos)

Local names are in Bengali, and scientific taxa are provided in parenthesis.

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A Study of Findings of Prehistoric Remains from Dighi Area of Dumka in Jharkhand

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Abstract

Though several archaeological explorations had been carried out in the district of Dumka in the area of Jharkhand under the division of Santhal Parganas, the area around the town of Dumka remained unexplored. During a recent exploration, some remains of prehistoric culture are found from the campus area of Sido Kanho Murmu University in the vicinity of Dumka town. The focus of the present paper is to analyse these findings with reference to stratigraphy, the geological depositions as well as geomorphological features of the area, vegetation and soil types.

Keywords: Prehistory, Dumka, artefacts, palaeoenvironment

INTRODUCTION

There were a number of studies and researches on prehistoric cultures of Santhal Parganas division since the reporting of Neolithic celts in 1901 by Rev. P.O. Bodding in the Journal of the Asiatic Society. Notable works in the area have been done by scholars from K. P. Jayaswal Research institute, Patna (1961, 1967), Pratap (1988), Chakrabarti (1981 to 1987), Kumar (2006), Tyagi and Mandal (2008). Despite so many researches in Santhal Parganas, there are very few archaeological finds reported in and around the Dumka town. The study is on the archaeological findings from a site in Dighi area of Dumka in Jharkhand. The site is about 6kms away from Dumka town. The finds are very few in number. Both finished and unfinished tools are found from the top of a hillock and also from a dry runnel. The tools are surface finds and are mainly blades and bladelets.

The objective of the present study is to study the prehistoric cultural remains in the background of topographical settings, drainage pattern, resources, flora and fauna. The present study may be helpful to understand the tool typology and technology of Post-Pleistocene period as well as past human behaviour. Cultural remains in in situ position is helpful for understanding proper chronological situation of the culture. For ethical purpose, tools were not collected rather studied on the site.

Site Dighi

The site is located in the campus area of Sido Kanho Murmu University in Dumka

district of Jharkhand. The co-ordinates of the site are 24° 16/ 25//N latitude and 87° 17/ 05//E longitude. The name of site is recorded in toposheet no 73P/7. The nearest road to the site is Dumka-Pakur road and the nearest railway station is Dumka railway station which is 4 kms away. The site lies on an altitude of 750m at the foothills of a hill named Dighi Pahar. The land is undulating and rolling in nature. A number of hillocks cover the area. The hillocks are mainly made up of quartz and quartzite rocks. The soil is lateritic and reddish to yellowish in colour mixed up with grits. Pieces of quartz, quartzite, chert are distributed throughout the site. Gravels are scattered throughout the site which are dislocated from their original matrix that belongs to the Pleistocene deposition. Tools are concentrated along the runnels and at the exposed sections formed due to natural erosion.

The area is very close to a protected forest just below the Dighi pahar (hill). The forest of the area is Tropical Dry Deciduous type. The vegetation of this area includes Sal (Shorea robusta), Kendu (Diospyros melanoxylon), Kusum (Schleichera sylvestris), Tentuli (Tamarindus indica), and Mango (Mangifera indica), Palash (Butea monosperma), and Date palm (Phoenix dactylifera). Besides these plants, various flowering trees and tall grasses are seen in this region. The fauna of the area includes Indian Flying Fox Bat (Pteropus giganteus), Indian Wild Boar (Sus scrofa), Jungle Cat (Felis chaus), Common Palm Civet (Paradoxurus hermaphroditus), Spotted Deer (Axis axis), Indian Wild Dog (Cuon alpinus), Rhesus Macaque (Macaca mulatta), Indian Field Mouse (Mus booduga), Three-striped Palm Squirrel (Funambulus palmarum), Rat Snake (Ptyas mucosus), and Rock Lizard (Agama buberculatus). Besides, there are different species of insects found in the area (The Director, ZSI, 2004). Both tribal and non-tribal people are inhabiting in this area.

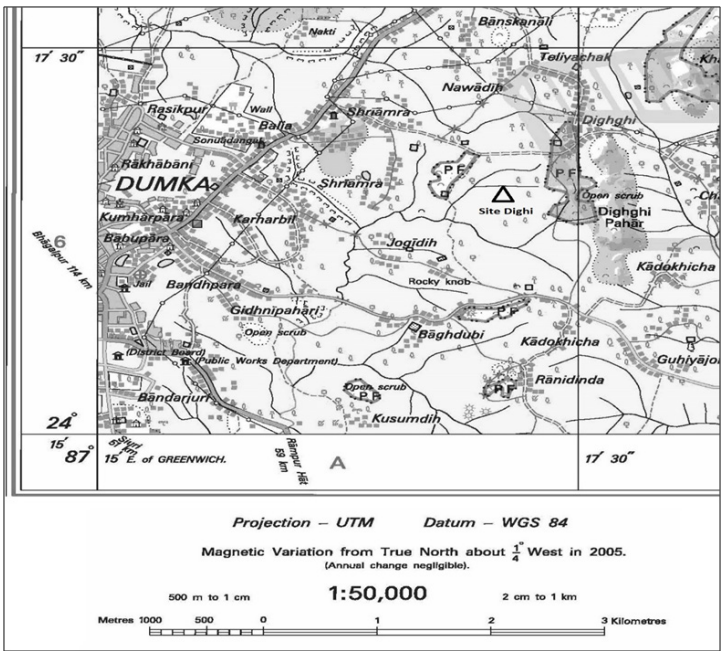


Plate I : Topographic map (73P/7) locating the site Dighi

The soil types and vegetation indicate that dry climate prevails in the area, interspersed with wet seasons. The area is dissected by a number of tributaries like Pusharo of the River Mayurakshi on the west and the River Brahmani and its tributaries on the east. A number of dried up paleo-channels are found throughout the area. The rich forest resources and raw materials available for making necessary items of daily life and presence of water sources closeby attracted people to inhabit at the place since prehistoric times. No major minerals are found in Dumka district. The minor minerals found in the district are feldspar, stone, quartz, granite and sand (MSME, GoI, 2016-17).

Methodology

Primary data are collected from the field and secondary data available from earlier reports and finds are also analysed for this paper. Maps and topographic sheets of the area are studied. A thorough site survey was undertaken. It included (a) exploration on foot over the whole area, (b) study of surface features including observation of soil and rock compositions, river and road sections, and (c) study of surface finds. The site was explored through fieldwalking Three geological methods, namely stratigraphy, surface geology and geomorphology were taken into consideration. Correlation between stratigraphy and allied geomorphology was done. Photographs were taken of the tools in situ, of the strata, and of the area. The physiography of the area with all its aspects like river system, flora, fauna, rainfall, temperature, humidity etc. was worked out. Photography was used for recording of sites.

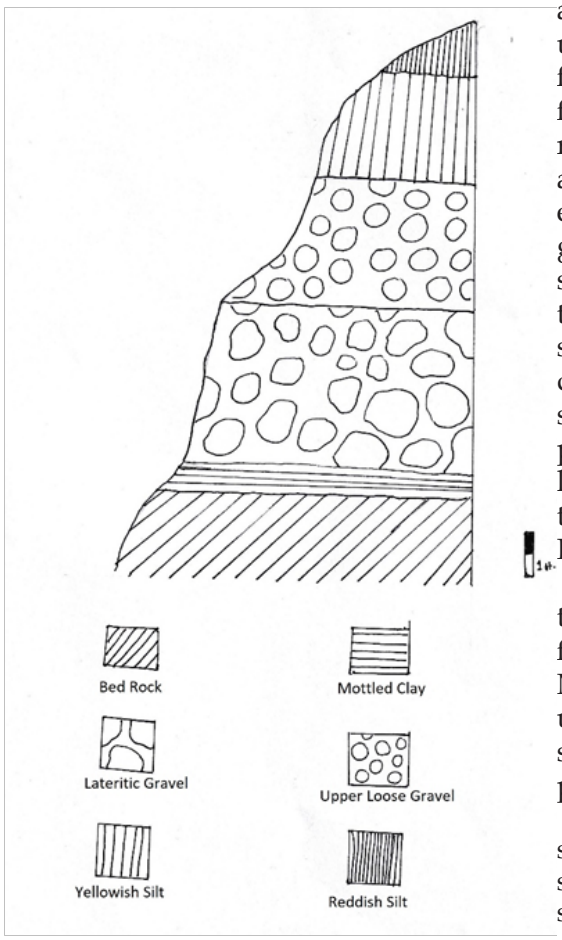


Figure 1 : Stratigraphy

The tools were analysed in terms of technology, typology, metric values, function, frequency, sequence, and culture. Morphometric analyses of the tools were undertaken. Attributes, namely, shape, size, colour, weight, cutting edge, bulb of percussion etc. were noted.

Sections exposed at various places were studied for reconstruction of the chronological sequence of prehistoric environment. These sections are correlated with the observation made earlier by Ghosh (1966) in eastern India.

Following is stratigraphic sequence at the site Dighi. Four major beds are identified at the site. The lower most is the bed rock, made Archean schist. Upper part of the bed is decomposed into mottled clay. Overlying the bed rock is a bed of gravel lying loose in lateritic matrix.

It is about 8 ft in thickness. There is an unconformity above this bed. The gravels are unsorted and varied in size from large to small. Above the unconformity is another bed of gravels. The gravels of this bed are not as thick as the lower gravel bed and gravels are smaller in size. On top of the smaller gravel lies a silt bed yellowish in colour. The yellowish silt bed is underlain by a bed of darkish red silt bed. Following is a brief account of the stratigraphy noted at the site Dighi.

Lateritic Gravel

This is the earliest deposition found over the bed rock. It is about 9ft thick. This layer consists of unsorted gravels of varied sizes, from very small to big. This phenomenon suggests the differential fluvial activity and a wet climate prevailed during the time of the deposition of this layer. No archaeological evidences were found from this stratum.

Upper Loose Gravel – This deposition is lying on top of the above-mentioned gravel bed. An unconformity is marked between the two. This stratum consists of sorted gravels, which are smaller in size. The gravel size in the deposition suggests that the climate during this period was wet. Ghosh (1966) dated this deposition to Upper Pleistocene.

Yellow Silt – This bed lies above Upper Loose Gravel. This stratum marks the end of Pleistocene and start of Holocene. The silt is coarse in texture and is mixed with pebbles and grits. Small stone fragments were also found. This stratum suggests a dry climate during its deposition. It is approximately 4ft. in thickness. The artefacts of the present collection were found from this layer. This layer yielded the artefacts belonging to Flake-Blade industry.

Reddish silt – This stratum overlies the yellowish silt. This Holocene deposition is about 3ft. in thickness. The climate was relatively wetter during this deposition.

Top soil – Reddish silt is topped by humus and is overgrown with grasses and bushes.

Ghosh (1970) had done intensive work in the district of Singhbhum in the state of Jharkhand. Singhbhum is adjoining to Santal Parganas and is located on the Chhotanagpur plateau. So far no such work is done in Dumka area on Pleistocene stratigraphy. Because of geographical location the stratigraphy of the present site may be compared to the one established by Ghosh (1970). The Pleistocene sequence consists of deposits in the following order from bottom upwards (Ghosh 1966:154):

5. Upper clay
4.Upper loose gravel

3. Lower silty clay
2. Lower gravel conglomerate

1. Mottled clay

All the above-mentioned beds were lying on the bedrock. It appears that the lower clay deposit at this site had washed away leaving an unconformity between the two gravel beds. Upper clay bed and recent deposits are more intact at the site. The tools collected from the runnels and surface, wherever the upper silt bed of Ghosh (1966), marked as yellow silt bed in this paper, is eroded the tools are exposed. From the field based observation and with a comparison to Ghosh (1970) finds the assumption is made that the collection belongs to the end of Pleistocene.

Cultural Assemblage (fig.2)

The typology of the tools resembles the flake blade industry of Upper Paleolithic period in eastern India. Tools are made either on flake or on blade. It shows that the culture belonged to the tradition of fluting and punching technology. There is a huge deposition of raw materials nearby. For making stone tools prehistoric people preferred to use sizable stones detached from the rocks and river pebbles and gravels.

(i) Specimen No. 1: End Scraper

Size – 5cm. x 4.2cm. x 2.2cm.

This is a stone scraper made on Levalloisian flake. The ventral surface of the tool has faceted striking platform and positive bulb of percussion. No flake scar is found on the ventral surface. Dorsal surface has both primary and secondary flake scars and few retouches at the proximal end of the tool. There is a small notch at the right lateral margin of the tool. The raw material of the tool is quartzite.

(ii) Specimen No. 2: Side Scraper

Size – 3.5cm. x 3cm. x 0.5cm.

This is a side scraper made on Levalloisian flake. The scraping edges are found at both the lateral margins of the tool. Retouches are found at the lateral margins of the tool to make the edges sharp. Ventral surface has faceted striking platform and positive bulb of percussion. The raw material of the tool is porcelainite.

(iii) Specimen No. 3: Side-cum-end Scraper

Size – 2.7cm. x 2cm. x 0.5cm.

This is a stone scraper made on Levalloisian flake. Scraping margins are found at the end as well as at one lateral margin of the tool. Both primary and secondary flake scars are found at both the dorsal and ventral surfaces. Retouches are found at the scraping margins for making the edges sharp and effective. The raw material of the tool is porcelainite.

(vi) Specimen No. 6: Thumbnail Scraper

Size – 2.1cm. x 2.7cm. x 0.5cm.

This is a thumbnail scraper made on Clactonian flake. Shallow flake scars were removed from the dorsal surface. Ventral surface is unworked. Serrations are found at the working edge of the tool.

(vii) Specimen No. 7: Borer

Size – 4.7cm. x 2.1cm. x 2.4cm.

It has four longitudinal sides which meet at the proximal end to make a projected end.

(viii) Specimen No. 8: End Scraper

Size – 4.6cm. x 3.9cm. x 1.5cm.

It is an end scraper made on Levalloisian flake. The ventral surface of the tool has faceted striking platform and positive bulb of percussion. Flake scars are found at both the dorsal and ventral surfaces of the tool. Dorsal surface has secondary flake scars and few retouches at the proximal end of the tool. The raw material of the tool is quartz.

(ix) Specimen No. 9: Bladelet

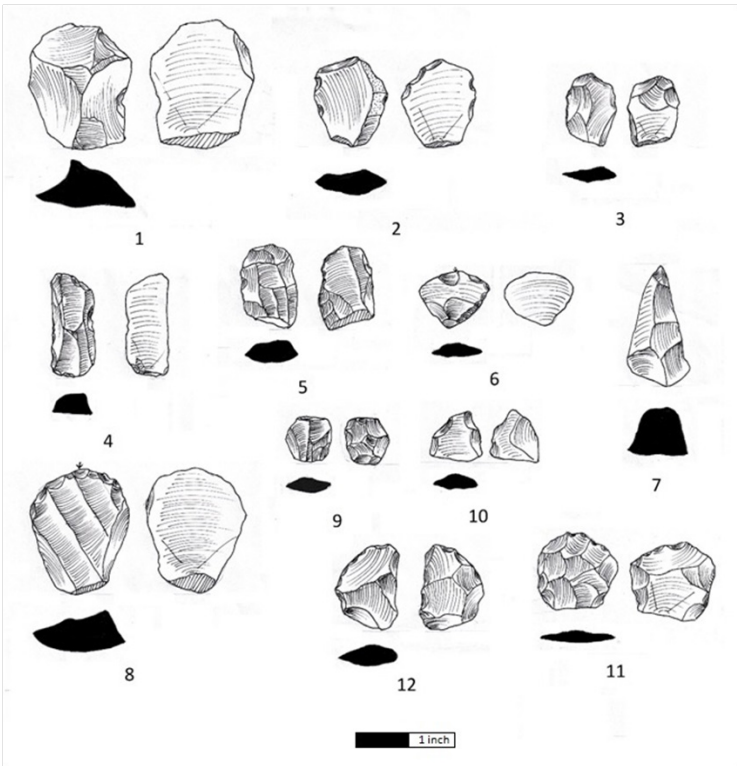


Figure 2: Schematic Diagram of stone tools found from the site (Specimens 1 to 12)

Size – 1.8cm. x 1.7cm. x 0.6cm.

It is a square-shaped bladelet with two sharp parallel edges. Flake scars are found on both the dorsal and ventral surfaces of the tool. The raw material is glassy quartz.

(x) Specimen No 10: Triangle

Size – 1.8cm. x 2.3cm. x 0.5cm.

It is a triangle shaped microlith made on milky quartz. It has two blunt sides and one sharp edge.

(xi) Specimen No 11: Side-cum-End Scraper

Size – 3cm. x 3.1cm. x 1.1cm.

This is an end-cum-scraper made on Levalloisian flake. Scraping edges are found at the proximal end as well as at two lateral margins of the tool. Primary and flake scars are found at both the dorsal and ventral surfaces. Retouches are found at the scraping margins for making the edges sharp and effective. The raw material of the tool is quartz.

(xii) Specimen No. 12: Side Scraper

Size – 3.3cm. x 2.6cm. x 0.9cm.

This is a side scraper made on Levalloisian flake. The scraping edges are found at both the lateral margins of the tool. One lateral margin of the tool is convex. Retouches have been found at the lateral margins of the tool to make the edges sharp. Ventral surface has faceted striking platform and positive bulb of percussion. The raw material of the tool is quartz.

Raw Materials

The primary raw materials used for making stone tools were quartz and chert. These materials were suitable for making flake tools and blade tools. Chert became popular with the introduction of fluting technology. Porcelainite is a rare silicate material used by Upper Paleolithic men for making smaller tools. Future exploration is needed to find the sources of this Porcelainite material.

Observation and Conclusion

Stone tools are the direct evidence of past human activity as well as their behaviour. The cultural assemblages found from the site Dighi resembles to the Flake-blade industry as proposed by Ghosh (1967). Upper Palaeolithic people learned the technology of removing blades by fluting technology. Blade tool technology was highly flourished in the area with formation of microliths. Microliths appeared with the flake blade cultures. The subsistence pattern appears to have been hunting gathering throughout the lithic period of Pleistocene. Though no direct evidence of fishing has been found but fishing perhaps was practised as there were number of tributaries and sub-tributaries distributed throughout the area.

The site Dighi is inside the campus of Sido Kanhu Murmu University. Geomorphological features of the village consist of Archean bed rocks decomposed at places into gneiss. The Dighi protected Forest is a mixed jungle with conifers, bamboo, shrubs. Some boulders which are partially rolled are found surrounding the region. The communities who live in and around the region practice agriculture. Their main cultivated crop is paddy. The geo-

physical settings of the area suggest that prehistoric men chose the place for their habitation for utilization of surrounding resources distributed in and adjacent areas under study.

The site itself preserves the rich cultural heritage of our prehistoric past. The in-depth study is recommended to study different aspects of prehistoric culture, which continued in the area. Prehistoric culture of the region may reveal interesting concepts regarding the bio-cultural evolution of man as well as population migration during the prehistoric period. The little findings made so far suggests that there is chance of getting rich prehistoric cultural remains from the area. Much of the site has been destroyed due to the construction of the campus of Sido Kanho Murmu University. Urgent in-depth study is needed for study of the chrono-cultural sequence of the prehistoric culture of the area and to preserve the rich archaeological heritage of the area on the age-old Chotanagpur plateau in eastern part of India before the evidences are completely destroyed.

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Photographs:



Plate II: Bed Rock



Plate III: Lateritic Gravel



Plate IV: Silt

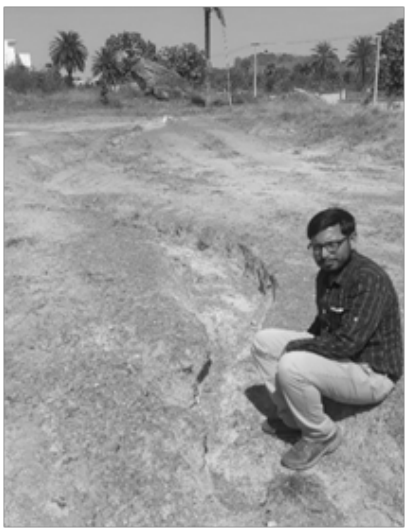


Plate V: Tools being exposed around this Runnel



Plate VI : In *situ* tools

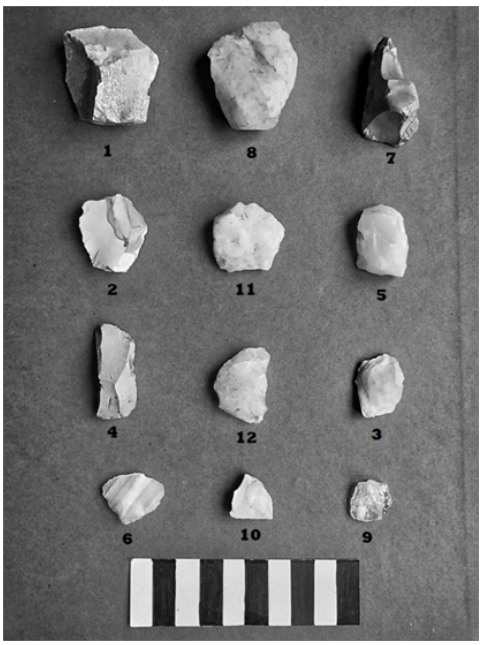


Plate VII : Tools found from the site

Child Birth and Child Care Experiences among the Sherpas of Srikhola and Gurdum areas of District-Darjeeling, West Bengal

Chumu Sherpa[1] and Pinak Tarafdar[2]

Abstract :

Birth is a significant socio-cultural event that differs in several ways around the world as it is the symbol of the beginning of life. In every society we find certain amount of knowledge about the birth of a child; and the rituals are the conspicuous phenomena to understand the important construction of the society and its values. In anthropological point of view the process of birth and its related rituals form a great part of the whole process of socialization, which the new ones later get accustomed with. It is an observable fact that every society since time immemorial has been practicing some rituals and methods that help in taking special care of both mother and baby. This paper mainly focuses on the child birth experiences and its associated rituals among the Sherpa community of Srikhola and Gurdum areas of Darjeeling district in West Bengal.

Key Words: Birth, Sherpa, Rituals, Experiences, Mother, Child.

Introduction :

Birth is an important event as it is the symbol of the beginning of life and in spite of its extraordinary nature occurs daily throughout the world. Birth is the process by which off springs are produced by means of reproduction in biological terms but according to anthropological perspective the process of birth and its related rituals form a great part of the whole process of socialization, which the new ones later get accustomed with. In every society we find certain amount of knowledge about the birth of a child. The term birth is an observable fact and in human society, it comes under a series of rituals together as the rite-de-passage the term coined by French ethnographer Arnold Van (Gennep, A 1909).

A ritual is a sequence of activities involving gestures, words and objects, performed in a sequestered place and performed according to set sequence as suggested in Merrian–Webster dictionary. It may be prescribed by the traditions of a community, including a

religious community (Bell 1997).

In the view of Victor Turner (1968), 'only among those least influence by technological change is ritual able to maintain its function'. The British anthropologist Jack Goody (1961) claimed some forty years ago, the term "ritual", has been applied by anthropologists and others to a wide assortment of acts and beliefs.

According to Monica Wilson (1954), 'Rituals reveal value at their deepest level… men express in ritual what moves them most and since the form of expression is conventionalized and obligatory, it is the values of the group that are revealed'.

Maternal health refers to the health of women during pregnancy, childbirth and the postpartum period (Kundu & Tarafdar 2012). It encompasses the health-care dimensions of family planning, preconception, prenatal and postnatal care in order to ensure a positive and fulfilling experience in most cases and reduce maternal morbidity and mortality in other cases (who.int/maternal-health).While motherhood is often a positive and satisfying experience, but for some women it is associated with lots of suffering, ill-health and even sometimes causes death.

In today's world mother and child healthcare plays a vital role in the healthcare practices and lots of programs and measures have been framed for the wellbeing. It is an observable fact that every society since time immemorial has been practicing some rituals and methods that help in taking special care of both mother and baby. This paper mainly focuses on the childbirth and its associated rituals in relation to maternal and child healthcare experiences of the 'Sherpa' community.

Methodology

This article is an outcome of the research endeavour conducted among the Sherpas of Darjeeling district, West Bengal. In the present juncture, the word 'Sherpa' is very well known and also used synonymously to the profession related to mountain climbing and potters. But actually Sherpa consists of Tibetan origin community mostly found residing in high altitude regions having long migration history of some 300 years back. Ancestors of the present day Sherpa are the pastoral community from the eastern part of Tibet i.e. Kham. Other Tibetans summon them as the Sarwa or Sherpa which means 'people from the eastern part of Tibet'. Later on, this descriptive term is used to identify them as Sherpa or Sherwa. They speak Sino-Tibetan language and mostly are Buddhists by faith (Sherpa & Tarafdar 2018).

The study has been done specifically in the areas of Srikhola Daragaon Gram Panchayat which comes under the administration of Pulbazar, Bijanbari block in Darjeeling district. The study area is bifurcated by Srikhola River and Singhallia forest range considered one of the inaccessible areas of West Bengal connected with the outer world through means of a single wooden foot bridge. Two villages namely: Srikhola and Gurdum of Srikhola Daragaon gram panchayat have been selected for the present study. Total fifty six household samples have been collected out of those forty houses belonged to

Srikhola whereas sixteen houses are from Gurdum. Gurdum is purely khasmal area while the upper part of Srikhola borders with Singhallia forest belonging to khasmal area. According to native people, khasmal is an area belonging to forest area where they are not allowed to purchase and sell the land. The population under the study is primarily engaged in agriculture along with livestock rearing.

Both primary and secondary data are considered while writing this paper. Primary data are collected through preliminary census schedule; besides that in this study some suitable anthropological methodologies have been applied keeping in mind every minute detail like population, location, viability, etc. As mentioned above, preliminary census has some structured questions in the form of schedule that tried to cover all sorts of basic question which is useful to get the general idea about the person like name, age, birth place, education, occupation, etc,. Schedule is filled by the researcher in presence of informer during the field visiting person door-to-door.

In this paper, case studies are used as models to explore the informant's personal experiences to elucidate the facts of the present study. Eight case studies are considered as most significant for the current discussion although there are other supportive cases studied by the researches for gathering comprehensive knowledge on the topic. The cases have been considered based on the informant's personal life history to support their view towards the overall aspects of birth in order to understand their cultural belief system and healthcare practices.

Birth

Birth (*Kewup*) is an important part of the Sherpa rituals that help in growing one's legacy. As birth helps one family to increase, it is considered a symbol of prosperity. According to elderly persons of the village, the birth of a child brings marriage to its successful conclusion. 86 years old mid-age man name Lakpa of Srikhola told- 'among Sherpa, the final stage of marriage ritual (zendi) is completed after the birth of a child'. He used to listen from the elders that until the birth of a child the couple stayed with the wife's family and the son-in-law (makpa) had to assist them. With birth of a child, they moved into the husband's house, but this kind of ritual is not observed in today's era as the Sherpa society even has undergone a social change.

In outlook of the under study community, parents held directly responsible for birth still the supernatural powers are supposed to be the sole and ultimate authority. The studied Sherpa population has a strong faith in Tibetan Buddhism. As per the teaching of Tibetan Buddhism, they believe in 'samsara' literally means 'continuing on' or 'wandering on' that indicates the repetitive cycle of birth, death, and rebirth. Samsara is symbolically represented by the wheel of life (srid pa'i khol lo) that can be found on the outside walls of Tibetan Buddhist monasteries. The wheel of life (srid pa'i khol lo) is depicted in the six regions of rebirth (gro ba rig-drug) namely, the three higher realms of God (lha), demi-God (lha-ma-Yin) and human being (mi) and three lower realms of

hell (dmyalba), hungry ghosts (yi-dvags) and animal (dus-'gro). The human (mi) realm is considered as the most fortunate realm because in this life/birth one can accumulate enough merit and attain enlightenment.

They also believe that karma plays a significant role in deciding and guiding one's destination in birth. The idea is what you plant, you harvest. The studied population of two villages believed that the couples conceiving the baby i.e. the soul or being who will be born are drawn together by circumstances of their previous lives (karma). Therefore, the circumstance of karma affects the condition of renaissance and what you become in the next life depends on what you did in this life; just like what you are in this life is a distillation of what you were in a previous life.

Infertility

Parenthood is a joyful occasion for the couple which satisfies natural eagerness of being the parents. The child is considered to be a gift of God while infertility a curse for the couple, especially for a woman. According to them, 'infertility (kama) is an inability to conceive or not being able to produce offspring'. Infertility is a great misery causing psychological distress not only for the young couple (nangtsang) but also the entire family. During fieldwork, it was found that infertility provided sufficient grounds for remarrying or divorce. Among them infertility regarding women and especially men has seldom experienced the prejudiced notion as nothing was said directly or openly to the couple. In case of infertility the under study people often suggest couples facing trouble in conceiving a baby to consult religious specialists (lama) or shamans or visit medical doctors.

Case Study 1: A 36 years old mid-age man, Nima and his 30 years old wife, Palmo has no children. After two years of marriage, when they failed to become parents, out of disappointment the couple has sought help from both traditional and modern method of treatments. Palmo stated, 'inability to become parent bears a stigma that causes lots of anxiety and disappointment for the couple particularly the woman'. In the hope of obtaining a positive outcome, they consult the lamas and also pilgrimage to holy shires for seeking blessing. Both of them also went to the doctor for check-ups. However, they discontinued the check-ups due to the high cost of treatment as their financial condition is not so well.

Pregnancy

Case study 2: Sangdoma (35 years) a mid-aged lady from Srikhola area, mother of two children shared her experience on how timid she was the first time on finding about her pregnancy (puzhung)…. 'After one year of marriage when I first got pregnant, I had no idea regarding pregnancy as very less is talked about those things openly with anyone. I cannot understand what was happening when I missed my menstrual cycle for two months. I shared the problem with my husband's sister (aaji or aai) who was married in

the same locality. She is a year older than me so, I easily share everything with her. After listening to my problem, she further interrogated me for providing details regarding the symptoms that I had faced through the duration. Immediately, she shared the news with the elder female members of the family when she became assured regarding my pregnancy. Later, all family members came to know about my pregnancy.' Along with her husband Sangdoma went to monasteries (gumba) to get blessings for safe delivery of the baby. During pregnancy she performed all her day-to-day chores regularly. Later, from the seventh month she started performing easier works. She regularly consumed plain and simple type of healthy meals such as rice, vegetables, legumes, meat, etc. Throughout pregnancy, she avoided going to the forest and river after sunset. Besides family members her pregnancy was kept a secret from outsiders. After completing nine months of pregnancy, she gave birth to a son at home.

As the population under the study does not observe any particular pregnancy rituals within the house so, the couples on finding about the pregnancy visit the monasteries and the religious heads (lama) for blessing to get a healthy baby. At times, they consult the lama for amulet (butti), etc. that can protect their upcoming child and also for safe delivery. The food of an expectant woman is not very special. She takes a regular meal, as whatever they eat on a regular basis. In some circumstances, if the expecting woman shows a desire for unusual edible things, then the family or husband tries to provide it if they are available and harmless to eat.

- ✦ According to most of the informants a pregnant woman should observe the following prohibitions: The pregnant women are not allowed to go out of the house, across the river, forest, burial ground and lonely places after sunset. They believe that after sunset some evil spirits linger in those kinds of areas and pregnant women can get victimised easily.
- ✦ The pregnancy of the women are kept secret outside the family as they fear that if the news of pregnancy spreads something unfortunate would occur. So, they do not take chances and usually hide it from the outsiders.
- ✦ During pregnancy apart from the family members, the pregnant women are prohibited to consume food from anyone. They believe that negative energy mainly from the food can be inserted to the pregnant woman and the growing baby.
- ✦ They believe that listening, thinking and speaking good things throughout the pregnancy period makes a great influences to the mental health of an upcoming child.
- ✦ The expectant mother visits holy shrines and offers prayers for the safe delivery and well-being of the upcoming baby.
- ✦ Until and unless the baby is born it is considered inauspicious to prepare too much or too far in advance.

More preferred boy/girl child

Case study 3: A mid-aged couple Tenzi (54 years) and Doma (41 years) from Shirkhola village have a total of six children, five daughters and one son. They are farmers and the husband also works as a day labourer in the village and adjacent area. In spite of the poor financial conditions the couple had a desire of having a son (pujung) along with the five daughters (pumu). After several years of waiting the sixth child was born as a son (pujung).

Case Study 4: Gyabul (49 years male) and Lakpha (42 years female) of Shrikhola village have four daughters. They married at the age of 29 years and 22 years. Lakpha was 24 years old when their first child was born. Gyabul was a retired army man, now working in their agricultural field along with his wife. They had not done any family planning. Currently, the four daughters of Gyabul are studying at Rimbick. Talking on the desire of son both husband and wife stated that they were happy with what they received and it is the wish of God. He believes that now days both daughters and sons are equal. They cannot afford more babies, as their financial condition is not well and the couple is happy with whatever they got. Same scenario has been found in other areas too. There is no hard rule regarding the preference of the child. Every child is welcomed with great joy and provided equal amount of love, care and opportunity as most of them think it is upon the willingness of God. It was also found that they did not have any specifications on number of children as it was found that some have more than ten children and some have only one or two.

Sherpa population is patrilineal in nature and considers the son (pujung) as the foremost successor of one's clan (ru). From the study, it is clear that the family at least wants one son to move further their lineage. Although they do not differentiate between the male and female child for offering the same amount of love, care, opportunity and absence of gender bias. The preference regarding the gender of a newborn entirely depends on the concerned couple and the family. Some parents prefer first born child as a girl child because she would be helpful for household work and taking care of younger siblings. The first born girl child is considered auspicious for both parents as it signifies longevity.

Fore-telling sex of the baby

Among them, there are different ways or signs to determine or fore- telling the sex of the child prior to birth:

- ✦ They seek the help of the incarnated lama's clairvoyant insight and prediction powers to determine the sex of the baby.
- ✦ If the left side of the mother's stomach is higher during pregnancy, this indicates the child is a girl and right side for the boy.
- ✦ They assume that if the pregnant woman has a pointed belly it would be a son, while in case of daughter her stomach would be round in shape.

- ✦ If the foetus lies on the right side of the belly, it would be a boy and left side for a girl.

Dream

Dreams (nalam) are observed as a connection to the unconscious mind and have a varying nature, such as being frightening, exciting, magical, melancholic, adventurous or sexual. Different types of dreams seen by the expectant mother at the time of pregnancy are considered auspicious and inauspicious. Sherpas under the study assume that certain dreams such as consuming fruits; wearing expensive ornaments or garments; a white conch shell; seeing enlightened people (lama); sunrise; seeing animals and playing of musical devices are considered the auspicious signs during pregnancy. The things such as falling off a cliff: a sunset, darkness; wandering without ornaments; deserted places; quarreling with others; weeping; being carried by water are considered as inauspicious dreams. In case of an inauspicious dream, the expected parent or the mother may go to a lama for balancing out any potential negativity through divination and prescribe rituals or prayers.

Parturition or Childbirth

In the studied area, most of the parturition usually takes place at home. With the introduction of modern medical facilities, some of them prefer to go to the hospitals. We found from the study that most of them have given birth at home on their own or with the help of experienced females, relatives or neighbours. Most of the villagers prefer parturition at home as basic modern facilities and hospital remains distant with difficult accessibility of transport and communication. Since the livelihood is also not well people mostly cannot afford being charged bulk of the money in moving to and fro so they prefer the above means.

Case study 5: During the field visit one mid-aged lady (52 years old) shared her experience regarding delivery of her fourth child. For the first time she conceived at the age of eighteen but unfortunately got miscarriage. Later, she had four children: two daughters (pumu) and two sons (pujung). All of her three older children were delivered at home with the help of her neighbouring friend. At the time of her fourth child, as she started to feel the labour pain, she sent her elder daughter to call her friend from the neighbourhood to help in the delivery process. After realizing some complication, they decided to transfer her to the nearby Rimbick Primary Health Center. Her husband summoned other male members of the village and arranged a carrier made of a bamboo basket (dhoko) to carry the patient till the periphery of Shrikhola wooden footbridge. After that a vehicle had been arranged to take her from Sepi till Rimbick.

However, halfway to the hospital, she gave birth to a baby boy in the vehicle. Thereafter, they took her to the primary health center. Later, she got discharged after the necessary checkup. She thinks herself fortunate that nothing happened to her and

the baby because some misfortunes had occurred previously in the village where the pregnant mother died during parturition due to lack of proper health care facilities available in the area. 'There are lots of problems regarding the access to the hospital, like transportation, financial situation and lack of proper medical facilities', she replied while showing apathy to institutional parturition. She further said, 'like her most of the expected mothers in the village had done their parturition at home by themselves or with the help of an experienced woman of the family or neighbour. We mostly visit the hospital in the most helpless or distress situations only'.

Case study 6: 61 years old Karma and his 48 years old, wife Diki had adopted their current daughter Nima (12 years old) from one of their relatives. Talking about adoption in more detail with Diki we find that Nima was her younger sister's daughter. They adopted her after mother passed away during parturition. Her sister died due to unavailability of good transportation and healthcare facilities in the area. After her death, there was no one to take care of the newborn baby (Nima) so, Diki and her husband decided to look after the baby. She took care and breastfed the baby as a foster mother. As they had only two sons, the couple decided to adopt the baby through consent of the family, relatives, and community. Interviewee couple further stated, 'This kind of case rarely happens in the area. It was the fate of both mother and child that one only survived and destiny wanted us to be her parents'.

Mostly, in Srikhola Daragaon gram panchayat childbirth happens at home, though in some cases the parturition occurs at the hospital. From the previous two case studies, it is clear that this kind of situation is very common in the region. As the studied area is located in one of the isolated parts of West Bengal so the basic facilities of day-to-day life is not up to the mark and it is very tough for the villagers to sustain in these conditions. The situation becomes worst during the rainy season especially for sick and aged people. In case of emergency, sometimes because of lack of amenities and transportation pregnant women face enormous trouble. Most villagers due to their economic condition and scarcity of time avoid attending the hospital for treatment as they have to spend large sums of money on travel and meals.

The expectant mother and the family wait anxiously to welcome the new member of the family. During the pregnancy period, the female members of the family prepare the traditional liquor (chyang) for the pregnant lady to drink after the childbirth. The chyang is kept in a safe container covered tightly with a lid. Birth of the baby generally happens after nine months, although seldom it may occur in a seventh or eighth month. In case of delivery at home, as soon as the expectant mother starts having labor pains, either matured or experienced female members of the family or neighbours help in parturition. If the expectant mother is taken to the hospital, the doctor and nurse perform the parturition process. There is no mid-wife in any of the villages under the study. Hence, the job of midwife is chiefly done by old and experienced women of the respected villages.

Case study 7: A couple of Shrikhola, Passang 28 years and Dolma 19 years eloped in their early teens. When first suspected about the pregnancy, she was only 16 years and her husband was 20 years old. As Passang worked in Indian armed force, his wife's pregnancy and parturition were monitored by his family members. Every month, Dolma went to the Darjeeling district hospital for check-up along with her sister-in-law (aaji or aai). After the doctor provided an estimated date of delivery, her husband also came for one month leave. Two days prior to the given date they went to Darjeeling town and stayed in relative's house.

At that time her mother-in-law asked the lama at the monastery to perform a special prayer for both her daughter-in-law and upcoming child for easy delivery. During my (first author) the first visit to the area, the baby was twenty-two days old and bought from the town a few days back after delivery. As she was not mature enough to understand and handle everything, therefore all the care was taken by mother-in-law and sister-in-law.

As discussed earlier, the studied area is far flung area of West Bengal and most of the delivery takes place at home and few occur in hospital. Total 307 populations of two villages: Shrikhola and Gurdum are studied, out of which 224 persons are born at home while 83 persons are born in the hospital. The study shows that usually parturition takes place at home and they only visit the hospital if complication occurs. Most of the people visit either the Darjeeling district hospital or hospitals located in the adjoining areas of neighbouring state of Sikkim for delivery. The reason for visiting the hospitals in Sikkim is the close location of the village to the area and also some of the women from the Sikkim got married in the studied area. While other villagers visit the Darjeeling hospital for delivery and related aid.

Rituals of childbirth

None of the males are allowed to attend parturition of the child (anga) as it is exclusively a female responsibility. It is said, that if the father stays during parturition then the upcoming child feels shy and not ready to come out from the mother's womb. Parturition usually takes place in a separate room of the house or the cow-shed so, it depends on the family choice and accessibility of the place in the house for delivery.

Prior to the labour pain, one of the family members takes some butter to a lama for blessings. The lama recites a mantra and then blows over the butter. As per belief, by doing so the energy of the spell (mantras) is transferred into the butter (mar). The blessed butter can be kept on the mother's hand during parturition or given to swallow and even rubbed on the body to reduce labour pain. For easy parturition, a small piece of butter is molded into the form of a fish (nya). Later, the lama or one of the family members recite a mantra over it and blows the energy of the prayer into the butter. The fish is given to the mother to swallow head first, without biting.

They believe that taking the blessed butter fish makes the woman feel blessed, stronger

and supportive which also encourage her to stop bothering labour pain and consequently make the parturition easier. In spite of the important role played by the lama in every aspect of childbirth and subsequent rituals his is presence is not required in the process of parturition. This is mainly because the process of birth is considered unclean and polluting (teep). If there is any kind of difficulty during parturition, lama may be asked to do special prayers at the monastery certainly not at the place of childbirth.

After-birth

With the coming out of the baby from the mother's womb, at first the umbilical cord is cut with the help of bamboo or kitchen knife. Then whole body of the baby is wiped with warm water and a piece of cloth. Depending upon the parent's personal choice a newborn is covered into neat clothes usually made from mother's clothes, bed sheets or new clothes.

After the birth of a baby, the newly mother is usually not allowed to touch her own hair and any other things present nearby until she cleans herself in warm water and changes her cloths too. As per belief of the villagers, after childbirth whatever things the new mother touches would fade out or lose quickly so, to get rid of she is given stone or wood to be held in hand for a few hours. Later, few drops of honey (rang) and butter (mar) are put in the tongue of newborn, as they consider it would bless the life of the baby with sweetness and prosperity. Butter is a symbol for nourishment, good health, and longevity.

After cutting of the umbilical cord (shaya), paste of turmeric (sermu) and mustard oil is applied in the navel of newborn as it is considered an anti-bacterial medicine. Umbilical cord of the baby is kept safe in piece of cloth at home, as it has the power to cure the diseases that occur to the child. Umbilical cord is used for making amulets (buti) to protect the baby from evil spirits and diseases. If the baby gets sick, a small part of the umbilical cord is given to drink with water.

After the delivery the placenta of a baby is carefully dispose away from the house. To dispose the placenta an empty place near the house is dug where the placenta is kept covered properly with mud. It is to be ensured that the area must not be reachable for animals to dig out. According to their belief, the placenta must be buried, as deep as possible because it plays a significant role during the development of a baby in the mother's womb. If an animal eats the placenta, the new mother may fall ill.

Purification process

With the birth of a baby various socio-religious rituals are observed. The studied population observes pollution period after the birth of a baby till three days in case of boys and four days for girls. During this period entire family is considered polluted and people usually avoid getting in touch with the affected family until purification is completed. As per their belief, if they visit or come into contact during pollution period,

they might suffer from invisible, unclean or polluting things commonly called as teep (Sherpa & Tarafdar 2018).

Lama of the village is invited beforehand for purifying from the pollution period by offering traditional liquor (chyang) and ceremonial scarf (kada). On the day of purification (anga pasum), Lama visits the house early in the morning as purification process must be done in morning session through some religious worship and ritualistic performance. At first lama offers pray in the holy shrine (chasum) and then burn the incenses (teep-sang) especially prepared for purification of birth pollution. Teep-sang are the mixture of different plants like dhupi, sunpathi, vhalayo (sag), harobaro found in the hilly regions along with other items like butter (mar), yogurt (sho), rock sugar (ngarcha), honey (rang), sandalwood (tsenden), mixture of grains (sadhbew palbew) and small piece of silk cloth (kochin ra). These items are mixed altogether with incenses and burnt to purify the house.

Later on, a half meter white (karmu) colour piece of cloth is tied in a bamboo (yungma or nygalo) stem named as tharchu which is placed in the main entrance of the house as it represents the birth of a child in the house. They believe that it guards the mother and child against malevolent spirits. The tharchu also signifies the gender of the child born in that family. In case of the daughter (pumu) the tharchu is kept at the right side of the main door and left side for the son (pujung). Next, the lama makes holy water (thui) with a mixture of kesar, camphor, and jaiphal then the bowl (kara) with red (marmu) soil (sa) and charcoal (soltok) are placed in the ground for providing the thui to mother and a newborn. Red soil represents the bond of a child with the earth and charcoal to ward off evil forces. Further, the lama puts butter (mar) in the forehead (trala) of both the mother and a child as a blessing.

Name - giving ceremony

On the same day of purification name giving ceremony (mindoup) is also observed. In view of Barbara (2006) naming is a decisive part of converting anybody into somebody that reveals crucial information about gender, kinship, geographical origin or religion. The name giving ceremony (mindoup) of a Sherpa child is an important event; it provides us some interesting information about the person. After childbirth, the parent usually consults with the respected religious figure (lama) to name a child as it is found that the lama plays a crucial role in life cycle related rituals. The lama is provided with the information about the birth time, date and day that it occurred. On that basis, the lama consults the religious book (dhato) and determines the child's name with the consent of the parents in presence of the relatives.

After finalizing the appropriate name, the maternal uncle (aajang) is called as he plays a significant role in the name giving ceremony (mindoup) of the child. The child's family first offers pong of chyang and ceremonial scarf (kata) to the maternal uncle (aajang) as a sign of respect. He summoned the baby with finalized name thrice and in the baby's

behalf mother (mama) responds by saying 'yes' (laso/hajur) three times. Likewise lama, relatives, and neighbours are invited to celebrate the purification and name-giving at a feast. The invitees bring gifts (kyeka) and ceremonial silk scarf (kata) for seeing the newborn baby for the first time.

Generally, the population under the study gives name according to the day of birth of a week. For example, a baby born on Monday would be named as Dawa (Sherpa word for Monday). It is found among them that mostly they have names with two words. Along with the first name, the middle name is also added, though one can also find a single word name. It totally depends on parental preference as there is no such rule. The names such as Passang, Migma, Tashi, Dawa, Tshering, Phurba are used for both males and females. In that case, the middle name can help to determine the gender of the person. For instance, if it is a girl child then Lamu, Doma while for boy child Tundu, Wangdi, Narbu, Sonam, etc are added as middle name along with first name. Besides name, the lama also determines the baby's element (kham) and year (lo). Lo and kham are determined by the animal year and element in which the baby was born. The lama also determines the child element (kham) and year (lo). Both kham and lo are useful during the time of marriage. According to Tibetan calendar, if a baby is born in the year 2017 then it will be firebird year (may, chya lo).

A temporary name is given to the new born child if any prior mishap occurs with the same parents. Later, when he/she attains a certain age, the lama gives a new name. In some cases if a child gets frequently sick, then the parent might rive the child a name of that person who is considered to be of low rank like blacksmith, potter. Suppose, if the parent give the blacksmith's summon name to the child they belief that the child may get rid of all the sickness. In return the child's parents offer that person some cash or goods. They believe that this is a way of tricking malevolent spirit to leaving the child alone. One can also witness similar kinds of practices among the other groups of Tibetans.

Clothing of baby

As per the belief, throughout pregnancy new clothes (namsa) are not prepared in advance. It is considered inauspicious or bad omen to buy or stitch clothes for the unborn baby. If it happens, the unborn child might die within the short span of time. After the birth of a baby new clothes are bought and stitched and it totally depends on the economic condition of the family either to use old clothes or new ones. Although sharing of baby clothes with one another is also done but it is considered inauspicious to dress a newborn baby in used clothes.

Ear- Piercing

After the baby becomes above three months old, the ear-piercing is done but there was no specific ritual followed. The elder person of the family pierces the ear (namjok) of the baby. At first, the needle (khap) tip is heated in the fire as they assume it would

prevent festering the pierced area. The thread is put on the eye of the needle which then pierces the ear. After that turmeric and mustard oil paste are applied to evade the fester for healing the pierced part soon. As per the saying goes, if one is not pierced the ear, after the death, she/he is forced to wear earthworm (bu-gyaltang) in the earlobe.

Hair- Cutting (Tachnet)

Hair cutting is an auspicious event of the child among the Sherpas .After the child attains a certain age like three to five years, parents consult the lama for suitable age, day and time for haircutting (tachnet). The lama checks his religious book (dhatu) and accordingly, the process of tachnet is observed.

On a particular day, the maternal uncle (aajang) is summoned, for cutting the hair. In case the uncle is absent the lama too can observe the same. The people believe that cutting of hair (ra) helps a child to get rid of diseases that he/she obtains at the mother's womb. By cutting that hair the child may live a healthy life. Womb hairs are also considered as unclean and thought to hinder natural growth of the baby.

Appearance of first tooth

If the first tooth (sa) of the baby appeared in eighth or twelfth months, it is considered inauspicious. As per belief, appearance of the first tooth in eighth and twelfth months is an ominous sign for mother's brother (aajang). To bypass that bad omen, aajang offers a copper plate (katir) and a bowl (thangar) to the child from the window (karung) which would reduce the harmful effects upon him.

Food

The increased physiological necessity of all nutrients during pregnancy is essential to i) support the growth and development of both maternal and fetal tissues and ii) builds normal maternal and fetal reserves of selected nutrients. So, nutrition is a critical variable both during and outcome of pregnancy (Eleanor. F. Eckstein, 1980). The Sherpa population under the study is not well-known with the nutritive value of different food items to be given to pregnant women. However, they have their own beliefs and practices in the context of the accepting of food items that define their preferences. It is observed that not so much importance is given in the diet of the expected mother during pregnancy. They believe that the growth process of a fetus is natural and not influenced by the intake of additional food.

The under study Sherpa women believe that during pregnancy if the women do their daily works (such as household chores, collecting fodder and woods from the forest, work in the agricultural field) then the expectant mother to be physically and mentally strong. It also helps in better growth and development of the fetus and would reduce the pang during delivery.

Case study 8: A grandmother (ma-gaga) of 82 years old from Gurdum village shared

her view that pregnant woman should be active and doing work would help in parturition of a healthy baby. If she takes more rest and does not work she might face problems during her delivery. She remembered her pregnancy days when she had to do the entire household and agricultural work just like her daily normal routine till the sixth or seventh months. Her in-laws never told her to take rest during pregnancy. Her mother and mother-in-law both used to say, 'As much as you work during pregnancy time you will have fewer problems in giving birth'. After having a baby, she took a rest for a few days and back to her normal routine. Throughout the pregnancy period, she took regular food as usual with less spice. After parturition, she was given several kinds of soup with meats (shya), butter (mar), and traditional liquor (chyang) to retain her lost energy.

According to her, present day women are very fortunate as they are not pressured to do much work in their pregnancy time. Family members are also very supportive in taking special care and allowing them to rest. However, she also believes that whatever her in-law had said previously is true. As these days very less workload is offered to expectant mothers lots of them have complications during delivery. Researchers found out that elderly women of the studied villages also shared a similar kind of experiences and opinions as Gaga.

During pregnancy, food intakes of women of the studied area do not witness any changes. Pregnant women take simple daily meals and also believe that no special care is required before the birth of a child as it is a natural process. Women are cautious in eating cold foods and the foods that are severely acidic, fermented, raw and very spicy. They consume all sorts of edible food items which are available to them in their surroundings. Too much raw or fibrous food is also not advised to consume as per the belief that the extra effort in digestion takes away the strength from the fetus. The pregnant mother should avoid or reduce the intake of spices like chill (marcha) and pepper (ermang) that generates creates heat.

Even though alcohol is not considered as a food taboo most women of the studied villages stop consuming alcohol throughout the pregnancy period. Alcohol or any fermented foods are considered toxic to a growing embryo because it can produce unhealthy bacteria, so usually, women do not consume fermented foods while pregnant. During pregnancy women craving for unusual food are considered natural. In the early phase of pregnancy, women often crave for sour and bitter food. These kinds of foods were considered helpful to pregnant women for decreasing headache and nausea because it has balancing, healing and cooling effects.

After the parturition of a baby, the mother is provided to eat something warm or hot to keep her warm as she uses all her energy in giving birth to the baby and become cold. During post-delivery period, the mother is provided with rich and ample nutrient foods like meats (shya), butter (maru), etc. so that she can retrieve her physical condition and produce lot of milk for nurturing the child. According to them, after parturition all the bones (ru) become flexible and teeth (sa) are loose. She is given only warm liquid and

soft foods like porridge, meat (shya) soups, and tsampa for a couple of days. The new mother is also provided traditional drink (chyang) at the post-delivery stage.

Varieties of grains like rice, millet, barley, buckwheat and whatever is available to prepare the chyang. Fenugreek is fried in hot butter and added in chyang to provide warmth to the mother for helping in lactation. They believe that when the mother drinks chyang her milk consumed by the baby which helps them both to take enough rest. It also helps in healing the uterus more quickly. The newborn baby consumes mother's milk (homa) for two or three years.

Lactating mother avoids certain foods which are regarded as cold such as curds, tubers, pumpkin, gourds, lemons, etc. The under study women opines, the attack of cold and cough may occur if one takes above food during such period. If the mother eats certain foods as stated above the baby would also suffer from diarrhoea, constipation, gas, vomiting, nasal cold, fever.

Conclusion

The birth process of a child is a significant socio-cultural event that differs in several ways around the world. Childbirth is observed, as an important part of the Sherpa society. For the birth of a child both supernatural forces and their parents are considered responsible. The participation of family members, relatives and neighbours provide evidence of community involvement in childrearing. The whole family getting involved in childbirth experiences shows close connection between family members and a child. The population under the study assumes childbirth is the only process by which a woman can be a member of her husband's family and achieve the status of womanhood. Birth of a child also allows the women to become close to herself and her family. Women's experience in birth depends on their individual views and social and economic conditions.

From the study, it came to know that most births occurred at home. The area under the study is situated in one of the remote parts of West Bengal where modern healthcare facilities are beyond the reach. The rituals and symbolic practices of the Sherpa community cannot be ignored. Some rituals and practices observed by the population are highlighted here to understand their perspective on looking upon the childbirth. During the entire duration of childbirth, the incantation is performed by the lama for safe delivery and protection of both mother and baby against malicious forces. The Tharchu (bamboo pole with white flag) hang at the main door for protecting the newborn from the evil forces and also indicate the birth of a baby in the family. They used the umbilical cord of the baby for treatment during sickness and in an amulet too for the protection against evil forces. At the time of purification, many different varieties of plants (names are already given) are burned to prevent the house and surrounding area clean and free from diseases. The mother is given a Chyang (traditional liquor) to consume after childbirth for lactation and healing of uterus quickly. After childbirth, the women avoid

some food items viewed as cold like curds, tubers, pumpkin, squashes, lemons, etc. for protecting a newborn from any sort of ailment.

Hence, their own ways of handling the circumstances helps them to cope up in such a difficult situation with the inadequate amenities available to them. The childbirth and its rituals not only celebrate and acknowledge the child, but also serve as an important way for families to solidify their connection to their community, heritage and culture. These rituals and practices are as a backbone of one's culture. Thus, one must nurture and preserve it for the upcoming generation which adds uniqueness to one's identity from the rest of the population.

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Kerala Floods 2018 and the Changing Dynamics of India's Foreign Aid Dependence

Urmi Mehra

Abstract

In August 2018, the south-western state of Kerala was hit by massive floods which caused immense damage to life, property and infrastructure. India has traditionally been one of the largest foreign aid recipient states in the world, both for development purposes as well as disaster relief. However, in the 21st century, the government of India is reluctant to rely on foreign aid, particularly to address natural disasters, which was clearly evident in the decision of the central government to refuse acceptance of disaster relief aid from foreign sources during the devastating flood in Kerala in August 2018. The entire debate surrounding aid refusal mirrored a shift in India's foreign aid policy in favour of reduced dependence on aid receipt. Such refusal is indicative of the higher goal that India wants to achieve, as much as it is a reflection of the problems that the country has to face as a result of aid acceptance. The present article, taking cue from the Kerala aid refusal, attempts to highlight the changing contours of India's tryst with aid dependence in the 21st Century. In the process, it will also discuss the kind of initiatives India has taken to reduce aid dependence.

Key words: foreign aid, aid dependence, aid refusal, disaster aid, foreign policy

"Of the seeming and real innovations which the modern age has introduced into the practice of foreign policy, none has proven more baffling to both understanding and action than foreign aid." Hans J. Morgenthau 1962: 301

Foreign aid policy of India is passing through one of the most interesting and dynamic phases in the 21st Century. An overall shift in the perception of foreign policy makers has been witnessed as far as India's dependence on foreign aid is concerned and this has got reflected in the stand taken by the government from time to time.

The Kerala deluge and India's foreign aid policy consideration

Between the 1st and 20th August 2018, Kerala was ravaged by incessant rain leading to 'once-in-a-century' flood causing severe damage to the life and property of the people in Kerala. The situation demanded huge assistance, both monetary and in terms of essential supplies, to meet the immediate crisis. The floods were declared a "calamity of severe nature" although the left-ruled state government in Kerala and the Congress Party demanded that the floods be declared a 'national disaster' so that the state could get substantial assistance from the centre. Under the federal system of India, states have the responsibility for disaster response and central government supplements the effort of the state governments by providing financial and material assistance. The central government announced an assistance of Rs. six billion, other than aid flowing from the National Disaster Relief Fund (NDRF) and the State Disaster Relief Fund. In the nature of the federal spirit of the Indian Constitution, various federal states in India also declared their support. That apart, celebrities, people in their individual and institutional capacity from all over the country also contributed towards the relief fund. While help came from sources within India, the disaster also elicited a response from various sources outside the country. The Emir of Qatar offered Rs. 0.35 billion and Maldives offered $50,000 (Joshua 2018: 4). One of the responses that evoked unnecessary controversy was with regard to the offer of assistance by UAE. While UAE offered to set up a committee to estimate the nature and amount of assistance that would be needed, it was widely believed that it had offered Rs. seven billion, which the Government of India had at once refused to accept. It was alleged that the central government was refusing the offer of aid because of the presence of leftist government in power at the state. The chief minister of Kerala, Pinarayi Vijayan asserted that the Malyali expatriate population in the UAE had a moral responsibility in providing disaster relief considering the scale of the disaster and the substantial contributions of that community towards the growth of UAE's economy. However, the central government had refused to accept any offer of foreign assistance on the ground that since the Tsunami of 2004, India had stopped accepting foreign aid for national disasters. The central government wanted to give a clear signal that it is capable of mitigating the immediate crisis. It was felt that the acceptance of such an offer would result in unnecessary diplomatic obligations. Union Minister, K J Alphons, requested the centre to make a 'one-time exception' to its 14-year policy of not accepting foreign aid in the face of the natural calamity in Kerala. The central government's refusal to accept foreign aid towards Kerala's flood relief has brought to the forefront the discussion of the changing contours of India's foreign aid dependence in the 21st century. India has expressed the desire to reduce its dependence on foreign aid receipt and increase its own foreign aid allocation to other needy states of the Third world. The author views Kerala aid refusal as the reassertion of the changing priorities in India's foreign aid policy. This article in India's contemporary history underlines a shift towards reducing aid dependence in the view of India's efforts to emerge as a prominent donor in the 21st century.

There is no dearth of academic writings on the concept and pattern of foreign aid since the phenomenon has touched most of the countries either as donor or recipient or both since World War II. The phenomenon of foreign aid (loan, grant, technical assistance) which has often been linked to the practice of 'gift giving' or 'tradition of exchange' (Mauss 1970) has been said to be mostly located in the politics of the Cold War and decolonization. If the aid literature of 20th century predominantly focused on aid-flow from the advanced countries of 'Global North' to the needy developing countries of the 'Global South', the 21st century aid literature mirrored the urge to understand aid-flow in the context of the changed world scenario as reflected in the works of Stokke (1996), Lancaster (2007), Ocampo (2007) . As much as scholars like Emma Mawdsley (2010), Sachin Chaturvedi (2012), Elizabeth Sidiropoulos (2012) were interested in studying the South-South direction of aid flow based on 'mutual partnership' and 'equality of relation' with emphasis on the 'Development Cooperation' Plan of 'emerging donors' such as India, China, Brazil, South Africa, the urge among traditional recipients to reduce their dependence on foreign aid was also highlighted on several occasions. The literature discussing aid motives and effectiveness gave a clear message as to why it is important for traditional recipients to reduce dependence on foreign aid. The views expressed on aid motives clearly indicate that the donors are not always guided by welfare motive as discussed in the writings of Lancaster (2007) Lumsdaine (1993) and Zimmerman (2007), Qian (2015) but often by the political , economic and security interest of the donors as highlighted by Mason (1964), Abrol (1989); Maizel and Nissanke (1984), Alesina and Dollar (2002), Hoeffler & Outram (2011) which ultimately leads to domination, exploitation and loss of sovereignty in the name of aid. With time, countries began to accept the 'welfare motive 'of aid with a pinch of salt and started talking more openly about their aim to reduce dependence. Multiple reasons contributed to the efforts by traditional recipients to reduce foreign aid dependence: the strict terms and conditions that were attached to small amounts of foreign aid, increasing uncertainty resulting from the sudden suspension of aid and the fiscal pressure of debt resulting from loan-based disbursements (as opposed to grants), loss of sovereignty. Moreover, it has been asserted that ideologically, moves to reduce dependence on external grants can be welcomed not only because it constitutes a small portion of plan allocations but also because 'the availability of easy aid precludes the necessity of generating own resources and improving efficiency and targeting' (Sethi 2003: 4421). Pakistan Perspective Plan for 1965-85 aimed at reducing Pakistan's dependence on foreign aid. A.R. Kemal, a Research Economist at the Pakistan Institute of Development Economics (PIDE) in 1975 talked about the ultimate aim of reducing aid dependence to 'zero' (Kemal 1975:386). Rwanda expressed urge to take responsibility for its own development. Several other countries also have valid reasons for reducing their dependence on foreign aid. For African countries (Burkina Faso, Mauritania, Rwanda, Vanuata, Niger, Gambia) between 1960 and 1999 the greatest challenge was the fact that aid accounted for a major portion of the budget (Djankov et.al.2008). Non-democratic countries in Africa such as Kenya and Malawi in 1990s faced aid suspension for failing

to implement democratic reforms. Aid was suspended to China by Japan first in 1989 after the Tiananmen Square incident, and also in response to China's nuclear testing in 1995 (Katada 2001; 40-41). In countries like Mozambique and Nicaragua half of the revenue was said to be absorbed by debt payment (Alexis 2013). In fact, aid has been considered to be a 'curse' (Djankov et.al. 2008). Since the beginning India has been studied essentially as a recipient as evident in the writings of Eldridge (1969); Rajan and Appadorai (1985); Kamath (1992); Phull (2007); Lipton and Toye (2010); Alam and Mittal (2014). India relied heavily on foreign aid (loan, grant, technical assistance) from economically advanced countries both for disaster relief as well as development, in order to address the challenges posed by stagnation, poverty, unemployment and backwardness although it had its own small aid programme too for neighbours such as 'Indian Technical and economic Cooperation'(ITEC) which was launched in 1960s. Since the 1980s, some scholars such as B.N. Banerjee (1982); Srikant Dutt (1984); Vandana Abrol (1989) took interest in studying the dynamics of India's own aid programme. However, the interest in studying India's foreign aid programme, preferably termed 'development partnership' or 'development cooperation' in the 21st century is unprecedented. Some of the most important contributors to these studies have been Gareth Price (2004); Emma Mawdsley (2010, 2012) Sachin Chaturvedi (2010, 2012, 2016); Dweep Chanana (2010), David Malone (2011), Rani D. Mullen (2012), Muchkund Dubey (2013). While the existing literature on India's transition from the status of recipient to donor suggests the need for reducing dependence on foreign aid, the reasons underlying it have been inadequately discussed. The debate surrounding aid refusal during the Kerala floods and the extent of publicity it obtained in social and print media generated fresh interest in studying India's reduced dependence on foreign aid. The present study attempts to highlight the shifting priority towards reducing aid dependence with special emphasis on the initiatives taken in this direction including aid refusal.

Contours of India's tryst with aid dependence

This section attempts to discuss India's urge to reduce dependence on foreign aid and the initiative taken by the Government of India in this regard particularly since the liberalization of Indian economy in the 1990s.

The urge for reduced aid dependence stem from two vital reasons: disadvantages resulting from aid dependence and India's foreign policy shift in the post-liberalization period recognizing the emergence of the country as an important power in the world.

Disadvantages linked to aid acceptance:

Although aid brings relief to the recipient countries in different forms, it invites problems, liabilities and financial, political and diplomatic obligations that have a bearing on the long-term policies of the country. Only a small portion of India's domestic requirement is said to have been met by most of the donors. Aid has generally been tied by source, commodity or project. Aid tied by source takes away the freedom of a country to buy

goods of its own choice from the cheapest source. There is pressure to purchase equipment, spare parts, machinery, raw materials etc. from the donor states. Aid tied to a project does not easily allow switchover to other critical projects. This reduces the flexibility of the country with regard to the utilization of aid. Moreover, sudden aid-suspension has created problems for India in the past. USA suspended aid during Indo-Pak war of 1965 and 1971. Besides, following the nuclear test of May 1998 at Pokhran by India, several countries imposed economic sanctions on India. Japan 'partially and incrementally' had cut its foreign aid to India. Germany, Denmark and Sweden 'fully' suspended their foreign aid to India. Interestingly Britain, France and Russia registered their protest but did not impose sanctions. Through these critical phases in India's post-independent history, donors were guided by their own interest. For the most part, portions of foreign aid remained in the pipeline causing delay. The large component of loans in the total aid provided, resulted in debt claiming a sizable portion of India's foreign exchange reserve. This reduced our savings and we had to take more loans to pay our debt.

Power ambition and India's reduced foreign aid dependence:

India's urge to emerge as strong soft power and a major power also provides the rationale for India's reduced dependence on foreign aid. Foreign aid is increasingly recognised as an important "Soft Power" instrument for elevating India's global status (Mullen 2012). Sir Joseph S. Nye's writings on 'Soft Power: The Means to success in World Politics' (2004) and Baldev Nayar and T V Paul's 'India in the world order: Searching for major power status'(2003) have been extremely useful sources in linking India's foreign aid to the twin concept of "Soft Power" and "Major Power". According to C. Raja mohan (2003) after the end of the Cold War, there was a shift of India's policy perception from Third Worldism to serving its self-interest. India's foreign policy became more pragmatic, ambitious and India aspired to achieve major power status. Munir Akram (2014) discussed India's transition from being a net borrower to a net creditor and considered foreign aid to be a 'soft power' instrument for elevating India's global status. Too much of dependence on foreign aid and particularly for emergency relief sends a weak, needy, dependent and struggling image of a country. It looks less attractive and others cannot look up to them for help or favours. As much as greater outflow of aid would be useful in upgrading India's power status, reduced dependence would also add to the strong power image that India is aspiring for. It would also be important for providing justification for its expanding aid outflow in the 21st century. This is particularly true in view of the fact that many of traditional donors to India such as UK expressed unwillingness to provide assistance to India on the grounds that it is an 'emerging donor' and a key player on the international economic stage, and not worthy anymore of receiving developmental assistance. P. Chidambaram, former Finance Minister had once said "We don't really need the aid. We have accepted it in the past, but I think both the countries have agreed that we can emphasize on trade rather than aid." Pranab Mukherjee, former President and Finance Minister, in the past had dismissed the funds as "peanuts" compared to

India's own spending. Talking specifically about India's changed attitude, it is often said that it is easy to accept its urge to reduce dependence on others, but not its keenness to increase its share of economic assistance to others when millions of its own people are still living below the poverty line.

Since liberalization of the Indian economy, India began to take the initiative to reduce its dependence on foreign aid bit by bit.

Economic liberalization of 1990s: First steps in aid reduction by India

In the 1990s, India initiated certain policy decisions and actions, which went a long way in gradually reducing India's dependence on foreign aid. The ball was set rolling by the liberalization of the Indian economy in the early 1990s, which emphasized on the replacement of aid by trade and a progressive shift from reliance on debt type of capital inflows to non-debt creating type of capital inflows (e.g. Direct Investment). Liberalization, coinciding with globalization, did give a temporary boost to aid-inflow as well as private capital inflow. As the investment environment became favourable, there was an improvement in growth rate, savings and capital formation, which was followed by high export and a favourable balance of trade and high foreign exchange reserve. These changes allowed India to depend more on domestic resources thus generated for its development work as well as meet disaster needs rather than depending much on the external resources. Montek Singh Ahluwalia, leader of the official team at the Aid India Consortium meeting at Paris in early 1990s, had said that foreign credits had ceased to play any developmental role; they were meant only to enable India to service its outstanding debt. In the early 2000s, the then Finance Minister, Jaswant Singh had made the first move to tell India's major donors that India no longer will be the end recipient of foreign aid (Sethi 2003: 4421). In the budget speech of 2003-2004 he said:

"Mr. Speaker, Sir, a stage has come in our development where we should now, firstly, review our dependence on external donors. Second, extend support to the national efforts of other developing countriies…. While being grateful to all our development partners of the past, I wish to announce that the government of India would now prefer to provide relief to certain bilateral partners, with smaller assistance packages, so that their resources can be transferred to specified non-governmental organizations (NGOs) in greater need of official development assistance" (Budget 2003-2004; Baru 2006: 198).

The guidelines issued by the Ministry of Finance in 2005 and 2015 to restrict aid inflow, quantitative shift in aid inflow and selected aid refusal would be useful in assessing initiatives taken to reduce aid dependence.

Government Guidelines of 2005 and 2015 : The government of India reviewed its policy of bilateral development co-operation in September 2004 in order to affirm the liberalization and reform orientation in India's economic policy. India's effort at stream-

lining its aid policy and reducing dependence was well exhibited in the 2 guidelines issued by the Ministry of Finance in 2005 and 2015 respectively. In 2005, revised guidelines were issued that superseded all earlier guidelines in this regard. As per the extant guidelines: i) The Government of India decided not to accept aid in areas where it has substantial control, ii) Bilateral development assistance was to be accepted from all G-8 countries, namely, U.S.A., UK, Japan, Germany, France, Italy, Canada and the Russian Federation as well as from the European Commission. iii) Bilateral development assistance could be received by the government, if the assistance was routed through or co-financed with a multilateral agency and the proposed programme/project was implemented by the multilateral agency under its own rules and procedures, iv) Tied aid was not to be accepted, v) European Union countries outside the G-8 could provide bilateral development assistance to India provided they committed a minimum annual development assistance of USD 25 million to India. vi) Technical assistance programmes aimed at enhancement of knowledge/skills of Indian nationals, vii) All Countries could continue to provide bilateral development assistance directly to autonomous institutions, universities, NGOs, etc through a simplified procedure, viii) Priority was to be given to aid with longer maturity periods and bearing lower interest rates so as to keep the burden of debt-servicing within manageable levels.

The Ministry of Finance in January 2015 issued a new set of guidelines where it stressed that: i) India would create additional infrastructure for which extensive capital investment was necessary, ii) Official Development Assistance may be accepted from other countries besides the existing bilateral partners, iii) Special Loans can be considered subject to the following criteria- minimum assistance from the bilateral partner shall be USD one billion in a year; promotion of "Make in India"; not more than 30 per cent of the total value of goods and services should be insisted to be sourced from the funding country; the rate of interest and tenure of the loan will be more concessional in comparison to the interest rate of normal loans and will be mutually agreed between the bilateral partners; the tenure of the special loan shall not be less than 40 years with not less than 10 years moratorium for repayment and individual projects with a minimum project cost of USD 250 million will only qualify for such special loans. The above guidelines clearly indicate that India does accept aid even today but on its own terms and conditions or without compromising on its dignity and priority.

Quantitative shifts in aid flow: Since the 1990s incremental change could be seen in the sources, quantum, nature of aid flow to the extent where it may probably be stated that India's dependence on foreign aid in 2019 has been curtailed. A closer analysis of the following shifts may possibly indicate the effort of India in the direction: First, India today receives foreign aid from lesser number of bilateral sources although the number of multilateral sources of aid flow to India has increased. Total number of donors to India has reduced. Dependence on non-G8 donors has reduced so much so that as in 2019 there is no disbursement from Austria, Australia, Belgium, Denmark, Spain,

Italy, Kuwait, Saudi Arabia, Sweden, Abu Dhabi Fund, Republic of Czech and Slovak, Hungry, Iran, Iraq, New Zealand, Norway, Poland, Romania, UAE and Yugoslavia.' Second, in terms of per cent of Gross Domestic Product (GDP), the year-wise aid receipt figures show that since 1995-96, aid receipt or utilization figure has been less than 1% of GDP. In 2017-18, India's aid receipt stood at 0.28 percent of India's GDP (Table 1). Third, there is a reduction in net aid flow with pre-payment and repayment of loans in order to reduce debt pressure which had triggered a balance of payment crisis in 1991 (Table 2). However, there is no consistency in this regard. The debt policy emphasized on concessional and less expensive loans having longer maturity profiles, monitoring of short-term debt, premature retirement of high-cost external loans and encouraging non-debt creating capital flows. It was Dr. Manmohan Singh, Minister of Finance who in his 1994-95 budget speech expressed the desire of the government to prepay some high cost debts. He said, "the reliance on capital flow is being shifted progressively from debt type inflows to non-debt creating type of flows e.g. Direct Investment. So this is a qualitative improvement." The desire of the government to prepay was also expressed by Prime Minister AB Vajpayee's NDA government in 2003-04 when the then Finance Minister, Jaswant Singh said "….taking advantage of our comfortable foreign exchange reserves and lower domestic interest rates, the government has effected premature repayment of 'high-cost' currency pool loans of the World Bank, and of the Asian Development Bank totaling around three billion dollars. We intend to continue with this policy of prudently managing the external liabilities and of proactively liquidating relatively higher cost component of our external debt portfolio". In 1999, India was upgraded to a less indebted country category from a moderately indebted country (Status Report: 2004). The Government of India prematurely repaid a significant part of both multilateral and bilateral loans raised under external assistance programmes except those of Japan, Germany, USA and France. Debt owed to Austria, Australia, Belgium, Canada, Denmark, Spain, Italy, Kuwait, Netherlands, Saudi Arabia and Sweden was fully pre-paid during 2003-2004. A Japanese loan of US$61.1 million was prepaid in 2006-07'. N Janardhan Rao said "It's a new India. It's a new journey- a journey from poverty to prosperity, from tradition to modernity, from a nation protected in the garb of license raj to a nation ready to compete on the global firmament" (Rao 2005: 37).

Selected Aid refusal: India generally received aid to meet developmental need and needs arising from disasters or natural calamities. While development aid is primarily meant to assist in the socio-economic elevation and flows in a planned systematic manner involving a cumbersome process, disaster aid is more often humanitarian relief provided during emergency posed by natural or man-made disasters. Moreover, while the former comes mostly in the form of repayable loans, the latter comes in the form of non-repayable grant. At times donors do not meet original aid pledges made immediately after the disaster and there is also delay in providing assistance as witnessed in Kashmir and NWFP in Pakistan during the catastrophic earthquake of 8 October 2005 (Ozerdem

2006: 403). Often it is expected that aid should be provided for disaster preparedness rather than relief. 'Funds for humanitarian assistance tend to be event-based and are provided in response to a disaster. In such instances the donors want their money to go directly to disaster relief rather than disaster preparedness' (Thomas 2006: 86). Moreover, when the amount is given towards relief work there is continuous eagerness among donors to know how the money has been spent.

The government of India in the 21st century has been refusing to accept disaster relief aid for instance during Latur earthquake in 1993, Gujarat earthquake in 2001 and Bengal floods in 2002. But since the Tsunami of 2004 when giant Indian Ocean waves killed thousands of people and rendered lakhs of people homeless, India categorically said that it was capable of taking care of such crisis. The then Prime Minister, Dr. Manmohan Singh said, "We feel that we can cope up with the situation on our own and we will take their help if needed," but clarified that should the need arise later, the decision would be reconsidered (Kasturi 2013). Later India did allow United Nations, World Bank, IMF and private agencies to help (Roy Choudhury 2018: 3). The government of India refused to accept international aid to recover from the Kashmir earthquake in 2005, which killed and displaced thousands of families. Further, New Delhi also turned down bilateral assistance from foreign countries for the Uttarakhand calamity of 2013. India made it clear to both the US and Japan, which offered $200,000 towards Uttarakhand relief, that it will not accept aid and that any funding may be given to NGOs of the foreign governments' choice. "As a general policy in case of rescue and relief operations, we have followed the practice that we have adequate ability to respond to emergency requirements," said External Affairs Ministry spokesperson Syed Akbaruddin' (Kasturi 2013). The whole debate surrounding aid refusal to deal with the Kerala Flood crisis was not just another instance hinting at the recent stand of India with regard to dependence on aid. It brings to the forefront the implications for India's future foreign aid policy and the involvement of its people on this policy issue.

Conclusion

There are certain interesting conclusions that can be drawn from the above discussion:

(i) India is still in the process of reducing its dependence on foreign aid. Aid dependence has not ceased to exist altogether but at the most limited to accepting aid, particularly development aid, from multilateral donors.

(ii) Out of all the initiatives, disaster aid refusal is perhaps one of the most important steps indicating India's urge to reduce its aid dependence. At the time when India is competing with other emerging donors to carve out a place for itself as a major donor through its own comprehensive foreign aid program, asking for disaster aid would not show the country in good light. Besides, India realizes that the real

strength of a country depends on its ability to deal with major national disaster on its own other than acquiring military and technological capability. It is for India to show how much resource it can generate from within the country to help in the relief and rehabilitation of the state. It has been asserted that 'the repeated rejection of foreign aid is widely seen as an assertion of India's self- worth – that the country does not need handouts and is, instead, a giver of aid.' (Joshua 2018:4)

(iii) India's refusal to accept aid for immediate relief for the victims of Kerala floods was significant in engaging large section of Indian people including Indian Diaspora in expressing their opinion on the issue and generating a renewed interest in assessing India's effort at reducing aid dependence. Generally, engagement with foreign aid related matters has been the preserve of diplomats, researchers in think tanks, journalists and the union government. The people of the country got to know that India is also an enthusiastic aid giver. A great chunk of India's ITEC (Indian Technical and Economic Cooperation Plan) programme caters to disaster relief to the developing world since 1999-2000. Medicines and medical equipment, food, blankets, tents and other forms of assistance worth billions of rupees have been given by India to deal with emergencies emerging from drought, flood, earthquake, cyclones etc particularly in Asia, Africa and Latin America. It extended assistance to Philippines, Myanmar, Nepal and had also sent Indian air force craft with 25 tonnes of relief supplies at the Little Rock air force base in Arkansas for victims of hurricane Katrina in the US in 2006. After the 2008 Sicilian earthquake in China, Indian Air force aircraft had also delivered relief materials to victims.

(iv) The issue of aid refusal or aid acceptance for any similar situation in future cannot be settled very easily since fingers would be pointed at India's own aid program. It may be argued that if India is not willing to take emergency help, then the government might as well stay away from extending help to others in such situation. But in that case, what would happen to the so called 'moral responsibility' of India or even the 'power ambition' or 'image changing' that comes with extending help to others. The issue is a complex one. There are multiple explanations that may be given. First, since we live in an interdependent world, it may perhaps be said that aid needs to be accepted, if offered, during any emergency and this cannot be linked to the prestige of the nation. The difference between development aid and disaster aid perhaps is one where development cost may be phased out over a period of time but reconstruction following a natural calamity demands work at a war footing because restoring basic infrastructure or building home for those becoming suddenly homeless cannot wait for long. Hence it is difficult for the people to refuse offer of aid during such situation. Thus, in such situations, perhaps it should not matter whether a country is developed or developing. A developed country may also have to take help during such situation as USA had to when it was struck by Hurricane Katrina in September 2005. It had requested European

Union for extending emergency help by providing water, medical kit, blanket etc. In this situation aid was also offered by countries like India, Afghanistan, and even Bangladesh among many others. India offered $5 million and supplied, water, hygiene kit etc. This is to say that huge aid flow takes place due to humanitarianism, and any country can be at the receiving end during such emergency. In fact, it may perhaps be stated that countries may need to prioritize aid acceptance from other countries. Emerging economies like India may perhaps have to be willing to curtail development assistance from other counties since the country could in a planned manner generate its own internal resources for the said purpose but natural calamities are emergencies and when the degree of devastation is high, the people may have the expectation to accept aid from outside. It is difficult to estimate disaster related expense. The scale of destruction and the cost that it would incur cannot always be estimated in advance. Alternatively there should be a planned way of keeping sufficient balance in the central and state relief fund so that any kind of emergency can be handled without having to wait too long for the contribution to come from within the country. The aid debate in the case of the Kerala floods will definitely be an important milestone in shaping future disaster-aid related policy of India.

Table- 1

Year-wise Aid utilisation by India as a per cent of GDP

Year	Total aid utilization in billion rupees	GDP (market price) at current price (base year: 2004-05) for 1990-91 to 2011-12 and (base year 2011-12) for 2012-13 to 2017-18	Aid utilization as a per cent of GDP
1990-91	67.04	5862.12	1.14
1991-92	116.15	6738.75	1.72
1992-93	109.82	7745.45	1.14
1993-94	117.81	8913.55	1.32
1994-95	108.81	10455.90	1.04
1995-96	110.23	12267.25	0.90
1996-97	119.79	14192.77	0.84
1997-98	117.44	15723.94	0.75
1998-99	132.39	18033.78	0.73
1999-2000	144.05	20231.30	0.71

Year	Total aid utilization in billion rupees	GDP (market price) at current price (base year: 2004-05) for 1990-91 to 2011-12 and (base year 2011-12) for 2012-13 to 2017-18	Aid utilization as a per cent of GDP
2000-01	142.54	21774.13	0.65
2001-02	175.60	23558.45	0.74
2002-03	157.37	25363.27	0.62
2003-04	173.53	28415.03	0.61
2004-05	170.83	32422.09	0.53
2005-06	188.31	36933.69	0.51
2006-07	192.88	42947.06	0.45
2007-08	198.50	49870.90	0.40
2008-09	269.24	56300.36	0.48
2009-10	312.36	64778.27	0.48
2010-11	380.12	77841.15	0.49
2011-12	322.75	90097.22	0.36
2012-13	278.68	99440.13	0.28
2013-14	352,09	112335.22	0.31
2014-15	367.49	124679.59	0.29
2015-16	425.66	137640.37	0.31
2016-17	486.54	152537.14	0.32
2017-18	469.36	167731.45	0.28

I. All Amounts in billion Rupees

II. Per cent calculated on GDP (Market price) at current price considering base year 2004-05 for period between 1990-91 to 2010-11 and base year 2011-12 for period between 2011-12 to 2017-18

Source: RBI Handbook of Indian economy 2017, 2018

Table 2
Yearwise Debt Service Payment and Net inflow of Foreign Aid

Year	DEBT SERVICE PAYMENT			NET INFLOW OF AID in billion rupees
	Amortisation	Interest payment	Total	
1990-91	23.29	19.54	42.83	24.21
1991-92	36.50	30.06	66.56	49.59
1992-93	47.88	39.61	87.49	22.33
1993-94	53.52	41.99	95.51	22.30
1994-95	57.91	46.35	104.26	4.55
1995-96	75.66	50.82	126.48	-16.25
1996-97	70.70	48.70	119.40	0.39
1997-98	75.50	47.95	123.45	-6.01
1998-99	88.80	51.92	140.72	-8.33
1999-2000	96.86	54.80	151.66	-7.61
2000-01	116.62	54.29	170.91	-28.37
2001-02	107.05	52.56	159.61	15.99
2002-03	289.76	53.90	343.66	-186.29
2003-04	279.70	38.43	318.13	-144.60
2004-05	95.68	32.59	128.27	42.56
2005-06	83.60	36.55	120.15	68.16
2006-07	89.80	33.52	134.33	58.55
2007-08	85.93	46.27	132.20	66.30
2008-09	110.87	48.52	159.39	109.85
2009-10	123.95	41.63	165.58	146.78
2010-11	132.09	35.97	168.06	212.06
2011-12	155.07	39.26	194.33	128.42
2012-13	186.27	44.66	230.93	47.74
2013-14	218.13	42.60	260.73	91.37
2014-15	247.56	41.28	288.84	78.65
2015-16	270.20	43.19	313.39	112.28
2016-17	313.19	57.03	370.22	116.32
2017-18	266.86	57.80	324.66	144.70

Source: Ministry of Finance, Government of India Accessed from : RBI Handbook of Statistics on Indian economy 201, 2018, Table 145

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Police corruption in Bangladesh: An empirical study

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Abstract

In Bangladesh, corruption is rampant in different sectors, be they public or private, and has become a national malady. The Bangladesh Police has by now got disrepute as one of the most corrupt institutions. This paper mainly explores the types and techniques of police corruption in Bangladesh based on a small sample survey from Paikgacha Upazila (sub-district) of Khulna District. The study finds that bribery, gratuities, kickbacks, shakedowns, and falsifying evidence are the major forms of police corruption in the study area. Majority of the respondents reported bribery as the most common type of corruption committed by police members. The police commit corruption by using several techniques, such as threat fear, physical torture, mental torture, excessive force, abusive word and political party pressure. Showing fear was mentioned by more than half of the respondents. The implications of the study findings are enormous for further research and policy reforms including the police reform program and the anti-corruption initiatives as well as awareness rising in the community.

Key words: Police, Corruption, Bangladesh, Perception, Experience.

Introduction

Corruption is a widely discussed social, political and economic issue of today's Bangladesh. Bangladesh was listed as one of the top corrupt countries as per the Transparency International's (TI) corruption perception index (Chowdhury, 2003). Corruption is undoubtedly one of the main barriers for the development for any country (UNODC, 2019). According to a Transparency International Bangladesh (TIB) survey, 66.5 percent of the households suffered from corruption in 18 service-oriented sectors in Bangladesh (The Daily Star, August 31, 2018).

The police in many countries are corrupt but not as corrupt as the police in South Asia including Bangladesh (Suddle, 2006). In 2017, law enforcement was the most corrupt

sector in Bangladesh and 72.5 percent of the households there were victims of corruption by law enforcement agencies (The Bangla Tribune, August 30, 2018). This is consistent with prior surveys. More than 70 percent households reported that they bribed the police (UNDP Bangladesh, 2007; Chowdhury, 2003).

A number of factors—low salary, absence of updated performance appraisal systems, inadequate logistics and facilities and absence of effective internal and external accountability mechanisms can be attached to police corruption in South Asia (Suddle, 2006). Prominent causes of corruption in police administration of Bangladesh include the lack of accountability, discretionary power, lack of transparency, influence of powerful people, and the menace of red tape, and absence of appropriate laws (Rahman, 2019; ADB, 2006; TIB, 2012).

Public confidence in police is associated with social order and economic development (Rahman, 2010; 2019). In citizens' eyes, the quality of police service reflects the quality of the government system and forms of good governance. According to a baseline public attitude survey conducted by the UNDP in 2006, bribery, negligence of duty, bad behavior with less powerful citizens, and corruption are the key obstacles to obtaining justice in Bangladesh (UNDP Bangladesh, 2007). The lack of public confidence in police activities is linked to the prevalence of police corruption. In Bangladesh, the police have become synonymous with terror and ferocity (Haque, 2006). The level of politeness of police is very low in Bangladesh (Rahman, 2010; Kashem, 2003; Huda, 2006). Police who are untrustworthy may create fear and anxiety among the general public for which the public do not cooperate police. In his series of studies of Kashem (2000, 2001, 2002 2003, & 2005) reported that the general public is dissatisfied with the quality of police work. On the average, between 80 and 85 percent of the citizens of Bangladesh believe that police are not doing good job and rate police work is extremely poor.

The police are reluctant about fair procedures during arrest, during interrogation, or investigation (Rahman, 2010, 2019; Rahman & Hossain, 2014; Kashem, 2002; Shahjahan, 2006; Huda, 2006). Misbehavior with complainants, harassment and arrest of innocent persons, misconduct with traffic violators, illegal detention and detention for longer period in the lock up, custodial violence, and creating scope for earning illegal money are different types police malpractices in Bangladesh (Huda, 2006; Rahman, 2010; Rahman & Hossain, 2014). The police use torture, crossfire and even extra-judicial killing, and even involve themselves in rape, robbery and extortion (Ain-O-Salish Kendro, 2010).

In Bangladesh, the law enforcement agencies (police, BDR, Ansar) committed 46 percent of total corruption (by all sectors) in 1997 and 30 percent in 2000 (Ahmad, 2005). Police members perform corruption by the way of misuse of power, taking bribe, doing embezzlement and extortion, adopting misuse of resources and negligence of duty (Ahmad, 2005). The recent TIB survey still finds the police as the most corrupt among eighteen service-oriented sectors of Bangladesh (Table 1).

India has the police at the top as well (Table 1). In a survey conducted in India in 2005 by the Transparency International India, police were ranked highest among nine public services on its corruption index (Transparency International India, 2005). Police corruption in India has long been associated with extortion and brutality (Verma, 1999). Embedded in various deviant practices in India, the cultural roots of police corruption can be traced to the British colonialism (Verma, 1999). Lee (2018) argues that pretty police corruption is more pervasive and less subtle in India compared to China. Among other South Asian countries, the law enforcement is perceived as the most corrupt sectors in Bangladesh and Sri Lanka, and Nepal is less prone to police corruption but more to land administration sector (Table 1). A study conducted by the Safer World in Nepal showed that for recruitment as a post of assistant sub inspector, US$ 4,600 to 7,700 was paid bribe, and for inspector position, US$ 7,700 to 10,800 was paid (Dhurgana, 2007).

Table 1. Three Most Corrupt Sectors by Countries

Countries	Sector (Percent of respondents who perceived)		
Bangladesh	Police (39%)	Health (25%)	Land Administration (18%)
India	Police	Health	Power
Nepal	Land administration (50%)	Customs (41%)	Police (24%)
Pakistan	Police (28%)	Power (15%)	Taxation (13%)
Sri Lanka	Police (39%)	Health (5%)	Education (4%)

Source: Transparency International (2012)

Police were the fourth most corrupt public institution among 86 countries following the top three --- political parties' public officials, parliaments and legislature (Transparency International, 2010). In Africa, police commit 4.6 percent, political parties commit 4.2 percent corruption, legal system judiciary 4 percent, and educational system 3.8 percent (TI, 2006). In Asia Pacific, police commit 3.8 percent, political parties 4 percent, judiciary 3.3 percent, and educational system 3.1 percent (TI, 2006). The police have become "a symbol of unfettered corruption, mismanagement, and abuse in Nigeria (Human Rights Watch, 2011). According to the Global Corruption Barometer (2013), 75 percent of the surveyed respondents paid a bribe during the past 12 months in Liberia.

While many Western countries conduct public perceptions of the police study on regular basis, there is no such attempt from the government or police authorities in Bangladesh. Police corruption remains as one of the under-researched topics here. The study of police corruption is essential for a number of reasons. Various studies indicate

the lack of public confidence in the police due to police corruption (Rahman, 2010, 2019). More than two thirds of Bangladeshi citizens were dissatisfied with police behavior and attitude (UNDP Bangladesh, 2007). More than one-fifths of the citizens are not willing to go to the police if they are threatened with violence (Saferworld, 2008).

Although around two-thirds of the residents of Dhaka City had confidence, trust and overall satisfaction in the police and were positive about some characteristics of the police (i.e., politeness, responsibility, responsiveness to the needs and competence), more than two thirds of respondents were very negative for police corrupt practices (Rahman, 2010; Rahman, & Akter, 2015).

United Nations Development Program (UNDP) Bangladesh has undertaken some reform initiatives to reform the police by modernizing the force, yet police corruption has continued at an alarming rate. Police reform measures must address the public perceptions of police corruption. Police makers and practitioners have to develop measures to address police deviance, corruption, misconduct and abuse of power based on the findings of the study. This study is aimed to investigate the forms and nature of police corruption in a subdistrict - Paikgacha Upazila under Khulna District of Bangladesh. There is hardly any study on police corruption at sub-district level so far. This study

1. What are the patterns of police corruption in Bangladesh?
2. What are the techniques of police corruption in Bangladesh?

Corruption, Police and Police Corruption

Corruption is a global phenomenon. It has been found in every society in one or the other form since time immemorial. In ancient times, the judges received bribes in Egyptian, Babylonian and Hebrew societies. In Rome, bribe was a common feature in elections to public offices. In France, judicial offices were sold during the fifteenth century. England was described as a 'sink-hole' of corruption in the seventeenth and the eighteenth centuries as well as in the nineteenth century (Gibbon, 1994).

In India, giving bribery is a common act that is considered Adharma, i.e., sin as per Hindu scripture. Kautilya, in his 'Arthasastra' reports the prevalence of embezzlement of state revenue by government servants during the ancient time in India. About forty ways of embezzlement is mentioned in Arthasastra. While the movements of birds flying high up in the sky could be marked, it was impossible to ascertain the secret movements of government servants (Samasastry,1967).

Corruption, a complex social, political and economic phenomenon, affects democratic institutions, economic development and governance of a country (UNODC, 2019). There are many competing definitions of corruption given by academicians, thinkers, researchers and governments. Corruption generally refers to "the misuse of power to obtain an illegitimate gain" (Kratcoski, & Edelbacher, 2018, pp. 3). It may involve "the

commission of a variety of act defined as criminal, such as bribery, extortion, graft, embezzlement, and various forms of fraud" (Kratcoski, & Edelbacher, 2018, pp. 3). According to Punch (1985), corruption occurs "when an official receives or is promised significant advantage or reward (personal, group or organizational) for doing something that he is under a duty to do anyway, that he is under a duty not to do, for exercising a legitimate discretion for improper reasons, and for employing illegal means to achieve approved goals."

Sutherland (1940) identifies corruption as white-collar crime '(i.e., those crimes committed in the course of occupations). Corruption occurs when one who has the power commits an illegal act "to determine the outcome of some matter such as a financial matter (obtaining a contract), a political matter (bribing a political official), or a personal matter (obtaining rewards of a sexual nature) to obtain benefits not deserved" (Kratcoski, & Edelbacher, 2018, pp. 3). Transparency International, a Berlin-based international NGO that leads in curbing corruption defines corruption "the abuse of entrusted power for personal gain". Bribery, embezzlement, fraud and extortion constitute the main forms of corruption. The Bangladeshi Code of Criminal Procedure 1898 section 161 defines corruption as illegal gratification that includes not only the pecuniary benefits as well as other types of gratification.

The term 'police' has no universal definition or meaning, and the idea of police has evolved over time (Klokars, 1985). According to the principles expounded by Sir Robert Peel – the creator of the London Metropolitan Police and the Royal Irish Constabulary, the police is the public and the public is the police. As per the Police Act of 1861, based on which the Bangladesh Police was created, the police are responsible for: preventing crime, protecting the safety of citizens and anyone else in the country, maintaining peace, law and order, investigating complaints and crimes, including identifying witnesses and securing evidence and identifying and arresting suspects, making sure witnesses are brought to Court, and serving summonses and executing warrants of arrest (UNDP Bangladesh, 2015).

Police corruption involves abuse of power and misconduct of police officers. Roebuck and Barker (1974) define police corruption as 'deviant, dishonest, improper, unethical or criminal behavior by a police officer'. According to Sherman (1974), police corruption means accepting money or money's worth for doing something that a policeman is under a duty to do or to exercise legitimate discretion for improper reason. Fjeldstad (2008) characterizes police corruption as an act where a member of the police department uses his/her position, his/her rights to make decisions, access to information, or other resources of the organization, to the advantage of a third party and thereby receives money or other economically valuable goods or services where either the payment itself or the services provided are illegal and/or against the organization's own aims or rules.

The term 'police corruption' may refer different activities: bribery; violence and brutality; fabrication and destruction of evidence; racism; and, favoritism or nepotism.

(Newburn, 1999). According to Newburn (1999), police corruption has some features: it is pervasive – i.e., corrupt practices are found in some form in a great many police agencies in all societies; it is a continuing problem – i.e., there is evidence of corrupt practices from all stages of police history, and it is not simply financial – corrupt activities go beyond bribery and extortion. Three forms of corruption can be found among the police members identifies three forms of police corruption: a) only a few isolated policemen accept bribes; b) a large number of officers (lower and higher ranks) take bribes but they are not joined together to form networks of corruptions, and c) pervasive organized corruption (Sherman, 1974).

Roebuck and Barker (1974) identifies nine major types of police corruption, i.e. corruption of authority, kickbacks (receipts of goods), opportunistic theft, shakedowns (acceptance of bribe for noncriminal reasons), protection of illegal activities, the fix (undermining criminal investigations), direct criminal activities, internal payoff and flacking or padding (alteration of evidence). Police can receive fees for referring arrested suspects to bail bond agents and defense attorney (Kickbacks). Police officers accept money from citizens in lieu of enforcing the law (shakedowns). Police involve in predatory criminal activities, either directly or through complicity with criminals (Planned theft and robbery). Police have numerous opportunities to pilfer valuable items named jewelry and other goods from the scene of a burglary or from a suspect (Opportunistic theft).

Police commit corruption for multiple factors or reasons. "Police officers act corruptly when, in exercising or failing to exercise their authority, they act with the primary intention of furthering private or departmental/divisional advantage" (Kleinig, 1996:166). It is often argued that power tends to corruption and absolute power corrupts absolutely. As our law gives absolute power to the police, they do corruption as well. Two major factors of police corruption: 'constant' and 'variable factors' (Sherman, 974). The constant factors of police corruption include discretion, low managerial visibility, low public visibility, peer group secrecy, managerial secrecy, status problems, and association with lawbreakers/contact with temptation are, while community structure, organizational characteristics, legal opportunities for corruption and moral cynicism are considered as variable factors (Newburn, 1999).

Police Corruption in Bangladesh

Police corruption is a very serious problem in Bangladesh. Since its independence in 1971, police corruption has been increasing at an alarming rate, and it has, by now, been rooted like cancer in the society. The Bangladesh Police is the main law enforcement agency. The law enforcement agencies include various branches according to function, such as the local (thana) police, traffic police, the Rapid Action Battalion (RAB), industrial police, Tourist police, and Highway police (Rahman, 2019; Khondaker, Kashem, & Rahman, 2019; TIB, 2012). The security sector of Bangladesh includes the Bangladesh Armed Forces,

Bangladesh Rifles (BDR), Bangladesh Police, Rapid Action Battalion (RAB), Bangladesh Ansar & Village Defence Party (VDP) and the secret services (Uddin, 2009). The media have always published reports of police corruption. Police have been hugely alleged for their involvement in corruption from recruitment to operational stage (Uddin, 2009).

The Regulation 33(a) of the Police Regulation of Bengal says, "No Police force can work successfully unless it wins the respect and good-will of the public and secures its cooperation (Police Regulation of Bengal, 1861). All ranks, therefore, while being firm in the execution of their duty, must show forbearance, civility and courtesy towards all classes". Various legal measures such as the Code of Criminal Procedure, the Prevention of Corruption Act, the Penal Code, and the Money Laundering Prevention Act, and the police Regulations of Bengal criminalize corruption, extortion, bribery and using public resources or confidential state information for private gain. Bangladesh has also acceded the United Nations' anti-corruption convention. Yet, the police have remained as one of the most corrupt institutions in Bangladesh (Rahman, 2010; TIB, 2004, 2005, 2012, ADB, 2006).

According to an earlier survey conducted by Transparency International Bangladesh (TIB), more than 90 percent of respondents experienced harassment by the police in the form of corruption (about 41 percent), misconduct (about 22 percent), threats of torture (about 11 percent), false FIR/charge sheet/case file/negligence in filing cases (about 11 percent) and others (about 7 percent) (TIB, 2004). In rural areas, over 90 percent of rural household respondents, who went to the police to make a general diary (GD) entry, had to pay bribe (TIB, 2005). TIB's 2010 survey identified some of the main reasons for paying a bribe: for lodging a complaint (74.7 percent of the households) followed by for avoiding arrest (38.1 percent), for properly lodging charge sheets (11.4%), and for avoiding torture (11.1%).

According to a recent study (Rahman, 2010), about 97 percent of the respondents in the City of Dhaka viewed the police as corrupt, and more than 85 percent of them believed the police abuse their power and were involved in the acquittal of criminals through their abuse of authority. More than 18 percent of the respondents expressed their unwillingness to call the police in case of any incidence of crime at home in the future (Rahman, 2010).

The study conducted by the UNDP Bangladesh –the initiator of the PRP revealed that low salaries, lack of skills, negligence of duty and practice of bribe and corruption of police (more than 70 percent respondents reported), social and political interference in police work (more than 70 percent respondents reported), harassment of harmless and good citizens, lack of community-police relations (more than 90 percent households reported), unwillingness to report to the police, maltreatment of powerless, the poor and females (more than 90 percent victims reported), and absence of neutrality in police work are major problems of the law and order that affect the levels of public satisfaction in the police service. The baseline study found that more than 70 percent respondents

were dissatisfied with police behavior, and police attitudes were particularly bad toward poor and vulnerable people (UNDP Bangladesh, 2007).

According to the 2002 TIB report, police committed 20.67 percent of corruption whereas local government 11.67 percent, education sector 10.93 percent, health sector 7.8 percent and other sectors48.92 percent (TIB, 2002). In a recent study of TIB, the law enforcement agency (committed 75.8 percent of total corruption by all sectors) stands in the first position for corruption in Bangladesh (TIB, 2010). The 2005 TIB study on the police corruption indicates that 92 percent people who lodges FIR to the police station had to pay average 2,430 taka as bribe, 91percent households who registered GD to the police station paid 939 taka as bribe, 80 percent household who takes clearance certificate paid 881 taka as bribe and the 77 percent household of the accused pay for 5,718 taka as for bribe (TIB, 2005).

According to Transparency International's Global Corruption Barometer 2011, 82 percent of the citizens who came into contact with the police identify police as one of the most corrupt institutions in the country (TI, 2011). More that 80 percent of respondents gave bribe to the police in the last 12 months (TI, 2011). In Bangladesh, the police force is purposively used by the political government to maintain their control of the political arena (Nawaz, 2012). The police often use torture, physical abuse and arbitrary detention (Freedom House, 2011).

According to the Global Integrity (2010), nepotism and political affiliations are common factors that influence recruitment in the Bangladesh Police. Bribery is widely used to recruit, transfer and promote police officers. It is also the fact that police officers have very low salaries and difficult working conditions in Bangladesh (Nawaz, 2012), and this situation lead to high levels of bribe-taking and extortion (Freedom House, 2011). Moreover, extrajudicial killings by security forces, arbitrary detention, deaths in police custody as well as harassment and torture of opposition leaders, journalists and activists are widely visible in Bangladesh (Freedom House, 2011). While looking at their opportunities, the police force of Bangladesh lacks adequate resources to be able to properly undertake their duty and the lack of funds makes the institution more vulnerable to corruption and undue influence.

According to a recent report published by the Transparency International Bangladesh, people don't make complains against a crime without paying bribes to the police (TIB, 2010). People expect that police will save them from being victim of crime. But in our country many crime victims never call the police for various reasons such as: a) they don't believe that police can help them i.e., many believe that calling the police make no difference since police can neither capture the offender nor recover stolen property; b) reporting cause too much inconvenience i.e. fear of harassment by the police; c) they are corrupt and would not help the victim without paying bribe to them (Kashem, 2001). The same TIB report states, 91.5 percent of the people pay illegally in a metropolitan police station, 85.7 percent in a district level police station, and 81.64 percent in a thana

level police station. In a study (Ahmed, 2011) on police users' views about their service in Dhaka Metropolitan Area, 34 percent of the respondents who paid speed money for the police service paid speed money willingly while the vast majority (66 per cent paid) unwillingly. Among the reasons for providing graft twice, 29 percent reported follow-up investigation, 50 percent who paid once was filing police case and 47 percent reported recovering dues. Moreover, in case of graft taking, every time, it took place among users who went to police stations for reasons of meeting prisoners (23%) and resolving conflicts (17%).

Method of Study :

The study is quantitative in nature as it was based on survey on a convenient sample of 31 respondents from a purposively selected police district called Paikgacha Upazil under Khulna District. The study used a questionnaire schedule for face-to-face interviewing of the selected respondents as the literacy rate is low in the study area. Respondents who were willing to participate in the survey were interviewed. The collected data were coded carefully for analysis. This processing (included coding) was done with the help of SPSS program through computer. The data were analyzed with primarily descriptive statistical tools.

Table 1 presents the socio-demographic characteristics of the respondents of the study. Among the 31 respondents surveyed, all respondents were male, and the average age was 31 years (Table 1). The majority of the respondents fell between 41 years and older (45 percent) of age followed by 29 percent (31-40 years) and 26 percent (20-30 years). In terms of education,

Table 1 : Socio-Demographic Characteristics of the Respondents (n=31)

Variables	Frequency	Percent
Age Group		
Young (20-30)	8	25.81
Adult (31-40)	9	29.03
More than 41	14	45.16
Level of Education		
Primary	8	25.80
S.S.C	7	22.58
H.S.C	10	32.26
Honors and Masters	6	19.35
Occupational Status		
Public service	5	16.13

Variables	Frequency	Percent
Private service	3	9.68
Business	17	54.84
Other (Labor)	6	19.35
Monthly Income Level (Taka)		
3000-5500	10	33.30
5501-7000	5	16.65
7001-9500	6	19.98
9501-14500	9	29.97

majority (32 percent) of them were Higher secondary certificate (HSC) graduates, followed by primary (26 percent), Secondary school certificate (SSC) (23 percent) and the rest (13 percent) were higher educated (Honors and masters). Most of the respondents (55 percent) were businessmen followed by public service holders (16 percent), private service (10 percent), others (about 19 percent). Among the respondents, 33 percent had monthly income bracket of Tk. 3000 to 5500 followed by Tk.9500 to 12000 (23 percent) and the rest with Tk. 14500 to 17000 (3 percent).

Findings and Discussion

Perception and experienced corruption

Table 2 : Perceptions and Experienced Corruption

Variables	Frequency	Percent
Attitude toward police (n=31)		
Police are good	6	19.35
Police are bad	15	48.39
No idea	10	32.25
Perception about corruption (n=15)		
Perceive that police are corrupt	14	93.33
Does not perceive that police are corrupt	1	6.66
Corruption experienced at police station (n=28)		
Faced corruption	25	89.29
Did not face corruption	3	10.71

This study showed that only about 19 percent respondents rated police as good, about

48 percent bad and the remaining did not report their attitude (Table 2). An overwhelming majority (about 93 percent) of the respondents perceived that police are corrupt, and more than 89 percent of the respondents reported that they experienced corruption at police station (Table 2). This finding is consistent with the finding of a TIB 2010 survey that 91.2 percent of households who received services from law enforcement agencies experienced corruption perpetrated by thana police.

The study revealed that the public attitude towards the police is generally negative, which is consistent with previous studies and reports (Rahman, 2010, Kashem, 2002, 2003; Saferworld 2008; UNDP, 2007). Prior studies indicate that the general public is dissatisfied with the quality of police work, believe that the police are not doing a good job, and rate police service is extremely poor, indicating that the police are impolite, dishonest, corrupt and not dedicated (Kashem & Bhuyin, 1998; Kashem, 2000, 2001, 2002; TIB, 2003, 2005; Huda, 2006, 2009; Khondaker & Lambert, 2009; Rahman, 2010). These studies argue that the police rarely use fair procedure in apprehending criminals /suspects and given the very low confidence in the police, many crime victims never call the police for various reasons including fear of further retaliation, or harassment by the police, corruption, and ineffectiveness.

Techniques of police corruption

Table 3 : Types of corruption

Variables	Frequency	Percent
Types of corruption experienced at police station		
Gratuities	2	8.00
Bribes	15	60.00
Theft of property	2	8.00
Falsifying evidence	3	12.00
Kickbacks	1	4.00
Shakedowns	2	8.00
Total	25	100.00

The study finds the police at Paikgacha used different types of corrupt practices at police station, outside police station and after arrest (Table 3). Bribery is the most common form of police corruption. Falsifying evidence, gratuities, shakedowns, and theft were also used by the police in Paikgacha area. The study also finds that the police also resort to kickbacks (Table 3).

Table 4: Techniques of police corruption at police station

Variables	Frequency	Percent
Technique used for corruption at police station (n = 25)		
Physical torture	1	4.00
Mental torture	1	4.00
Excessive force	4	16.00
Showing threat	14	56.00
Abusive word	3	12.00
Political party pressure	2	8.00
Total	25	100.00

The study identified that majority of the respondents (above 40 percent) in all three cases (at police station, outside police station and after arrest) reported showing fear as technique of corrupt practice followed by excessive force (12 percent and/or above in three cases), abusive word (8 percent to 12 percent) and political pressure (8 percent) and mental torture, physical torture (about 4 percent to 13 percent). Physical torture and excessive force were found higher after arrest than at or outside police station, while showing fear was found lower after arrest than at or outside police station (Table 4).

Suggestions for Controlling Police Corruption

The findings of the study are critical to the police reform in Bangladesh, particularly concerning the salient issues of police corruption. Police malpractices and loss of police legitimacy can also make people disrespectful toward the police and non-compliant with the law (Bradford, Stanko, & Jackson, 2009; Sherman, 1992; Tyler, 1990). Public perceptions of the police must be improved by addressing the factors of police corruption (e.g., police misconduct, abuse of power and bribery practices) that are associated with the satisfaction with police service in Bangladesh.

The government and policy makers need to enhance the image of the police and to improve the quality of police service in Bangladesh. Negative attitudes toward the police result in mutual ill feelings, lack of respect, disorder and inefficient police functioning (Cao & Burton, 2006; Brown, Benedict, & Wilkinson, 2006; Redlet, 1986). Salary, training, facilities, equipment, and logistics must be tailored to the needs. Bangladesh Police incorporated various units like RAB (Rapid Action Battalion), Highway Police, Industrial Police, Marine Police, Special Police Squad, APBN, Police Investigation Bureau (PIB). Community policing approach has been increasingly supported following the model police station (Rahman, 2010). The impacts of Model Thanas introduced under the PRP

have been found positive in several studies (PRP, 2009; Rahman, 2011; Kashem, et al, 2009).

To discourage corruption, exemplary punishment to corrupt police members must take place on regular basis redressing the culture of immunity and impunity, and the political interference that constitute the major issues for police reform in Bangladesh (Rahman, 2010; 2019). Weak implementation of laws such as the Code of Criminal Procedure, the Prevention of Corruption Act, the Penal Code, and the Money Laundering Prevention Act, and the police Regulations of Bengal criminalize corruption must be addressed to curb corruption. The anti-corruption commission must be independent in terms of legal authority and budget.

Political will is the key to police reform in Bangladesh. Like colonial masters, our governments since independence politicize the police and use the police to harass and intimidate their political opponents (Rahman, 2010). The police must be independent of political interference and accountable to the law and the people. The law (The Police Act of 1861) that governs the police needs reform for transforming the Bangladesh Police from a force into a service. The 'Bangladesh Police Ordinance 2007 (Draft)' was proposed during a caretaker government to promote the improvement of police service (Rahman, 2019; Uddin, 2009). The draft ordinance suggests reforms that include creating a national police commission, removing the political patronisation of police, improving police behaviour and making the police more responsible, transparent and accountable to the people.

Conclusion

Police is one of the most important and most contacted components of the criminal justice system of any country. The police station is a gateway for citizens to access police services. While police members are supposed to serve the public and not to abuse their power and authority, corruption and abuse of power are the characteristics of many police forces of the globe today. Given the increased importance of the area of policing in the criminal justice system, a growing body of literature has been developed over the last five decades based on the policing in developed democracies (Rahman, 2010). There are hardly any scientific studies on attitudes toward police and police service in Bangladesh.

The implications of the findings of the present study for policy and further research are immense. This study revealed that the public are negative about the police as they are corrupt. The findings of the study indicate that the respondents faced police corruption at police station. The study also identified the types and techniques of corruption committed by the police at police station. The study found that corrupt police members practice bribes, kickbacks, gratuities, theft of property, falsifying evidence and shakedowns. The study identified that police staff use techniques like showing threat, abusive word, mental torture, physical torture, excessive force and political party pressure. Appropriate mechanisms need to be established to ensure the rights of victims

and offenders so that they are not forced to pay bribery or are subjected to torture, threats or fear. The policy makers must take seriously this as our police show fear or threat for getting bribe. Independent police oversight mechanism has been found effective in many countries (Rahman, 2019). Police corruption can be reduced if the policy makers establish effective mechanisms so that victims can freely make complaint against corrupt police staff, and police executives can monitor and ensure punishment of corrupt police members.

The study scope limited to a subdistrict and a small number of respondents selected purposively. Hence, the findings cannot be generalized to other police districts at all. But the study reveals that the fact that corruption is rooted in police work in Paikgacha Subdistrict, and it is the part of police culture in Bangladesh. As survey respondents were selected conveniently, they are not representative of the country, even neither of the district or sub-district at any means. But this study can help understand whether the nature of police corruption and techniques in a sub-district are more or less similar to the findings previous studies that are mostly at other levels of geography.

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