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Editorial

For bringing out a journal several norms are needed to be followed. It often takes a long time for getting the papers through all the procedures. However, for volume 9 number 1, we are able to publish fourteen articles. All of these are quite well researched and cover diverse academic fields of interest and value. The first article in this volume is on the discovery of Palaeolithic sites in the Frontal Range of the Siwalik in North Western India. Exploration was done in a yet unexplored area. A good number of Palaeolithic tools are collected from the area and detailed research is discussed and illustrated in the paper by the authors Worrel K. Bain and Professor Dwipen Bezbaruah, Department of Anthropology, Gauhati University. The stone tools that are found from the sites at River Seer Khad belong probably to Middle Pleistocene period.

Cultural evolution with a marker to subsistence economy from prehistoric period began with hunting gathering economy. Mankind lived on wild plants and animals and was nomadic. In time, some of the wild plants and animals were domesticated and humans became settled farming communities. Gradually population increased, subsistence mechanism became complicated and towns and cities grew. However, rural and urban communities existed in various places in contemporaneous times. In some geographical space hunting gathering communities continued in their primeval nomadic way of life. India with its vast land and geographical diversity retained such cultural communities in the form of cultural back water. In the western part of West Bengal a forest dwelling tribe known as Lodha lived in hunting and gathering nomadic stage, depending on forest products until the forests were declared Reserved under British forest Act. The Lodhas were marked as "criminal tribe" by the British because the former used forest products for their livelihood. With independence of the country the Lodhas, at par with many other tribes of India, were categorized as "denotified tribes". At present the Lodhas fall under the category of Particularly Vulnerable Tribal Group (PVTG). There had been developmental endeavors for the betterment of the livelihood of the Lodhas both from the Government and non Government sectors. In the paper entitled, "A Nomadic Tribe Becomes a Settled Agriculturist: The Lodhas - A Stigmatized Criminal Tribe in India in British Period", Professor Samita Manna, Senior ICSSR Research Fellow of Sociology department, Kalyani University has done research on the developmental aspects and has brought out the present day economic status of the tribe in West Bengal.

Tanmoy Mondal, Senior Research Fellow, Department of Ancient Indian History, Culture and Archaeology, Visva-Bharati, Santiniketan, in his paper, "Understanding the Ancient Heritage of Kṛmilā : An Early Medieval Viṣaya under Śrīnagara Bhukti", discussed on the heritage of Krimila, an ancient place referred since Gupta dynasty. Research had been carried out earlier by scholars on the region through ancient inscriptions. Southern part of Bihar in

mediaeval time was known as Srinagar Bhukti. The Bhukti was divided into three Visayas. Krimila Visaya was one of them. The author has carried out extensive exploration in the region in search for Krimila Visaya. His work was carried out in Lakhisarai district of Bihar, on the tracts of older alluvium of Rivers Ganga and Kiul. The author had chosen this region not only for its strategic location as far as river borne trade is concerned but the prospect of its fertile soil and also the scattered archaeolocal evidences in the area. The author has located the ancient Krimila Visaya and has found that the region is rich in the heritage of both Hindu and Buddhist regime.

Nilkamal Singha, Assistant Professor of History, Bodoland University and Oinam Ranjit Singh, Professor and Head, Ancient History, and Archaeology, Manipur University have jointly written a paper entitled, "Tracing the Sacred Geography of Kamarupa in Kālika Purān and Yogini Tantra". In this paper an endeavor is made to identify the sacred places and shrines, which are mentioned in the religious texts of Kalika Puran and Yogini Tantra. Kamrupa, the ancient name of present day Assam, one of the states of North-east India is famous for *pithas,* holy places, for the pilgrims. Kamrup got its name after *Kam deva*. Both the texts are related to Shiva and Parvati and the latter's various incarnations. The authors had gone into the verses of both the texts meticulously to find out the geographical location of all *pithas,* rivers, hills, lakes and other land marks referred to as sacred. When Sati, lord Shiva's wife died after having forced to listen to abusive words against her husband by her father Dakhsha, Shiva took Sati's body on his shoulder and started to dance 'the dance of destruction'. In order to preserve the earth Lord Vishnu threw his weapon and Sati's body fell into 52 places in as many pieces. These places became *pithas*. Kamakshya is one of them. The authors have given account of the *pithas* in order to locate the sacred places in the state of Assam. The authors have concluded that sanskritization played a great role in changing the names of the sacred places in Kamrup and made it difficult to identify.

Chanchal Chowdhury, an independent researcher, presently posted as Senior Joint Commissioner of Revenue, West Bengal in an article, "Women, Atrocity and Reformation in Colonial India: The burning of *Satis* in Bengal, 1757-1829", had brought up the atrocious activities in the form of burning of widows on their husband's pyres. The author has portrayed the male dominated Hindu society of India. He has cited literary evidences of the atrocities from various historical accounts. Within the stated time period number widow burnings from various sources are mentioned. The Christian missionaries raised the voice against widow burning. The author concluded, "Acting on the criticisms and demands of Christian missionaries, enlightened British officers, judicial members, and sensible Bengali intellectuals, the East India Company government passed regulations prohibiting the practice of *Sati* in 1829".

The article, "Ethno-nationalistic Attitudes in the novels of Anjum Hasan, *Lunatic in My Head* and of Bijoya Sawian *Shadow Men",* brings out the conflict of locals and outsiders of

town Shillong towards each other. The author Sk. Masikul Ahmmed, Assistant Professor, Department of English, Krishnagar Women's College, West Bengal, has taken example from two novels. One is Anjum Hasan's *Lunatic in My Head (2007)* and the other is Bijoya Sawian's *Shadow Men (2010)*. Theme of both the novels is based on conflicts rising out of ethno-nationalism in the backdrop of Shillong, Meghalaya. In the first novel, the tension is between the indigenous tribal group and outsiders. The outsiders are from Bangladesh, Nepal and China and the tension is over the resources of the state. In the other novel by Sawian, the tension is shown among the different tribal and non tribal communities of the state. The author also has shown that people from both sides want to end the conflict.

Moumita Gupta, Asst. Professor, Department of Anthropology, Dr. A. P. J. Abdul Kalam Govt. College, Rajarhat, Newtown; has made study on health issues of women working in various industrial sectors. For her research she has taken data from Purba Medinipur, South 24 Parganas and Howrah districts. Data is collected from industrial houses located in the districts. These are, Mitsubishi, Indian Oil Corporation, Exide, Renuka Sugar, Plastic recycling factory and Suchita Art making *bindis*. Workers are categorized as: Construction Engineer, Management Worker, Semi-skilled Workers and Unskilled Workers, Types of hazards noted are, Muscular-Skeletal disorder, Head ache, Eye irritation, Skin problem, Reproductive problem and CVS (Computer Vision Syndrome). In the paper, "Study of Occupational Health Hazards among some Women industrial Workers in the state of West Bengal: Issues and Consequences", the author made recommendations for prevention of such hazards and to bring out safety measures for women working in the factories.

Ram Shepherd Bheenaveni, Assistant Professor, Department of Sociology, Osmania University, Hyderabad, had discussed the demand of the Gollakuruma in Telegu speaking states for reservation in tribal status similar to Maharashtra's nomadic tribal category and the Renke commission's recommendations. The Golla Kurumas belong to nomadic pastoral community. They are famous for weaving woollen blankets known as Gangadi. They move with their herds of sheep, goat, buffaloes and cow from one state to the other in Deccan, especially in Telengana state. Gollakurumas at present are in the category of Other Backward Caste community. The author has given detail of their names, that vary from one state to the other, their origin and socio-economic status and has pointed out that they are now in a neo-socio political movement for tribal status.

Dhananjay Kumar Tiwari, Doctoral Fellow and Arun Kumar, Assistant Professor in the Department of Linguistics, Banaras Hindu University in their paper, "Linguistic Characteristics of Legal English: An Evaluation" discussed on the austerity of legal English. Most of the legal words are derived from French and Latin. The reason for such lexical character of legal English is explained in terms legal personnel and common people. The language is incomprehensible for the latter group. The authors have given examples of the words in tabular forms mentioning their forms in use and source. In a table some of the

words that are used in its original forms of Latin and French are given together with their meanings in English. As an explanation of such lexical features, the authors had shown that Britain had been invaded over time by the Romans and French. The legal system is a fall out of such incidents. However, the authors feel that the legal language must be simplified for the benefit of common people.

Under section 377 of Indian Penal Code homosexuality was a punishable offence. This Act was propagated in British India in 1860 during the reign of Queen Victoria, under the chairmanship of Lord McCauley. The author Biswanath Sarkar, Assistant Professor, Political Science, Sri Chaitanya College, Habra wrote the article, "*Bharatiya Dandabidhi 377 dharar bilop o samakami manushder lodai: Ekti Porjalochana"* in Bengali. In English it means "Struggle of Homosexual people for the end of Indian Penal code 377". The article explained the Act, which changed over time with LGBTQA movement. The legal Act did not change with the Independence of India and with the constitution of free India, until September 6, 2018 five judges of the Supreme Court in their judgment of 495 pages declared that Homosexuality is not a crime. The author has given historical background of homosexuality as found in many of the ancient Indian literary sources and had pointed out that the Judo-Christian religion was the source for considering it as a crime.

Smt. Jayita Das, Faculty Member, Department of Sociology, Asutosh College has written the article, "Education and Muslims in India: A Reassessment of the Sachar Committee Report". The article emphasizes education for the development of minority community, especially for the Muslims in India. She has based her discussion on Sachar committee report, which was submitted to the Government of India on November 6, 2006. In her work she has pointed out cases of Madrasa education and medium of education being in Urdu language. Details of the report of the commission are discussed and has pointed out that the education level of Muslim community of present day is not at par relatively with main stream communities. She had forwarded recommended measures of the commission for development of mainstream education among the Muslim communities.

Consumerism emerged with Globalization in the wake of liberalization in 1990. Lushismita Jena Ph.D Scholar and Tattwamasi Paltasingh, Professor and Head, P.G. Department of Sociology, Sambalpur University, Odisha, in their article, "Globalization and Consumerism and the New Middle Class: A Study on Emergence of Mall Culture in Odisha, India" have discussed emergence of consumerism and related social phenomena in the backdrop of globalization. The authors have taken Bhubaneswar city for their study. According to them a new middle class has emerged with education and job opportunity, which prefer to shop in the newly formed shopping malls and look for branded items. The authors have pointed out change in cultural milieu, especially among the middle class people, whom they have termed as New Middle class. Data is collected from various Malls in Bhubaneswar city and conclusion

is drawn on analysis of the same. Some secondary sources are also used as per necessity of the research.

The paper, "An analysis of tourist's satisfaction and perception: A case study of Panchmura Village, Bankura," is by Atanu Sen, Assistant Professor, Department of Geography, Panchmura Mahavidyalaya, Bankura, West Bengal. He made a survey of tourists for understanding demand for local terracotta craft of the village Panchmura in district Bankura, West Bengal. Although the data taken from the tourists is small but the author has used various statistical methods to prove his point. The village is famous for its crafts of terracotta horses, images of gods, goddesses, figurines and other decorative objects. The study shows that there is a demand among the tourists for the terracotta objects and people often visit the village for the purpose of purchasing the craft objects. The author considers that the craft is a support for the villagers in their livelihood and recommends measures for improvement of the marketing of the crafts.

The article entitled "Techno-militia: Rightwing, Fake News and Cyberspace in India" is written jointly by Dr. P. R. Biju, Assistant Professor, Department of Political Science, Government Brennen College, Thalassery, Kannur; and Dr. O Gayathri, Associate Professor, Department of Political Science, Government College, Madappally, Vadakara, Calicut, Kerala. The word 'Techno-militia' is coined by the authors to mean 'the new face of rightwing politics in India'. The paper is an outcome of intensive research on the internet portals. The rightwing ideology operates through Hashtags, Facebook Timelines and Online publishing platforms. All theses internet media have emerged as the political war machine. None of the players have their profiles in internet. 'Paper presumes that techno-militia is closely affiliated with fake profiles that explode a list of similar profiles across the social media landscape'. According to the authors the sociology of the force behind this organized polity must be systematically studied further to understand its effect on democratic dialogues and political communication.

Articles in this volume cover a wide range of topics, starting with discovery report of newly discovered Stone Age sites in Siwaliks to the most sophisticated use of cyber space for political issues. Each paper expresses the research findings of its author / authors. Each article had undergone plagiarism test and recommendation obtained through rigorous peer review. The results of the researches, methodology and interpretation are solely of the respective authors. The editors are not to be held responsible for any of them. The editors would like to offer thanks to all the reviewers of the articles included in this volume and to the respective authors.

Ranjana Ray

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Introducing Kasohal: A Newly Discovered Palaeolithic Site in the Siwalik Frontal Range, Himachal Pradesh, India

Worrel Kumar Bain[1] & Dwipen Bezbaruah[2]

Abstract

The Indian Siwalik Hill is well-known throughout the Indian Subcontinent for producing abundant implimentiferous and fossiliferous sites. Acheulean and Soanian are the most prevalent Palaeolithic technologies in this region, with Acheulean being less common than Soanian. In the absence of absolute dates, lithic technology has been used to compare the Palaeolithic sites from a Chronocultural point of view. Recent fieldwork in Siwalik Frontal Range of Himachal Pradesh led to the discovery and study of Kasohal and the documentation of lithic assemblage variability, typo-technological traits, and raw material utilization. To better understand the dimensional variances, the lithic data from the site was compared with that of other lithic sites on the Indian Siwalik Hill. The study also focuses on local geology and geomorphology.

***Keywords*:** *Siwalik Hill, Kasohal, Seer Khad River Basin, Geology, Geomorphology, Lithic technology, Raw Material exploitation*

Introduction

The Siwalik Hill of the Indian Subcontinent offers archaeologists rich and diverse lithic evidence, which is represented by two distinct cultural traditions; the Ache lean and Soanian. The Acheulean assemblage is distinguished in this zone by the presence of hand axe and cleaver, whereas the Soanian assemblage is constituted chiefly of various types of core, chopper, discoid, scraper, and flake. The Palaeolithic evidence of this area is often characterized by open-air sites distributed in different eco-geographic zones and indicates diverse patterns of intra-regional mobility and land use. Most of this evidence is from the surface context and thus cannot be dated. Understanding changes during the Palaeolithic periods in the Indian Subcontinent is complex, making it difficult to place them within a chronological framework. With over 100 occurrences in various settings (Bain and Bezbaruah 2019: 25–29), the Indian Siwalik Hill is a significant zone for studying Palaeolithic assemblages in the Subcontinent. This paper discusses the Palaeolithic evidence from Kasohal, a newly discovered site in the Indian Siwalik Frontal Range, Himachal Pradesh. Primary objectives are (i) to introduce a new Palaeolithic site and (ii) to understand the site's lithic technology through typo-technological analysis. The study also looks into raw material availability and

exploitation to learn more about hominines' adaptability and cognitive abilities in North-West India, as well as disseminate new archaeological data for South Asian Palaeolithic archaeology.

Review of earlier studies in the Siwalik Frontal Range

In the Siwalik Hills, Wadia (1928: 39) reported the presence of hominines for the first time by discovering a few lithic artefacts by the Geological Survey of India. After a few years, a team of international scientists carried out the first extensive interdisciplinary study on the Quaternary deposits of India through the Yale- Cambridge expedition in 1935, which produced meaningful results for the Quaternary research in South Asia (De Terra and De Chardin 1936: 234; De Terra and Paterson 1939: 252-257). It quickly became a classic work of reference for all future prehistoric studies of the subcontinent. Indeed this team carried out explorations to explain their ideas about Indian Stone Age cultures (Bain 2020: 157). This study identified the lithic artefacts of the North-Western part of the subcontinent through a few cultural labels (Hawkes et al., 1934: 4; Movius 1948: 334-347; Soni and Soni 2017: 118) and firmly established their origins in the Middle Pleistocene (Dennell and Hurcombe 1993: 70; Chauhan 2007: 413-416). Graziosi's work (1964: 57) in the western sub-Himalayas was another important study that later attracted many scholars for different multidisciplinary investigations in this area. During the middle of the 20th century, the Archaeological Survey of India investigated several regions in the sub-Himalayas. It came up with various lithic localities which demonstrated the presence of hominines and provided a magnificent database for further prehistoric research in this part of the subcontinent (IAR 1954–55). Prufer (1956: 94-99) also found several Stone Age localities from the Pinjore-Nalagarh Dun area of Sutlej valley. While studying the Dun areas by the scholars, Soanian lithic remains were recovered from the Kangra (Lal 1956: 61-68; Joshi et al., 1978: 84) and Beas (Lal 1956: 75-79) valleys as well as from Sirsa terraces of Himachal Pradesh (Sen 1955: 178-180; Karir 1985: 159-166) for the first time. Sen's comparative study on the lithic industry of Nalagarh and the early Soanian assemblage of West Pakistan (1955: 181-183) showed a critical observation of the core and flake assemblages of the sub-Himalayas. Subsequently

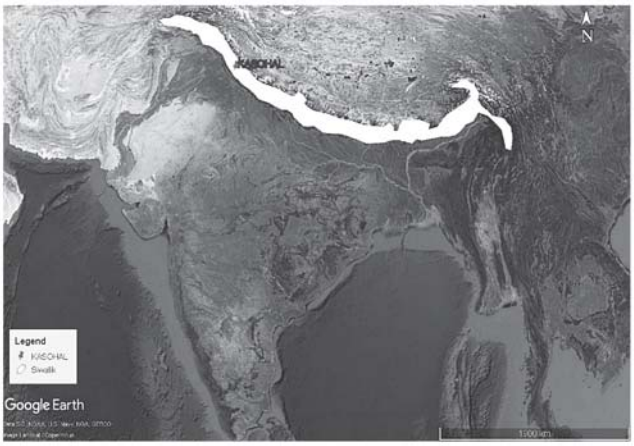


Figure 1: Map showing the position of Kasohal in the Siwalik Frontal Range (Siwalik Frontal Range has been marked with white colour. The map has been prepared through Google Earth).

various scholars and organizations started to focus on Himachal Pradesh, which produced a good number of prehistoric studies in different parts of this state and adjoining areas. These made a significant contribution to our knowledge of cultural remains of hominines (Khatri 1963: 162-167; IAR 1964; IAR 1965–66; 1968–69; 1969–70; Mohapatra 1966: 227, 1974: 211, 1976: 9-10; Mohapatra and Saroj 1968: 11-12, Sankalia 1971: 541-543 and Joshi et al. 1974: 85). Saroj (1974: 105-108) with a view to expanding the work of Yale- Cambridge expedition of 1935 at the valley of Kashmir, chose the area between the Chenab and the Ravi river. He examined the lithic remains of the Jammu region and classified the artefacts. Joshi (1975: 464-465; 1978; 90-92) extended his work in Markanda valley of Himachal Pradesh and found several core and flake implements. He studied and compared the lithic remained with other reported sites and suggested that there is no need to relate them with the cultural labels made earlier by de Terra and Paterson. His observation brought to light some important aspects of the cultural evolution of early man in North-Western India. In 1980 Mohapatra recovered the first Acheulean site in the Indian Siwalik Hills from Punjab, which provided important data on Acheulean hominines and their technological behaviours in Punjab plain (Mohapatra 1981: 233-235, 1990: 254-255). From the site Toka, Chauhan (2007: 230-236) recovered the highest collection of Soanian remains, which suggests tremendous technological diversity within the Soanian industry in Indian Siwalik Hills. A team of archaeologists under the Indo- French Prehistoric Mission 2009 explored the Siwalik Hills in Punjab (near Chandigarh) and recovered many Soanian localities, providing huge data on lithic artefacts and paleontological remains (Gaillard et al., 2016: 344-346). Though several works have been done in different parts of Himachal Pradesh, the prehistory of Bilaspur district remains unexplored. In this region, a few studies were conducted (Verma 1975: 518-521; Sharma 1977: 94-95; Prasad 1982: 101- 104; Sankhyan 1979: 360; 1983: 26; 2017: 63738-63740; Bain 2020: 159-164; Bain & Bezbaruah 2020: 3-9). The studies mostly reported paleontological remains and a few cultural remains from different Siwalik deposits at Haritalyangar and its surrounding areas. Despite almost a hundred years of investigations in the Siwalik region, our understanding of Palaeolithic industries in this area has remained poor. Most studies of the past relied on insufficient data samples and ambiguous terrace sequences, resulting in biased artefact collections and inconsistent interpretation (Bain & Bezbaruah 2019: 15-17).

Material and Methods

The study region comprises of the Seer Khad River Basin of Himachal Pradesh. It is part of the lower Sutlej valley of the same state and covers 107.07 km^2 (76.26°- 76.36° E and 31.22°-31.31° N). It comes under the Survey of India topographic sheet no 53A/11. River Seer Khad, a tributary of river Sutlej, and its streams have created this basin. Kasohal (31°28′49.16 N; 76°41′ 40.87 E) comes under the Kasohal Village in Ghumarwin Tehsil (Figure 2). It is located 19 km north of the District headquarters in Bilaspur; 72 km from the State capital Shimla. Kasaru (3 km), Dadhol (3 km), Kothi (3 km), Ghumarwin (4 km) and Pater (4 km) are the nearby Villages to Kasohal. Kasohal is surrounded by Jhandutta Tehsil towards the South,

Bhoranj Tehsil towards the North, Bijhri Tehsil towards the west and Bilaspur Tehsil towards the South. Multiple transect surveys have been conducted along the Seer Khad, covering 26 km^2. The grid method (3m X 3m) is applied for systematic surface collection. During the field visit, various localized features were noted, such as, site distance from the riverbank; discreetness of the scatters; the association of the artefacts with the raw material blocks and such other techniques. The artefacts recovered are recorded at the site and were analysed in the laboratory with the use of the typo-technological method. Satellite imagery, and topographical maps were used for better understand of the geographical setting and features. The maps were created with the use of the ARC GIS- 9.3 software and data from the ISRO satellite were used. The ASTER DEM of 30 m resolution with Universal Transverse Mercator (UTM Zone 43) was used to generate topographical information, as well as to generate and calculate geomorphic indications of the basin using image processing and ARC GIS- 9.3 software. The primary terrain attributes, such as slope aspect, curvature (plain and profile), and topographic wetness, were computed from DEM. The lithic assemblages were analyzed using quantitative and qualitative attributes.

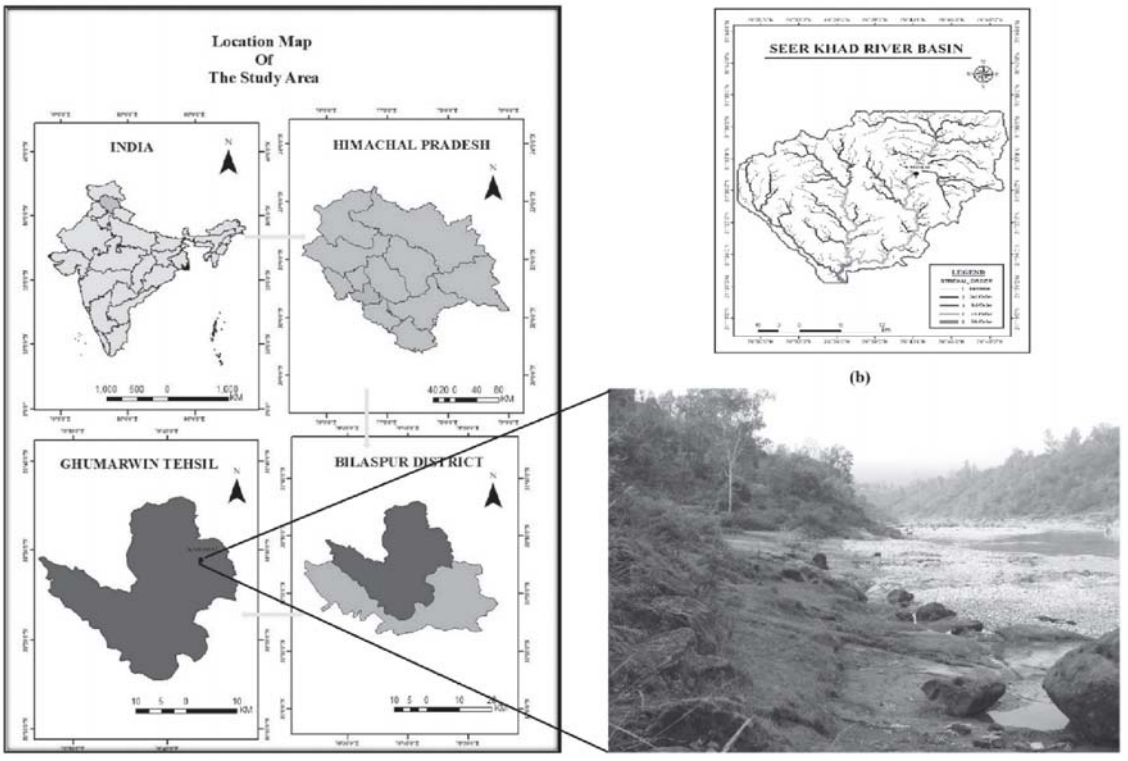


Figure. 2. (a) Location of Kasohal site in Gumarwin Tehsil of Bilaspur district, Himachal Pradesh (Source: ISRO Bhuvan). (b) Location of the site in the Seer Khad Basin (Source: ARC GIS- 9.3), (c) General view of the site.

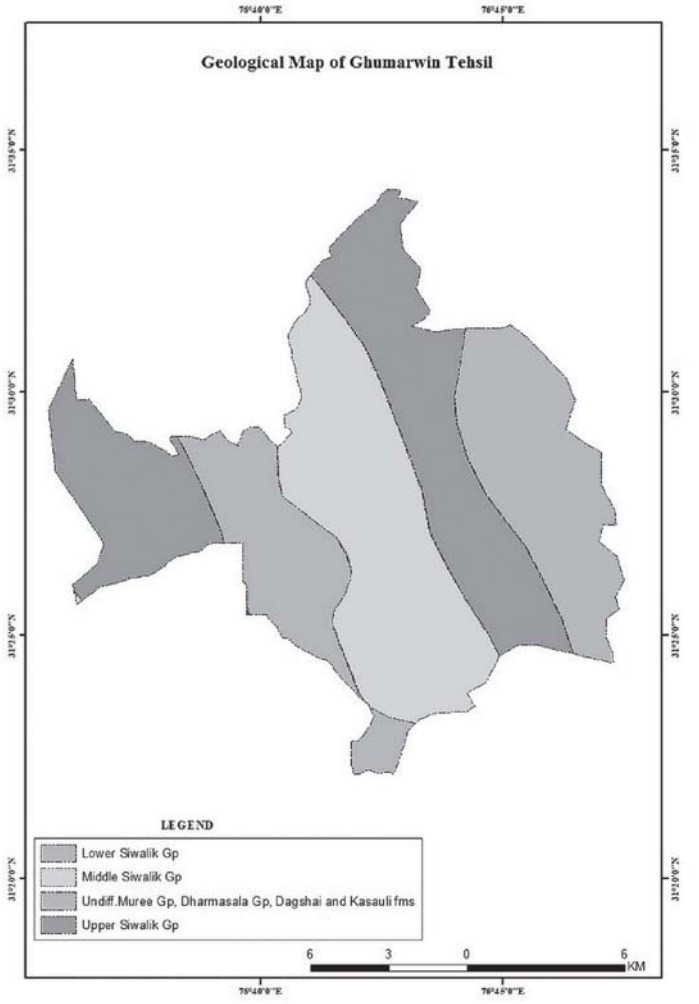


Figure 3: Geological settings of Ghumarwin Tehsil (Source- Bain & Bezbaruah, 2021).

Results

Local geology, geo-morphology, lithology and drainage system

Ghumarwin Tehsil comprises the Tertiary and Quaternary deposits of Siwalik and the unidentified Muree, Dharma–sala, Kasauli, and Dagshai groups of the Oligocene and Miocene periods (Bain & Bezbaruah, 2021: 7) (Figure 3).

The morphological land form map of the study area (Figure 4) provides categorical information about the studied locality, which comprises ten physical features. Many highly dissected hills and valleys were observed in the studied area. Some portions of the area are covered by moderately dissected hills.

The unconformity between Upper Siwalik sediments and post-Siwalik conglomerates is an important geomorphologic feature of the study area (Bain & Bezbaruah, 2021: 7). The rock types of the study area are granite, syenite, diorite, siliceous sandstone, quartzite, and volcanic rocks. The Sub-Himalayan terrain in this area is the uplifted Siwalik piedmont zone between the Lesser Himalayan slope on the east and the Boulder Conglomerate Formation on the west. These were deposited 1.8-1.1 million years ago (Valdiya, 1993: 875-877; Kumar et al., 2007: 10-13). The post-Siwalik Quaternary sedimentations resulted in the aggradations of two prominent Quaternary fans (Qf). The olderone is known as Qf-1 and the younger one as Qf-2 (Kumar et al., 2007: 14-16). The piedmont streams, which were formed at the foot of

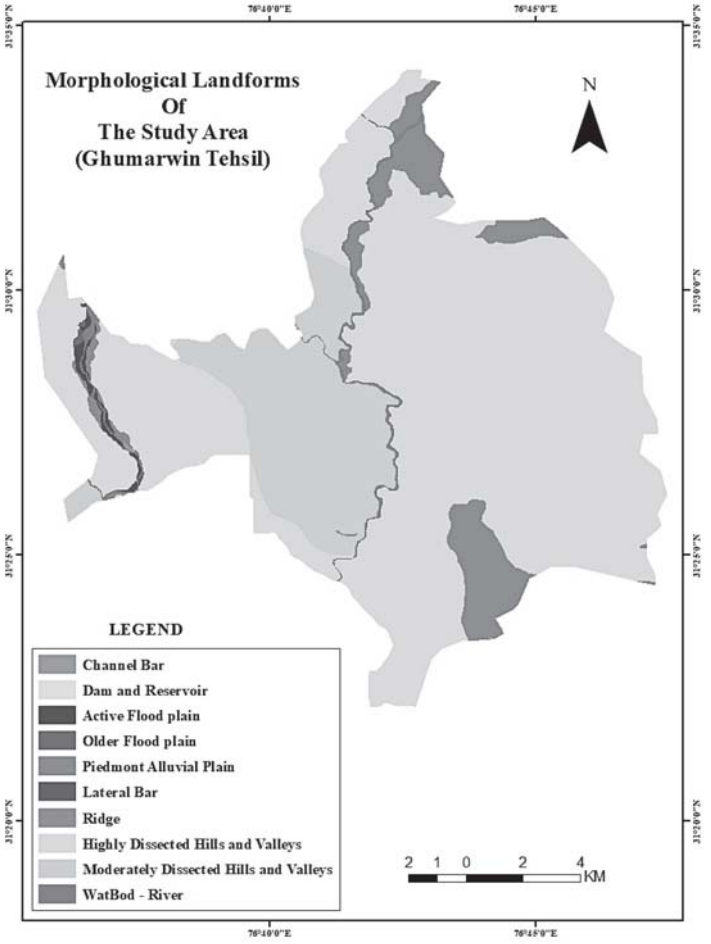


Figure 4: Morphological landforms of Ghumarwin tehsil (The data for preparing the map has been retrieved from ISRO RISAT –I satellite and the maps have been prepared through ARC GIS- 9.3 software).

hilly tracts by debris deposits, are the only feeders to the alluvial fans. The largest stream formed in the study area is the Seer Khad. The graded layers of boulders, cobbles, gravel, sand lenses, and silt in the Qf-2 section in the study area are roughly 3-4 meters thick. During fieldwork, various aspects of geomorphology have been studied and special attention has been given to exploring its outstanding features. Samples of sand, pebble, cobble, and boulder were collected from in and around the studied locality that yielded artefacts to ascertain their origin, mode of deposition, and paleo geographical conditions at the time of sedimentation. Several naturally exposed sections were observed during the field visit. The stratigraphy at the sections were composed of topsoil, followed by layers of brownish clay, shale, poorly sorted and crudely bedded conglomerate and boulder beds. The bedrock is of sandstone. The layers vary in thickness. Topsoil is displaced in some areas due to agricultural activity and the mining of sand, gravel, cobbles, and medium-sized boulders; exposing the pebbly gravel layer beneath. The gravels vary in size, mostly of quartzite, though there are some sandstone gravels. The elevation of the site is 598 m. The site's relief varies greatly from 452 to 1828 meters, due to local and regional tectonic conditions, depositional and nature of erosion, and denudation during the Pleistocene period (Figure 5). The Digital Elevation Model shows that the eastern side of the site is undulating and rough, while the slope on the South-East side is higher than the west side (Figure 6).

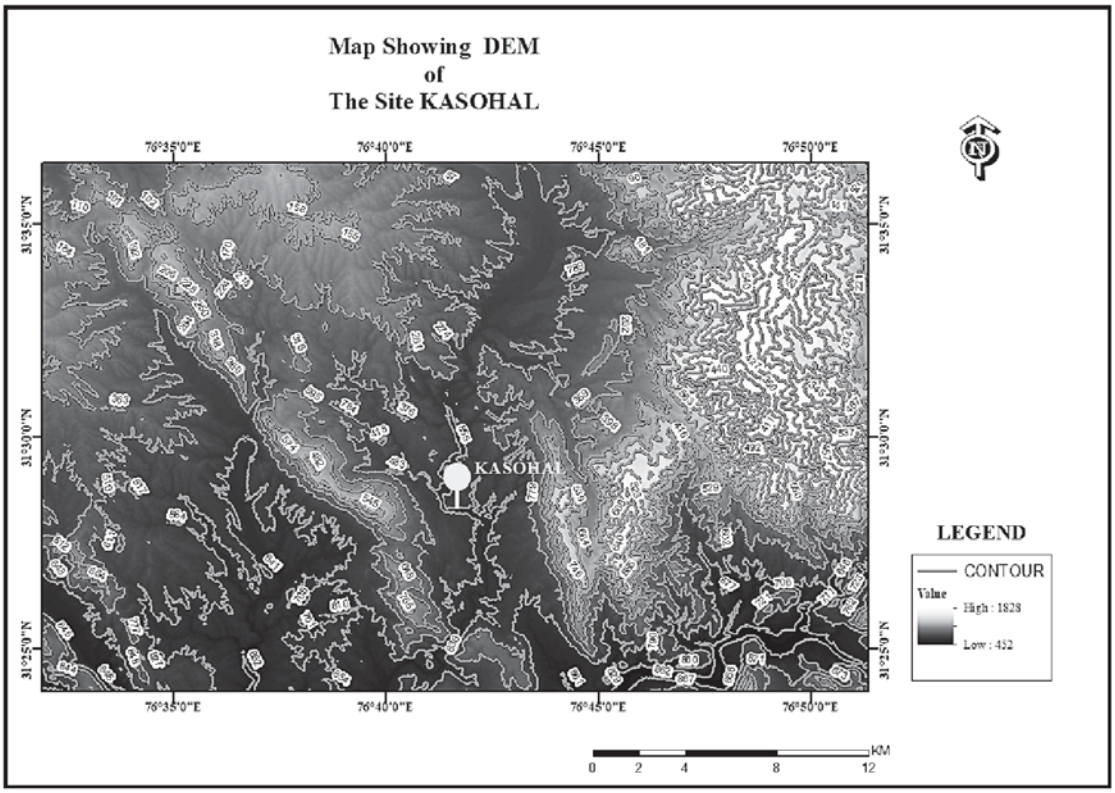


Figure 5: Digital elevation model of the region showing the studied locality (The data for preparing the map has been retrieved from ISRO RISAT –I satellite and the maps are prepared through ARC GIS- 9.3 software).



Figure 6: Sectional view of the studied locality (The data for preparing the map has been retrieved from ISRO RISAT –I satellite and the maps have been prepared through ARC GIS- 9.3 software).

The study area goes under the frontal slope of the Siwalik Hills of North-West India, is undulating, and contains fertile valleys and streamlets. The area falls in the humid subtropical zone, meaning annual rainfall varies between 1100 and 1400 mm. The principal river of the study region is the Seer Khad River, fed by streams originating from the sub-Himalayan foothills on the east; the Siwalik and the c*hoes* that rise from the Siwalik on the west. The basin's overall elevation ranges from 476 m at its lowest point to 1968 m at its highest point, and it contains the Barsar Thrust Fault and Folds, making it a tectonically active zone. The drainage basin area reflects the fluvial geomorphic cycle development from late youth to earth maturity. The present study delineated the stream order using Strahler's method (Strahler 1952: 225-230). Snow melt and monsoon runoff are the Seer Khad River's water sources. Seer Khad is associated with several small streams and *nullahs*. The streams bear flash flood release as a significant part of the precipitation is connected to monsoonal deluges. The Seer Khad River has a first to fifth-order basin and is characterised by a dendritic to the sub-dendritic river basin. To evaluate the magnitude of permeability and infiltration qualities in the analysed region, the greatest number of first-order streams was taken into consideration (Bain & Bezbaruah 2020: 14). Basin asymmetry (AF) implies that the basin is tilted to the east due to the existence of the Barsar Thrust and that tectonic upliftment is taking place in the basin. The basin elongation ratio (0.10) indicates tectonic activity. At the source, the basin has a concave value between 620 and 630 m, followed by elevation changes caused by active fault zone development around knick zones. This suggests that tectonics have significantly impacted the Seer Khad river course (Sharma et al., 2018: 408-411).

Palaeolithic assemblage

Exploration at the Kasohal has revealed 200 lithic artefacts (Figure 7), which have come from the surface context. Artefacts have been recovered from different locations such as river banks, dried river beds, and eroded hill slopes with a density exceeding ¯3 - 5 artefacts /m2. The grid method (3 m X 3 m) was applied to the systematic surface collection due to the differential density of artefacts. The investigators could not identify a few lithic pieces and mentioned them as unidentified. Lithic artefacts are further subdivided into various subtypes for analysis (Table 1). Quartzite cobbles and angular fragments have been used for manufacturing lithic artefacts. The primary source of quartzite is the local boulder-conglomerate formation observed near the study area ≤ 1 km North-West). At Kasohal, hominins used quartzite as fluvially- rounded clasts (cobbles (approximately 60-240 mm) and angular clasts of various colours. The colours were broadly divided into a shade of grey and black, a shade of white, a shade of red, a shade of yellow, and a shade of green. Fluvial clasts are formed by water continuously working on present rocks in rivers and streams abundant in the Seer Khad. Angular clasts are formed by colluvial activities that break down rocks into smaller angular pieces. They can be found in abundance at the foothills of the

nearby hilly tracts of the studied area. Kasohal stone tools were made from three different blank types. Fluvial transportation is the primary cause of weathering on artefacts in the study area, which is divided into four categories (Table 2).

Table 1: Kasohal assemblage composition with select attributes.

Types of Artefacts	*n*	%	Length (cm.)				Width (cm.)				Thickness (cm.)				Weight (kg.)			
			Max	Min	Mean	SD	Max	Min	Mean	SD	Max	Min	Mean	SD	Max	Min	Mean	SD
Core and core fragment																		
Single platform	3	1.5	15.3	13.8	14.56	0.75	13.8	9.7	11.83	2.05	12.3	11	11.63	0.65	1.10	0.83	1.01	0.15
Multi platform	6	3	16.8	11.3	14.26	1.13	15.7	8.9	12.86	3.03	13.6	5.6	10.43	3.12	1.3	0.97	1.13	0.15
Core fragment	7	3.5	16.2	7.7	12.07	2.81	14.6	8.9	11.21	2.03	11.7	4.9	8.11	2.06	1.12	0.69	0.84	0.13
Irregular discoid	4	2	11.3	7.1	9.62	1.79	8.9	6.9	8	1	5	3.2	4.1	0.73	0.36	0.14	0.26	0.09
Chopper																		0.04
Unifacial end	8	4	12.8	8.1	9.52	1.35	11.2	6.4	8.56	2.06	7.5	2.9	5.36	2.02	0.49	0.34	0.39	
Unifacial side	4	2	9.5	6.3	8.05	1.34	11.6	6.4	8.62	2.19	7.2	2.7	5.45	2.10	0.60	0.37	0.48	0.12
Unimarginal side	3	1.5	10.3	8.4	9.2	0.98	9.6	8.7	9.2	0.45	5.2	4.8	5	0.2	0.29	0.26	0.28	0.01
Irregular	3	1.5	10.1	9	9.56	0.55	7.6	6.4	7	0.6	5.2	4.6	4.86	0.30	0.36	0.33	0.35	0.01
Peak	10	5	17.5	10.8	13.79	1.96	10.8	5.9	8.01	1.54	7.1	3.6	5.17	1.07	1.30	0.31	0.52	0.28
Scraper																		
Lateral sided	22	11	12.2	5	8.11	1.73	15.2	3	6.67	2.79	4.7	1.5	2.90	0.86	0.73	0.02	0.21	0.15
Double sided	7	3.5	15.2	5.1	9.77	3.84	8	5.5	6.92	0.80	4.6	1.9	3.01	0.95	0.55	0.05	0.34	0.18
Peripheral	10	5	18.8	6.3	10.61	3.78	15.1	4	7.83	3.23	5.7	1.6	3.41	1.31	1.57	0.06	0.40	0.46
Sub- peripheral	2	1	9.9	6.1	8	2.68	7.3	5.6	6.45	1.20	5.4	2.3	3.85	2.19	0.20	0.07	0.13	0.08
Flake																		
Unretouched	35	17.5	12.3	4.3	7.25	1.60	7.9	3.3	5.54	1.15	4.8	1.3	2.69	0.86	0.32	0.01	0.14	0.07
Retouched	38	19	15.5	4.9	8.65	2.54	14	3.4	7.82	2.67	5.2	1.1	3.06	0.96	1.05	0.03	0.26	0.22
Split cobble	14	7	9.8	6.1	7.37	1.22	8	4.1	5.57	1.14	4.6	1.9	2.98	0.84	0.31	0.06	0.19	0.07
Broken artefact	8	4	11.3	6.8	8.76	1.49	6.2	4.9	5.63	0.51	4.6	3.1	3.6	0.46	0.68	0.22	0.39	0.13
Unidentified piece	16	8	15	6.4	9.18	2.15	8.4	4.2	6.39	1.11	5.1	2.7	3.88	0.69	0.53	0.27	0.36	0.07

Table 2: Percentage of types of preservation of the artefacts

Tyepe of Preservation	**n**	**%**
Fresh	19	9.5
Silghtly weathered	28	14
Moderately weathered	66	33
Heavily weathered	87	43.5
Total	**200**	**100**

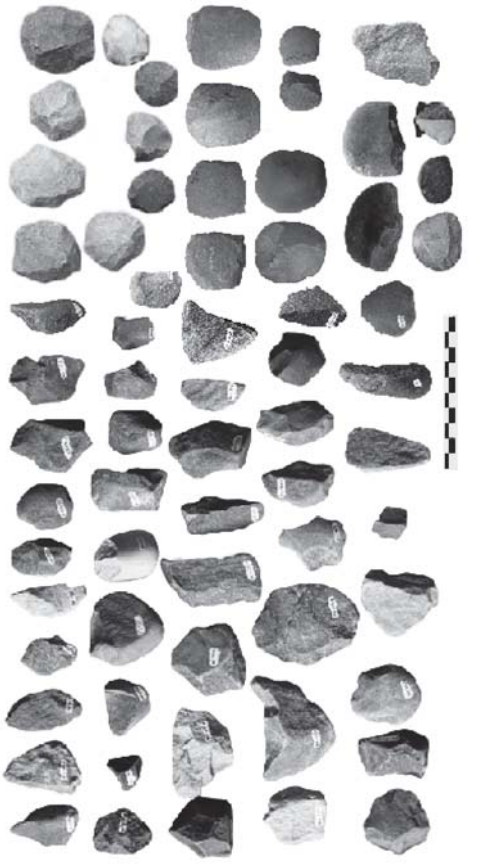


Figure 7: Lithic artefacts from Kasohal.

Core and core fragments

Cores (n= 9) in the Kasohal assemblage clearly show a cortex patch on the surface, indicating that they are river cobbles or boulders (Figure 8). Technologically, they are divided into two categories: single platform core and multi platform core. The mean values for the length, width, and thickness of single platform core and multi platform core are 14.56 X 11.83 X 11.63 cm (L X W X T) and 14.26 X 12.86 X 10.43 cm (L X W X T), with the largest core being 16.8 cm in length. The mean weights of these two types of cores are 1.01 kg and 1.13 kg (Table 1). Angular fragments and chunks represent core fragments. The artefact was manufactured using both sides struck and end struck flakes. The dorsal face of the specimens is variable: It is either without a cortex or little cortex. The length, width, and thickness of core fragments vary between 16.2 cm- 7.7 cm (mean- 12.07 cm; SD- 2.81), 14.6 cm- 8.9 cm (mean- 11.21 cm; SD- 2.03), and 11.7 cm- 4.9 cm (mean- 8.11 cm; SD- 2.06) (Table 1).

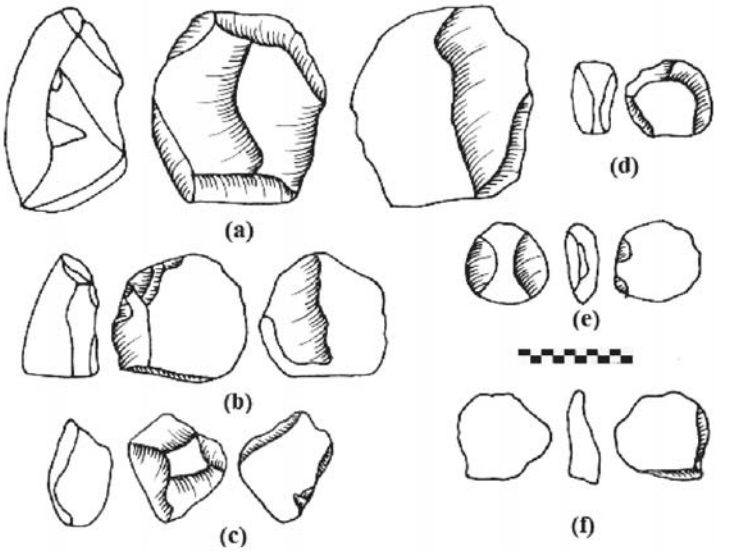


Figure 8: A variety of cores on different kinds of quartzite clasts.

Irregular discoid

Discoids are circular residual cores formed by varying numbers of flake scars. The flake scar direction in the irregular discoid type (n= 4) shows converging, semi-converging, and non-converging ridges at the center (Figure 9). The artefacts vary in length, width, and thickness, ranging from 11.3 cm-7.1 cm (mean- 9.62 cm; SD- 1.79), 8.9cm- 6.9 cm (mean- 8 cm; SD-1), and 5 cm- 3.2 cm (mean- 4.1 cm; SD- 0.73).

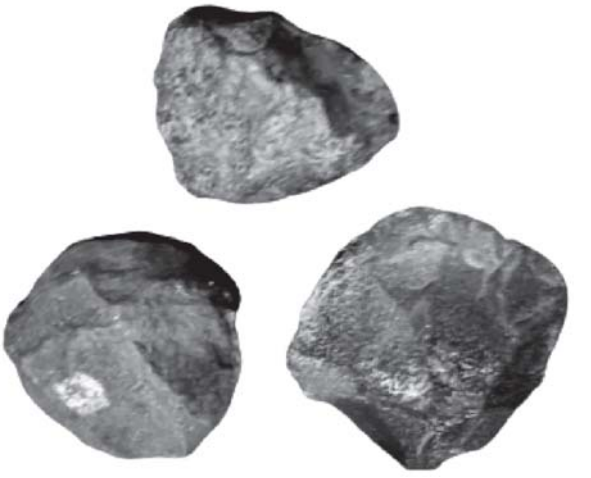


Figure 9: Recovered irregular discoids from Kasohal.

Chopper

At Kasohal, 18 choppers were discovered. These are made of whole cobbles, as well as split cobbles, broken cobbles, and flakes. Choppers on split cobbles indicate that the knapper obtained the blanks by splitting the cobble on the anvil in half. The authors used a

hammerstone to obtain two half-split pebbles in an experimental study on the cobbles. The choppers' edges are sometimes sharp and not blunt. There are four types of choppers: (i) unimarginal side chopper (n= 3), (ii) unifacial end chopper (n= 8), (iii) unifacial side chopper (n= 4), and (iv) irregular choppers (n= 3). The mean measurements are 9.52 X 8.56 X 5.36 cm (L X W X T) for the unifacial end chopper, and the largest is 12.8 cm in length (Table 1& Figure 10). For the unifacial side chopper, the range of length, width and thickness vary between 9.5 cm- 6.3 cm (mean- 8.05 cm; SD- 1.34), 11.6 cm- 6.4 cm (mean- 8.62 cm; SD- 2.19) and 7.2 cm- 2.7 cm (mean- 5.45 cm; SD- 2.10). Unimarginal side-choppers are oval to semi-rounded in form and composed of cobble pieces or broken cobbles. Irregular choppers are amorphous and do not fit into any of the above-mentioned chopper categories. A high number of broken choppers (n= 12) have been recovered during the study. Breakage was largely found along with the proximal end (n= 7). A moderate number of choppers (n= 5) had broken edges. Few complete choppers (n= 6) have been recovered (Table 3). A closer view of the breakage exhibit shows that these are not recent. The breakage part also exhibits patination on both surfaces (dorsal and ventral).

Table 3 : Chopper types with their broken areas

Chopper types	Parameters	No	Percentage value
Unifacial end	Broken (Proximal end)	3	16.66
	Broken (Edge)	2	11.11
	Complete	3	16..6
Unifacial side	Broken (Proximal end)	1	5.55
	Broken (Edge)	2	11.11
	Complete	1	5.55
Unimarginal side	Broken (Proximal end)	1	5.55
	Broken (Edge)	1	5.55
	Complete	1	5.55
Irregular	Broken (Proximal end)	2	11.11
	Broken (Edge)	0	0
	Complete	1	5.55
	Total	18	100

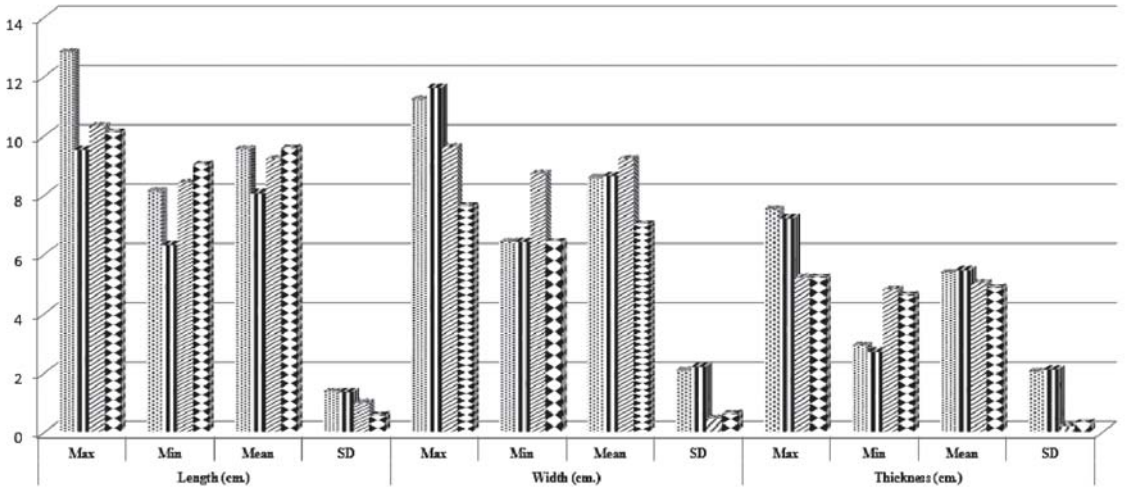


Figure 10 : Dimensional attributes (maximum, minimum and average of length, width, and thickness) of chopper types.

Pick

There are ten (n= 10) picks in the Kasohal assemblages. These are angular flakes and are blank types for manufacturing picks (Figure 11). Though the artefacts are rolled in nature, some flake scars are noticed on the surfaces of the tools. The mean measures are 13.79 X 8.01 X 5.17 cm (L x W x T) for the picks, and the largest is 17.5 cm in length. Six of the artefacts have approximately 25-50% of the surface as cortex. The majority of the picks are unifacial in nature, with no ventral surface modification. Pick weights range from 1.30 kg to 0.31 kg, with a mean value of 0.52 kg (Table 1).

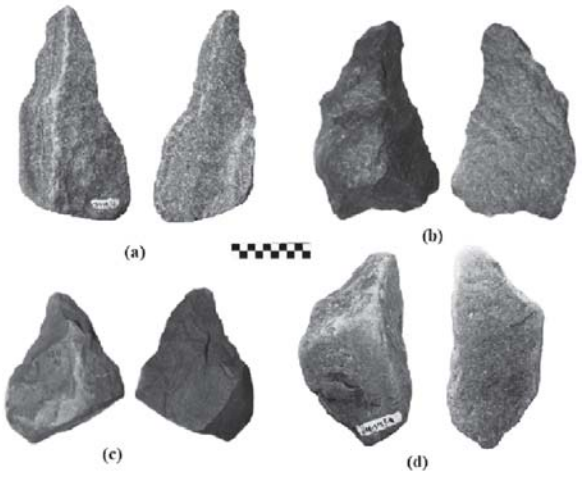


Figure 11: Recovered picks from Kasohal.

Scraper

The assemblage contains 41 scrapers (Figure 12), which are classified into four groups: lateral sided scraper (n= 22), double sided scraper (n= 7), peripheral scraper (n= 10), and sub-peripheral scraper (n= 2). They are fashioned on flakes. This type of artefact was made on thick, broad, pear-shaped, and more or less rectangular quartzite flakes. The most common

type of scraper is the lateral sided scraper. The maximum length of 18.8 cm is found in the peripheral type of scraper and minimum length of 9.9 cm is found in sub-peripheral type of scraper (Table 1 & Figure 13). Lateral-sided scrapers (n = 30) have a lateral working edge parallel to the longitudinal axis. A few scrapers (n = 7) have a concave working edge made by deliberately removing flakes, whereas double-sided scrapers (n = 8) have two working ends produced by the intersection of primary flaking. The peripheral scraper is roundish or oval in form and has a sharp working edge that spans almost the entire diameter of the flakes of the distal end. The dorsal surfaces of the artefacts are thoroughly prepared by removing flakes with steep flaking.

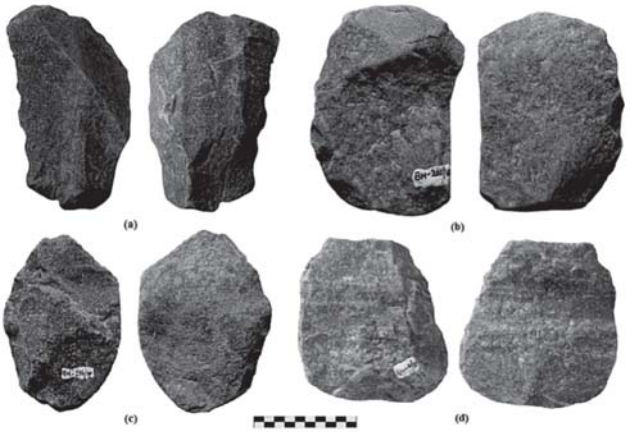


Figure 12: Scrapers from Kasohal.

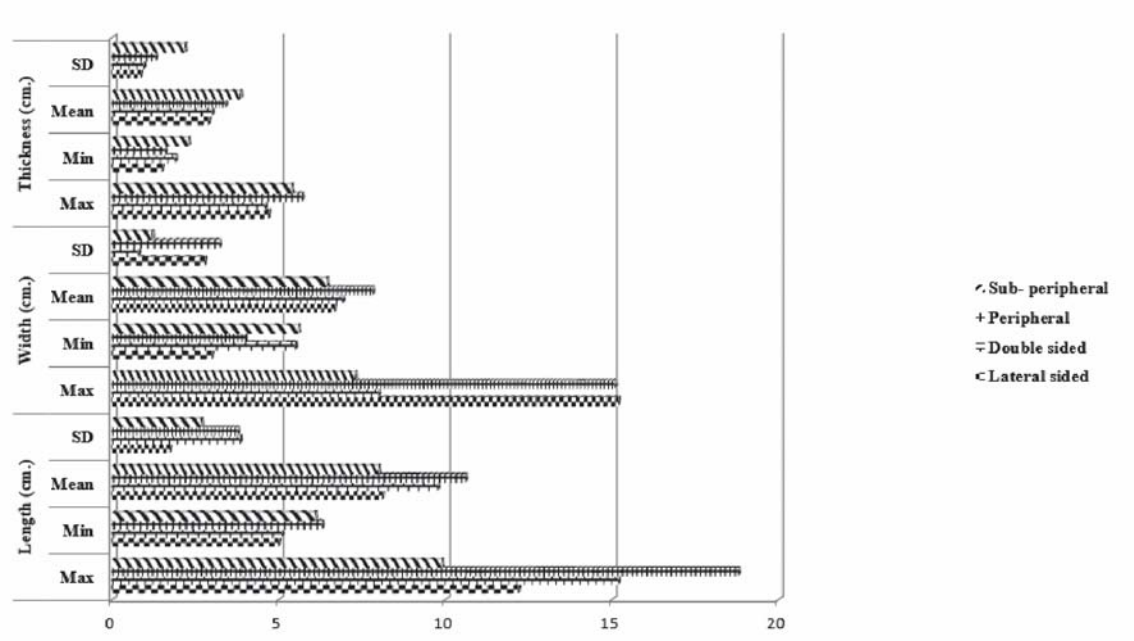


Figure 13: Dimensional attributes (maximum, minimum and average of length, width, and thickness) of scraper types.

Flake

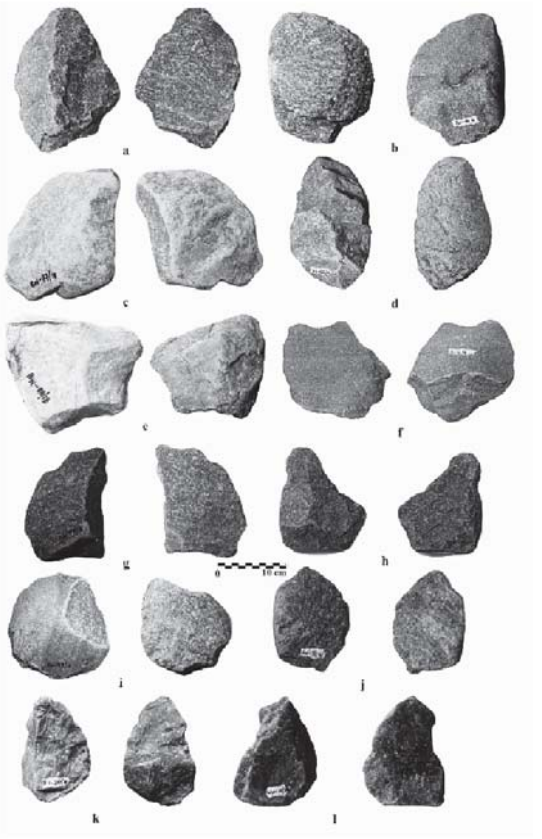


Figure 14 : Diverse flake types from Kasohal

This group contains 73 artefacts (Figure 14) and has been typologically categorized as retouched (n= 38) and unretouched flakes (n= 35) and technologically divided into side struck and end struck flakes. The dorsal portion of some flakes is partially to completely cortical. Three types of striking platforms, namely, flat (n= 47), complex (n= 11) and abraded (n= 15) are found on the flakes (Table 4). The mean measurements for unretouched and retouched flakes are 7.25 x 5.54 x 2.69 cm and 8.65 x 7.82 x 3.06 cm (L x W x T). The maximum length and thickness is found in retouched flakes (15.5 cm and 5.2 cm) (Table. 2). The majority of flakes (n = 58) have a cortical dorsal surface, but a handful of the flakes (n= 6) have cortexon both ventral and dorsal surfaces. The striking platform of the flakes is sometimes cortical. The shape of the cortex at the striking platform indicates that flakes were split from cobbles. Retouching is found on various sides of the artefacts (Table 5). The number of flake scars on the dorsal surface ranges between 2 and 9, while those on the ventral surface range from 1 to 4. The range of edge angles of both unretouched (97°- 130°) and retouched flakes (91°- 119°) of the Kasohal show similarity with adjoining localities of the Siwalik Frontal Range (Table 6). 19 flakes were broken, probably due to high energy fluvial or anthropogenic activity.

Table 4 : Platform types of the flakes

Type of platform	n	%
Flat	47	64.38
Complex	11	15.06
Abraded	15	20.54
All Total	73	100

Table 5. Number of sides retouched flake

Side	No of flake scars
Left side	5
Right side	2
Left and right side	8
Dorsal end	4
Proximal end	3
Dorsal end and proximal end	2
Left side and dorsal end	4
Left side, right side, and dorsal end	6

Table 6. Edge angle of the flakes from different sites of Siwalik Frontal Range

Artefact type	Site	Range	Average	Reference
Unretouched flake	Khoiwala, Himachal Pradesh	75^0- 112^0	95^0	Karir, 1985
	Marhanwala, Himachal Pradesh	90^0- 118^0	108^0	
	Baddi, Himachal Pradesh	104^0- 112^0	108^0	
	Sandholi, Himachal Pradesh	102^0- 111^0	107^0	
	Nalagarh, Himachal Pradesh	103^0- 107^0	105^0	
	Dhang, Himachal Pradesh	104^0- 122^0	115^0	
	Dabhar, Himachal Pradesh	105^0- 109^0	107^0	
	Dagah, Jammu	100^0- 122^0	Not available	Saroj, 1974
	Kasohal, Himachal Pradesh	97^0- 130^0	108^0	Present study
Retouched flake	Khoiwala, Himachal Pradesh	88^0- 99^0	94^0	Karir, 1985
	Marhanwala, Himachal Pradesh	103^0- 123^0	112^0	
	Sandholi, Himachal Pradesh	93^0- 122^0	108^0	
	Nalagarh, Himachal Pradesh	107^0- 123^0	111^0	
	Dhang, Himachal Pradesh	83^0- 105^0	95^0	
	Dabhar, Himachal Pradesh	89^0- 109^0	99^0	
	Dagah, Jammu	91^0- 114^0	Not available	Saroj, 1974
	Ambran, Jammu	81^0- 132^0	Not available	
	Kasohal, Himachal Pradesh	91^0- 119^0	101^0	Present study

Split cobble

The lithic assemblage reveals that some cobbles were split into two parts before being turned into cores, with remnants of flat or slightly convex surfaces in between. The length of the split cobbles spans from 6.1 cm to 9.8 cm, with a mean of 7.37 cm.

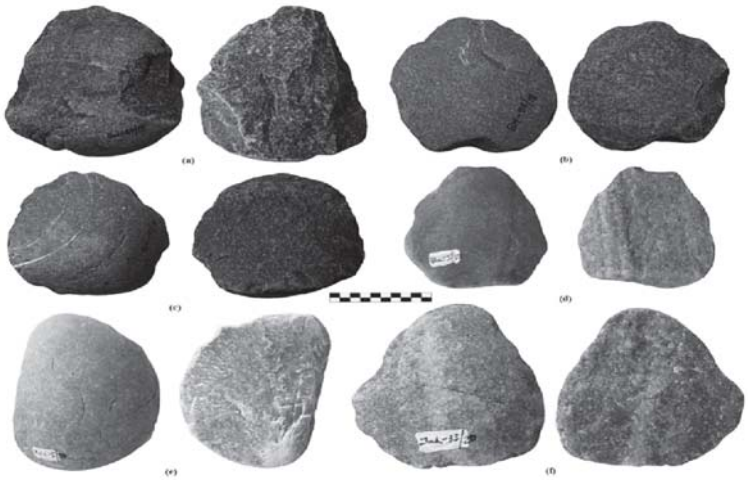


Figure 15 : Split cobbles from Kasohal.

Broken artefacts

It is worth mentioning that the notable feature in the Kasohal assemblages is the broken artefacts (n= 8), which is indicative of high-energy river activity. Due to ongoing developmental work in the study area, some of the artefacts broke, even though they are fresh (Figure 16).



Figure 16 : Occurrence of broken artefact from the surface in the study area.

Unidentified piece

Occurrence of geological clasts that look like lithic implements (n= 16)are a critical observation made during the field study. These clasts were most likely formed by high-energy contexts or the exfoliation process. High fluvial energy can lead to natural flaking that rolls, cores, and flakes in the gravel context (Chauhan, 2009: 100-103).

Comparison of the dimensional attributes of the recovered artefacts of Kasohal with other reported sites of Indian Siwalik Hills

To explore the variations in dimensional attributes of Kasohal tool types with other lithic sites in the Indian Siwalik Hills, the investigators compared their data with other earlier reported sites, which have yielded similar tool types. These are Baddi, Marhanwala, Dhang (Karir, 1985); Atbarapur (Gaillard et al., 2008: 5-7); Toka (Chauhan, 2007: 222-229); Masol (Gaillard et al., 2016: 345); Bhapral (Bain & Bezbaruah, 2020); Bam (Bain & Bezbaruah, 2021: 9-11) and Ghumarwin (Bain & Bezbaruah, 2022: 17-18). Three variables are considered, namely, range, average, and SD of artefacts' length, width, and thickness. The authors have found that the dimensional attributes of the tool types of Kasohal progressively vary in length, width, and thickness with the above mentioned sites. The authors have also found that the dimensional attributes of the irregular discoids of Kasohal differ gradually in length, width, and thickness when compared with the Bhapral, Bam, and Ghumarwin sites of the Siwalik Frontal Range. Regarding chopper and scraper, the authors discovered an intriguing contrast between the Kasohal tool types and the sites mentioned above. The average length, width, and thickness of the Kasohal picks are greater than those found at Bam and Bhapral. The average length and thickness of the unretouched flake of Kasohal are less than those of Bam, Bhapral, and Ghumarwin but greater than those of Baddi, Marhanwala, and Dhang. The retouched flakes of Kasohal is less than Bam and higher than other sites in terms of its average length. The average thickness of retouched flake of Kasohal is less than Bam, Bhapral, and Ghumarwin but greater than that of Baddi, Marhanwala, and Dhang.

Conclusion

The paper highlights a new Palaeolithic site in the Indian Siwalik Hills. Kasohal lithic assemblages comprise core, flake, discoid, chopper, and scraper elements, which are diagnostic of North-West India's core and flake lithic traditions. The Kasohal assemblages, like other Palaeolithic sites in the Indian Siwalik Hills, are associated with the same surface occurrences. Kasohal has a single cultural horizon, which may imply a temporally constrained occupation, although this must be proved by sedimentary and geochronological studies. The preliminary results here highlight lithic occurrence at Kasohal as an evidence of Palaeolithic culture in the Seer Khad River Basin. The Kasohal lithic assemblages replicate the general Palaeolithic occupational behaviour observed elsewhere, in which Palaeolithic hominines preferred permanent sources of water in the form Seer Khad River and its small streams; and raw material for stone tool making from the post-Siwalik depositions present in the study area. The typo- technological analysis of the Kasohal artefacts and their comparative study with other Palaeolithic sites of the Siwalik Frontal Range presented in this paper would aid in further refinement of regional comparative studies in orderto determine the nature of change that took place in the Siwalik Frontal Range during the post-Siwalik period. In future,

multidisciplinary research and excavations at Kasohal will be required to learn more about the technology and behaviour of the hominines of this region.

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A Nomadic Tribe Becomes a Settled Agriculturist : The Lodhas - A Stigmatized Criminal Tribe in India in British Period

Samita Manna

Abstract

The Lodha, a hunting -gathering tribe in Paschim Medinipur and Jhargram Districts of West Bengal, traversed a long trajectory from nomadic life to settled agriculturist. They are the autochthonous people of the Frontier Bengal[1] like the other tribal groups such as Santal, Munda, Bhumij, Ho and others. Among these, the Lodha occupies a significant place in that region due to their socio-economic and religious activities. In colonial period, the Lodhas were identified as a criminal tribe after the amendment of the Act in 1871. In earlier days, they were the forest dwellers and their livelihood was based on hunting-gathering. Due to enforcement of Forest Act in 1865 they were forced to leave the forest and were engaged with different type of criminal activities. But over time they were declared as primitive tribal group by the Government of India like the other two tribal groups, namely, the Toto and Birhor of West Bengal. Now they are known as Particularly Vulnerable Tribal Group (PVTG). Since 1960 special attempts were made to make them settled agriculturist by giving them land, agricultural equipments, materials for house construction and the like. Slowly and gradually, they became settled agriculturist with the process of cultural assimilation from the local agricultural communities. On the other hand, many changes have been observed in their socio-cultural and religious lifedue to the impact of globalization, industrialization, information technology and of many other governmental policies. These are analyzed.

Key words - *Frontier Bengal, Particularly Vulnerable Tribal Group (PVTG), Primitive Tribal Group (PTG), Criminal Tribe, Cultural Assimilation*

Introduction

Over a few decades, being stigmatized as a 'criminal tribe' by the British, thename of the Lodhatribe in Bengal,has been till today proliferating the former image profile of their livelihood in the minds of the local people, generation after generation. During the time of colonial period, the criminal tribes were identified as born criminals or professional criminals. Historian David Arnold (2006) argues that such communities were classified within the Act because they did not conform to the colonial pattern of settled agriculture and wage labour.The

Lodha tribe was identified as a de-notified tribe after the revocation of criminal tribe Act in the year 1952 (Bhowmick,1963). Due to the addition of various Amendments, the criminal tribe Act of 1871[2] was again modified in 1897 and 1911 respectively. Subsequently, the then Britishers assumed that due to their hereditary qualities they accepted criminality (Sharma 2000, Kapadia 1952). British Government's unethical marking of the adjective 'criminal' on tribe is still scintillating among the people of India and other foreign countries too. But the Lodhas are still glorifying themselves by their ancient history and culture. The Epic period was delineated by the enlightening stories of Savara, the non-Aryan king. Before the invasion of Aryan, the non -Aryan king ruled over India and constituted the pan Indian civilization. There are ample evidences of the stories of Savara in Ramayana, Mahabharata, Puranas and different ancient literatures (Padhi 1975, Dash 2014, Bhowmick 1963, Bhakta 2009, Hansdah 2018). The Lod has think that they are the descendants of the king Savara and often they identify themselves as 'Lodha Savara' (Bhakta 2009). In Orissa, a large number of Savara community live and locally they are identified as Soura, Savara, Sora and Sabara. Historically there were some evidences that they used to worship first Lord Jagannatha as their deity (Eschmann et. al. 1978, Joshi 2007). In the temple of Jagannatha, earlier they were engaged with priesthood and even today they are also involved with the priestly work of the worship of Lord Jagannatha with the other Brahmin priests (Dash 2014, Bose 1953). The Lodha Savaras who are residing in different places of Jhargram and West Medinipur Districts have many similarities with the Savaras of Orissa (Padhi 1975, Dash 2014). Even in West Medinipur and Jhargram Districts a good number of temples exist where the main priests of those temples[3] are the Lodhas known as Savaras (Bhowmick 1982). Before the intrusion of the Aryans, they were the original settlers of Bharata. But after the Indus valley civilization the Aryans gradually established themselves as the nation builders (Fuchs 1973; Hasnain 2009). Consequently, the original settlers began to settle in different forest areas and since then they claimed their identity as indigenous population of the land. It is believed that the Lodha Savaras of West Bengal and the Savaras of Orissa[4] have many similarities in their socio-economic-religious life (Bhowmick 1975; Bhakta 2009; Bose 1953). Most probably slowly and gradually, the geo-political boundaries have separated them from one state to other. Both of them are known as Hinduised tribe. They have no original language. They simply follow the local language. As for example in Bengal the Lodhas speak in Bengali language and they say that they are the Bengali Lodha Savara. On the other hand, in Orissa, they speak in Oriya language but many of their pristine culture justifies that there are many similarities in their socio-economic and religious life. In West Bengal, all the Lodha Savaras worship the Hindu gods and goddesses along with a few of their jungle deities by holding their traditional legacy. On the other hand, the same trend has been followed by the Savaras of Orissa.

A Long Journey: Nomadic Tribe to Settled Agriculturist

In West Bengal, with the passage of time, the Lodhas traversed a long journey from criminal tribe to Particularly Vulnerable Group owing to their distinguishable vulnerable features.

Till today they possess a few traits of marginality like low level of literacy, less or no governmental representative, and persisting primitiveness (Bhowmick 1994). In 2008 onwards they have been marked as PVTG (Particularly Vulnerable Tribal Group).

Changing faces of their everyday life have been observed by conducting a field study in a village named Daharpur situated in Paschim Medinipur,West Bengal, India. The village was studied 60 years ago by an eminent social anthropologist, Prabodh Kumar Bhowmick, who published his classic ethnographic work entitled as *The Lodhas of West Bengal* (Bhowmick 1963). Lodhas were declared as 'de- notified tribe' in the year 1952, when Bhowmick started his Ph. D. dissertation on them.The criminal tribe's name was revoked. During the time of his field work the then Lodhas were hardly wonderers.They mainly depended on forest and forest products with scanty opportunities available to them. Their socio-economic condition was very poor. They lived a life of hand to mouth.Their low level of literacy, poor economic level and mostly zero level representation of Government's service had cumulative effect in worsening their situation, this prompted the Ministry of Tribal Development to categorize them under the group of P TG (Primitive Tribal Group) along with other two tribal groups - Birhors and Totos in West Bengal (Bhowmick 1994).

During that time, with the help of Government, a small amount of money was sanctioned and with this some developmental schemes were formulated on them. Daharpur village as a model village was selected by the anthropologist.They had to be settled unwillingly to this village Daharpur (with the help of the Government's welfare measures). Bhowmick also established Bidisa[5]- a Non-Voluntary Organization to do some welfare work for the rehabilitation of the Lodha tribe. It is in this area the re-study has been done. Changing faces of the everyday life of the Lodhas have been observed by the present writer through conducting an extensive field work on them which started on and from the last January 2022 to till date.

The Lodhas are now settled in different villages of the Districts of West Bengal and they have been lately shifted from hunting –gathering economy to settled agricultural economy. Initially, during the time of their first settlement in Daharpur village, they showed a negative attitude to do agricultural works as they were at that time tuned with the culture of nomadism, by moving here and there in different forest areas, they used to collect their food and were engaged with hunting and fishing activities from the nearby forest named Belti situated in Narayangarh Block, Paschim Medinipur, which is situated within the Jhargram forest area in Jhargram District, West Bengal. During the time of their early settling (early 1960s) often they sold their agricultural land, agricultural equipment like plough, axe, hoe and many domestic animals which were given to them by the Government. Sometimes they sold their house construction materials also as they did not like to be settled in one place. The local high caste people generally purchased all those materials at cheap price by exploiting the innocent tribal people.

But the recent survey (February 2022) reveals that now they are getting increasingly interested in agricultural works. There is not a single family of Lodha who is surviving without food.The Lodhas have crossed a long journey of 60 years from hunting-gathering to agricultural economy.

Many important factors of social change like industrialization, urbanization, globalization with information technology have brought many changes in the socio- economic life of the Lodhas. Side by side, various welfare schemes have been implemented by the Government to change their ways of life. As a result, slowly and gradually they have been adjusting themselves in the light of modernity.

Different schemes of Central and State Governments in the last twenty years helped them to change their socio-economic life drastically. Especially since 2011 awareness for better living is realized and it is continuing till date. Now they think that they are also the members of the village society like the other tribal and non-tribal groups. A sense of solidarity also emerges among them. Especially the Lodhas now think and express that they are the Lodha Savara. This nomenclature was given earlier by one of the members of the Lodha Savara community whose name is Prahallad Kumar Bhakta. Lodha Savara is a Hinduised tribe as referred to by Bhowmick (1963). The Savaras asserted themselves as the early settlers of Bharata which was ruled by Biswabasu who belonged to the Savara tribe, a non-Aryan Hindu ruler. As a result, they think that they are much closer to Hindu caste group. But on the other hand, ethnic groups like the Santal, Munda, Oraon and many others also want to continue their cultural identities along with a development orientation. However, the Lodhas are a little bit different from them.

The Study Area

The present study is based on field views. The present writer conducted a field work on the village Daharpur. Daharpur village is situated in Block Narayangarh and District West Medinipur. It is 21 km away from Kharagpur station. The NH 60 is the high road in the eastern part of Daharpur village. The western side, of the village has a big forest locally named as Belti, which is near Keleghai River from where the tribal people fulfill the needs of their daily life.The forest provides fodder, wood, twigs and many dried plants and roots for their fuel. They collect wild fruits, honey, edible roots, small animals like rats, birds, one type of snake like reptile and many other eatable jungle products.They also collect small fish, molluscs, shrimps, crabs and many other aquatic organisms from nearby ponds lying in the vicinity of forest for their food. At present the local people get the facilities of daily marketing from Narayangarh. There is also a railway station known as Narayangargh near Daharpur village. Since earlier days they are availing of the facilities of weekly village marketing system known as *hut* situated in Narayangarh. Every Thursday the village *hut* goes on. At present due to the high road facilities, they are getting the advantages of daily market also.

Earlier, there was a king's palace in Narayangarh. The name of the last king was Narayan

Ballav Pal. Now the palace is still there but its glamour is no more. The King's son is now a retired school teacher. A well-known Raj - temple named Brahmani is still upholding the traditional heritage of the local area. There is a popular myth that around eight hundred years back one day Raja Gandharba Pal, Sadgop by caste, was passing from this place and fell asleep on the way. Suddenly, he was awakened and saw three goddesses coming to him. After that, the Raja built this temple and placed three images of the goddesses, namely, Brahmani, Rudrani and Indrani. Since then, this temple has been very active.The devotees from different places would come and worship the goddesses. The temple is open for all caste and tribal people. They worship together to get the blessings of goddesses. The structure of the temple is unique. The heritage of the area still glorify the place. Historically, this place is also important as Sri Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu crossed this area after visiting the Brahmani temple on his way to Puri, the place of Lord Jagannatha.

Table 1 – Distribution of the Lodha Population in the District Paschim Medinipur, West Bengal.

	LODHA Population								
District	**Block**	**No. of Village**	**No. of Household**	**Population**					**Sex Ratio**
				Total	**Male**	**%**	**Female**	**%**	
Paschim Medinipur	**MedinipurSadar**	27	792	3244	1656	51.05	1588	48.95	959
	Keshpur	8	203	820	435	53.05	385	46.95	885
	Salbani	13	241	1041	550	52.83	491	47.17	893
	Dantan I	5	178	756	368	48.68	388	51.32	1054
	Dantan II	2	84	366	177	48.36	189	51.64	1068
	Daspur I	4	52	175	86	49.14	89	50.86	1035
	Kharagpur I	46	1777	7074	3589	50.74	3485	49.26	971
	Kharagpur II	24	858	3130	1588	50.73	1542	49.27	971
	Keshiary	17	1187	4396	2285	51.98	2111	48.02	924
	Debra	22	467	1614	823	50.99	791	49.01	961
	Sabang	11	830	2699	1373	50.87	1326	49.13	966
	Pingla	7	415	1255	620	49.4	635	50.6	1024
	Narayangarh	50	3701	12250	6232	50.87	6018	49.13	966
	District Total	**236**	**10785**	**38820**	**19782**	**50.96**	**19038**	**49.04**	**962**
		468	**16733**	**61104**	**31099**	**50.9**	**30005**	**49.1**	**965**

Source- Cultural Research Institute (2018)

Research Design

A total of 112 families of Lodha live in Daharpur village (as seen in recent survey, 2022). Daharpur is a multi-ethnic village consisting of 504 households of different castes and tribes. The total composition of the households and the sample of the different ethnic groups are given in Table-2.

Table 2 – Composition of Different Castes and Tribal Groups along with Sample in Village Daharpur

Caste/Tribe	Occupation	Total	Sample
Brahman	Priesthood and Worshipping	5	02
Mahisya + Kayestha	Land holding community and cultivation	12	03
Sodgop	Land holding community and cultivation	47	06
Jugi	Umbrella re-pairing, bedding work, Cultivation and Business	24	04
Tanti	Weaving and Cultivation	4	02
Kamar	Iron work and Cultivation	6	02
Dhopa	Washing and Cultivation	2	02
Bagdi/ Brga Kshatriya	Cultivation/ day labour	44	06
Hadi	Drum -beating and Cultivation	2	02
Vaisnab	Cultivation and singer of devotional song	10	02
Bagal	Day labour/ Cultivation	16	03
	Total	**172**	**34**
Munda	Government Job holder, Cultivation and agricultural work	220	43
		220	**43**
Lodha(do)	**Cultivation /Agricultural Work/ Small Business**	**102**	**21**
Converted Lodha(do)	**Cultivation/Day Labour**	**10**	**02**
		112	**23**
	TOTAL	**504**	**100**

Source- Field survey done in 2022

Table 2 describes different multi-ethnic groups (Caste and Tribe) living in village Daharpur. Daharpur is a multi-ethnic village consisting of different caste and tribal groups. There is a total of eleven caste groups consisting of Brahman, Mahisya + Kayestha, Sodgop, Jugi, Tanti, Kamar, Dhopa, Bagdi/ Barga Kshatriya, Hadi, Vaisnab, Bagal, and two tribal groups: the Lodhas and the Mundas. The total number of households in Daharpur village is 504 of which 172 households belong to different castes (34%). 220 (43%) households of Mundas are living

in different areas of the village and 112 (23%) Lodha families are residing there. Accordingly, the purposive sample has been drawn from the entire households of the village along with the sample of each group. In this way, 34 sample households from various caste groups, 43 sample households from Mundas and 23 Lodha households have been selected purposively.The present research paper deals only with the changing status of the Lodha tribe. There are 112 numbers of households and the sample size is 23.

Out of 112 families, 10 lodha families are converted into Christianity and the rest are non-Christians (102). Form this 23 Lodha families from 112 families from the village Daharpur have been selected of which two are Christian families and 21 are non-Christians. Purposive sampling had been followed to elicit data...

Extensive field work was conducted for the present research work. Direct observation, face to face interview, and focus group discussion are mainly done for knowing the changing life of the Lodhas in Daharpur village. This village was studied earlier by Prabodh Kumar Bhowmick in early 1960s. After that the re-study has been conducted by the present researcher to assess the changing life style of theLodhas.

Sample Characteristics

Table 3 - Distribution of theLodhafamiliesat different Paras in Village Daharpur

Lodha (Para Wise)	Total Population
Masak Para	77
Tegeria	25
Kali Mandir Para	10
Total	**112**

Socio-Economic Characteristics of the Sample Lodha Families (Table 3.1 to table 3.6)

Table 3.1 –Clan Wise Distribution of the Sample Lodha Families

Tribe	Name of Clan	Taboos of Clan	Frequency
Lodha	Sandilya\ Sandil\ Chandil	The do not eat *Swetmagur (one type of jeol fish)*	12 (52.18)
	Sishu	They do not eat big fish from ocean	03 (13.04)
	Sal	Sal fish is prohibited	03 (13.04)
	Kashyap\ Cachchap	They do not eat tortoise	03 (13.04)
Lodha converted to Christian	No Clan		02 (8.70)
	Total		**23 (100.00)**

Figures in the parentheses (brackets) indicate percentages

Majority of the Lodhas belong to Sandil\ Chandil clan, but now they say that their clan name is *Sandilya*. There is a marked point of difference between caste and tribe in the sense that caste groups identify themselves with their clan names or *gotros*. The caste people have

different *gotros,* which are generally originated by using the names of different sages or *rishis*, i.e., *Sandilya, Bhradwaj, Kashyap, Modhukulya* etc. But the tribal people identify their ancestors through their clan names which are not originated from the names of sages or *rishis*. Their clan names were originated either from different objects, or the names of different trees, flowers, animals etc. Gradually the process of *Sanskritization*[6] helped them to change their clan names as for example, now the *Chandil* clan becomes *Chandilya* and then it becomes *Sandilya.* In this way, they have borrowed different *gotro* names from the Hindu caste people without knowing the proper meaning of the term. In similar way they have adopted *Kashyap* from *Cachaap* (tortoise), which was their clan name before. This process of adopting clan names is one of the examples of the transformation of the hunting – gathering tribeto become an agricultural tribe by following the culture of agricultural communities. There are ample examples of cultural assimilation of the Lodha with the local agricultural castes living around them. During the time of birth, marriage and death they employ local Brahmin, local washer man (dhopa) and barber (Napit) to provide ritual services. They perform various functions to complete different ritualsjust like Bengali caste group. All these rituals are performed by different specialist groups. The Lodhas follow the Rite-de-Passages of the Bengali caste group and the members of the village approve this. In this way they rightly claim that they are the "Bengali Lodha Savara." Slowly, they have become part of the larger Bengali society. But in the Daharpur village a large number of Mundas also reside and they never claim that they are the part of Bengali group. They have their own ethnic culture and with time they're enforced their ethnic cultural identity.

Source- Field survey done in 2022

Table 3.2 - Age Distribution of the Head of the Family

Lodha Tribe	Age in Years					Total
	25 - 34	35 - 44	45 - 54	55 - 64	Above 65	
Lodha	02 (8.70)	05 (21.74)	04 (17.39)	05 (21.74)	05 (21.74)	21 (91.30)
Lodha converted to Christian	-	-	-	1 (4.35)	1 (4.35)	02 (8.70)
		TOTAL				**23(100.00)**

Figures in the parentheses (brackets)indicate percentages

Table 3.3 - Nature of Families

Lodha Tribe	Nature of Family		
	Nuclear Family	Joint Family	Total
Lodha	15 (65.22)	06 (26.08)	21 (91.30)
Lodha converted to Christian	01 (4.35)	01 (4.35)	02 (8.70)
	TOTAL		**23 (100.00)**

Figures in the parentheses (brackets) indicate percentages

Table 3.4 - Family size

Lodha Tribe	Number of Family Members				Total
	1 – 3	4 - 6	7 - 9	10	
Lodha	06 (26.08)	13 (56.52)	02 (8.70)	-	21 (91.30)
Lodha converted to Christian	01 (4.35)	-	-	01 (4.35)	02 (8.70)
	TOTAL				**23 (100.00)**

Figures in the parentheses (brackets) indicate percentages

Table 3.5 - Nature of House

Lodha Tribe	Nature of House			Total
	Pakka	Kachha	Mixed	
Lodha	05(21.74)	02(8.70)	14(60.86)	21(91.30)
Lodha converted to Christian	01(4.35)	01(4.35)	-	02 (8.70)
	TOTAL			**23(100.00)**

Figures in the parentheses (brackets) indicate percentages

Table 3.6 - Land distribution

Lodha Tribe	Amount of Agricultural Land (Katha)					Total
	No Land	1 - 19	20 - 39	40 - 59	Above 59	
Lodha	03(13.04)	07(30.43)	07(30.43)	01(4.35)	03(13.04)	21(91.30)
Lodha converted to Christian	-	-	01(4.35)	-	01(4.35)	02 (8.70)
			TOTAL			**23 (100.00)**

Figures in the parentheses (brackets) indicate percentages

Majority of the Lodha family's are nuclear in nature due to their poor income, spatial problem in their original houses and also their preference to stay separately from their parents. In general, the grown up lodhas prefer to live in nuclear families. Number of families with fewer member is very common in their society. At present fully mud-built houses are not seen. Majority of the houses are either pakka or mixed for this they now get help from different schemes ofthe Governments, both State and Central. In general, now they have some agricultural land. They do cultivation by themselves. They afford to sell their produce from their land, though after all, for most of them the amount is very low. They get sufficient rice and wheat\flour from the Government free of cost. Engagement in cultivation has resulted inchanges in their status from nomadic life to settled agriculturist.

Changing Scene: Then and Now

Earlier

The Lodhas, a nomadic forest living group, was identified as a criminal tribe by the colonial rulers. They were notorious for their criminal offences and the local people were horrified for their violent activities. The insecurity in their lives led them to move from one place to other places of the District Pashim Medinipur like Jhargram, Gopivallavpur, Dantan, Binpur, Keshiary, different places of Lalgarh,Narayangarh and the like (Bhowmick 1990).

Over a period of time the Lodhas have traversed a long historical trajectory. Around 1960s,when the first systematic ethnographic work on the Lodhas was done by Bhowmick, primitivism still persisted in their socio cultural life processes.'The traditional bow and arrow culture, which was evolved through pulling strings of the catapult, developed in them a spirit of homocentrism' (Manna 1990).

At that time, the process of transition was just started. Newly developed schemes for development were initiated to bring them into the mainstream society. But they were confused and were not still ready to accept the newly developed life style in their everyday life. They remained largely de-motivated and also they continued to be totally exploited by the local caste people of that area. But situation has changed now after fifty years. The changing scenario is observed when the same village is re-studied by the present researcher.

In the earlier study, it was seen that they were socio-economically very poor. All Lodha families lived in mud-built thatched houses. Each of the family had barely one room for their living purpose and this too they shared with their domestic animals. At that time, they mainly depended on forest and forest products. They used to collect different forest products from nearby forests.

Present-day

Now they are settled agriculturists and majority of them have their own land except for a few(13.04%). Each Lodha family now that is after Corona, gets 27 kgs rice every month along with 5 kgs wheat and 12 kgs of flour. They also get sugar, kerosene oil at subsidised rate. As a result, all Lodha families get food daily. They even earn some money by selling paddy, they produce. Before 2007, they had practiced cultivation of seasonal crop, the *Amon* rice. But now they practice agriculture by getting water from deep tube well or submersible pump which they hire from the local big cultivators. For *boro* cultivation they spend approximately Rs 4000.00 for one bigha of land. The Daharpur village area is a draught prone area, the rain water is not available always, so for *amon* (seasonal) cultivation they sometimes have to hire water from nearby big cultivators for which they spend approximately Rs 200.00 per hour. But it depends on the situation. The big cultivators are Horen Bhnuia, 55 years old, a Bagdi by caste, who is service holder and big cultivator and lives in AndhiraVara village and Dinesh Debnath, aged 35 years, a Jugi by caste and a big cultivator living in the same village, who supply water to the small farmers and collect money from them.

Earlier for drinking water, they had to depend on nearby pond or from nearby well. But now they get drinking water from tube wells. Since 2007, this practice is getting due to sandy and rocky mud levels. Often the tube well facilities are not properly available. Recently after implementation of the State Government scheme in the name of *Sajal Dhara*, they get sufficient tap water. Water now is available in the morning from 6 to 8 AM, from 10 AM to 12 noon, and at 3 PM to 5 PM in the afternoon. For availing such facilities, they have to pay Rs. 50 per family each month. The tap water is used mainly for drinking purpose, although they do washing, cleaning, bathing and all house hold chores with this water. No doubt the facility of drinking water makes their life safer and secure. Earlier the children used to suffer from diarrhea, typhoid, jaundice and different skin diseases but now they are almost free from those diseases.

Education is another important indicator and an indicator of settled life. In Daharpur village, there are three primary Schools, namely, *Daharpur Sabar Pally Nimna Buniadi Vidyalaya, Daharpur Prathamik Vidyalaya and Koragaria Daharpur Sishu Siksha Kendra*. There are two *Aganwaries* in Kalimandir Para and Masak Para for the children up to ages five. In these schools the pregnant mother also gets food and other medicines. One high School at Bidisa is also availed by the children of the Daharpur village. All children of the village go to school daily. There are also two schools in Narayangarh and Makrampur. From the Lodha families 31 students, both boys and girls, attain school regularly in class eight to class twelve in Daharpur village of which 14 are males and 17 are females. Two girl students are getting higher education. One of them named as Gayetry Bhakta (19 yrs of age), is nursing student and another named as Amrika Bhakta (18 yrs) is a college student. All Lodha children go to school daily.



The Lodha children are in primitive life mood (1965-66)



Gayatri Bhakta – A Lodha Nursing Student (2022)



Amrika Bhakta- ALodha College going girl (2022

Infrastructural Changes : State Government and Central Government Schemes

Earlier mud-built roads were there. But gradually *morum* roadsare built at a few places of the village Daharpur. Since 2017 metal roads are replaced by concrete roads.

Mud-built houses are replaced by mixed house of mud and brick, as well as brick and cement built houses provided by the Central Government Scheme, such as, *Pradhan Mantri Abas Jojona.* During the time of the ruling by CPIM party,only ten 'pakka'houses were made. Since 2011 *Bangla Abas Jogona* scheme was introduced and at present thirty-five houses are constructed in the same village by the state Government.Toilet facilities are available in a few houses where three to four families have built their own toilet with their money, but six families are enjoying toilet facilities provided by the Central Government's *Swachcha Bharat Mission.* Each family had to give Rs.1000 and the rest of Rs.10,000 per family was paid by the Central Government.

Women folk are also engaged in different SHG Programs. Especially in the Lodha paras there are four SHGs, where the women are mainly engaged in cooking at different *Aganwary* centres.

Another important scheme, known as, *Lakshmi Bhandar,* is implemented for women aged from 25 years to 60 years. In this scheme SC and ST women get Rs.1000 and general caste women get Rs 500 per month. *Pension Scheme* is implemented in the year1995 (15thAugust) where Rs.1000 is given to each male and female who are inthe age of 60 years and above. From 8th March 2013, *Kanyasree scheme* is implemented for unmarried girls upto 18 years of age. Among the Lodhas in Daharpur village one girl has received it and two girls are ready to get it. *Rupasree scheme* is also there, where after 18 years,one will get Rs, 25000.00, but no one in the village yet got it. *Widow Pension*s cheme for women of 40 years to 59 years of age is there. Rs. 400 is also given to each widow. *Old age Pension* scheme is availed by all aged persons. In this village there are 20 persons who are availing the benefits of the scheme. Since 2018, all families got the facility of using gas but now only 5 families are using the gas for cooking. This facility was installed free of cost through the scheme of the Central Government but one has to bear the running expenses. *Abas Jojona* started during the time of C P I M in the year 2005, when Rs. 30,000 was given to each enlisted family. But now after 2011 the amount has been increased and now each family gets Rs. 1 lac and 50 thousand.

So, at a glance, it appears that enormous changes have taken place, especially after 2010. During the time of Bhowmick's study, the Lodhas largely lived a life of primitiveness but now significant improvement has taken place in their socio- economic life. We are hopeful that very soon the Lodhas will get a new status in the village society.

Changing Socio-Economic and Religious Life

Initially, during the time of Bhowmick's study the Daharpur village was controlled by



Tulsi Mancha in Kanchan Digar's (Lodha) house

the general high caste people who were socio-economically affluent at that time. But now the total scenario in connection with the village social relations has changed. The Lodhas are now claiming that they are not the adivasi group like the Munda or Santal tribes. On the other hand, they are claiming that they are the Lodha-Savara who is closely associated with the Bengali Hindus. As a result, slowly and gradually they are assimilating the Bengali culture. Most of the Lodha family's house has a courtyard where the female members, generally the wife of the head of the family, planted a *tulsi* (Ocimumtenuiflorum) plant on a *mancha,* a small temple like structure. Sri Hari and Lord Shibais represented by Bael plant (Aegle marmelos) and ma Manasa symbolically represented by *cactus* (Cactaceae) plant.

The place is cleaned with cowdung daily. *Dhup* (Incense), flower and Chandan (sandal paste) are used for worshipping the gods and goddesses. They also blow the conch shell.

In this way the Lodhas are gradually changed into an agrarian community. It is very interesting to note that all Bengali festivals are celebrated by them. They claim Durga Puja, Lakshmi Puja, Kali Puja, Saraswathi Puja are their own festivals like the Bengali culture. As a result, ssteadily they are abstaining from the worshipping of their traditional ethnic gods and goddesses. Only twice they worship their traditional gods and goddess i.e.,in the last day of the month of Chaitra (March-April), during the time of *Chaitra Sankranti* and on the last day of the month of Paus (December- January) *Makar Sankranti*. No Brahmin Priest is required. Their own priest known as *deharies*, at present a 72 yearsold man, named Subal Diger, Kinkar Kotal, 50 years of age; Sunil Bhakta,50 years of age worship their tutelary deities. In each and every living area they have some *Baram-than* (Sacred place). At a*than* (sacred place) the priest of a particular clan of their own community perform the worship. Under a big tree like Banyan (Ficusbenghalensis) or Peepal (Ficusreligiosa) or Mango (Mangiferaindica) or Neem (Azadirachtaindica) or any other, a place known as *Garam* or *Baram-than* is made ready for worshipping their titular deities. The small earthen horses and elephants are placed there. During the days of *Sankrantis* they worship. In Daharpur village among the Lodhas one traditional deity named *Sannyasi Bir* is worshipped. Sunil Bhakta acts as a *dehari* (priest). All the lodha families take part in it. They collect subscription of money of Rs.50 from each family and perform the worship. Day by day The Lodhas are closer to Bengali



The day of Makar Sankranti 15th January, 2022 the image of Sannyasi Bir worshipped by the dehari Sunil Bhakta.

culture apart from restoring their pristine culture, which was associated with forest and nature earlier.

Newly Developed Social Relations among the Villagers

In general, the village societies are characterized by the rigidity of caste system. The villagers strictly adhere to the social distance with each other. Sixty years ago when the previous work was done by Prof. Bhowmick, the village society was strictly characterized by caste type of stratification. The adivasi group was totally segregated from the others. But now that type of social distance does not exist. All groups are considerably accepted by all excepting their ethnic cultural differentiations. The Brahmin as a superior caste always maintained a social distance from others and this trend is still going on. On the other hand, the Brahmins also perform worship and other ritualistic functions for all caste groups and the Lodhas are not the exception. The Mundas have their own *Pahans* known as *Brahmin* (Priest). On the other hand, in other ceremonial days and public gatherings of the village, the Lodhas also participate. Even on the festive days of other caste groups, they also participate and accept food and other material goods from them. During the time of annual worshipping of the village gods and goddesses, they also worship and play significant roles to complete the function. Even in the employment guarantee scheme for hundred days work, all villagers (caste and tribe together) take part in it. Tribals also perform various vital roles in village politics. In Daharpur village Souman Bhakta, 40 years old, Kinkar Kotal, 50 years old, Sunil Bhakta 50 years of age and Prafulla Bhakta at the age of 62 are directly involved and play various roles in village panchayat.

The Lodhas settled Agriculturist today

Now the socio-economic life of the Lodhas is fully dependent on agriculture. They are settled permanently in different villages of the districts of Jhargram and West Medinipur. Daharpur is such type of one village where the Lodhas have settled and accepted agriculture as their occupation. Gradually with time they also participated in different socio-religious activities

of the villagers. Centering round cultivation, they also perform some of the agriculture related rituals annually like other agricultural caste groups, such as, *Mahisya, Sadgop, Tili, Teli* and many others of the village society. All these socio-religious activities related to agriculture are performed by them on their own and there is, no need for Brahmin to do such activities. In Daharpur, a good number of Lodhas possess a good amount of land today. The names to be mentioned are: Basudev Naik aged 30 years (6 bigha), Adhin Bhakta aged 40 years (6 bigha), Madan Bhakta aged 42 years (5 bigha). In general, the farmers' houses have open court yard to keep paddy and straws after bringing the paddy from the field to house, it is known as *Khamar Bari* which is an open place for keeping paddy.



A Place stored with paddy for future

Now a days the large lands are cultivated with tractors. The Lodhas are not an exceptional. In this village generally Dinesh Debnath, 35 years old and Monoranjan Debnath 40 years old jugi by caste help the lodhas by hiring tractors for cultivation.

The list of the agricultural activities.

Name of the Agricultural Activities	Month	Participation of the Members	Nature of Performing	Worship of the Deity
Sowing seeds *Tolafelano*	Early July	Both male and female members	Prepare land and sowing seeds for seedling	No deity is worshipped, but they generally observean auspicious day for the agricultural work
Seedling plantation *Dhanroa*	August	More females than males	Seedling are planted in the cultivable lands	On any auspiciousday
Ripening of paddy, ready for cutting paddy *Dhan kata*	November to first week of December	Both males and females	Cutting plants are ready for processing	It depends on the days of maturity. They celebrate the auspicious day as *Khamar puja*

Continuity and Change

Previously the Lodhas were the worshippers of Jungle gods and goddesses of which the names of the Barams are mentionable. They are the worshippers of *Barams*, only on the day of *Makar Sankranti* they worship the tutelary deity. Earthen elephants, horses and other articles for worshipping like flowers, fruits and tulsi leaves are offered for getting His blessings. In village Daharpur the *dehari* named Subal Diger, aged 72 years performs the priestly functions for the welfare of the villagers. The horse is the symbol of *Baram* deity. The Munda tribes who are residing at the same Daharpur village are also the worshippers of *Baram* deities. It is very clear that the adivasi or the indigenous population of the Border Bengal worship the *Baram* deities for maintaining their healthy and safe life as *Baram* deity is the deity of the forest.

They are also the worshippers of goddess Sitala. This also signifies an important characteristic of village society based on agriculture. Generally, in each village irrespective of different tribal groups, all caste groups also worship the goddess Sitala. The Sitala than is also in the central part of the village. The village society is distinctively marked with invisible boundary known as *para,* where different people of various communities live. Caste and tribal communities of the village worship goddess Sitala separately, but they also participate and worship the village goddess Sitala, which was arranged by the members of the village club where all villagers irrespective of caste and tribe participate in it. Another important god has been worshipped by the villagers is the Lord Shiva. During the time of *Charak* festival all the villagers worship lord Shiva. Irrespective of differences among caste, tribe and religion, all the villagers participate in it. Mongal Chandi is another village deity which is worshipped by them by the villagers on different auspicious days. So, the Lodhas who were once considered as a criminal tribe, a stigmatized group, are now accepted by the villagers as their own neighbor like the other agricultural communities.

An opinion survey has been done in this research through focus group discussion. There are altogether ten senior members of the Lodha community along with a few senior women folks who also participated there. They had been asked to narrate their life experiences in forest-based economy and their feelings towards the agro-based economy on which they are spending their days. All of them virtually lamented for leaving their forest-based life pattern. Especially they are not getting help from *gunin* (medicine man) (Manna & Manna 2018; Manna 2003). Only one or two medicinal men like Subal Digarand Baku Bhakta are surviving. New generations are not interested to hold the tradition. Medicinal plants are not available like in earlier days due to climate change (Manna & Manna 2016). All senior Lodha members say that till today forest is their sweet home. They love forest life as it fulfills their dreams, gives comfort and keep them fresh like nature.

Conclusion

Indian history and culture always seem to respect others as it moves progressively since the day of Independence. No doubt a massive change in the socio- economic life of the people

draws attention not only the people of the local area but also it focuses on a larger attention in the field of the entire system. Poverty, deprivation, exclusion, corruption, and the like persist along with the social development and transformation of Indian social system (Vaidyanathan 1995; Nayar 2007; Kattakayam 2012). In spite of all these short comings, the poor section of the society specially the Lodhas, who were once identified as a criminal tribe by the Britishers and the local people were also horrified and did not approve the activities of the Lodhas, have crossed a trajectory from hunting gathering to settled agriculturists. They have also taken upsome cultural traits of Hinduism where the tribal culture of Lodha is gradually eroded. The changing socio-cultural and religious life rationalizes it, though economically and educationally they are lagging behind. This imperative field study justifies that the Savaras/Lodhas gradually accept their socio-cultural mobility like the main stream population following the process of globalization and availing the fruits of developmental schemes.

Notes:

1 Frontier Bengal has been addressed as Western Frontiers by Bhowmick (1976) in his book *Socio cultural Profile of Frontier Bengal*. It is known as '*Samanta Bhum'* of Anga-Vanga And Kalinga region of ancient legends ... the area is still now inhabited by many autochthonous or primitive people represented by the Santals, Mundas, Lodhas, Kharias, Mahalis... most of whom still cling to their pristine culture.

2 Criminal Tribal Act provided for registering all the members or any member of the tribes or tribe declared as criminal tribes.

3 In the area of Border Bengal good no. of temples are visited, where the priests belong to Savara community. It is assumed that earlier these Savara priests were the novel. But with passage of time, the Brahmin priests were associated with them. A few examples are given here. The name of the temple isGuptamani situated under the jurisdiction of Jhargram police station of the Mumbai Kolkata National highway.Jaichandi temple is another one which is situatedin the village Pitalkanthi\ Patharkathi, under SankrailP.S of Jhargram .Now theLodha priest named Gajen Pramanickworships daily in this temple. On the other hand, the name of the priest\ Dehari in Guptamani temlple is Sunil Ojha who is a Savara Lodha (Sarita 1982). The traditional legacy of worshipping by the Lodhapriest\ Dehari is still continuing in various places of Border Bengal (Manna and Bera 2018).

4 The worship of Lord Jagannath by Savara is also mentioned in Darubrahma Gita written by Jagannath Das in 16th Century AD and in DeulaTola written by Nilambara Das in 17th Century AD. Regarding origin of Lord Jagannath, historian William Hunter also remarked that the aboriginal people worshipped a Blue Stone inside dense forests as Nilamadhaba the Dravidian God, who was offered kacha (Raw) food by the primitive tribes and with the passage of time as the Aryan elements introduced Jagannatha into Hinduism, he is worshipped as God of Aryan (a more civilized race) who is offered pakka (cooked) food. At present this two fold worship coexist side by side. Till today the Sauras or Savaras worship trees "the Nature God" known as "Kitung" which means God (Joshi 2007).

5 Bidisa is an Ashram Hostel and is a model example of running tribal hostel under Samaj Sevak Sangha, a NGO (around 1960).The founder of this Ashram Hostel was an eminent social anthropologist, Prabodh Kumar Bhowmick, Calcutta University, West Bengal. Gradually he developed the Institute of Social Research and Applied Anthropology which was lying within the boundary of itin the year 1975. It is situated in the adjacent area of village Daharpur, PaschimMedinipur, West Bengal.

6 'Sanskritization is a process by which a lower caste or tribe or any other group changes its customs, rituals, ideology and way of life in the direction of a higher or more often twice born caste' (Srinivas 2003).

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Understanding the Ancient Heritage of Kṛmilā : An Early Medieval Viṣaya under Śrīnagara Bhukti

Tanmoy Mondal

Abstract

The Munger inscription of King Devapala, a ruler under the Pala dynasty of Bengal and Bihar, appraised that in the early medieval period, the southern part of the present Bihar region was known as Śrīnagara Bhukti. Farther more this Bhukti was also divided into three Viṣayas, namely, Rājagriha Viṣaya, Gayā Viṣaya and Kṛimilā Viṣaya. Present research attempts to understand the ancient heritage of the Kṛimilā region through archaeological evidence from a holistic perspective. Those who worked earlier on the archaeology of Kṛimilā, concentrated on inscriptions, sculptures and the studies were of isolated sites. The present work is intended to study the cultural heritage of the Kṛimilā region by analyzing earlier recorded sites with help of independent fieldwork in the Kiul river valley. An effort has also been made to systematically record the archaeological remains scattered in this area.

Keywords: *Settlement, Habitation, Sculpture, Early Medieval, Kṛimilā, Archaeology*

Introduction

The Munger inscription of King Devapāla, inscribed in his 33rd year of his reign, was discovered in the Munger district of Bihar in 1780. It was first published in 1788, and was edited and published subsequently in 1892, 1913 and 1925-26. The deciphering of the inscription has brought a new idea of the Pāla administration in early medieval times in eastern India. According to this inscription, the present south Bihar region was known as Śrīnagara Bhukti in the early medieval period. Further, the inscription also addressed that Śrīnagara Bhukti was divided into three Viṣaya. These were Rājagriha, Gayā and Kṛimilā Viṣayas (Map.1). It is certain that Rājagriha and Gayā Viṣayas were the present Rajgir and Gaya respectively but identification of Kṛimilā Viṣaya was difficult for the scholars. After a long time in 1950, the mystery was solved when D.C. Sircar visited three villages in south Bihar of present Lakhisarai district, namely, Rajaona, Chowki and Balgudar (also pronounced as *Valgudar*). During his visit, he discovered three such inscriptions with the mention of the word Kṛimilā Viṣaya. Based on these inscriptions, he identified that the village Balgudar was the headquarter of the Kṛimilā Viṣaya (Chhabra and Sircar 1985:137–45). The references to Kṛimilā Viṣaya also were found in some other inscriptions. The earliest epigraphic record

about this belongs to Gupta period. Besides these, two Nālanda seals of Samudragupta are significant in this respect (Sastri 1942:53–54). These inscriptions mentioned the word Kṛimilā and designated it as a Viṣaya. It has also mentioned a village known as Kavala, under this Viṣaya. The reference to Kṛimilā Viṣaya has also been recorded in the Bihar inscription (Choudhary 1958:22). The Naulagarh image inscription, reported from the Begusarai district, Bihar, was issued in the 24th year of reign of Pala king Vigrahapgla, has mentioned Kṛimilā Viṣaya (Sahai 1983:96). All these recorded inscriptional sources address the historical importance of this Viṣaya. Therefore, in the present research, an attempt is made to understand the ancient heritage of the early medieval Kṛimilā region. Specific importance is given to the different aspects of human settlement, like the geographical context, connectivity and cultural assimilation, etc.

Geomorphology

The research area belongs to the Lakhisarai district of Bihar. The district has a diverse geographical landscape. Based on these diversities, the district is divided into three major geomorphic units:

1. Rocky upland of Surjagarha block
2. Older alluvia or marginal alluvial plain
3. Younger alluvia in the northern part of the district

The present research area is located on part of the Older Alluvium. Alluvium was deposited by the Rivers Ganga and Kiul. The thickness of this deposition is limited; hence it is also known as a marginal alluvial plain. The thickness of this alluvium deposit near the Ashok Dham temple at Rajaona-Chowki village is about 123m but has reduced considerably in the south eastern parts up to 15-20m (Anon n.d.:11). However, small hillocks like Lalpahari, Kalapahari, Bichhewye etc., are present in a scattered manner in the alluvial plain.

Critique of the Previous Works

This region has been a point of attraction for many archaeologists, historians and antiquarians for a long time. Earlier were Buchanan; Beglar, who surveyed the whole area in 1871–72; Cunningham. Who explored the area first in 1871 and later in 1879–80; and later were D.C. Sirkar, B.K. Jamuar, Frederick M. Asher, S. Huntington, D.K. Chakrabarty, Anil Kumar, R. K. Chattopadhaya and others. Many recent scholars are also working in this region to uncover the far-flung history of the region. Scholars either concentrated on the study of sculpture, architecture and iconographic importance of this area; or on the nature of the settlements, i.e., urban or rural. On several occasions, scholars have visited only one site and given only a description of that particular site. Although, the previous works on this area have brought into light the importance of some archaeological sites in this area, like Valgudar (Balgudar),

Rajaona, Chowki, Jainagar etc. Very recently, archaeological excavation is conducted in two major sites of this region, Lalpahari and Uren. The excavation report of these two sites certainly would enrich the history of this region in future. Previous research shows that the Krimilā region, which is broadly on the lower Kiul flood plain, has a number of archaeological sites, many of which have multi chronological character.It is a difficult task for the historians to make a statement over the physiographic boundary of an ancient administrative centre, specifically in a plain landscape like the lower Ganga valley. In case of Kṛimilā, no literary evidence has been found that can address the boundary of Kṛimilā Viṣaya. However, based on inscriptions and other archaeological evidences, it has been argued that Kṛimilā Viṣaya was located in the lower Kiul basin; the exact boundary is yet to be fixed.

Study Area

The Kṛimilā region had great importance as a geopolitical unit in the ancient past, specifically in the post-Gupta period. Ancient literature had profusely mentioned this region and there are epigraphic evidences, but there is no such evidence regarding the area or boundary of this Viṣaya. This lacuna only is fulfilled through an analytical study of the existing archaeological remains in this area. In this research, focus is given on Lakhisarai town and its adjoining areas (Map 2). The shape of the study area is triangular and bounded by the left bank of the River Kiul and the right bank of the River Harohar.

Study of Archaeological Sites: Explorations in Lower Kiul Basin

Lakhisarai and its adjoining region are singularly important in understanding the gradual progress of human history in the Ganga valley region. This region is located at the confluence of three rivers, Ganga, Haruhar and Kiul, which has made the area adequately fertile and helped to bring its status high on the scale of civilization for a long time. The present study has highlighted some significant sites in this area. Among these, a few are newly reported as a result of the survey of the researcher (Table No.1).

Rajaona and Chowki

The villages Rajaona and Chowki, is also spelled by scholars as Rajauna and Chawki. These are two modern villages in the Lakhisarai district, which are now incorporated within the Lakhisarai municipality. It is 4.5 km south of Luckeesarai station. These villages are located on an archaeological mound which belonged to an era of Gupta to medieval period. Earlier scholars mostly have mentioned these two villages as two different archaeological sites. As per personal observation of the researcher these are massive mounds of an ancient settlement over which these two modern villages exist. The site is located around 4km away from the river Kiul and almost the same distance from river Harohar. The landscape in the surrounding area of the site is almost plain. The site is located on land elevated by 2/3 meters from its surrounding area. On the other hand, literary evidence indicates that the remains of human

settlements in these villages have a much earlier origin. According to Cunningham, Rajaona is not other than the 'Lo-in-ni-lo' of Xuanzang's account. Once, when Xuanzang visited this place, he saw a Buddhist monastery and a Stupa erected by Asoka in the third century BCE. However, the remains on the surface of this mound are associated with the Post Gupta period.

A large number of sculptural and architectural pieces are scattered in different parts of the villages (plate 1 & 2). Besides these, there is a modern Shiva temple, Ashok Dham, on the western side of this village. In the museum of this temple, more than 150 sculptures and architectural fragments are exhibited. The researcher has personally visited this museum. Most of these artefacts have been reported from these two villages, especially at the time of the construction of the temple.

Rahugarh

On the western side of Rajaoun-Chowki, there is another habitational mound (plate 3) of Post Gupta or the early medieval period. It is similar to the Rajaona-Cwoki settlement. It belongs to a part of the massive Rajaona-Chowki habitation situated on the same landscape. There is a massive structural deposition on the western side of this mound, where brick robbers were active for a long time. Like the Rajaona-Chowki, the local people have collected many architectural and sculptural fragments from this mound during their agricultural activity. People believe that many antique objects are hidden in this mound. However, coarse red ware, grey ware, black ware, etc., are reported from the surface of the mound. All these are similar in fabric and style to the Rajaona-Chowki mound.

Gangta

Gangta is a small village 3km on the west of Rajaona-Chowki. Architectural and sculptural fragments of the early medieval period have also been reported in a secondary context from this village (plate 4). This village has no habitational deposition or archaeological mound. Age of the present settlement of this village goes back to about 150 years ago. On the eastern side of this village is a huge pond known as 'Bahan-Bigha Talab'. This pond is much older, probably related to the Rajaona-Chowki and Rahugarh mound. This area once acted as the periphery catchment area of the Rajaona-Chowki and Rahugarh habitation. There is a Shiva temple on the western side of the pond. Local people have gathered many architectural and sculptural fragments from the Rahugarh mound.

Balgudar

The village Balgudar is another well-known archaeological site of the early medieval period, located one kilometer north of the Rajaona-Chowki settlement. The site is on the south bank of the river Harohar, a tributary of the Kiul River. It is a massive settlement of the early medieval period. A structural mound, probably ruins of a monastery, still exists in the south

of this settlement (plate 5). From this mound a large number of architectural and sculptural fragments were collected. All these sculptures either are associated with the Brahmanical or Buddhist religion. These are kept at different places of the village, such as, Balgudar-Shiva temple, Balgudar Kalisthan, near the river bank and few of these are kept in the private houses of the village.

Lakhisarai English

This site is located at a walkable distance of about 2.5 km east of the Rajaona-Chowki settlement. The expansion of Lakhisarai Township has occupied the entire mound of this site. It is not easy to trace the archaeological mound in the present circumstances. Architectural and sculptural fragment of this site is kept in three places. These are Bisahori Sthan, Shri Lakhsmi Narayan Mandir and Pipar-per-tala (plate 6). All these sculptures are associated with either Brahamanical or Buddhist pantheon. The iconographic style and features of the sculptures of this site are similar to the Rajaona-Chowki settlement.

Sabikpur

It is located 5 km north of Rajaona-Chowki on the right bank of Harohar River. The village has an undulating surface very close to the Harohar flood zone. Architectural and sculptural fragments have also been found in a secondary context from this village. The local villagers argue that they have got all these architectural and sculptural fragments beneath a tree, which was probably once a temple complex. However, no archaeological mound in or around this village has been reported. It seems that due to some religious importance, villagers had collected and gathered these sculptural fragments from the surrounding area. Anyhow the site is destroyed. However, based on style and features, these sculptural fragments are close to Balgudar, Rajaona-Chowki and Lakhisarai English.

Damodarpur

Damodarpur, under Sabikpur Panchayet had yielded archaeological remains. This village is situated on the right bank of river Harohar, around 6 km north of Rajaona-Chowki village. This village has an undulating surface due to its location in the very active flood zone of the Harohar River. Architectural fragment and the sculptural fragment of the early medieval period were reported from Shiva temple and the Damodarpur-Musahar area (plate 7). No archaeological mound or any sign of ancient habitation is traced in this village. The village people collected all the sculptural fragments and used them for religious purposes.

Neri

This village is located 4 km southwest of Rajaona-Chowki. It has a habitation deposit belonging to the early medieval period (plate 8). Unfortunately, the site is badly disturbed as an electric

powerhouse is built on the top of this mound and a pond is dug on the northern side of the mound. At the southeastern corner of this mound from the surface, black ware, red ware and black slipped ware are reported.

Jainagar

A well-known archaeological site Jayanagar is located on the southeastern corner and about 6km from Rajaona-Chowki. This area is presently an integrated part of the Lakhisarai municipality. The site is situated between two small hillocks, known as Kalipahari on the north and Lalipahari on the south. The river Kiul flows just on the eastern side of this mound. It is a habitation mound of the early medieval period, but unfortunately, most of the area of this mound is occupied by the modern settlement. Local people believed that this area was known as 'Hatbari'. Buchanan first visited this place, followed by Beglar, Cunningham, and many Indian scholars who have worked on this site. Cunningham mentioned this mound as the mound of an ancient market. On the southern side, on the Lalipahari hillock, there is an archaeological mound. Recently, Visva-Bharati University and Bihar Heritage Development Society excavated a Buddhist monastery. However, Jainagar has a very significant role in early medieval history. The existence of large mounds and epigraphically records found in this area address this fact.

Hasanpur

Hasanpur is on the southern side of Jainagar, just beyond the Lalpahari hillock. The site possesses an extensive habitation deposit of the early medieval period and is very close to the river Kiul. A channel of river Kiul has passed from south to north direction in the middle of this mound and created a natural section of this mound. Approximately one-meter layer of cultural deposition is prominent in the river sections. The deposit shows ceramics of red ware, red slipped ware, and grey ware. Close to this mound, there is a Shiva temple. Many architectural and sculptural fragments are kept by the local people in this temple (plate 9). All these sculptures belong to the 10th to 11th century CE.

Hasanpur Dira

On the east of Hasanpur mound, just on the opposite side of the old river bed of Kiul, there is a mound of the early medieval period, locally known as Hasanpur Dira. The villagers informed that, around 100 years back, people of Hasanpur village lived on this mound. After that, the villagers migrated to the present Hasanpur village. The size of this mound is decreasing rapidly due to the action of the river. In section of the river, potshard are visible. Hence, it is challenging to assume presently how large the settlement was. The rest of the mound can certainly vanish within a few years. However, on the surface of the existing mound, the evidence of coarse red ware, red slipped ware, and black ware ceramic are found.

Kali Pahari

There is another habitation mound 500 meters northeast of Kalipahari. The area is known as Kalipahari and belongs to the Lakhisarai municipality. Because of modern construction, this mound is disturbed largely. On the other hand, a modern road has passes through the middle of the mound and divided the mound into two parts, northern and southern. From this mound, various types of red ware ceramic have are reported.

Pathla

It is s a village located around 10 km south of Rajaona-Chowki. Many sculptural fragments of the early medieval period from this village are reported in a secondary context. The villagers collected the sculptures from nearby villages and preserved them in a Shiva temple.

Bilouri

This village is located around 11 km south of Rajaona-Chowki settlement and 7 km west of Jainagar settlement. It has a habitation mound of the early medieval period. The mound area is locally known as 'kachhahari' as they believe that King used to give his judgment from this place in the early days. Sculptural and architectural fragments (plate 10) associated with this mound are collected from three different areas of the village, i.e., Suphal Brahamin ka Sthan, Paschim Tola Shiv Mandir and Kalisthan.

Jhulana-Biharaora

These are two adjacent villages of Damodarpur Gram Panchayet, located 9.8 km south of Rajaona-Chowki. These villages are located on an archaeological mound of the early medieval period. The people of this area have occupied a portion of this mound by constructing houses. The rest of the site is made agricultural fields. Sculptural and architectural fragments (plate 11) are reported from four different areas of the villages, such as Shiva temple near the pond, Shiva Temple near the road, Garbhua Sthan and Dibal Baba Ka Sthan.

Aure

The village Aure comes under Ramgarh Chowk block. It has another occupied habitation site of the early medieval period in this area. This village is located 13 km south of Rajaona-Chowki by road. The modern village that exists on this mound is around 200 years old. According to the villagers, once this area was known as 'Dhatri-Sthal', but due to a large number of 'Aura' trees, a type of wild plant, the village became well-known later as Aure. However, a large number of architectural and sculptural fragments have been reported from Shri Ram Mandir and the nearby area of this village (plate 12). All the sculptures of this site are associated with Buddhism and could be dated 9th to 11th century.

Discussion and Conclusion

In the present research, an extensive exploration has been conducted to understand the ancient heritage of this region (Map 3 and 4). This area belongs to the lower basin of the river Kiul and has a very fertile plain landscape. A significant part of the south Bihar plain and some parts of Jharkhand were connected with the trading route of the river Ganga through this area. From a political point of view, this area also has great importance for its strategic location. This area has been considered as an administrative unit from the Gupta period onwards. We have a reference to this area in the Gupta inscription. In this regard, two Nalanda seals of Samudragupta are significant, where we find the mention of this Kṛimilā -Viṣaya (Hirananda Sastri 1942:53–54).

This exploration has revealed a cluster of archaeological sites in this area. A large number of sculptures and architectural fragments are reported from these sites, undoubtedly the postmark of the ancient heritage of the area. The significant sites of this area are Rajaona-Chowki, Balgudar and Jainagar. The ancient name of Balgudar and Rajaona-Chowki was Kṛimilā (Chhabra and Sircar 1985:137–45). Therefore, it appears that a part of Kṛimilā (Balgudar) was situated on the bank of the river Harohar, and another portion of the Kṛimilā (Rajaona-Chowki) was situated in between the river Kṛimilā (Hardy 1899:354) and Harohar. It is also interesting that the present Jainagar area, under the Lakhisarai municipality, was known as Champa (Chowdhury 1967:280) in ancient times. Both of these places had great significance in the early medieval period. Kṛimilā was the Headquarter of the early medieval Viṣaya. At the same time, there was a Buddhist monastery in Champa. Inscriptions reported from this place indicating that the monastery had enough dominance in the locality and society.

Jainagar Image inscription is as follows:

"May there be success. On the 3rd day of C*aitra* in the 35th year of the feet of *Palapāla*, the illustrious lord of *Guda*, here at the illustrious city of *Champā*, the (goddess) *Bhaṭṭārikā Purṇyeś Varī)* is installed by *Ūtakva*. Whatever merit is here let it go to the communities of *Siddhas* and the congression of *Śramaṇas* as well as to the relatives (of *Ūtakva*) who are bound by the fetters of (worldly existence)." (Chowdhury 1967:280).

A Large number of finest sculptures have been reported from this locality through the various explorations by the scholars, indicating the significance of this part.

From Kṛimilā area, on the other hand, a large number of sculptures and architectural parts, both Hindu and Buddhist pantheon are reported. Once, Xuanzang, the famous Chinese pilgrim of the 7th century, visited this area. He had seen a Buddhist monastery and an Ashokan Stupa here(Cunningham 1873:153). The present survey has recognized that the number of

sculptures associated with Buddhism is less than the Hindu pantheon, and most of these sculptures have been reported from the eastern side of the site. The Balgudar also has Hindu and Buddhist pantheon sculptures, yet limited sculptures are Buddhist here. On the other hand, in Lakhisarai English, large numbers of sculptures are associated with Buddhism. In Bilouri, all the sculptural fragments are related to Hindusim. On the other hand, in Aure, all the sculptures are related to Buddhism. In the case of Jhulana-Bhiruara, except for two or three fragmented pieces rest are related to Hinduism. Therefore, undoubtedly both Hindu and Buddhist communities used to live together in this area, which was the distinct heritage of the Kṛimilā Viṣaya.

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SL.NO	ARCHAEOLOGICAL SITE	COORDINATES	TIME PERIOD	REMARK
1	RAJAONA-CHAWKI	Lat. 25° 11' 41'' N Long. 86° 04' 15.64''	EARLY MEDIEVAL	Cunningham E1873:151–56
2	RAHUGARH	Lat. 25° 11' 27.49'' N Long. 86° 04' 46'' E	EARLY MEDIEVAL	Beglar 1878:116–17
3	GANGTA	Lat. 25° 11' 9.87'' N Long. 86° 03' 49.96'' E	EARLY MEDIEVAL	Mondal 2020:19–30
4	BALGUDAR	Lat. ° 12' 20'' N Long. 86° 04' 43'' E	EARLY MEDIEVAL	Beglar 1878:117
5	LAKHISARAI ENGLISH	Lat. 25° 11' 31.23'' Long. 86° 06' 2.84'' E	NEARLY MEDIEVAL	Newly Reported
6	SABIKPUR	Lat. 25° 11' 36.44'' N Long. 86° 04' 36.29'' E	EARLY MEDIEVAL	Newly Reported
7	DAMODAROUR	Lat. 25° 14' 0.24'' N Long. 86° 04' 27.34'' E	EARLY MEDIEVAL	Newly Reported
8	NERI	Lat. 25° 10' 0.21'' N Long. 86° 03' 28.88'' E	EARLY MEDIEVAL	Kumar 2011:23–50
9	JAINAGAR	Lat. 25° 9' 11.32'' N Long. 86° 05' 46.98'' E	EARLY MEDIEVAL	Cunningham 1873:159–60
10	HASANPUR	Lat. 25° 08' 47.76'' N Long. 86° 06' 14.36'' E	EARLY MEDIEVAL	Kumar 2011:23–50
11	HASANPUR DIRA	Lat. 25° 8' 45.65'' N Long. 86° 06' 19.55'' E	EARLY MEDIEVAL	Newly Reported
12	KALIPAHARI	Lat. 25° 9' 7.44'' N Long. 86° 06' 17.09'' E	EARLY MEDIEVAL	Cunningham 1873:160
13	PATHLA	Lat. 25° 8' 56'' N Long. 86° 04' 58'' E	EARLY MEDIEVAL	Newly Reported
14	BILOURI	Lat. 25° 8' 6.12'' N E Long. 86° 03' 27.96''	EARLY MEDIEVAL	Newly Reported
15	JHULANA-BHIRAURA	Lat. 25° 7' 31.12'' N Long. 86° 04' 58.95'' E	EARLY MEDIEVAL	Newly Reported
16	AURE	Lat. 25° 7' 18.62'' N Long. 86° 02' 56.32'' E	EARLY MEDIEVAL	Newly Reported



Plate 1: Horizontal view of the archaeological mound from the northern side at the village Chowki



Plate 2: Architectural and sculptural fragments scattered at Rajaona and Chowki

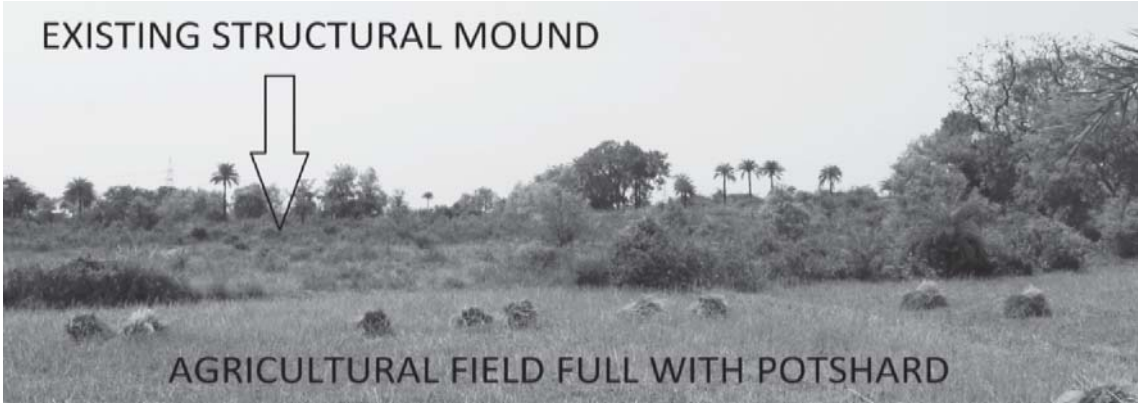


Plate 3: Archaeological mound at Rahugarh



Plate 4: Sculpture from left side: Mother with child (partly broken in the upper part), Pedestal of Surya image, Buddha (head is broken) at Gangta. Scale: 20 cm.



Plate 5: Balgudar mound (Left); Dancing Shiva on the pedestal of sculpture at Balgudar (Right)

Plate 5: Balgudar mound (Left); Dancing Shiva on the pedestal of sculpture at Balgudar (Right)

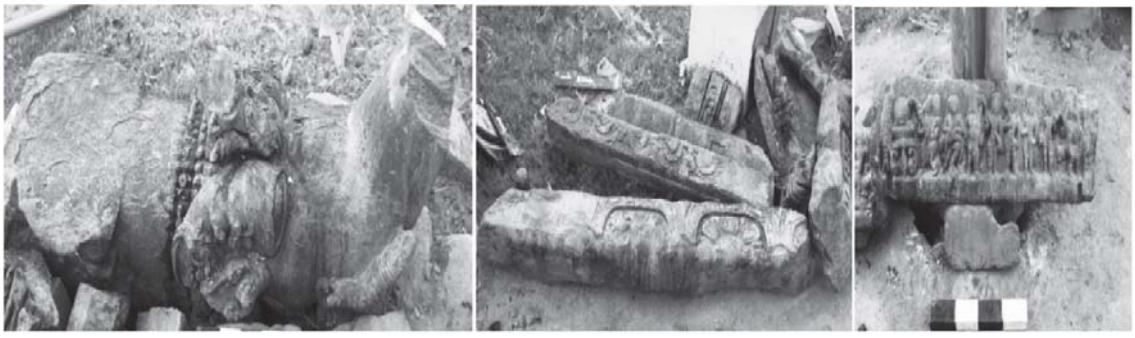


Plate 6: Gargoyle (Left), Architectural fragments (Middle), Dasavatar panel (Right) at Lakhisarai English.(Scale: 20 cm.)

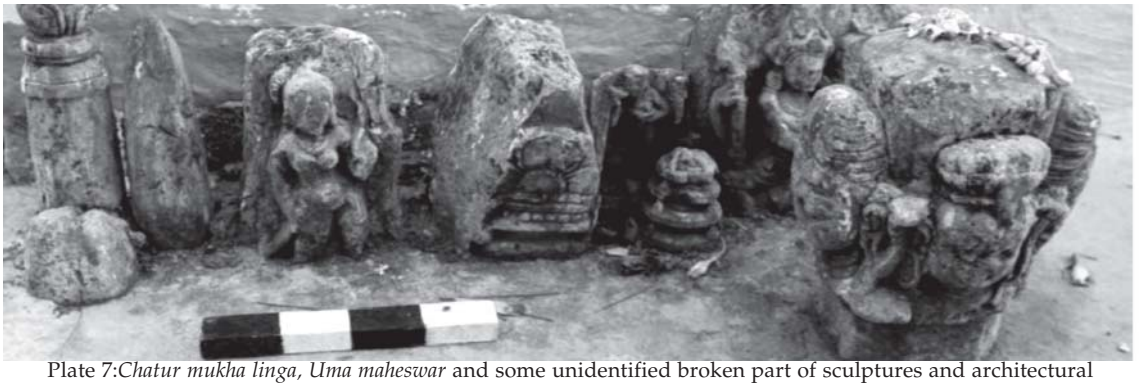


Plate 7:*Chatur mukha linga, Uma maheswar* and some unidentified broken part of sculptures and architectural fragments at Damodarpur. (Scale: 20 cm)



Plate 8: Exposed brick wall in eastern side (Left), Existing mound from the eastern side (Right) at Neri



Plate 9: Sculptural fragments near the mound (Left), Huge stone slabs on the mound (Right) at Hasanpur



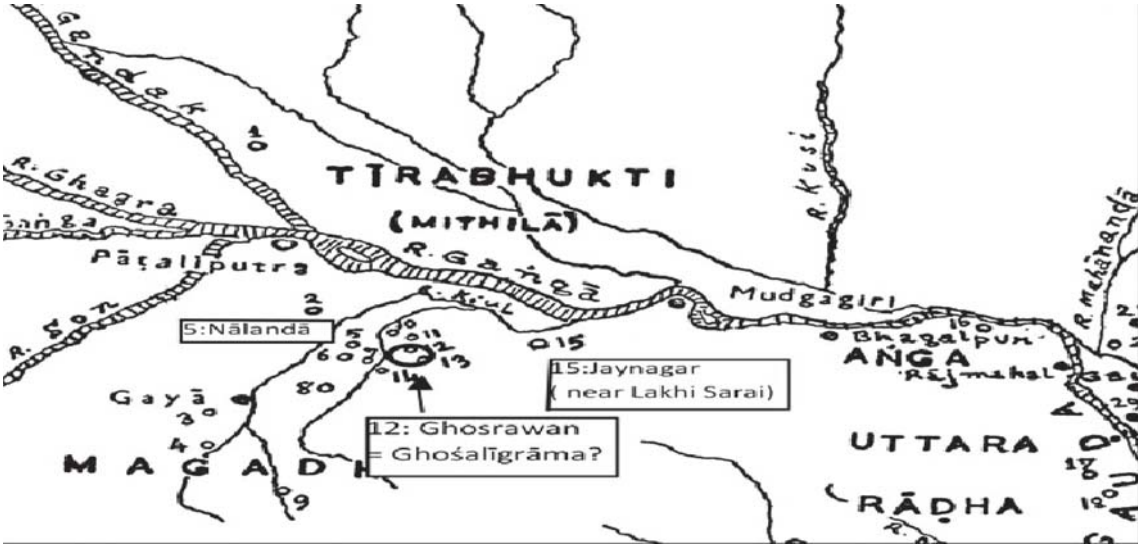
Plate 10 : Face of Vishnu, Shiva ling and some architectural fragments. (Scale: 20 cm.) at Bilouri



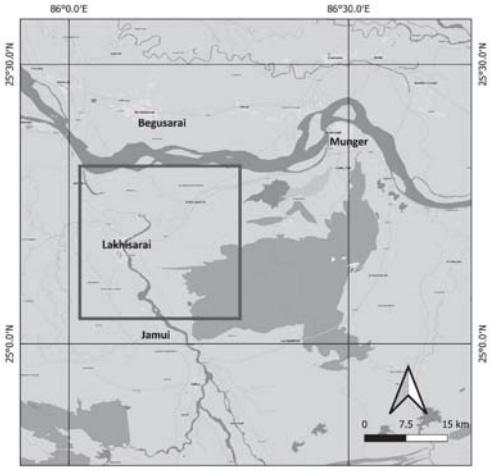
Plate 11: An early medieval Gargoyle attached with a modern Shiva temple (Left), Heap of sculptures and architectures (Right) at Jhulana-Biharaora.



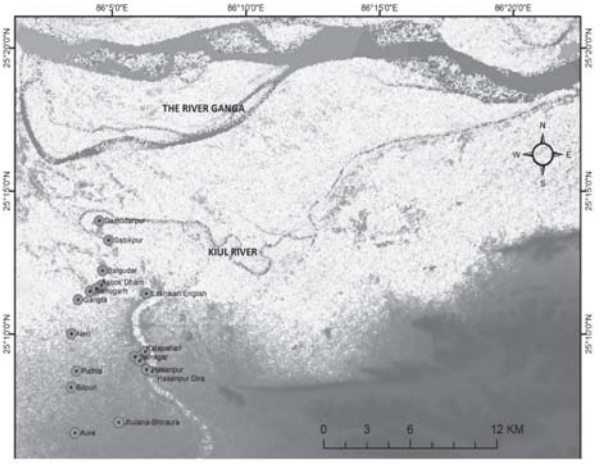
Plate 12: Singhanad with broken head (Left); Unidentified Buddhist male figure (Right) at Aure.(Scale: 20 cm)



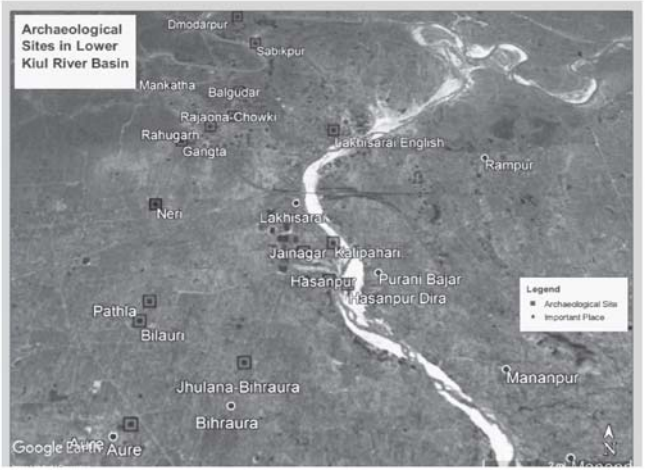
Map 1: After, Chowddhury (1967), 'Dynastic History of Bengal'. Here in this Map Jaynagar (Jainagar) and its surrounding area have been identified as *K[imilg*, yet the actual geographical boundary is unknown.



Map 2: Study Area (study area has been marked in red colour in the middle)



Map 3: The river Ganga and it's tributary, river Kiul
Location of archaeological Sites in Red colour



Map 4: Representing the Close view of the Archaeological Sites in Google Earth

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Tracing the Sacred Geography of Kamarupa in Kālika Purān and Yogini Tantra

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Abstract

In the corpus of religious and Purānic literature of India, Kālika Purān (KP) and Yogini Tantra (YT) are two texts which deal elaborately though not exclusively with the Kāmarūpa (Assam) and its religious shrines along with their geographical features. The latter half of Kālika Purān and almost whole of Yogini Tantra is devoted to the shrines and geography of Kāmarūpa and Devi worship. However not every features were identified due to the reasons explained in the article but most of the religious shrines were identified along with the geographical features, which are referred for the identified shrines. The present article is an attempt to study the sacred geography and religious landscape of Kāmarūpa with reference to Kālika Purāna and Yogini Tantra.

Keywords: *Kālikā Purān, Yogini Tantra, Sacred Geography, Kāmarūpa, Kāmākhya, Brahmaputra, V (verse/s)*

Introduction

The earliest historical reference of Kāmarūpa came from the Allahabad Pillar Inscription of Gupta king Samudragupta, where Kāmarūpa is mentioned alongside Samatata and Devaka as frontier kingdoms in 4th CE. Some scholars even opine that the name 'Prāgjyotisa' has some astronomical relevance. According to the Kālika Purān, Brahma made the first circulation of the stars in Prāgjyotisa which signifies the importance of the study of astrology and astronomy in the province in ancient times. However according to Banikanta Kakati, the topographical features of the land was responsible for the formation of the term 'Pagar Juh', meaning a region of high hills, which changed into 'Prāgjyotishpur' in later time. However the discourse remains inconclusive.

In the collection of religious literature of India, there exists eighteen Māhāpurān and eighteen Upapurān, of which one is Kālika Purān. In these literature various events of life and character of Shiva and Parvati is narrated. Kāmdev is an important *dev* in the context of Assam. Earlier Assam was known as Kāmarūpa, which was derived from name of lord Kāmdev. He was burnt by Shiva and regained his form at this place. Shiv Purān mentions Kāmdev being cursed by his creator Brahma to be burnt to ashes by Shiva because he used

his weapon (*madanāstra*) to Brahma himself which put him into a distressing situation. The sacred geography of Kāmarūpa is dominated by the River Brahmaputra and Kāmākhya hills, making it the most significant landmark of sacred landscape of Assam. All the inscriptions, Kālika Purān, Yogini Tantra and other records speaks of river Brahmaputra in very respectful and revered terms. Brahmaputra is the only male river in India and is believed to be son of Lord Brahma. Legends speaks that when Parasuram killed his mother with an axe on the orders of his father, the axe got stuck to his hand because he had committed a sin (*mahapāāp*) by killing his mother. He repented and tried to get rid of the sin. He succeeded when he came to Lohit river, main stream of River Brahmaputra. As soon as he put his hand in the pristine waters of the river, the axe was detached from his hand. Since then the site became significant and most sacred place of worship and is presently known as Parasuram *kūnda*. Kālikā Purān is a Sakta/Tantric literature, which refers to various secret practices related to the *sādhana* of Sati. Shiva narrates the Purāna to his consort Parvati and asks for secrecy. It contains 98 chapter and more than nine thousand *slokas* (hymns).This Purāna is dedicated to goddess Kāli and her various forms. The text speaks of the mountains of Kāmarūpa, rivers and Kāmākhya temple and other sacred places. The text records and explains the mode of worship of goddess Kali, Durga and Kāmākhya. It is the main book of *Sakta* sect and is also a *smriti* literature. The approximate period of their creation is supposed to be 10th century CE and thought to be composed at Kāmarūpa. It is one of the rare Hindu texts referring the term "Hindu". The holy text narrates the Naraka story and places. It describes Kāmarūpa as holier than Varanasi. The text also has references of Kālidasa and Magha of 7th century personalities. The extent of upper limit of Ratnapalas' reign as 10th century is made with reference in the text of Durjaya hill with Pragjyotishpur in the east. There is no definite information regarding the territorial extension of Kāmarūpa. Different texts suggest differently. In Ramayana it is described as situated near the sea and its ruler was called Sailālaya, dweller of mountains. Bhagadaṭṭ as territory is described as extended to the sea coast. According to the Vishnu Purgnthe country extends to hundred *yojana* on all sides from Pragjyotishpur. According to Yogini Tantra it is triangular and bounded on north by Kanjagiri and Dikshu on east; Karatoya on west and confluence of Lakshya and Brahmaputra on south. Detailed and elaborate description of Kāmarūpa is given in this article.

When Chinese traveller Huen Tsang visited the area in 639 CE, he estimated the circumference of Kāmarūpa to be 10,000 li or 1667 km.Yogini tantra divides Kāmarūpa into four *pithas* or sacred region, namely, *Ratnapitha, Swarnapitha, Kamapitha* and *Saumar pitha*. The Vrahadguvakastantra refers Kāmarūpa in three divisions *Ratnapith, Kampith* and *Saumarpith* (Shastri 1985). *Haragaurisamvada* refers four part of the kingdom, such as, *Ratnapitha* (Karatoya to Sankosh); *Kamapitha* (Sankosh to Kapili); *Suvarnapitha* (Rupika to Bhairavi); and *Saumarpitha* (Bhairavi to Dibang). According to the Kamrupar Buranji, the divisions were Ratnapitha (Maurang kingdom to Sankosh river), Kamapitha(Sankosh to Duimunisila).

Bhadrapitha (Kallang river to Kailash river), and Saumarpith (Duimunisila to Dikkaravasini) (Bhuyan, 1930). Sircar presented three versions first being Kamapitha (Karatoya to Sankosh); Ratnapitha (Sankosh to Rupahi); Suvarnapitha (Rupahi to Bharali); and Saumarpitha (Bharali to Dibang near Sadiya).The second being Ratnapitha (Karatoya to Manas); Kamapitha (from Manas to Silghat on the north bank of Brahmaputra); Bhadrapitha (south bank, south of Kamapitha); and Saumarpitha to the east and third being the one presented by Haragaurisamvada (Sircar, 1990). According to Kakati it was also divided into four parts Ratnapitha (river Karatoya to river Sankosh) western Assam, Kamapitha (river Sankosh to river Rupali), Swarnapitha (rupali river to Bharali river) mid Assam, Saumarpitha (Bhairavi to Dikarai river eastern Assam (Kakati, 1967).

Kālika Purāna

According to Hazra (2003), there existed a text that was older than the extant one, and that the origin of that text was in Bengal. This was denied by Shastri, who claims that the evidence provided by Hazra for an earlier text can be explained by other means, without invoking an older text. According to Shastri, the local descriptions explain the exposition of the myth of Naraka from whom all the dynasties of Kāmarūpa drew their lineage. The description of the myth of Brahmaputra river and the claim in the text that Kāmarūpa was holier than even Varanasi, points to the fact that text had been composed in Kāmarūpa. The explanation in the text for the *Mlechchha* population and the indication of a parallel explanation found in Harjaravarman's (CE815-CE832) Hyunthal copper plate inscription places the text closer to his reign. Thus, the text is dated to late 9th to early 10th centuries. The earliest printed edition of this text was published by the Venkateshvara Press, Bombay in 1829 Saka Era (CE1907), followed by the Vangavasi Press, Calcutta in 1316 Bangabda (CE1909).

In Kālika Purān and Yogini Tantra the state of Assam is mentioned variously as Kāmarūpa, Kāmarūpa, Kāmākhya pitha/tirtha, Pragjotispura, Lauhitya. Following excerpts are taken from Kālika Purān (Shastri, 2018) pertaining to Kāmarūpa/ Kāmākhya.

The Naraka narrative in Kālika Purān begins with chapter 36. The early part deals with the life and story of Daksha and Sati and praising of Brahmins, and there are other Purānic stories, specially of Saivite. The chapter 38 speaks of Kiratas and their tribal and uncivilized nature (*v*. 102). It also describes and narrates about great Kirata king Ghataka and how he was killed by Naraka and chased the Kiratas to sea. When Naraka asked about future course, *bhagwan* told him to chase and annihilate the fleeing Kiratas upto Dikkarvasini and protect those who submit (*v*. 103-117). Averse (*v*.118) speaks of the place with Karatoya in the west, Ganga on the east, where goddess Lalitakanta resides. Verse 119-120 refers Kāmākhya and river *Lauhitya* (Brahmaputra). In the verse 123 it was stated that at Pragjyotisa Lord Brahma created stars and constellations. Rehabilitation of Kiratas took place in the eastern sea coast (*v*. 125). The land from Lalitakanta up to river Karatoya is the region of Kāmākhya (*v*. 127). In

the verse 134-140 it speaks of elephants, horses, lion, tiger skin, jewels, precious stones lapis lazuli (cats eye) etc. as treasures of the region belonging to the Kiratas. In the verse 157-158 Naraka is told to become well versed with Vedas and worship goddess Kāmākhya on the high hill of Nilakuta.

Chapter 39 of Kālika Purān speaks of Naraka and his friendship with king Bana of Sonitpur. Under the influence of the latter he assumed demonic character and started atrocities upon common people and Brahmins, who were addressed as twice born. The verse 82-83 elaborated the city of Paragjyotisa being inhabited by the delightful and energetic people, full of herds of cattle, horses, elephants and free of calamities and looked like Amravati, the favourite city of the Indra. The later verses of the chapter narrate about Naraka and his battle with Krishna and his death and about his successor to Pragjyotisa. Chapter 40 is about the story of Naraka and elaborates the events of the life of Naraka. Chapters 56-62 are about the worship of Mahamaya Kāmākhya and elaborated the genesis of goddess Kāmākhya. Chapter 72 speaks of the glory of Kāmākhya and about situation of Kāmākhya on Nilachala (*v*. 2) and mentioned *Nilakuta* hill (*v*. 72, 83).

Chapter 78 deals with the description of sacred places, hills and rivers of Kāmarūpa. It is the most elaborate chapter dealing with the geography and topography of Assam.
The verses are given below:
V. 3: speaks of Kāmarūpa *pitha*.
V. 4: speaks of division of Kāmarūpa in three parts, namely north, middle and eastern.
V. 7: mentioned river named *Bahuroka* on the left of *Karatoya*. *Karatoya* flows on the north of it and on the east of this river is Kāmarūpa.
V. 8: mentions mountain *Surasa* in Kāmarūpa. The river *Bahuroka* rises from this mountain which yields many merits.
V. 10a: describes merits of taking bath in river *Bahuroka*.
V. 14-16a: mentions of Vasistha *kunda.*
V. 16b-17: mentions Mountain named *Krtivasa* on the east of the mountain *Surasa*. River *Chandrika* rises from this mountain.
V. 19-21: speaks of river *Chandrika* and merits of worshipping her and about river *Phenila*.
V. 24-26: speaks of river *Sita* and another river *Somadana* flowing two *yojana* (25 km) east of *Sita*.
V. 27: mentions these rivers flowing towards north and flowing east of the pitha of goddess Tripura.
V. 30: speaks of river *Bhadra* in the east of *Agada*.
V. 31: on the east of *Bhadra* is river *Subhadra*.
V. 32: further east of *Subhadra* is the river *Manasa*.
V. 34: speaks of *Vibhrata* Mountain.

V. 35: auspicious river *Bhairavi* was mentioned.
V. 37-38: mentioned river *Varnasa*.
V. 39-41: speaks of river *Madana* and god Aditya and about the hill called Tattva-Saila, where Sri Surya resides and on its east flows the river Trisrota and of two ponds called Kapota and Karana on the western side of the river.
V. 42-56: speaks of Sun god.
V. 58: speaks of river Trisrota.
V. 59: mentions river *Kasumamalini* and *Ksiroda* both flowing southwards.
V. 60: mentions river named *Lila*.
V. 61: mentioned of river *Chandika* emerging from mountain *Dhavala*.
V. 63: mentions of two Sivalinga named *Golaka* and *Shringi* situated at river *Chandika*.
V. 64-67: informs of merit of taking bath in *Chandika* river flowing south, of climbing Dhavala and touching Golaka Shiva; climbing down and worship Shivalinga Shringi and acquire a merit of performing *asvamedha* and also mentioned of mountain named *Gandhamadhana* located on south-eastern direction.
V. 68-69: mentions that on the western side of the region lies the *Gandhamadana* Mountain where Shivalinga named *Bhringesa* is located. At the end of the mountain lie two foot prints of *Bhringesa*.
V. 70-73: refers to an auspicious kunda *Antaralaka* and about merits of visiting it.
V. 74: refers that Brahma caused Lauhitya to flow betweentwo mountains *Manikuta* and *Gandhamadan*.
V. 75: mentions that on the south of *Varnasa* there is a lake called Lauhitya and in the east there is a hill *Manikuta* where god Hayagriva resides.
V. 81: mentions Vishnu residing in Manikuta hill which was extended 100 vyama (approx. 500 hands) in width.
V. 82: mentions that on the east of Manikuta hill, there is another hill, triangular in shape named as *Bhadrakama* and there is a Shivalinga on that hill called *Kalahaya*.
V.83-85a: speaks of *Apurnabhava* kunda, on the *Bhadrakama* hill on the bank of *Apurnabhava,* which a piece of stone slab called *Harabitthi*, which is Brahma himself in the form of the stone.
V.85b-87: speaks of *Gokarna* (a slab) on *Bhadrakama* hill, on the south-east direction of *Gokarna* located on the edge of the hill, where Sambhu called as *Kedara* resides.
V.88-109: speaks of merits and methods of worship at the *tirtha* located in the vicinity of *Manikuta* hill, which was compared with Varanasi in holiness and glory and served by Siddhas and Vidyadharas.
Chapter 79 deals with places of pilgrimage in Kāmārūpa.
V. 1: refers to*Darpana* Mountain, where *Kubera* resides in the company of keepers of wealth.
V. 2: refers to a lake named *Rohita*.

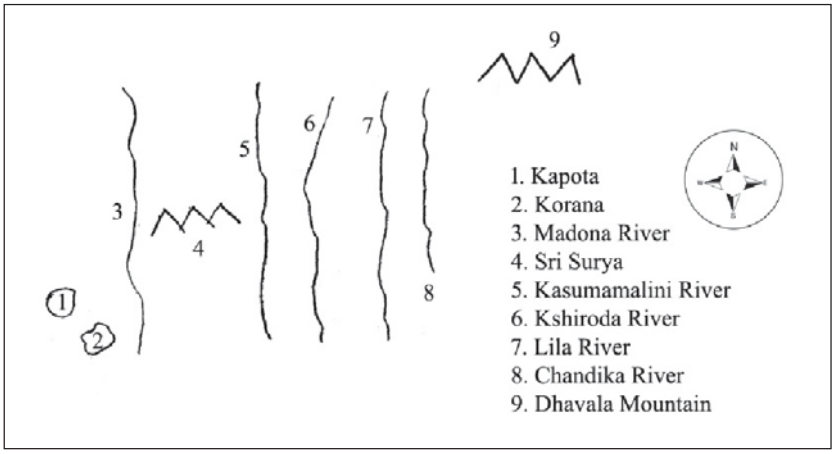


Fig. 1: Arrangement of features as narrated in Kālika Purān (none of the features could be identified)

V. 3-7a: refers to river *Darpana/Darpat* rising from Himalayas.
V. 7b-11: speaks of mountain named *Agnimala* on the east of *Darpana*.
V. 12: speaks of a pond named *Varuna* and a mountain nearby called *Kamsakara* on the east of the Agnimala.
V. 17b-19: speaks of *Vayukuta* Mountain to the east of *Varuna* Mountain.
V. 20: mentions that in the east of Vayu hill lies the *Chandrakuta* hill, which is triangular in shape.
V. 23: speaks of lake called *Somakunda* towards the east of *Vayu* hill.
V. 26-28: speaks of *Chandrakunda* and *Chandrakuta* hilsl and *Nandana* Mountain on the banks of *Chandrakunda*.
V. 30: mentions that towards the south of *Chandrakuta* hill is another hill *Jangrdhana* and on its southern part is *Aswakranta* Lake, which is most sacred pilgrimage of the world.
V. 31-33: refers to *Chandrakuta* and *Nandana* hill.
V. 34: speaks of *Bhasmakuta* and *Urvasi*.
V. 38: speaks of a *kunda* lying in between *Urvasi* and *Bhasmakuta*.
V. 42: speaks of great mountain Manikuta located on northeast of Bhasmakuta where *Hara* in the form of *Manikarna* resides.
V. 44: refers to *Bhasmachala* and *Manikarneswara*.
V. 49-50: speaks of an auspicious river Sumangala rising from Himalayas flowing smoothly east of Manikuta.
V. 51-52: speaks of mountain *Matsyadhvaja* in the east of *Manikuta* where *Madana* was burnt by *Sambhu* and also regained his form. Kama in the shape of a fish resides here, hereby getting the name *Matsyadhvaja.* Possibly the site may be the temple of Madan Kāmdev, located

near Guwahati.
V. 53: speaks of river *Sasvati*, flowing in the valley of *Matsyadhvaja* towards south.
V. 54: speaks of Lake *Kamasarovara* on *Matsyadhavaja* Mountain.
V. 55-58: speaks of *Sukanta* Mountain to the east of *Gandhamadana* Mountain and *Vasavakunda* by the side of Sukanta. Another mountain named *Raksahkuta* in the east of *Sukanta*.
V. 64-68: speaks of god *Pandunath/ Madhava* and hill *Pandunath*. *Madhava* in the form of big stone is located towards the east of *Raksahkuta* and it narrates about the lord *Pandunath*.
V. 69-70: towards the north of *Pandunath* is the lake *Brahmakunda* created by Brahma, one hundred *vyama* (two hundred extended arms) in length and half of it in breadth.
V. 74-75: mentions that towards the east of *Pandunath* is *Chitrahara* hill. Beyond this is *Nilakuta* hill, the abode of Kāmākhya.
V. 76-77: speaks of *Brahmagiri* Mountain to the east of *Nilachala*.Towards east of *Brahma Saila* in *Kāmākhya yoni mandala* resides the goddess *Ugratara*.
V. 92: speaks of *Ganesha* (*Agnivetala*) located at the eastern gate of *Kāmākhya* (*Dwargorilla*).
V. 113: mentions that a mountain named *Karpata* lies towards the south of *Bhasmakuta* mountain.
V. 120-121: refers to the hill on the east of *Karpota*, called *Chitra* situated on the edge of eastern part in south eastern direction and to a stone slab called *Brahmagrava pitha* located on the hill called *Prag-parvata* (the eastern hill), nine planets reside there as per their will. It is the present *Navagraha* temple.
V. 143: speaks of *Kajjala* hill located on the east of *Chitrashaila*.
V. 145: mentions of another hill named *Subhaparvata* on the east of *Kajjala hill*.
V. 146: mentions that towards the east of *Subhaparvata* flows river *Kapilaganga*.
V. 147-148: mentions that in the east of *Kāmākhya* towards south is a very big charming lake of twenty five yojana in extension (possibly a reference to *Deeporbeel*), from there rises a river of white water.
V. 151: mentions that to the east of *Kapilaganga* is the river *Damanika* of black water, which suppresses sins.
V. 152: mentions that to the east of *Damanika* River is another river named Vriddha, equal to Ganga in merit.
V. 154-155: mentions that to the east of *Damani* River is another river *Divyayamuna*, equal to Yamuna in granting merit. It rises from southern hills and flows to Brahmaputra.
V. 156-157: speaks of a big mountain *Durjaya*
V. 160-161: speaks of river *Bhairabganga* and of a pond *Bhairab sarovar*. On the east of *Durjaya* mountain is a city named *Varasana.* Towards the south of this is hillock named *Ksobhaka*.
V. 162: mentions that on the hillock of *Kshobhaka* is five yonis called *Panchapuskarni*.
V. 164-165: mentions that towards the east of *Ksobhaka* hill flows a big river named *Kanta* which flows to Brahmaputra travelling northward initially. There is a big lake called

Divyakunda on the slope of *Ksobhaka*.
V. 172: mentions that on the south eastern direction of *Panchpuskarini* is Sivalinga of stone called *Heruka*.
V. 175-180: mentions that in the northeast direction of *Ksobhaka* is the mountain *Sandhyachala* where Vasistha practiced austerity and *Sandhya* River emerges from an auspicious lake nearby.
V. 181-182: mentions that on the east of *Sandhya* mountain is River *Lalita* which emerges from Brahmaputra and on the eastern bank of the river *Lalita* is a hill named *Bhagavan* caused by Mahadeva.
V. 185-186: mentions that all the rivers mentioned are north flowing and flows to Brahmaputra and prescribed bath in these rivers after visiting *Kāmākhya* and to take a dip in water of *Urvasi*.
Chapter 80: The description of Holy Rivers and places of pilgrimage of *Kāmārūpa*.
V. 1: speaks of river Dipavati on the east of river Sasvati.
V. 3: speaks of on the east of river *Dipavati* lies Sringata Mountain.
V. 4: speaks of river *Siddha Trisrota* flows to south sea/ Brahmaputra through the foot hill of *Sringata* emerging from the same hill.
V. 9: speaks of on the east of *Shringata* flows *Vrdhavedika*.
V. 10: speaks of beyond *Vardhavedika* is big river *Bhattarika* emerging from Himalayas.
V. 12-17: refers *Natakashaila* Mountain and a lake on it and from this lake three streams emerges and flows to south sea/Brahmaputra from eastern, middle and southern part of lake. The river *Dikkarika* emerges from the western part of the lake, from middle part *Vrddhaganga* and from eastern part is stream *Svarnasri*.
V. 29: refers that on the east of *Svarnasri* flows the river Kama. On the east of the river *Somasana* is the river *Vrsodaka*.
V. 30: speaks of *Kāmārūpa* pitha on the east of *Vrsodaka* River where Mahamaya the mother of the world in the form Dikkaravasini resides.
V. 33: speaks of *Dikkaravasini* located on ground occasionally submerged under the water.
The chapter 81 is about curse of Vasistha on *Ugratara* and others and speak about the Malecchas of Kāmarūpa (*V*. 17-27).

From the above excerpts of the Sri Kālika Purānam it is surmised that the narrative was basically around three locations namely (i) *Kāmākhya* and Manikut hill, (ii) Durjaya and Sandhyachal (iii) Dikkaravasini temple. An open ended exercise for the identification is based on the information in the narratives of Kālika Purān. It is arduous to identify the geographical features as mentioned in Kālika Purān. As long time has elapsed since it was written and the region had gone through major geographic and geological changes since then. The second problem being the heavy use of adjectives and synonyms in Sanskrit languages in respect to geographical locations and religious places which sometimes poses problem, whether it is

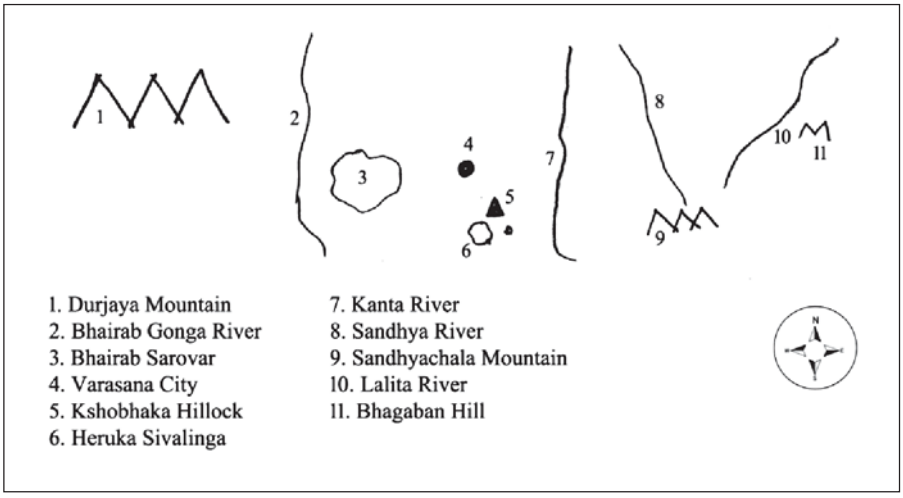


Fig. 2: Arrangement of features as narrated in Kālika Purān

used for the supposed location or any other location. Being a Devi centred text, the theme basically centres on the method and glorification of Devi worship.

The locations as narrated in Kālika Purān about *Kāmākhya* and Manikuta hill consist of locations both on north and south bank. On the north bank from west to east is Golaka Shiva in the westernmost part with Varnasa River, Manikuta hill, Gokarna, Bhadrakama, Kedara, Manikarneswar, Sumangala River, Chandrakut hill and Janardhan hill. Chandrakunda, Nandana and Aswakranta Kunda on a west-east alignment following one after another. On the south bank beginning with Gandhamadan hill and located south of Manikut hill on western most part is Sukanta mountain, Vasavakunda, Raksakuta mountain, Pandunath Madhava, Chitrahara hill, Nilachala hill, Brahmagiri mountain, Ugratara temple, Urvasi kunda (an island in Brahmaputra), Bhasmachal (another island in Brahmaputra), Karpata mountain, Chtrachala hill, Kajjala hill, Subhaparvata, Kapilaganga river, Damanika river, Vriddhariver, Divyamuna river and Manikhalya hill are on a west-east alignment following one after another. The Durjaya Mountain as narrated in the text is possibly also located on the southern bank. On the western side is the Durjaya Mountain. On eastern side is Bhairabganga river, Bhairab sarovar, Varasana city, Divyakunda and Kshobhaka hillock, Heruka pilgrimmage, Kanta River, Sandhyachala Mountain, Sandhya River, Lalita River and Bhagaban hill on a west-east alignment following one after another.

The arrangement made in Fig. 2 is based on tentative identification of Sandhyachala mountain with Basishtha hills located on Assam-Meghalaya border towards the southern side of the present day Guwahati city where the Ashram of *Basisthamunin* is still present at the confluence of Kanta, Sandhya and Lalita Rivers. Taking Sandhyachal as a point of reference we can

approximate Heruka Sivalinga to be Bheema Shankar or Bhimeswar Jyotirlinga. Varasana city and Durjaya mountain could be somewhere in Guwahati.

In another narrative, the location of Dikkaravasini temple is explained. The geography so narrated seems similar to the eastern quarters of the northern bank of Assam. In the description on the westernmost part are Saswati river, Dipawati river, Sringata mountain, Siddha Trisrota river, Varadha vedika river, Bhattarika river, Natakashaila mountain, Dikkarika river, Vriddhaganga, Svarnasri river, Kama river, Somasana river and Varsodhaka river on the easternmost side is the shrine of Dikkaravasini on a west–east alignment following one after another. Few places so mentioned in Kālika Purāna are easy to locate and some cannot be located successfully at the moment. The places are tried to be located with reference to other well-known sites and their tentative location with reference to nearby sites. Sometimes this chain of reference is lost therefore leading to identification of three centres only. Possibly these are contiguous sites but some links are missing because of abrupt closing of the narration. The places narrated in the Kālika Purāna (KP) are as follows:

Table1: Geography of Western Assam as narrated in Kālika Purān (KP)

Name as in KP (alphabetically)	Remarks/observation
Agada river	Emerging from northern mountains and flowing south,on the east and west are Rivers Bhadra and Somadana.
Bahuroka river	Emerging from Surasa mountain, it flows to south, east/right of Karatoya, west of river Chandika
Bhadra river	Its location as given in Kālika Purān as o west of river Subhadra and Manasa and east of Agada, possibly present Manas river in western Assam. A river with the same name also exists in Karnataka rising from Gangamoola, also known as Varaha parvat.
Bhairavi river	Emerging from northern mountains and flowing south, on the east and west flows Varnasa and Manasa river
Chandika river	Cannot be identified exactly, flows east of Bahuroka and west of Phenelia, seems originate from Dhavala mountain, but there was a river by the name in Orissa, now dried up but the bed isidentified
Darpana river	The river cannot be identified, it is been told that Kubera the god of wealth was residing on Darpana mountain, however Kubera worship is not known/popular in Assam. He is popular in south India particularly Tamil country
Dhavala mountain	Located on east of Chandika river
Kapota	A pond near Madana river
Karana	A pond near Madana river
Karatoya river	Supposed to be western boundary of early Assam, flowing left/east of Bahuroka river, emerging from Surasa mountain
Kasumamalini river	Emerging from northern mountains and flowing south, on the east and west is Sri Surya hill and Ksiroda river

Ksiroda river	Emerging from northern mountains and flowing south, on the east and west flows Lila and Kasumamalini river
Lila River	Emerging from northern mountains and flowing south, on the east and west flows Chandika and Ksiroda river
Madana river	Flows towards south and west of sri surya on tattva Shaila hill.
Manasa river	Emerging from northern mountains and flowing south, on the east and west flows Bhairavi and Subhadra river. The present Manas river in Barpeta fits the scheme
Phenelia river	Emerging from northern mountains and flowing south, on the east and west flows Sita and Chandika river
Sita/ Sitaprabha river	Emerging from northern mountains and flowing south, on the east and west flows Somadana and Phenelia river
Somadana river	Emerging from northern mountains and flowing south, on the east and west flows Agada and Sita river
Sri Surya	Located on a hill between Madana and Kshiroda rivers
Subhadra river	Emerging from northern mountains and flowing south, on the east and west flows Manas and Subhadra river
Surasa mountain	Mountain in Kamrup, located west of Krtivasa mountain, with river Chandika emerging from it
Trisrota	Literally meaning three channels
Varuna pond	Not identified
Vayukuta mount.	Not identified
Vibhrata mount.	Big mountain near Himalaya (B C Law)

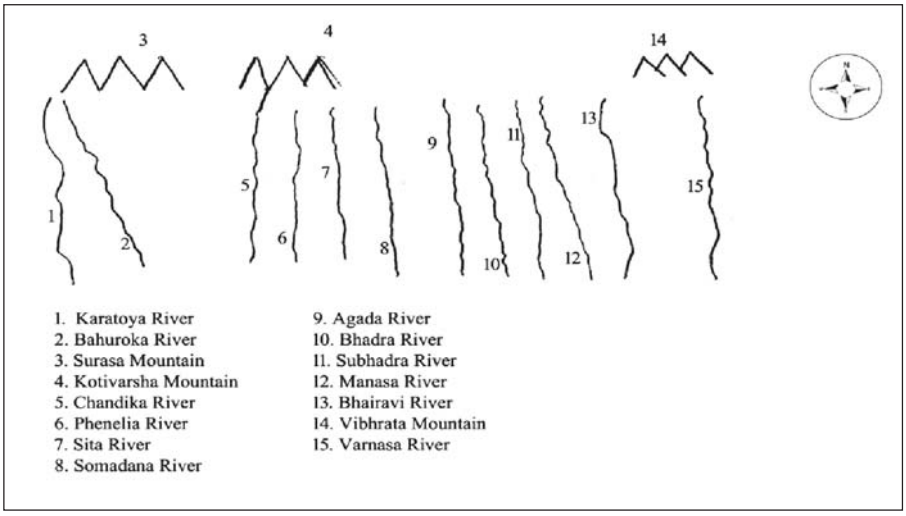


Fig. 3: Arrangement of natural features of western Assamas narrated in Kālika Purān.

There are numerous streams between river Karatoya and river Varnasa (possibly flowing a little west of Manikut hill, Hajo in Kamrup District). Among the rivers only Manasa is flowing presently bearing the same name therefore it is arduous and will be folly to identify them without any known feature of reference.

Table 2: The identification of features connected with Kāmākhya

Feature around Kāmākhya	**Remarks/observation**
tirtha (alphabetically presented)	
Aswakranta Kunda (N)	Possibly backwater of Brahmaputra, on southern side of Aswakranta temple
Bhadrakama (N)	Possibly Poa Mecca hill
Bhasmachal	An island in river Brahmaputra in hill shape, also known as Umgnanda
Brahmagiri mountain (S)	Likely the Kalipur hill near Kāmākhya hill on its west
Brahmakuta pond (S)	Lake on the north of Pandunath possibly a horseshoe lake of Brahmaputra
Chandrakunda (N)	Cannot be identified
Chandrakut hill (N)	Cannot be identified
Chitrachal (S)	A hill in Guwahati where the Navagraha temple is located.
Chitrahara hill (S)	Pandu hill in Guwahati
Damanika river (S)	Not identified possibly Pokoria river
Divyamuna river (S)	Flowing east of Kapili and its tributary, likely Yamuna or Jamuna merging with Kapili at Jamunamukh?
Gandhamadan hill (S)	Not identified
Gokarna (N)	Not identified
Golaka siva (N)	The shrine cannot be identified
Janardhan hill (N)	A hillock in north Guwahati, Aswakranta temple is located here. A Vishnu image in eternal sleep also present here.
Kajjala hill (S)	Cannot be identified exactly, possibly Noonmati hill in Guwahati
Kapilaganga river (S)	Kapili river, attaining the name possibly due to draining of Akasi Ganga river
Karpata mount. (S)	At present Sukreswar hill also known as Itakhuli hill, a big stone can be seen on river side, Sukra the preceptor of demons is mentioned in the verse 79.127
Kedara (N)	A Shiva temple in Madanachala/Matsyadhvaja hill in Hajo
Manikarneswar (N)	Manikarneswar temple/ Manikut hill/Manikhalya hill
Manikut (N)	Manikut hill of Hajo, in YT it is connected with Haygriva
Manikut hill (N)	Hill in north Guwahati upon which Manikarneswar temple resting
Matsyadhwaja mount. (N)	On east of Manikut hill, cannot be identified
Nandana hill (N)	Hill near Gauripur area
Nilakuta hill (S)	Kāmākhya hill upon which famous temple is located

Pandunath Madhava (S)	Present Pandunath temple in Guwahati at Pandu
Rakshakuta mount. (S)	PossiblyJalukbari hills, where temple of Lankeswar temple is located connected with Lankesh/Ravana a *rakshasa* (demon) king.
Sasvati river (N)	Flowing in the valley of Matsyadhwaja
Subhaparvata (S)	Chandrapur riverside hill?
Sukanta mountain (S)	Cannot be identified
Sumangala river (N)	Mangala/ sumangala river presently Barnadi
Ugratara temple (S)	Present Ugratara temple in Jor Pukhuri in Guwahati
Urvasi	A small island south west of Umgnanda
Varnasa river (N)	Its location is told to be west or near Manikut hill, Puthimari river fits the scheme perfectly
Vasava Kunda (S)	Cannot be identified
Vayukuta hill (S)	Foothills of Pandu hill in Guwahati
Vriddha river (S)	Possibly Akasi Ganga stream of Hojai area?

(N) North bank, (S) south bank

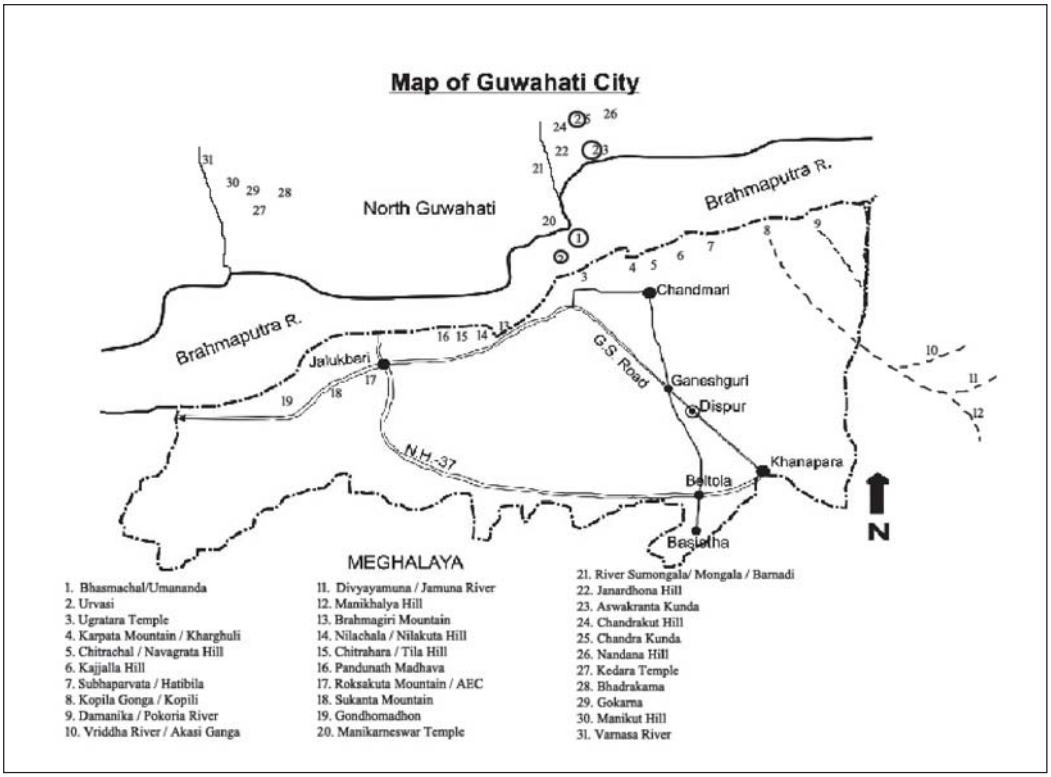


Fig. 4. Map of Kāmākhyatirtha as narrated in Kālika Purān

It includes mostly the religious sites in and around present Gauhati city, also known religiously as Pancha tirtha due to the presence of five sacred shrines. Most of the features mentioned in the Kālika Purān were located on the bank of river Brahmaputra or on a hill (Fig. 4).

Table 3: Geography of Dikkaravasini

Bhattarika river	Ranganadi? mentioned as big river, tributary of Subansiri
Dikkarika river	Possibly Dikorai?
Dikkarvasini	Tamreswari temple at Sadiya also known as Sri Sri Kesaikhati Maa
Dipawati river	Cannot be identified
Kama river	Cannot be identified as numerous river flow between Subansiri and Dibang
Natakashaila mount.	Eastern Himalaya?
Saswati river	Cannot be identified
Shringata mount.	Singri hills in Dhekiajuli, Sonitpur district
Siddha tristotra	Sessa river?
Sitaganga river	Cannot be identified
Somasana river	Cannot be identified as numerous river flow between Subansiri and Dibang
Svarnashri river	Subansiri river, a trans Himalayan river emerging from Mount Porom
Vardhavedika river	Dikrong river?
Varsodhaka river	Dibang river, tributary of Lohit
Visvanatha	Gupt Kashi or the Pani Devaloy which remain in water for six months
Vriddhaganga River	Buri Gonga river of Biswnath, present Borgong seems to be the river, which changed its course, a tributary of Brahmaputra

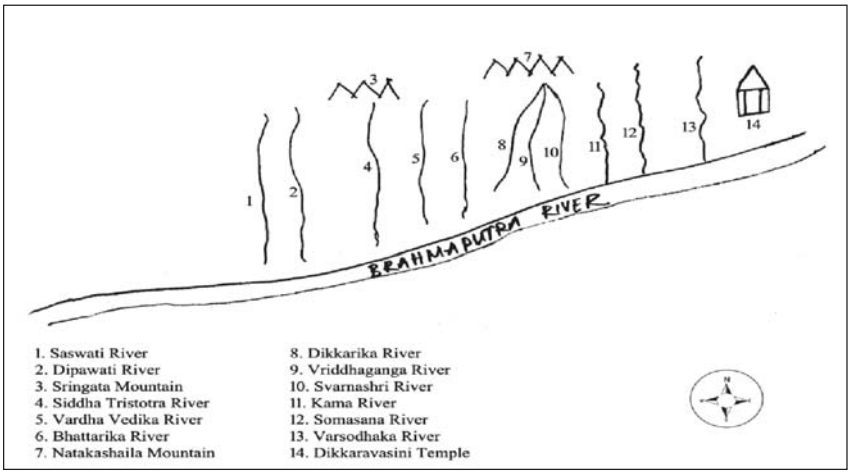


Fig. 5: Arrangement of features around Dikkarvasini temple as narrated in Kālika Purān

The identification of the features is done with reference to near accurate identification of Tamreswari temple, Subansiri River and Visvanath temple.

Yogini Tantra

The Yogini Tantra is a 16th-17th century tantric text by an unknown author from Assam or Bengal dedicated to the worship of Hindu goddesses Kali and Kāmākhya. Apart from religious and philosophical themes Yogini Tantra contains some historical information also. The Tantra is especially important for the Vamachara form of tantric worship.

It is a narration by Shiva to Parvati, beginning with goddess Kali.The goddess is very popular in eastern India. The three cities/tirtha which are extensively described and mentioned are; Varanasi, Gaya and Kāmākhya. The following excerpts are from Yogini Tantra pertaining to Kāmarūpa/Kāmākhya by Pt. Harihar Prasad Tripathi in Hindi.

Chapter 11. Narration about Kāmākhya peetha.

V. 17-18: first reference of Goddess Kāmākhya appeared in this chapter.It is been told that worshipping in Kāmarūpa Kāmākhya will fulfil all *Siddhis* and wishes. It is asserted that the place is frequented by Saktas, who worship *siddhas;* mention is of *Kanchangiri* from Nepal. The location and extent of Kāmarūpa was narrated. Kāmarūpa was extended from *Karatoya* on the west to *Dikkarvasini* on on the east and Kanchangiri on north. On the west of Karatoya is the sacred pilgrimage site of Dikshu nadi. Kāmarūpa extended on east upto Girikanya and on south upto the confluence of Brahmaputra and Lakshya rivers.

V. 19-20: describe whoever happily pays his dues to father, sages and god are able to reach closer to the goddess Kāmākhya and anyone who reaches this pilgrimage gets boon of *ashwamedha* at every step.

V. 21-22: in these verses it is told that Kāmarūpa is triangular in shape with length of 100 *yojana* (400 *kosa*) and 30 *yojana* in wisth. Kedara on *Isanakon* i.e. on the northeast, Gajashasan on *Vayavyakon* i.e. northwest and south upto the confluence of Brahmaputra and Lakshya river.

V. 23-30: mention Kāmarūpa as triangular in shape, where all god and demons were greeted; the inhabitants of the place are godlike, the water bodies of the place are like tirtha. Nine pithas were mentioned in these verses namely *Upavithi, Vithi, Upapitha, Pitha, Siddhapitha, Mahapitha, Brahmapitha, Vishnupitha* and *Rudrapitha*. These *nava* pithas is also famous as *nava* yoni and praised stating that worshipping at the place brings boon. Karma performed in these pithas gives twice result; worshipping and chanting here brings *siddhis*. Kāmākhya yonimandala is also known as Navayoni and it is famous. Also speaks of a place called Panchakrosi. which was best place for spiritual self-annihilation for even gods.

V. 31-32: anyone who visits Panchakrosa attains *moksha* and gets released from the cycle of birth' It also mentions sacredness of the place and the people living there are immune from the atrocities of Shanideva.

V. 33-40: anyone who visits Panchakrosa attains moksha and gets released from the cycle of rebirth. Here best of the *sadhaks* (hermits) performs *mantrapuja* and *japa*. Worshipers here attain eight *siddhis; namely, Anima, Mahima, Laghima, Garima, Prapya, Prakamya, Ishitwa,* and *Vasitwa*. In this yonipitha there is a radiant mountain named Nila which bears the potential of Brahma, Vishnu, Shiva and Shakti. Also mentions that there exists a forest named *Manobhav* where *Kotilinga* abounds. It also mentions a pond named *Karanasagar* and merit of dipping and performing shraddha there.

V. 41-45: mention various devis *Chinnamasta, Bhairavi, Dhumavati, Bhuvaneswari, Matangi, Kamlalaya, Bhakilatra, Bhagdhara, Bhagandhari, Durga, Jayadurga and Mahisamardini*.

V. 46-62: mention a pitha named *Ugratara* and a place called *Brahmamukhasheya* pitha and two aspects of this pitha are told. Firstly, is secret (*gupta*) the other as revealed (*vyakta*). Worshipping in secret pitha gives greater merit than *vyakta*. This *gupta* pitha is very rare and mentions a forest named Manobhav and pitha named Mohagra. A Ghora, a form of Kali resides here. Canting here gives fast result. Fruit produced in this pitha is double compared to at *Jalandhara* and four times more than those at *Uddiyana*. Also mentions Nilakantha Mahadev of Nepal.

12th Sarga/ Chapter

V. 1: speaks of importance of Kāmākhya

V. 4-5: speaks of Naraka, his birth and making of king of the fertile kingdom of Kāmarūpa by Vishnu. This narrative also appeared in Kālika Purān.
V. 6-7: Naraka, after defeating Kiratas became an important ruler, impressed Vishnu, who gave him city named Pragjyotishpur in Kāmākhya *yonimandala.* After the coronation Vishnu attached the powers of king to Naraka.
V. 8-34: is the story of Narakasur, Vasistha and Kāmarūpa. HowVasistha) cursed Kāmākhya, as he was denied entry to the temple by Naraka and her efforts to get rid of the curse.
V. 42-43: speaks of Kāmarūpa being ruled for12 years by Yavanas. Also mentions that during the period of curse there will be chaos in Kāmarūpa and Yavanas, Kuvach, Saumar and Pallav will rule Kāmarūpa.
V. 58-59: speaks of migration of elites from *Saumar* and *Kamruppitha* to *Bhumhiripuchulvaka* when the water in Brahmaputra will recede after 16 years.
V. 60-61: speaks of war between Mallechas with the western invaders.
V. 62-63: is about the iconography of the *yoginis*.
15th Sarga/ Chapter

This chapter peaks about the coming of Kali in the form of Kāmākhya. Basically this chapter speaks of the demon Kesi and his killing.

21st Sarga/ Chapter

V. 12-14: speaks of various mountains including *Udyachala*, a mountain in the east. Even today a small hillock exists of the same name at the middle of the Guwahati city in Christian *basti* (slum) area.

V. 15: speaks of *Kosala Bhairava* meditating at *Kāmākhyapitha* for 25 lakh years.

Part II

1st Sarga/ chapter

This chapter is specially dedicated to Kāmākhya.

V. 2-3: Parvati asks Shiva, "I have heard from you about the pilgrims at Uddiyana etc. now I want to know about the Kāmākhyapitha which is known a *punyamaysthan* (holiest place) in kali yuga".

V. 6: speaks the boons of worshipping Kāmākhya in kaliyuga. This verse speaks of importance of *Uddiyana* in *satyuga*, *Purna shail* in *tretayuga* and *Jalashail* in *dwaparayuga*.

V. 12-14: speaks of location of *Bhadrapitha* on the west of *Madyadesa*. On the west is *Jalandhara* and on the east is *Punyapitha*. Kāmarūpa is situated east of the northeast (*Ishan*) side. On the northwest is *Jalandhara*, *Kolhapur* on north, *Bihar* on northeast, *Mahendra* Mountainis located on the north and on east is Srihatta. However, it is inconsistent with present Assam.

V. 15-32: Shiva describes about complete Geographical details of India with their name and physical setting.

V. 34: describes Kāmarūpa as having six sides and it is in the shape of a perfect womb.

V. 35-36: Kāmarūpa consist of 9 vyuha (blocks) and 3 mandala (circles). The centre of the vedica consists of ten mountains and speaks of residence of lord Kameswar (Shiva) in the pitha and speaks of a river named Champavati flowing near the pitha. It is probable that there flowed a river nearby or a stream flowed from Nilachal of the same name. Kameswar temple here refers to Kameswar temple located on the Nilachal hill.

3rd Chapter/ sarga

Speaks of *Kamaruppitha* being located in a deep cave. Possibly it refers to Kāmākhya temple which is located under ground.

4th Chapter/ sarga

Speaks of geographical features of various parts of India including *Pushkar tirtha* (Rajasthan); *Gaya* (Bihar);

Kanyakubja (Uttar Pradesh); *Brigukaccha* (Gujarat); *Cauvery, Nandipuri, Prabhas* and *Suvarna* River (Karnataka).

V. 5-6: speak of *Kameswar* Shiva of *Nilachala* and *Bhasmachal* (Umgnanda Island).

V.7: speak of *Aswakranta* tirtha and *Janardhan* (probably the present day Aswakranta temple at north Guwahati).Mythological legend of the temple says that Lord Krishna had camped

there with his army, before finally overpowering and killing the evil demon Narakasur. The *Asvakranta* Temple is associated with the story of Lord Krishna and his wife Rukmini. It is also believed that the spot where the temple is built is exactly where Lord Krishna's horse was surrounded by enemies. Some hoof marks of horses on stone can be seen at the site.
V. 11: speaks of *Hayagriva* temple at *Manikuta* hill, presently located in the Hajo town on the northwest of Guwahati.
V. 12: addresses Brahmaputra as *Parmesthi* (Supreme Being)
V. 23: speak of nearby locality of Aswakranta.
V. 30: describe *Aswatirtha* (Aswakranta) as the best holy place of *kaliyuga*.
V. 35-38: Shiva tells his wife Parvati that Aswakranta tirtha was famous / well known among the tirthas and *Aswakranta* was is the best place for worshipping. The same place is also called as Parbrahma and Parampada. It even says that Narayan is best among the devas; Mahesh among ishwaras; Aswakranta among the tirtha is best (*shretha*).
V. 39-42: speaks of rare yoga and mukti found in aswakranta at Aswakranta all the sins gets washed and even term it greater (*uttam*) than *Kurukshetra*, *Gaya* and *Pushkar*.
V. 43-46: state the merit of *Aswakranta* as higher than *dana, tapasya, yagya* and *vidya* and even higher than *Agastya* tirtha. The tirtha is so holy that one can get rid of sin like *brahmahatya*.
V. 47-50: at *Aswakranta* small *dāna* (donation) is equal to huge *dgna*at other tirtha. One day's fast equals thousand years fast; donation of crore cows at other tirtha equals here one day's fast and equals to whole month of *maghasnana* at *Prayaga*. It is one of the most holy Hindu pilgrim centre.
V. 51-60: speaks of merit and sin washing (nirvana) features of *Aswakranta;* speaks of insects, mosquitoes, flora, fish, frog etc. found at *Aswakranta,* which turns to form of Shiva after death. The verse speaks of *panchatirtha* and merits of worshipping at *panchatirtha* and of bath at Aswakranta and demise at *panchatirtha.* With these people earn the merit of proceeding to *brahmaloka* (heaven).
V. 61-70: speaks of Brahmasarovar; Aswakranta and *Sidhakunda* are located on its west and.
V. 71-80: speaks of Brahmasarovar, *Indrakut* Mountains, *Ramakshetra*/tirtha.
V. 81-90: speaks of Sitatirtha, Vijaytirtha, Yogatirtha and Muktitirtha.
V. 108-138: Speaks of Gayatirtha located at present Bihar.
5th chapter
V. 49-50: speaks of Bhasmachal (Umgnanda Island).
V. 51-52: speaks of *Urvasi* tirtha, where taking a dip is worth *aswamedha* yajna. Probably it is the present Urvasi island (also known as peacock island).
V. 63: speaks of pond named Kāmākhya.

V. 141: speaks of high rock on southern side of Urvasi.
V. 162: speaks of *Aswakranta*.
V. 164: refers *Bhasmachala* and its sacredness.
V. 169: refers *Bhasmachala* Mountain and *Pishachamochana* tirtha.
V. 170-171: refers *Pishachamochana* tirtha and *Bhasmachala/kuta*.
V. 230-31: refers *Jangrdhana* and *Sukreslinga* (Sukreswara in Guwahati).
6th Chapter
V. 2: speaks of Lauhitya tirtha, on whose south on Vayukon (north-west), there was KolMountain and on west there is the place of Mahabali Pandunath.
V. 86 & 141: mentions *Lauhit*.
V. 91: mentions *Aswakranta*.
V. 149-50: describes that worshipping in land or water in Kāmarūpa have equal merit and worshipping Devi in Kāmarūpa gives highest merit. It is said that Kāmarūpa is a land of Devi and elsewhere Kāmākhya is rare but at Kāmarūpa she is in every house.
V. 151: mentions *Kāmākhya*.
7th Chapter
V. 139-150: mention *Kāmākhya* and *Nilachala* Mountain.
8th Chapter
V. 63: mentions that stream from *Kāmākhya* is equal to Ganga.
V. 68: speaks that at *Dharmaranya*, visiting (*darshan*) of Kotilinga gives godliness.
V. 69-70: states location of *Kotilinga* Kunda to be 30 *dhanush* towards north of Kamagiri/ *Kāmākhya* Hill and describes merit of *Kotilinga* Shiva.

Parisisth (Supplementary)

V. 13-14: states Kaladharma of Yoginipitha was different from Jalandhara (Pakistan). At Yoginipitha the religion of Kiratas are in vogue. Sanyasa is longest at Kāmarūpa and meat eating is not practiced. Brahmacharya also is not prescribed.
V. 15-16: at Kāmarūpa there is no restriction on dharma and karma for women folks or any restriction and she can always have tambul (betel). At Kāmarūpa consuming duck, pigeon, tortoise and pork is not prohibited but those who do not have has to face misery (*durgati*).
V. 19: speaks of surplus rice production at *Srihatta*.
V. 120: speaks of *Manikuta* hill and a tirtha named *Vishnu Pushkar* on its eastern side at a short distance.
V. 123-124: speaks of *Manikuta* hill and *Haygriva* Vishnu and eight thousand hills nearby.
V. 206: refers to *Manikuta* hill and its merit.
V. 209-12: speaks of *Manikuta* hill, about *Haygriva* and way of worshipping Vishnu.
Manikuta and *Haygriva* appears together sometimes making us think that it is in reference to *Haygriva* in modern town of Hajo in Kamrup district.

Towards the end Vishnu appears frequently showing the increasing popularity of Vishnu.

Table 4: Geographical features of Yogini Tantra (YT)

Name as in Yogini Tantra	Remarks/ possible identified location
Kāmākhya	temple on the Nilachala hill of goddess *Kāmākhya* in Gauhati
Kanchangiri	Kanchanjunga mountain in Indo-Nepal boundary
Manobhav forest	forest on the western side of the *Kāmākhya* temple
Kotilinga	temple of Shiva on the foothills of Nilachala
Nila hill	sacred hill of Kāmarūpa where *Kāmākhya* temple located
Karanasagar pond	cannot be identified
Mohagra pith	
Ghora	Kali shrine
Saumar	
Bhumiripuchulvaka	
Udyachal	possibly a hill in Guwahati near Ganeshguri area
Kameswar	Shiva temple at Nilachal hill
Champavati river	
Bhasmachal	Umgnanda island
Aswakranta	temple adjacent to Gauhati in north bank
Janardhan	hill on the north bank
Haygriv temple	temple dedicated to Hayagriv Vishnu at Hajo
Sukres linga	temple of Sukreswar Shiva
Pandunath	temple at pandu area in Gauhati
Kol mountain	Situated north-west of Pandunath, not identified

After Buddhism and Shaivism, Shakta cult penetrated or rather originated from Assam. Shakta cult became popular among certain population especially among the tribes. It never became mainstream because of its esoteric, occult and obscene nature. Few of the practices associated with Shakti cult were something not considered appropriate in Indian philosophical thought. Charwahaka thought that it always looked down upon as mean and material unlike the mainstream thoughts based on personal sacrifice; control/subduing of the the senses and simple living in view of the peace in next world. The tantric-Sakta cult is the blending of tantrayana Buddhism, shaivism and local tribal practices. The seed of Sakta cult lies in the Purgnic narrative of Sati.

Conclusion

Historically the process of sanskritisation of Kāmarūpa was set in motion with its inclusion in Mahabharata and other religious texts and structurally and archaeologically established at Baitbari and Ambari. Most of the places, rivers, ponds, mountains etc. mentioned in Kālika Purān and Yogini Tantra, cannot be identified independently. They can be identified only in

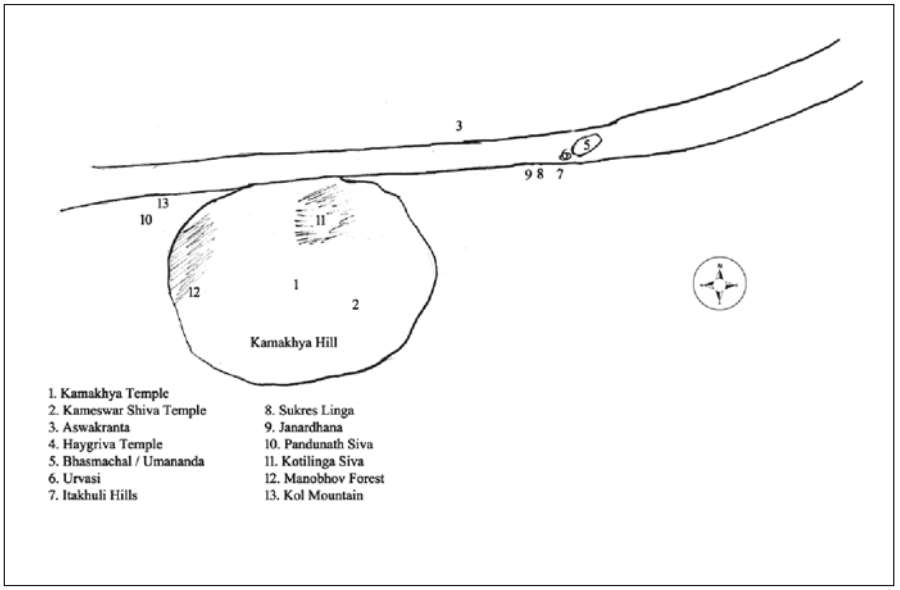


Fig. 6: Sacred geography in and around Kāmākhya temple, Guwahati, Assam

reference to a well-known identified site/shrine. The reason that the natural features could not be identified is due to their naming in Sanskrit. It is evident that the natives do not follow the language and the features have popular native names, which do not comply with the Sanskrit nomenclatures. Therefore the Sanskrit names were never popular among the masses except for the few important religious shrines, but remained in written records.

In Sanskrit the features are perfectly encoded and nicely explained with adjectives which any individual with the knowledge of Sanskrit could identify and understand the mentioned feature. Many generic terms and suffixes were used to name the places like 'dhavala' for high mountains covered with snow, as *dhavala* means white in Sanskrit. Suffixes like *nadi, parvata, pushkara* were used to denote rivers, mountains and ponds. Most of the features named during the period or in text has religious connotation like Bhairavi, Manasa, Madana, Bhadra, Chandika, Kapilgganga etc. for rivers; Urvasi for an island; and Jangrdhana, Gandhamadana, Kedara etc. for hills. The names of every place and feature of KP and YT have religious connotation thereby preparing the premise of sacred geography.

Sanskritisation of names has played a crucial role in spread of Brahmanical Hinduism. Such practices were always used by dominant groups to establish psycho-historical claim on the landscape and sometimes on community as well. It is evident that during the time the concept of tirtha was also emerging all over the subcontinent. In Assam some of the shrines were designated as tirtha, namely, Dol Gobinda, Manikarneswar, Dirgeswari, Kāmākhya and Umgnanda. Apart from them Hajo Haygriva shrine, Tamreswari temple, Tezpur temples, Hojai and Golaghat temples also command respect and reverence equal to them. All the

religious places were connected with Purānic narratives. Therefore forwarding of psycho-religious situation for these shrines established a claim of their presence. By the close of 12th century the entire landscape upto Lakhimpur and Golaghat are sanskritised. However in common practice the areas and features retained their native and Bengali names.

It is evident from the ruins that during 10th-11th century temples were raised on all the religious placesmentioned in the respective texts. Due to the negligence and decline of royalty, not much up keeping of the structures were executed, resulting in decay and disintegration of the structures. However looking into the importance of the sites and its dilapidated condition Ahom rulers rebuilt most of the structures and issued copper plate for endowments of land and servitors to most of the temples.

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Women, Atrocity and Reformation in Colonial India: The burning of *Satis* in Bengal, 1757-1829

Chanchal Chowdhury

Abstract

In the eighteenth century, women's position in a male-dominated Indian society was discriminatory. Hindu widows were the worst victims of society's superstitious beliefs and practices. Neither their in-laws nor their parents' sides welcomed their presence in the family. The orthodox Hindus were required to burn their widows on the funeral pyres of their husbands, irrespective of their ages. During the East India Company's rule, the largest proportion of widows' immolations was executed in the Bengal Presidency compared to other parts of India. On most occasions, widows were immolated against their will. Thousands of Bengali widows were burned in the name of *Sati* rites until 1829. The Christian missionaries were the pioneers who raised their voice against this barbarous custom and urged the government for its abolition. A segment of British civilians, police officers, and members of the judiciary also made their efforts to stop this inhuman custom. Raja Rammohan Roy played a leading and glorious role through his writings and activities for the abolition of *Sati* rites. Among the Governor-Generals of India, Lord William Bentinck took the real initiative and passed the *Sati* Prohibition Regulation to ban this atrocious act against women, and the flames of the funeral piles of living widows in Bengal were extinguished.

Keywords: *Bengal, Widows, Atrocity, Sati, Regulation, Prohibition*.

Introduction

In eighteenth-century Bengal, the independent lives and livelihoods of women were frowned upon by society. For the women, the attitude of the men was disdainful, and the women were denied some of the most basic human rights. This tradition continued until the nineteenth century. It was a common practice to marry off girls in their early ages. There were very few cases of widows remarrying. Only some of the lower-caste Hindus would approve the remarriage of widows. The religious scriptures of Muslims support widow remarriage. But in reality, only the most charming and tender-aged widows were remarried in Muslim society. Polygamy was a common practice among the orthodox *Kulins*, and most of the time, there was a significant age gap between a *Kulin* and his wives. As a result, the proportion of widowhood among the *Kulins* was much higher. The practice of *Sati* burning was in vogue not only among the Brahmins but also among the Baidyas, Kayasthas, and other *Sat Sudras*.

On most occasions, the widows were burned on their husbands' funeral pyres by force or by exerting huge psychological pressure on them. The instances of *Sati burnings* in India were well documented by foreign travelers, European merchants, and Christian missionaries. This paper focuses on the general subjugation of widows in Bengali society, as well as the atrocities committed against them in the eighteenth and first half of the nineteenth centuries, when they were burned alive on their deceased husbands' funeral pyres.

Sati practices in India can be traced back to ancient times. It is said that Emperor Harsha's mother climbed her husband's funeral pyre before her death (Mallick 1935: 164). In the medieval period, Al-Biruni, the Arab Indologist, made reference to the burning of widows in India (Al-Biruni 1993: 252). Ibn Battuta, the Moroccan traveller, depicted a shocking description of widow burnings in India (Battuta 1976: 21-23.). Chaitanyadeva of Nadia was not in favour of *Sati* rites in society. It has been said that he hurriedly departed from the place of occurrence after glancing at the burning of a *Sati* during his lifetime (Mullick 1320 BS: 30). During the rule of the Mughals in India, *Sati* rites were executed in many parts of their kingdom. On one occasion, Emperor Akbar himself rescued a widow from the funeral pyre of her dead husband and saved her life. But the Muslim rulers could not prohibit this brutal custom (Collet 1914: 24). In the seventeenth century, French physician, Bernier witnessed the burning of *Satis* in different parts of India (Bernier 1826: 9-19). Job Charnock, the founder of Calcutta, rescued a charming widow from being burned on her deceased husband's funeral pyre and accepted her as his wife (Nair 1977: 28). In eighteenth-century Bengal, major instances of *Sati* burnings took place along the two banks of the river Bhagirathi. A few of the widows voluntarily became *Satis* to avoid the spiteful treatment of society. Others were brought to the cremation grounds by their family members and relatives forcefully, where they were thrown into the flames of the funeral pyres of their dead husbands.

In Indian society, women have ordinarily been forced to submit to the supremacy of the male family members. They have hardly received recognition for their contributions to the family and society. Manu writes: "Her father protects (her) in childhood, her husband protects (her) in youth, and her sons protect (her) in old age; a woman is never fit for independence" (Manu 1886: 328).Yet we find Bengali women who excelled in their individual fields of activity. In the eighteenth century, Rani Bhabani of Rajshahi and Maharani Vishnukumari of Burdwan played excellent roles in their respective *zamindaris*. Among the women, widows were badly treated. The orthodox Hindu society could not even think about the remarriage of the widows. FeiHsin, the Chinese official who came to Bengal in the fifteenth century, recorded that when a husband had died in Bengal, his widow could not remarry (Hsin 1996: 76). In the early eighteenth century, Raja Raj Ballabh of Dacca and Rani Bhabani made an attempt to introduce widows' remarriage in Hindu society but could not succeed (Ghosh 1338 BS: 164–165; Karim: 115–116). The widows were required to wear only white clothes. They were prohibited from

wearing ornaments and using perfumes. They had to give up eating fish, flesh, or butter and live on plain barley or wheaten bread. They were allowed to eat only once a day (Forster 1798: 58). The Hindu widows were called *moonda*, a reproachful term that meant "shorn head," because every widow was supposed to have their hair cut off. When women in India quarreled, this offensive term, "*moonda*," was generally the first abusive word that they used (Dubois 1905: 352-353). When their spouses died, their in-laws usually sent them to their parental homes. After the death of their parents, widows were compelled to live with their brothers' family just like slave girls (Forster 1798: 57). The hardships imposed on the upper-caste Hindu widows were so severe that women with strong morale frequently preferred to burn themselves on the funeral pyres of their deceased husbands. It has been estimated that at least 70,000 Hindu widows were burned in India from 1757 to 1829 (Smith 1885: 285). According to statistical returns,the number of *Sati* rites in the Bengal Presidency was much higher compared to that of the Madras and Bombay Presidencies.From 1815 to 1826, the total number of *Sati* rites performed in the Bengal Presidency in twelve years was 7154, whereas their numbers in the Madras Presidency in eight years and in the Bombay Presidency in nine years were 287 and 248 respectively (Peggs 1832: 220). Because Sati burning was much more common in Bengal, the majority of the wretched women among these burnt widows were from the Bengal Presidency. A section of the widows renounced their caste and sought refuge in brothels in order to escape the harsh regulations of society (Hamilton 1828: 205).

In the twelfth century, Ballal Sen, the king of Bengal, restructured Hindu society into different classes and introduced the practice of *Kulinism* (Bhatta 1901: 8-12). The *Kulins* of Bengal maintained strict restrictions in marriage rules and widely performed *Sati* rites among them. In Bengal, the practice of widow burning was restricted only to some limited castes. Scrafton noted that the *Sati* practice was not common to all classes of Bengalis. Only the illustrious families of the province observed the *Sati* rite (Scrafton 1770: 10). Stavorinus, a Dutch East India Company captain, visited Bengal between the late sixties and early seventies of the eighteenth century. He recorded that the women belonging to some castes were obliged to sacrifice their lives either on the flames of the funeral pyres of their deceased husbands or by burying them alive with the corpses of their husbands. If the widows refused to submit to this atrocious custom, their characters would be stamped with the greatest infamy, and they would suffer the abomination and derision of their companions and relatives (Stavorinus 1798: 441). The upper class Hindu society taught their girls from their childhood that the happiness of a married woman would be staying with her husband in both the two worlds on all circumstances. Scrafton recorded about the social perception of women's position in the former half of the eighteenth century:

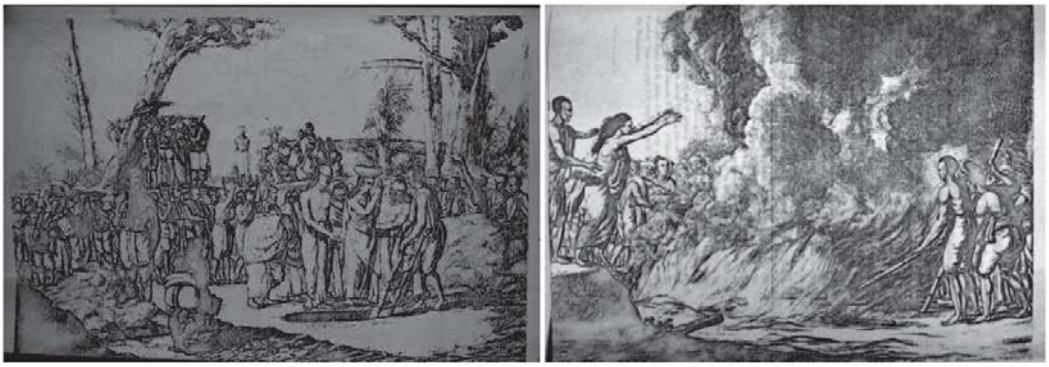
> "Another circumstance that contributes to form their general character, is, their ... burning with their husbands...they are brought up together from their infancy; the woman has no opportunity of ever conversing with any other man; her affections are centered solely

> in this one object of her love; she is firmly persuaded, that by being burnt with him, she shall be happy with him in another world; that if she neglects this last token of affection, he may take another wife, and she be separated from him forever."(Scrafton 1770: 9-10).

An impression was produced in the mental world of an orthodox Hindu woman that once her husband died, she had nothing left in this world. The widow of one Rhaam Chund Pundit was only 17 or 18 years old. It has been reported that she voluntarily sacrificed her life on her husband's funeral pyre at Cossimbuzaar on February 4, 1743 (Holwell 1767: 93-97). Forster recorded that: "The wives of the deceased Hindoos have moderated that spirit of enthusiastic pride, or impulse of affection, which was used to urge them to self-destruction on the pile of their husbands." (Forster 1798: 57). The Hindu women became *Sati* by burning or burying alive with their deceased husbands. Stavorinus recorded that a Bengalese woman was buried alive with her deceased husband on the 20th of October, and another was burned on the 25th of November with the body of her husband (Stavorinus 1798: 126). It seems that, towards the end of the eighteenth century, the instances of *Sati* burning in Bengal increased. Craufurd observed: "The practice of burning the dead is almost universal; and that of the widow burning herself on the funeral pile with the body of her deceased husband still exists." (Craufurd 1792: 14).

When pure Kulin Brahmins died, their widows were usually required to perform *Sati* rites. The sanctity of their *Kulinism* was jeopardised if the widows of the dead *Kulins* escaped *Sati* sacrifice. Where a family of the *Kulin* Brahmins supposed that the burning of a widow of the family was necessary to support their honour, the woman knew very well that her death was expected. She was aware that if she disagreed to burn herself, she would be treated with the greatest cruelty and continually reproached for the disgrace of the family (Ward 1815: 311). Around the year 1796, a shocking and atrocious murder of a widow was committed by her own son and members of her family when a Brahmin of Mujilupoor, about a day's journey south from Calcutta, died. The wretched widow fled from the funeral pyre of her dead husband so that she could save her life. When she was found out, she prayed for her life to her own son. But her own son, relatives, and others rejected her appeal for fear of losing their caste. At the end, the wretched widow's hands and feet were tied and thrown on the flames of the burning funeral pile, and the widow was burned alive (The Missionary Register 1816: 268).

Solvyns, a Flemish marine painter who stayed in India from the late eighteenth century to the early nineteenth century, left valuable accounts of trade, customs, and ceremonies in contemporary India. He witnessed *Sati* rituals being carried out in Bengal at the end of the eighteenth century. Solvyns recorded elaborate descriptions and drew illustrations of these horrible ceremonies that he witnessed. Following are two of his engravings of *Sati* rites, witnessed and elucidated by him:



Sati: Buried alive (Solvyns). *Sati*: Burnt alive (Solvyns).

Solvyns witnessed *Sati* rites being performed by burying the dead body of a Hindu with his living widow as well as burning the corpse together with the widow alive. He witnessed another form of *Sati* ritual where a widow burned herself alive with some of her husband's property, like his used apparel or footwear. These types of *Sati* rites were performed in a case where the husband died in a distant country (Solvyns1810: Onnoo-Gomon). Solvyns recorded that the *Sati* rites by burying alive with the dead were more frequent in Orissah and Maratta territories compared to Bengal and Behar. It is evident from Solvyn's engravings that the *Sati* rites of burying or burning widows alive were performed with the active participation of the Brahmins and their relatives.The widows of the Jugis (Yogees), a description of the weavers, were often buried alive with their deceased husbands (Ward 1815: 309). The following is Solvyn's description of *Shogo-Gomon* in the form of burying widows alive:

> "When the widows of a *Joogee* has signified her intention to bury herself with her deceased husband, her family dig a grave from six to eight feet deep, into which the body of the husband is let down, and placed sitting with the hands joined. The widow then approaches the grave, escorted as in the ceremonies ... by a solemn procession. She bathes before the public without giving occasion to the slightest scandal, being already considered, from the sanctity of the death she has chosen, as a supernatural being. At the edge of the grave she listens to the pious exhortations of the Brahmuns who accompany her, gives them her jewels, and after placing upon her head a *cudjery* or pot filled with rice, plantains, betel and water, makes her farewell salutations to the assistants with her hands joined. She descends into the grave by a ladder of bamboo which is instantly drawn up again. She sits herself by the side of her husband; at that moment all the instruments hired for the ceremony are heard, and the relations throw such quantities of earth upon the unfortunate widow, that she is soon suffocated and interred. The preparations for this ceremony are horrid, but it does not appear that the sufferings of

the unhappy victim are of long duration." (Solvyns 1810: Shogo-Gomon: The wife of an Hindoo buried alive).

Captain Kemp also eye-witnessed the *Sati* rite of a young widow of sixteen years of age belonging to the Jugi (Jogee) caste with her deceased husband by burying her alive in 1813 (Peggs 1832: 259-260). Solvyns, in his other account of *Sati* sacrifice by burning in Bengal, narrated:

> "The woman who has made the vow of burning herself with the dead body of her husband, begins by bathing; after which she dresses herself in entirely new apparel; the priests then paint her face with *minium* or red oker, with which I have been assured they mix gunpowder and sulphur, no doubt to shorten the sufferings of the unfortunate victim of their superstition. When this is done, she takes in one hand an evergreen herb called *Cusa,* and some water in the other; and while the Brahmuns are repeating the word *Om, Om,* she distributes the *minium* among her relations, and her jewels among the priests. To those who assist at the ceremony, she throws some grains of rice as she proceeds three times round the pile on which the corpse of her husband has been deposed wrapt up in a white sheet. Two Brahmuns accompany her repeating texts of the sacred writings, and representing to her the inexpressible pleasures which await her in the next world. Even the whole family of the widow are to participate of the happiness which, according to their opinions, is to be the result of this sublime action; for the Brahmuns assert that all those who lead the widow to the pile will enjoy for every step they take many years of felicity". (Solvyns 1810: Shogo-Gomon: A woman burning herself with the corpse of her husband).

During the latter half of the eighteenth century, the practice of *Sati* burning in Bengal became unrestrained, rampant, and widespread. Child marriage, polygamy, and widow sacrifice became the general rule among the *Kulin* Brahmins. Numerous widows of the *Kulins* were murdered by burning them on their husbands' funeral piles. With the death of a polygamous *Kulin*, many of his surviving widows were burned alive. A horrible mass murder in the name of *Sati* rituals was committed at Bagna Para in 1799. On the death of Ununtu, a Brahmin with over 100 wives, 37 of his widows were burned with him in three days (Long 1846: 423; Peggs 1832: 219-220). Three widows were burned on the first day, fifteen on the second, and 19 on the third.[1]The Muslims of Bengal did not glorify the act of *Sati* among them. Nonetheless, isolated cases of *Sati* practice among them have been discovered. It was reported in the Calcutta Gazette of July 29, 1790, that a Muhammadan lady buried herself alive with the corpse of her husband (Majumdar 1905: 157).

The misery of the higher-class Hindu widows of Bengal became intolerable in the early nineteenth century because they were required to relinquish their widowhood by burning

themselves alive on the funeral pyres of their dead husbands. Even young wives of tender ages were not spared from burning with their dead husbands. Around the year 1794, a fifteen-year-old girl who had a three-week-old child was burned alive with her dead husband, Devee Charan, a Brahmin of Manirampur near Barrackpore. About the year 1804, a child widow of eight years old was immolated with her deceased husband, Huree Nath, a Brahmin of Elo, near Calcutta. In the year 1824, Mussummaut Dhun Munee Dossee, a fifteen-year-old teen-ager widow of Nadia district, was killed in the name of the *Sati* rite.[2] The orthodox Hindus did not spare the much older widows from observing *Sati* rites. Around the year 1791, an eighty-year-old widow of Gopal Nayalankar, a very learned Brahmin of Nadia, who was about 100 years old, was burned alive when he died. A similar incident occurred at Santipur in 1809 when the widow of Ram Chandra Basu, a Kayastha, aged between 80 and 85 years, was immolated with her dead husband (Ward 1815: 307-308). In contemporary India, the province of Bengal experienced more *Sati* burning incidents than western India**.** According to the estimates of *Samachar Darpan* dated March 27, 1819, one out of every seven cases of *Sati* burning in India took place in the Hooghly district of Bengal (Bandyopadhyay 1339 BS: 145). Tribeni was the most notorious location in the Hooghly district for *Sati* immolations. The inhabitants of Tribeni would hear the screaming of burning widows at night from a cremation ground north of its ferry *ghat*.[3]

Ram Mohan Roy himself witnessed the burning of his sister-in-law after the death of his elder brother, Jaganmohun, on April 8, 1810 (Collet 1914: 50). Nadia and Burdwan were the seats of "pure" Brahmins. For this reason, the number of widow burnings in these two districts of Bengal was high in comparison to other districts other than Hooghly. Ranighat (Ranaghat), Santipur, and Bagna Para were notorious places for *Sati* rites. However, the majority of *Sati* burnings occurred in the Hooghly district. An atrocious act of mass-burning of widows was committed around the second decade of the nineteenth century at Santipur in Nadia district. On the death of Chandra Banerjee, a *Kulin* Brahmin of Santipur, eight of his wives became *Sati* on his funeral pyre (Long 1846: 416). To occupy her property, helpless widows were often murdered in the name of *Sati* rites. In a report of the East India Company Government in Bengal, it was published that 706 instances of *Sati* burning had taken place in Bengal in the year 1817 and 650 instances in the year 1819. Among these 650 cases, 421 instances took place only in Calcutta Division (Kaye 1853: 531). In the District of Dacca, one hundred and ninety-five widows burned themselves on the funeral pyres of their deceased husbands during the period between the years 1815 and 1828 (Taylor 1840: 285). Between the years 1815 and 1826, in the Division of Calcutta, hundreds of *Sati* rites were performed. From the following data, we can compare the frequency of *Sati* immolation in Calcutta and other divisions:

Table I: Number of *Satis* in different Bengal Divisions of Bengal Presidency from 1815 to 1826

Division	Year											
	1815	1816	1817	1818	1819	1820	1821	1822	1823	1824	1825	1826
Calcutta	244	280	428	533	388	337	364	300	309	348	368	279
Cuttack	9	9	14	11	33	33	28	28	31	25	30	45
Dacca	31	24	52	58	55	51	52	45	40	40	101	65
Moorshedabad	11	22	42	30	25	21	12	22	13	14	21	8
Patna	20	29	49	57	40	42	69	70	49	42	47	65
Bareilly	15	13	19	13	17	20	15	16	12	10	17	8
Beneras	48	65	103	137	92	93	114	102	121	93	55	48
Total	378	442	707	839	650	597	654	583	575	572	639	518

Source: Peggs 1832: 220

The data shown in the above table indicates that the intensity of widow immolations was very low in the Dacca and Moorshedabad divisions, where the numerical strength of Muslims, Namasudras (Chandals), and Koch-Rajbansis was very high compared to the Calcutta division, where the demographic proportion of the upper-caste Hindus, including orthodox Brahmins, was much higher. In Bengal proper, the instances of Sati immolation were much higher compared to Bihar and eastern Uttar Pradesh. Among the total number of 575 cases of *Sati* burning in the Bengal Presidency in 1823, 234 *Satis* belonged to the Brahmin, 35 to the Khetry, 14 to the Vaisya, and 292 to the Sudra (Hamilton 1828: 205). By the third decade of the nineteenth century, the total number of *Sati* cases among the Sudra caste had surpassed the total number of *Sati* cases among the Brahmins. Baidyas, Kayasthas, and other *Sat Sudras* of Bengal had been performing *Sati* rites in large numbers in order to project them as ardent followers of Brahmanical Hinduism during this period.The instances of immolation of widows in the Bengal districts under Calcutta Division were in alarming numbers in the years 1823 and 1824. From the report submitted in the House of Commons, it was found that in the Calcutta Division, the total number of instances of *Sati* immolation in 1823 was 263 and in 1824 was 314 (East India Affairs 1827: 53–54). Even in the third decade of the nineteenth century, *Sati* instances were increasing in Calcutta Division.

The criticism of Christian missionaries about the atrocious treatment of women produced awareness among the Bengalis. The Baptist Missionaries of Serampore began their campaign against the *Sati* rites at the beginning of the nineteenth century. They learned that thousands of Hindu widows had been burning in Bengal as part of *Sati* rites. To collect reliable data on

Sati immolation, they deputed 10 persons of Hindu castes, under the supervision of the professor of Sanskrit and Bengali languages at the College of Fort William, to prepare a report regarding the number of *Sati* rites within 30 miles of Calcutta. These agents prepared and submitted a report of *Sati* rites for a period of six months in 1804. The report excluded the number of *Sati* cases in the districts west of Calcutta and places beyond 20 miles in other directions (Buchanan 1811: 41-42). Following is the report of the appointed persons:

Table II: Number of women who were burned alive on the funeral pile of their Husbands, within thirty miles round Calcutta, from 15th April to 15th October, 1804

Places with in 30 miles round Calcutta	Number of different Places	Women burned alive
From Gurria to Barrypore	11	18
From Tolly's Nullahmouth to Gurria	17	36
From Barrypore to Buhipore	7	11
From Seebpore to Balleea	5	10
From Balee to Bydyabattee	3	3
From Bydybattee to Bassbareea	5	10
From Calcutta to Burahnugur (or Barnagore)	4	6
From Burahnugur to Chanok (Barrackpore))	6	13
From Chanok to Kachrapare	4	8
Total of women burned alive in six months, near Calcutta		**115**

Source: Buchanan 1811: 41-42.

It was found that within a period of only six months, from April 15th to October 15th, 1804, one hundred and fifteen widows had been murdered in the name of *Sati* rites in and around Calcutta. William Carey, though his primary objective was to preach Christianity among the natives of British India, was sincere enough to save the wretched widows from being burned. Carey prepared a memorandum and sent it to Governor General Wellesley, seeking a ban on this inhuman practice. Later, George Udny, a friend and associate of John Shore, made an effort to prohibit this atrocious rite. When Lord Wellesley quit the government in India, he recorded a minute in favour of abolishing the rite, stating "that it was one of the fundamental maxims of the British Government to consult the opinions, customs, and prejudices of the natives, but only when they were consistent with the principles of humanity, morality and reason." (Marshman 1867: 52).

With the expansion of the British Empire all over India, the foreign rulers brought many changes to the administrative policies in British India. The influence of Western education infected some of the early Bengali intellectuals. Printed books replaced hand-written *punthis*. Newspapers have been published in the vernacular and circulated among common readers. Very soon, Calcutta became the epicenter of intellectual activity in India. From the beginning

of the nineteenth century, the Bengali intellectuals started raising questions on the superstitious beliefs and practices of the society. It was Raja Rammohan Roy who came forward to criticise the evil customs of society, including the burning of widows. It has been reported that Rammohan went down to the Calcutta burning grounds and exerted his efforts to avert the *Sati* sacrifices through earnest persuasion. He, often, would consume the displeasure and insult from the relatives of the *Satis (*Collet 1914: 50). Rammohan knew that religious belief was the root cause for the execution of this brutal custom. For this reason, he interpreted the Hindu religious texts and showed that they disapproved of the burning of widows. He wanted to abolish the *practice of Sati* burning in the country by creating public opinion against it. Rammohan condemned the *Sati* burning in his book, *A Second Defence of the Monotheistical System of the Vedas*, published in 1817. Bengali newspapers like *Bangal Gazettee* and *Sambad Cowmoodee* were made as platforms for criticism of *Sati* immolation. (Biswas 1373 BS: 342-343). Later in August 1818, when Governor General Hastings came back to Calcutta, a group of elite Hindus petitioned him to take more appropriate action against *Sati* rites in Bengal. The handiwork of Rammohan was behind this petition. Three months later, Rammohan published a booklet on the religious legitimacy of *Sati* practices. On November 20, 1818, he published its English version in order to attract the attention of the British. On December 26, 1818, the *Samachar Darpan* reported that Srj. Rammohan Roy of Calcutta had published and distributed a booklet on *Sati* immolation. The sum and substance of his booklet was that there was nothing about *Sati* rites for widows in the religious scriptures (Bandyopadhyay 1339 BS: 52). Rammohan dismantled the arguments of the orthodox Hindu supporters of the *Sati* immolation with his logical interpretation of the Hindu religious texts and refuted their contentions through his publications. The major and glorious contribution of Rammohan was the generation of awareness in Hindu society against *Sati* rites through his writings and activities. By 1828–1829, he had become a well-known personality in this respect. (Biswas 1373 BS: 343).

After Wellesley's administration, the effort at the government level for the abolition of the *Sati* rite in India lost its priority. Despite reduced government initiatives, the missionaries maintained their sincere efforts to end the *Sati* practice. The Charter Act of 1813 lifted government restrictions on missionary activities. The missionaries launched an offensive against *Sati* burning after obtaining legal approval. They began their campaign in India as well as in England. Serampore missionaries began their campaign against *Sati* in the *Samachar Darpan* and the Friends of India in 1818, both of which were published in Serampore. In its May to December 1818 issue, the Friends of India wrote about Bengal's *Sati* practice:

> "Considering as we do the British government to be the greatest temporal blessing which Providence has conferred on the contrary, we cannot give up the hope indeed that, ultimately, Government will abolish entirely a custom which involves the murder of the helpless and the innocent, almost without the shadow of support from the Hindoo superstition itself." (*The Friends of India*, Vol. I., 1818: 311).

Vernacular newspaper like the *Samachar Darpan* had also been publishing news about the inhuman act of *Sati* incidents and generating awareness among the Bengalis about this barbarous custom. In its August 16th, 1823 issue, citing the Calcutta Journal, the *Samachar Darpan* reported that an eighteen-year-old charming widow of Santipur sacrificed her life on the funeral pile of her dead husband (Bandyopadhyay 1339 BS: 146-147). In another incident, on the death of Somrah, a man of the Jugi (Jogee) or weaver caste, his widow went down to the grave with her deceased husband and became *Sati (*Peggs 1832: 260-261).

The enlightened Britishers serving in India were in favour of the cessation of *Sati* practices in India from the beginning. Sir John Anstruther, the Chief Justice of the Calcutta Supreme Court, immediately after arriving in Calcutta in 1798, ordered that these atrocious rites should not be permitted under the jurisdiction of his authority, and *Sati* practice ceased within its limits. During his tenure, the orthodox Hindus took 130 widows into the neighbouring territories of the East India Company and burned them (Marshman 1859: 404). In accordance with government orders of 1813, the magistrates of Bengal issued some instructions to police *darogahs*. The instructions stated that the widows could not be burned forcefully or by feeding on intoxicating drugs. Their age must not be under 16 years of age, and they must not be pregnant. The relatives of the widows often performed the *Sati* immolation, flouting the orders of the government. In 1824, Mussummaut Makhun Koomari, a widow from Jungle Mehals who had a one-and-a-half-year-old child, was burned as part of a *Sati* rite in the presence of the *darogha* despite his prohibitory order. Later, six of the deceased were fined 200 rupees each by the magistrate. They were unable to pay the fine and were imprisoned for a period of three months. The Court of Circuit confirmed this order.[4]

In 1818, the acting Superintendent of Police, Lower Provinces, W. Ewer, communicated to Mr. W.B. Bayley, Secretary to Government in the Judicial Department, by a letter dated November 18, that during the years 1815, 1816, and 1817, 864 *Sati* rites were performed in the five *zillahs* of Burdwan, Hooghley, the Jungle Mehauls, Nuddea, and the Suburbs of Calcutta. He shared his experience that voluntary act of *Sati* rarely occurred and widows sacrificed their lives mostly on being overpowered by force or by persuasions. A widow was "little prepared to oppose the surrounding crowd of hungry brahmins and interested relations, either by argument or force." He further observed that if this barbarous and inhuman practice were suppressed, there would be no dissatisfaction among the natives of Bengal (Accounts and Papers: East India Affairs Vol. XVIII. 1821: 227-229).

The newspapers and periodicals published in England began to bring out reports about the burning of widows as part of *Sati* rites and also suggested abolishing this inhuman practice prevalent in India. In its January to April 1824 issue, the Oriental Herald and Colonial Review reported:

> "The immolation of living mothers, burnt by the hands of their children, is at least quite as abominable, and yet, this frightful custom remains in full vigour to the present hour.

> The power of the English in India is now so great, that they might, by a mere decree, put an end to this cruelty forever; and no man would dare to resist their orders."

(Oriental Herald and Colonial Review, Vol. I., January to April, 1824: 552).

In the year 1826, one person, disclosing his or her name as "D," wrote a letter to the editor of the Christian Observer with his argument to abolish the widow burning rite in India by passing appropriate legislation (Christian Observer, Vol. XXVI., 1826: 470). The widow-burning controversy sparked heated debate at London's East India House. Ordinary people from all over England began to send petitions to put an end to this inhumane practice in India.

On July 4, 1828, the "straight-forward, honest, upright, and benevolent" William Bentinck assumed charge as the Governor General of India. It is learned from his private and confidential letter dated November 12, 1828, written to Lord Combermere:

> "Having had the suttee question very much pressed upon my attention in England, and feeling the great responsibility which under any view of the case, and under any decision must belong to me, both in my private and public capacity, I came to this resolution for my own future comfort, that as soon as possible I would come to a decision upon the question, in some way or other."
>
> (Philips 1977: 94).

He gathered secret information from military officers, judicial members of the Nizamat, and police officers. The majority of them reported that the natives would not resist any regulation prohibiting *Sati* practices. In May 1829, a group of Christian missionaries stationed in and around Calcutta sent a memorandum to Bentinck stating, "If the Hindu who burns his innocent mother brings himself to think it a religious action, the civil authorities, to whom the preservation of her life is committed, over which life he has not even a shadow of a right, are undoubtedly not obliged to think so too."

(Philips 1977: 191-192).

Around July 1829, Bentinck sought the personal view of Rammohan regarding ways to abolish *Sati* rites in India. Rammohan was not in favour of prohibiting the practice by passing regulations. He anticipated that the Indians would interpret such a move as an act of interference in their own religion. Rammohan's view was that "the practice might be suppressed quietly and unobservedly by increasing the difficulties and by the indirect agency of the police" (Boulger 1897: 101). Bentinck was disappointed by such an opinion from Rammohan but did not lose his courage. Because he realised that the disagreement with Rammohan was merely about the procedure for the prohibition of *Sati* rites and that there would be no formidable threats to his administration from the natives if a stringent regulation against *Sati* immolation was passed. Ultimately, on December 4, 1829, the *Sati* Prohibition

Regulation was passed, which declared the practice illegal and punishable as a criminal offense (Collet 1914: 148). Once the *Sati* Regulation was passed, Rammohan stood like an iron wall against those who vehemently pressed the British government to withdraw the regulation. When the petition of the orthodox Hindus seeking the repeal of the regulation reached the Privy Council, Rammohan himself arrived in London and submitted a counter-petition supporting the ban on *Sati*. During the hearing on the *Sati* question in the Privy Council, Rammohan was personally present there like a vigilant watchman. He breathed a sigh of relief when the Privy Council upheld the *Sati* prohibition (Biswas 1373 BS: 346-347). After the enactment of Bentinck's regulation, covert and isolated cases of *Sati* rites were performed in Bengal until the last quarter of the nineteenth century. Even at Cossipore, Chitpore, and other places in the vicinity of Calcutta, *Sati* burnings were executed up to 1882 (Carey 1907: 130). In the twentieth century, the horrors of the immolation of widows disappeared from Bengali society. But the determination of sex in mothers' wombs became widespread, and female foeticide, a new form of atrocity to females, turned rampant throughout India from the last quarter of the twentieth century.

Conclusion

For hundreds of years, Hindu widows from orthodox families in Bengal were required to sacrifice their lives on the funeral pyres or under the graves of their dead husbands. The widows, who could save their lives after their husbands' deaths, had to live an ignominious life in society. Their food, clothing, and social circle were definitely limited. Hundreds of widows were murdered under the guise of *Sati* rites. Infant, adolescent, and old widows were buried or burned with their deceased husbands. Widows with their breast-feeding children were also immolated. A son guided his own mother to the funeral pyre of his deceased father. The family members of the widows took an active role in the performance of *Sati* rites. The Brahmin priests officiated the *Sati* rituals and got huge amounts of money as their service charges. The orthodox Hindu society considered this atrocious activity as their religious duty. The Bengal Presidency committed the majority of these barbaric acts in British India, with Calcutta and its suburbs being the most common locations. Acting on the criticisms and demands of Christian missionaries, enlightened British officers, judicial members, and sensible Bengali intellectuals, the East India Company government passed regulations prohibiting the practice of *Sati* in 1829. The stringent provisions of the *Sati* Regulation of 1829 caused the cessation of the most brutal atrocities committed against humanity, saving the lives of thousands of wretched widows in Bengal.

End notes

1. Peggs recorded that Goopeenaut, a Brahmun employed in the Serampore printing-office, witnessed 22 of such immolations. Peggs, J. 1832. *India's Cries to British Humanity relative to Infanticide, British Connection with Idolatry, Ghaut Murders, Suttee, Slavery, and Colonization in India,* Simpkin and Marshall, London, pp.219-220; Long, J. 1846. 'The Banks of the Bhagirathi', *The Calcutta Review*, 6(2), p.423.

2. The incidents of immolation of child widows can be learnt from a return prepared in compliance to an order of the House of Commons, dated 21st February 1827. *East India Affairs: Hindu Widows immolated since the 5th July*

1825, May 17, 1827, p.54.

3. In the Hooghly district of the Bengal Presidency, the most *Sati* burning incidents were committed. The inhabitants of Tribeniwould hear the screams "*Pure molempati pelamnabaap"* (I died of burns but could not get my husband back) at night from the riverside burning *ghat* of Tribeni. Mallick, P. 1935. *Sachitra Kolikatar Katha* (in Bengali), Juno Printing Works, Calcutta, p.164.

4. The orthodox Hindus were so superstitious that widows having infant children were immolated, flouting the prohibitory orders of the police. *East India Affairs*, *op. cit.*, p.53.

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Ethno-Nationalistic Attitudes in the novels of Anjum Hasan, *Lunatic* in My Head and of Bijoya Sawian *Shadow* Men

Sk Masikul Ahmmed

Abstract

A group of people who share common cultural heritage, ancestral history, tradition, laws, rituals, customs, and overall physical appearance are considered as an ethnic group. Similarly, ethno-nationalism for tribals can be defined as nationalist temperaments dealing with common tribal affiliation, religion, faith, shared language, and common ancestry. Meghalaya is such state where a number of indigenous communities reside. Khasi, Jhantia, and Garos are prominent groups. The region has problem of population influx from different parts of India as well as illegal intrusion from neighboring countries like Bangladesh, China, Bhutan, Myanmar and Nepal. As a result tribal people of the state fear loss of their ethno-cultural identity and apprehend of becoming a minority in their own land. They also think that intruders would snatch the service opportunities both in the government institutes and private sectors and also would hold control over the natural resources and lands of the region. The expressions of such feelings are the result of ethnic movements against the"outsiders." Based on thesefacets, this paper, through critical analysis of Anjum Hasan's *Lunatic in My Head (2007)* and Bijoya Sawian's *Shadow Men (2010)*, will focus on how the Meghalaya's tribal people experience the anxiety of inclusion of the outsiders and undergo sadistic operations to drive out so-called "outsiders."

Keywords: *Ethnicity, Inclusion, Outsiders, Indigenous, Minority, Sadistic Operation, Meghalaya*

Introduction:

"We are Khasis by Blood, Indians by Accident"(Anjum Hasan in *Lunatic in My Head*)

An ethno-nationalism is a form of constructive nationalist ideology that deals with the nationalist sentimentality with common ancestral history, physical appearance, language, religion, cultural norms, values, traditions, and identity. In an ethnic nation, people always try to distinguish themselves from the outer section of people. They always consider themselves as "different" from the rest of human society. Being differentiated from the external world, they try to utilize all the natural resources and lands for individual purposes. They are not ready to get involved with sections of "others" people in their motherland and let them use the natural resources. Thus when they find people from other communities entering

into their land, they start a movement against the intruders. Thus it can be said that ethno-nationalism is a reaction against the cultural and political dominance over a marginalized or undeveloped section of the people by the developed and powerful communities.

From colonial viewpoint, the "first world", such as, the developed countries like England, France, and Italy ruled over the "third world"or underdeveloped or undeveloped countries, who spoke different languages, had different religious beliefs, and were frequently culturally quite different. As a result of colonization, the people of the"thirdworld" countries began to feel marginalized. Consequently, they started movements against the colonial rulers to save their motherland and their distinct cultural and political identities. Similarly, so called 'uncivilized' indigenous people belonging to different tribal communities feel a sign of catastrophic situation on intruders'attempt to dominate over them. The outsiders try to control the agricultural lands, natural resources, educational facilities, jobs and services of the state. In consequence, the tribal communities are deprived of all contingencies that they could get from the fertile land of the state and from the state and central government services.As a result the indigenous people have started movements against the "outsiders" to save their lands and their distinct cultural identities. This conflict of the tribal people is termed as "nativism" by Myron Weiner, an American political scientist, in his book *Sons of the Soil: Migration and Ethnic Conflict in India* (1978). He defines "nativism" as the form of ethnic identity that seeks to exclude those who are not members of the local or indigenous ethnic group as resident and are working in the territory because they are not native to the country or region. In short, an ethnic-national state will be a sovereign political state and will be with single national culture. The nation does not allow any cultural discrepancies to be present among its people. Rather, the nation should be dominated by one politically sovereign ethnic group. Viplav (2010), in his book review on Sanjib Baruah's *Ethno-nationalism in India: A Reader*, defines ethno-nationalism as:

> Ethnic nationalism is a form of nationalism wherein the "nation" is defined in terms of ethnicity. Whatever specific ethnicity is involved, ethnic nationalism always includes some element of decent from previous generations and the implied claim of ethnic essentialism, i.e., the understanding of ethnicity as an essence that remains unchanged over time. The central theme of ethnic nationalists is that nations are defined by a shared heritage, which usually includes a common language, a common faith, and a common ethnic ancestry. It also includes ideas of a culture shared between members of the group, and with their ancestors, and usually a shared language; however, it is different from purely cultural definitions of the nation. (Viplav 2010: 1)

Meghalaya is such an ethnic state that shares its borders on the north and the east with Assam and on the south and the west with Bangladesh. The region is the habitat of numerous ethnic or tribal communities; Khasi, Jhantia and Garo are the important ones among them.

Komol Singha and Purusottam Nayak, in their article,"Reconsidering Ethnic-Based-Autonomy Movements in Meghalaya: An Analysis", alleged as follows, "Each of them had their kingdoms until they were brought under the British colonial administration in the 19th century. Consequently, after independence, these tribes and territories were merged with undivided Assam, and then carved out as a full-fledged state of Meghalaya in 1972" (Singha & Nayak 2015:1).The tribal communities of this region always feel proud for their distinct traditional ethics, cultural past, and their ancestral myths, which are governed by a set of beliefs and practices which have been endorsed with the utmost respect from time immemorial. These ethnic people are not ready to renounce their celebrated past values and customs under any circumstance. The tribal people began to lose their control over the natural recourses, agricultural lands, and government job and services, when people from other Indian states like West Bengal, Bihar, Rajasthan, as well as, from some neighbouring countries like Nepal, Bhutan, Bangladesh, Myanmar, and China migrated into the region. The customary laws, systems, rituals, beliefs and regulations of their ancestors are also replaced with constitutional laws and regulations of the Indian states. Therefore, they see inclusions of the outsiders as nothing but a re-establishment of the colonial rule over them. Sanjay K. Roy, in his article"Conflicting Nations in North-East India", defines,"Freedom of India in 1947 meant 'continued colonization' for them" (Roy 2005: 2176). Therefore, these freedom-loving indigenous communities, being submerged culturally, demographically and economically by the interlopers, have started violent and non-violent movements against the illegal intruders. The first tribal movement in Meghalaya took place in 1979 in various parts of the city of Shillong. The year 1987 has also seen similar aggression against the non-tribal communities. The annoying issue of trading by non-tribal without proper licenses in and around Shillong witnessed a sequence of unpleasant incidents in 1992. Abhishek Saha, in his newspaper article, "Explained: Behind Meghalaya violence" (2020) in *The Indian Express*, writes, "Shillong has seen violence against "outsiders" several times in the last four decades. The targets were Bengalis in 1979, Nepalis in 1987, and Biharis in 1992. In 2018, Shillong saw clashes between Khasis and Dalit Sikhs of Punjab-origin of whose ancestors had settled there over 100 years ago."This paper will focus on the ethno-nationalistic attitudes of the tribal communities like Khasi, Garo, and Jhantia towards the outsiders of the mainland Indian states as well as the foreign countries. Two Meghalaya novels, Anjum Hasan's *Lunatic in My Head (2007)* and Bijoya Sawian's *Shadow Men (2010)*, are taken into consideration and analyzed. This paper will also try to find out whether the tribal people and the non-tribal intruders can live harmoniously or not.

Discussion:

Lunatic in My Head (2007) is a novel by a Shillong based novelist Anjum Hasan. It is a story of three protagonists. They are; Aman Moondy, an aspirant for Civil Service who, after failing in the first attempt, is very apprehensive of his future in life and decides to sit for a

second chance; Firdaus Ansari, a college lecturer tries to complete her M. Phil thesis; and Sophie Das, an eight year old girl, who lives with her adopted parents, Mr. and Mrs. Das. The novel attempts to bring to limelight the themes of insider-outsider dichotomy and racial discrimination among the tribal and non-tribal people of the city of Shillong. At the very beginning of the novel, Hasan has created a picture of a roadside scene of Shillong, which is overflowing with both tribal and non-tribal people. Sharon is "a quarter British, a quarter Assamese of the tea-planter variety, and half Khasi"; a few Khasi "college boys are whistling raucously from across the street"; "the short, scruffy men from the restaurants, out shopping for vegetables and chicken to put in the evening's noodles" are Nepalese; "two men with long black umbrellas and jholas" are Bengalis; "the woman with orange hair who ran the liquor store" is Goan; "the man with the spherical bald head leaning on the corner of his bookshop" is Sindhi (Hasan 2007:3-4). Thus, Hasan has created a Shillong with an amalgamation of the people of different communities to show the insider and outsider dichotomy in the region.

The novel makes its point on the notion of insider-outsider dichotomy in which people are separated into two major groups, i.e., those who belong to the tribal ethnic community of Shillong and share common ancestral history, physical appearance, language, religion, cultural norms, rituals, and traditions are considered as "insider", and those who belong to the foreign countries and the other Indian states are taken as "outsiders". Focus is on illegal influx of the outsiders, and how the tribal people of the state feel dispossessed, estranged, and marginalized in their own land. Therefore, they have started a movement against the entry of the outlanders. Ali Ahmed and Sivasish Biswas, in their article "Migration and Marginalization Leading to Identity Crisis in Anjum Hasan's *Lunatic in My Head*," commented, "They feel to be looked down upon by the people of the other Indian states. They feel deprived, alienated, laughed at for their low life. Some of them even protested against the republic in an unconstitutional way. They took up arms, formed illegal associations and marched ahead to fight for their right" (Ahmed & Biswas 2020:17). In the novel, all three protagonists belonged to states other than Meghalaya. Thus, the protagonists themselves suffer from oppositional conflicts.

Insider-outsider opposition is seen at the beginning of the novel when the novelist introduces Sophie's mother as someone who does not have any contact with her family members because she has married a boy from the non-Khasi community. Firdaus, one of the three protagonist characters, though she is living in Shillong from the time of her birth, and always considers herself as a resident of Shillong and refuses "to introduce herself as a Bihari because though her parents were from Bihar...." (Hasan 2007:4). However, she is not accepted as a residential member of the region by the tribal people, they always consider her as an outsider. The narrator says, "In Shillong's eyes if at least a "dkhar," a foreigner, someone who did not have roots here, did not have the ground needed to put roots in" (Hasan 2007:4). Thus, she suffered from identity crisis in the adopted land of her parents. Firdous Ansari

also runs into the insider-outsider dilemma at the prospect of her union with her Manipuri suitor, Ibomcha. She says to him:

> "...nothing, not the smallest thing could possibly unite us. You, your homeland, and your tribe, your love for your mother, your dozens of cousins, your schemes, and your beliefs –I share nothing of this. I can't get onto a bus every second month and go home. How would you, always enfolded by this mist of connections, carrying it with you whenever you go, how would you understand this loneliness?" (Hasan 2007:152).

The insider-outsider dichotomy has created such a grave situation that it has also felt by the younger generation. The writer makes it noticeable through Sophie Das, an eight years old girl whose father is Bengali and mother is from Shillong. But she always shows her interest in presenting herself as one of the Khasi and not a "dkhar". She tells her friends that she is not her parents' biological but an adopted child. She talks about some Uncle Syiem as her real father, who is an imaginary figure. It shows that Sophie tries to conjure up Uncle Syiem to establish her connection with the Khasi community. Sophie faces the worst possible humiliation when she accompanies Lady Elsa to a wedding ceremony. They are terrified because if any Khasi man sees an old Khasi woman driving a non Khasi girl, the consequence would be terrible for them. Thus Sophie tries to ignore the stares of other persons on their way. At their arrivalat the wedding ceremony, Sophie feels ignored by girls of her age and is also denied food as a guest because of her parental background as an outsider. The narrator says, "But a girl about her age from the facing row had noticed that Sophie had been ignored, that the "dkhar" had been shown her place" (Hasan 2007:98). Sophie, therefore, thinks that "the nicest thing by far, even better than being adopted, would be if she somehow turns into one of them, somehow becomes Khasi" (Hasan 2007: 99).

The insider-outsider separation is also seen when Aman and Ribor went to the Channawalla Sarak Singh, who is bullied by a group of Khasi boys because he came from other states. When Aman tries to defend the Channawalla, one of the boys says, "Shut up, dhakar. Shut up and go home. Don't interfere" (Hasan 2007:37). When the group of the Khasi boys go away, Sarak Singh complains that the boys keep on doing this; "And they never ever pay" (Hasan 2007:38). The conflict is more vividly illuminated when Sophie's mother, Mrs. Das, complains about Sophie's intimacy with their neighbor, the old Khasi woman, Lady Elsa. She expresses her fear to her husband that it is good that "Sophie spends time with the old lady, but she's getting obsessed with the family. After all, their culture is different" (Hasan 2007: 287). On another occasion, Firdaus visits the Chic Choice Beauty Parlour owned by Sharon Blah, who informs her that she loves a "dkhar" boy, Neel, but she feels it challenging to introduce him to her family because her brothers would behave dreadfully towards Neel. Sharon says, "He is a great guy but I can't bring him along on a family picnic. My brothers, you know. They'd just be terribly mean to him" (Hasan 2007:54).

Like other incidents, it also focuses on the insider-outsider opposition.

At the end of the novel, when Aman, along with friends Ibomcha, Ribor, and Bodha, has organized an event called "Happening," two Khasi boys enter the event and ask, "Have you invited Rat-A-Tat from Mawlai?" (Hasan 2007:284). Bodha tries to explain the nature of "Happening" that it is a particular type of arts' event where local people get an opportunity to show their talents, and only the "ragtag" band from the countryside can be invited, not any established band from outside. But the boys were not willing to listen to his explanation, so Bodha becomes angry and starts to say that they have organized the event, so it is their right to decide whom they should call for performance. Then these two boys get angry and start scolding and punching Bodha. One of the boys says, "You, fucking dkhar. Go home, dkhar. I have a gun. I will shoot at you" (Hasan 2007:285). This incident focuses on how the Khasi tribal people treat the people belonging to other states.

Racial discrimination is also being reflected in the novel in terms of a tribal and non-tribal dichotomy. Here, Anjum Hasan has tried to show the mentality of the non-tribal or the people from mainland India who always considers the indigenous communities to be uncivilized, barbaric, unsophisticated and uncultured. In the novel, when Flossieand Firdaus were involved in the discussion on Firdaus' M.Phil dissertation, Mrs. Nivedita interrupted their conversation and informed her husband's involvement with a tribal girl. She showed her dissatisfaction with her husband's extramarital affair with a girl, especially with a tribal girl. She says that her husband's attachment will be "dragging my name in the mud" and "totally ruined my life" (Hasan 2007:11). In reply to Mrs. Nivedita's accusation of her husband, Flossie reacts, "Yes, yes. It's painful indeed that the man has displayed so little taste" (Hasan 2007:11). Thus, it can be said that non-tribal people have a derogatory mentality towards the tribal and indigenous people. This degrading mentality of the non-tribal inflames the indigenous people to segregate themselves from the non-tribal people, resulting in an ethno-nationalistic stance in tribal society.

Though Anjum Hasan in her novel *The Lunatic in My Head,* gives an in-depth view of the nature of insider-outsider conflicts, she also tries to minimize the hostility between the insiders and outsiders and to generate an amicable liaison among the tribal and non-tribal people. Indoing so, Hasan has created characters like Firdous Ansari, Ibomcha, Aman, Sharon, and Ribor, who are far away from insider and outsider binary opposition. They are ready to accept friendships irrespective of their ethnic identity. Likewise, despite being Muslim, Firdaus has rejected the proposal of marriage from a Muslim boy and decided to marry her sweetheart, Ibomcha, a boy from a different community. She also does not have allegiance to the "do's and don'ts" policies of religion. She assures her boyfriend that she does not have any problem with eating pork. She says, "I don't think religious thoughts. I'd be embarrassed to think about it... . If I can eat other meat, I can also eat pork" (Hasan 2007:123). Moreover, when she

is informed that Mrs. Nivedita's husband falls in a romantic relationship with a tribal girl, she feels happy as she finds a chance of connecting tribal and non-tribal people in a single row through their relationship. The narrator exposes her mental condition as, "She privately liked the idea that Mr. Nivedita, as she thought of him, was in love with a tribal girl. It made her happy to think that connections were still being established between people from opposite sides of that invisible, yet very palpable, a line that divided people in Shillong" (Hasan 2007:12). Not only that, a character like Sharon also informs Firdaus that she does not believe in insider-outsider conflicts. She says, "I don't really believe in all this dkhar stuff...." (Hasan 2007:54). Apart from these, the novelist Hasan has further pointed out thatthis insider-outsider divergence can become insignificant with facing of the broader outside world. Literary and musical figures like Shakespeare, Hemingway, Dickens, Jane Austen, and Pink Floyd work as unifying agents to connect such dissection of this dichotomy. Aman is anenthusiast of Pink Floyd and a member of a musical band, "Proto-Dreamers." which identifies Aman. His friends, who are members of this band, in voluntarily attachthem selves with him regardless of their distinct ethnic identities. His close friend is Ribor, a Khasi, who shows a common interest in music and art. So does David Rockwell. The narrator states:

> "The music was what united Ribor with baby-faced Ibomcha... The music was what united them both with Bodha, poet, and musician, sitting on his bed, trying out a couple of chords on his guitar, ignoring his mother's calls for breakfast. The music was what brought Aman into the circle, disillusioned and sad, putting a tape of Atom Heart Mother into his player" (Hasan 2007: 76).

Hasan has also created a romantic relationship between her creation of tribal and non-tribal characters like Firdaus and Ibomcha, and Mr. Nivedia and Sharon. However, despite her attempt to dissolve the narrow insider-outsider separation, Hasan has failed to establish the bond of these two groups in a single bowl. As a reader, we see that not a single relationship has come to a union. The relationship between Mr. Nivedita and Sharon becomes a failure as Sharon dies after drowning in a lake. Firdaus' relationship with Ibomcha has also remained unsuccessful as Ibomcha goes to Manipur and never returns. Thus it can be said that Hasan has failed to establish a connection between constricted insider-outsider conflicts.

The ethno-nationalistic approaches are also reflected in Bijoya Sawian's *Shadow Men* (2010). The story revolves around the mysterious murder of Suresh, a "dkhar", most probably by the underground militant in the beautiful hill town of Shillong. The novel deals with the issue like regional discrimination, where the mainland's people consider the northeastern as tribal and inferior. It also talks about the marginalized people's struggle against the government to equal opportunity for education and jobs. Moreover, they raise a voice against the colonial treatment of the mainland businessmen and politicians who consider the marginalized proletariat as a tool to fulfill their selfish desires.

As a result of unlawful arrival of the people from nearby places, tribal people of the region lose opportunities for education, government jobs, and business. These tribal people are also treated as slaves in their motherland. The outsiders grab the agricultural lands, abduct, rape, and kill the tribal girls. In the novel, Robert, an essential character, states, "The dkhars are all usurping our jobs—get them out, they are stealing our women—kill them...." (Sawian 2010: 40). Moreover, the results of the inclusion can be realized through the psychological expression of Robert. When he explains and narrates the government mismanagement and how the outsiders' colonial treatments make their lives miserable, and why they are protesting, he sheds tear and breaks the wine glass. The narrator says, "Tears welled up in his eyes which were red as live coals. He was holding the stem of the wine glass so tightly that it broke and drops of blood stained his hands, and fell on the Tibetan rug on the floor" (Sawian 2010:41). Again, when Kmie U Flin tries to console him by saying, "Why are you complaining so much? My child, you are whining like a school boy. Robert this is not you. Stop drinking. Throw away that drink!" (Sawian 2010: 41). He replies like a drink-obsessed man, "I won't Meisan. I will drink and I will whine and complain.... and drink some more and whine and complain. I need to do it. Why haven't I done it before? You are asking me, Meisan?" (Sawian 2010: 42). The narrator also confirms his anger to the readers by saying, "I noticed the anger in his eyes. I felt the need to step in" (Sawian 2010:42). Thus, through these analyses, it can be said that because of the inclusion of the intruders from the different parts of the Indian states and neighboring foreign countries, indigenous people of the region are suffering from the lack of opportunities in both government and non-government sectors and business policies.

Ethno-nationalistic sentimentality is also echoed in the narrator's and Robert's conversation. When the narrator and Robert go for a long drive, the narrator asks Robert to explain the real convict behind Suresh's murder and requests him to talk to the police. Robert replies that the murder is not serious to discuss with the police. He says, "It has nothing to do with the police" (Sawian 2010:70). That means, for Robert, it is not a crime to kill an outsider or "dkhar" because they are not part of the tribal communities and come from the outside states and a possible reason for miseries in the life of the tribal people. Because of these "dkhar", the tribal man loses opportunities in the job and other government services as these outsiders take jobs from the government, start their business in the region, and occupy the lands. Robert says, "No. Crime is not understanding another person's pain, not having the courage to accept the cause of suffering of that person's pain and not doing anything about it. That is a crime" (Sawian 2010: 71). It means non-tribal or outsiders do not understand the problems of the tribal people; rather, they occupy lands, start business, or have a plan for colonial rule over the tribal people. Therefore it becomes compulsory for the tribal people to fight against these outsiders to save their land and get relief from outsiders' colonial treatments.

The issue of insider and outsider dichotomy is also analyzed at the end of the novel.

When the narrator prepares for the Minister's wife's birthday and talks about the dresses of Punjabi or other mainlanders as "long dress", "Deshi sari and salwars" (Sawian 2010: 110), Robert counsels her that she should "wear something safe, tribal or western –best" (Sawian 2010: 110). He alleges that though they are a part of India, both the mainland Indian people and the central government do not care about the region and its tribal people. He says, "We are all Indians but the rest of India knows nothing about us, they call us Assamese" (Sawian 2010:110). It shows that the step-motherly treatment of the Indian government over the region provokes the tribal people to set up a mentality of ethno-nationality.

There is a sense of "insider" and "outsider" in dealing with the administrator too. When the police come to investigate the murder of Suresh and missing of Rabi, they concluded without any further investigations that it is a simple case of robbery and that Rabi killed Suresh to take all his earning. Though the narrator and Kmie U Flin try to convince the policeman that Rabi cannot kill Suresh because they belong to the same village from Bihar and live peacefully like two brothers, the policeman denies their points. He is not willing to investigate the case further. Not only that, the following morning, it is published in the newspaper, "The murder of the Bihari employee of a private residence in Lawbah colony has been solved with the arrest of the victim's cousin, Rabi Rai, who has confessed to the crime, police sources confirmed today. The body of the victim has yet to be traced but the police are confident that the crime will be solved expediently after this breakthrough" (Sawian 2010: 61). The narrator undertakes to investigate the case of Suresh's murder, but everyone tries to ignore her appeal to talk about the matter.When she gets a call from the Minister and tries to talk about Suresh's murder, the Minister simply tries to ignore her query by saying it is a robbery case. Then the narrator replies that she believes it is not a robbery case; instead, it is a conspiracy against these two "dkhars" boys (Suresh and Rabi). The Minister becomes angry with her points and says, "Raseel I am a friend of Aibor's and you are his guest. You've come for a holiday. Do you want to get involved in this mess? You don't have to feel guilty. I'll sort it out" (Sawian 2010: 109). Here, as a reader we can say that based on the narrator and Kmie U Flin's assertions, both the policeman and the Minister could have continued the investigation to find the real convict, but they denied their appeals. Thus, through these incidents, Sawian has tried to illustrate how the administrative like political leaders and police officers neglect the case of the outsiders. Not only that, when the narrator tries to discuss this matter with her close friend Aila, a tribal girl, she also denies talking about this matter, and remains silent. These further points out the negative attitude of the tribal people, defense persons, and the political leaders towards outsiders and that they do not bother about the problems of the non-tribal people; rather, they ignore issues related to outsiders.

One of the important reasons behind creating ethno-nationalistic schmaltziness of tribal people is the "step-motherly treatments" of mainstream India, and its government is also

illuminated in the novel. Because of its geographical distance and differences from mainland India in terms of linguistic, cultural, ethical, and physical looks, the region and its indigenous people are treated as "others" and "foreigners" in their motherland. Tribal people are called by derogatory names like "Chinky" and "Chinese". There is also no mention of the region in the national anthem of India. The Prime Minister also forgets to mention the names of the northeastern seven sisters, especially Meghalaya, in his Independence speech to the nation. Thus, though Indian liberal democracies formally recognize full citizenship, it often creates unequal citizenship in actual practice, as the structural accommodation through citizenship and affirmative action policies fail to bring about the desired change. This provokes the ethno-nationalistic mindset among the tribal people because when state or government ignore the legitimate political, social, and economic grievances of disadvantaged ethnic groups contribute to ethnic conflict. In the novel, Strong, an underground militant, charges that states like Meghalaya, Nagaland and Manipur in the Prime Minister's Independence Day speech have not been mentioned. So these underground men take this ignorance of the ministers to provoke the ordinary people against the Indian sovereignty. Strong says, "Yeah and why not? Got reports that in the Independence Day Speech which the Prime Minister has prepared or rather which had been prepared for him there is no mention of the North East, so it's a good opportunity to come down hard" (Sawian 2010:105). Here, Sawian enlightens how the government's superficialities in dealing with the region give the surreptitious militant group opportunities to provoke the ordinary tribal people and create a sense of ethnic attitudes. The same tunes have been reflected in Babli Mallik's research articles, "India's northeast – Retelling the Tale of the Indian 'Other'." She pens:

> "For most of the northeastern people then it was simply an exchange of masters, from British to Indians. The independence did not bring any change to them.... but the deprivation, indifferent attitude of the government and the failure of proper disbursement of funds for the development, the violation of human rights under Armed Forces Special Power Act...." (Mallik 2018:5).

The novel is also a good description of the consequences of the insertion of the outsiders and silence of the government over the issue. Robert points out that the problem of intruders' issues can never be solved because the state and central government as well as the mainstream media and people are not heeding to the region's tribulations. He says, "It speaks through the horrors that erupt all the time—but no one listens. Everyone hears but no one listens" (Sawian 2010: 41). Then he confirms that to get justice in terms of equal distribution of education and government job opportunities and other services people are taking up weapons in their hands. He also says to the narrator, "If you've got guts, here's the gun, follow our orders and collect your paycheck.' That is it, Kong Raseel" (Sawian 2010 : 41). Thus, it proclaims the harsh reality of the Meghalaya where people are taking guns into their hands and join the underground militancy group to protest against the mismanagement of the government

because they find no other options of getting justice in terms of job and educational opportunities and from the colonial treatment by the outsiders.

Bijoya Sawian not only exposes the ethno-nationalistic attitudes of tribal people on the non-tribal communities but also tries to communicate the intertribal conflict of different tribal communities, i.e., the Khasi and Jhantia are fighting against the Garos, over the reservation of education, government jobs, and other government services, land disputes, and business opportunities. In the novel, when the narrator and Robert assemble to drink, they notice that something is burning on the hill. Robert informs that there is an agitation against the government over the unequal distribution of "education and jobs." He also reports that despite 30 percent of the total population, the Garos, a tribe, are getting 40 percent of reservation in education and jobs. Further, he claims that their jobs are usurped, and women are raped and killed by outsiders. Then he becomes so furious and holds the glass of wine so tightly that the glass shatters. Robert says, "There's an agitation against the government about quotas for education and jobs. The Garos don't deserve 40 percent, the vacancies are never filled, they go waste, and we are more deserving" (Sawian 2010: 39). Though Kmie U Flin tries to cover up the outside incident of "burning" by pointing out, "... Robert stop it. It must be an accident. Why should they burn Bah Jus' car? He's a good man, a good MLA. He's not the Chief Minister" (Sawian 2010:40). Robert becomes angry and replies, "He's part of the cesspool...and by the way Meisan he's trying very hard to become the Chief Minister. How would you know? For forty odd years you have been closeted here in the lap of luxury, how would you know what is happening beyond these four walls?" (Sawian 2010:40). Thus, through this, the novelist clarifies that these tribal communities not only fight against the non-tribal people from mainland India and neighboring countries but also fight against each other.

Though this novel talks about the fighting and dissatisfaction of the tribal people, especially Khashi, against the non-tribal people who belong to different parts of India and from the nearby countries, it has also tried to show a harmonious relationship among the tribal and non-tribal people. In the novel, the non-tribal people like the unnamed narrator, Suresh and Rabi have a good relationship with tribal characters like Robert, Kmie U Flin, Kong Aila, and Bah Aibor. Noteworthy, Kmie U Flin fights for Rabi and Suresh's sake. Like a defensive friend and well-wisher, when the policeman and Robert conclude Suresh's murder that Rabi has killed Suresh and robbed his whole year's earning, Kmie U Flin assures, "Don't worry. I don't know why he said what he said but I am not letting anyone cast aspersions on Rabi and Suresh just like that...." (Sawian 2010:49). She also tries to convince them that she knows Rabi and Suresh and they cannot kill each other. She says, "Look Bah, I am quite sure that nobody robbed and nobody killed. NOT my boys. They loved each other like brothers. They worked together, stayed together, ate, drank and laughed together. They are from the same village!" (Sawian 2010:49). Again on another occasion, in order to find out the real convict

and save Rabi's life on Suresh's murder, she, along with Kong Bonili, goes to Bah To, "a nongeit" (a tantric soothsayer) and collects mud from the front and back of the cottage, where Suresh and Rabi lived, on the instruction of the tantric soothsayer to investigate the case. Thus through this analysis it can be said that the novelist tries to make a solidconnection among these two oppositional sections of people through Kmie U Flin's character because she irrespective of her tribal status always shows her supportive attitudes towards these two non-tribal boys, Suresh and Rabi and also tries to find out the real convict behind Suresh's murders and save Rabi from wrong sentence.

Additionally, as a mouthpiece of Bijoya Sawian, the narrator always tries to find out how the region's problems can be solved, and there would be a harmonious relationship between the tribal and non-tribal people. When Robert expresses his frustration on the treatment of the mainland over the indigenous people and states, "...the dkhars will never always look down on us tribals." (Sawian 2010: 36). The narrator tries to console Robert by saying, "in the mainland, everyone looks down on everyone. The Brahmins turn up their noses on the Kshatriyas, the Kshatriyas look down on the Kayasthas, the Kayasthas on the Vaishyas and it just goes on." (Sawian 2010: 36). Further, at the end of the story, on Robert's allegation that though the tribal people of the region are a part of the Indian territory, the people of India do not know about them, their existence and their cultures and historical records and also these mainland people consider them as "Assamese" or "others", the narrator tries to defend the "mainland" India by saying, "Robert, the North Indians call everyone from the South, Madrasis and when you go south, the South Indians call everyone from the North, Punjabis" (Sawian 2010:110). Thus, through these above points, Bijoya Sawian intends to end the hostile relationship between the tribal and non-tribal people and create a tuneful connection between these two communities.

Conclusion:

In ethno-nationalism, the "nation" is defined in ethnic terms and validated with the appellation of having inheritance, linguistic, customs, enemy, and parallel suppression settings. In this account, the relationship between the region and the state is alleged between the colonized and the colonizer. The anti-governmental ethnic movements are supported with the tag of the "right to self-determination." Meghalaya is such an ethnic state where the indigenous communities controlled the agricultural land and natural resources and had a long established method of governance through customary laws. With the involvement of the people from different parts of India and neighboring countries, these communities gradually have lost jurisdiction over the territory and natural assets. Their ancestral customary laws have been replaced with modern "foreign" constitutional laws. Consequently, these tribal people have started both violent and non-violence movements against the outlanders. In both the novels mentioned, there are lots of references to the tribal people's struggles against the "dkhars". These novels also focus on how the sick mentalities of the mainland Indian's over the tribal

people provoke them to create the mindset of ethno nationalism. Though these novels talk about the struggles of the tribal people for the reservations in education, government jobs, and over the control on the natural resources and agricultural lands, there are sufficient numbers of references of amicable bound among the tribal and non-tribal people. In *Lunatic in My Head*, we find characters like Firdaus, Ibomcha, Aman, Sharon and Ribor always try to end up the hostility; in contrast, they always try to generate an amicable attachment to each other. Similarly, in *Shadow Men,* the narrator always tries to engender a good relationship among tribal and non-tribal hostility. In doing so, whenever she finds Robert's negative thinking over the mainland Indians, she undertakes to remove those downbeat outlooks of Robert against the mainland Indians. Moreover, it is also seen that there are lots of possibilities of making friendship irrespective of the individual's identities. The novel envisions good companies of non-tribal characters like the narrator, Suresh and Rabi with tribal people like Robert, Kmie U Flin and Kong Aila. Therefore, based on this point, it can be mentioned that there are people in the region who make insiders and outsiders dichotomy and are fighting each other. But some people from both sides want to end this violent environment and generate a close association among themselves.

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Study of Occupational Health Hazards among some Women industrial Workers in the state of West Bengal : Issues and Consequences

Moumita Gupta

Abstract

Health is most valuable aspect for survival of human beings. Occupational safety deals with all aspects of health and safety in the workplace and has a strong focus on primary prevention of hazards. The present study is based on the investigation at some industrial working places in Purba Medinipur, South 24-parganas and Howrah districts, in order to show the health hazards of working women at different occupational sites, as well as, its immediate cause and possible remedial measures. The study is based on primary data, collected from approximately 100 working women engaged in different occupations at selected factories. Methods applied are Individual and Group Interview, Case studies and Participant Observation method along with Purposive sampling. Selected women working in selected factories experienced occupational health hazards like skin problems, irritation in the eyes, headache, breathing problems like suffocation, as well as muscular and skeletal problems and Computer Vision Syndrome (CVS). Compared to male workers, it appears that female workers are more susceptible to occupational hazards in the present research. It is necessary to take proper care against health hazards at work places.

Key Words: *Health, Occupational Hazards, Working Women, Affected, Factory, Unskilled Workers*.

Introduction:

The concept of health and hygiene varies from society to society. In the preamble of the World Health Organization (WHO) constitution; "the enjoyment of the highest attainable standard of health is one of the fundamental rights of every human being." In its 1948 constitution, (WHO) gave most popular definition of Health; "Health is a state of complete physical, social, and mental well-being and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity". Health is one of the major parameters of Women's development. Without proper health, women cannot be the preserver of the tradition and cultural heritage especially for the future generation. If anyone examines the proper occupational health problems among the women workers, they must study the types of women's work along with the hours of work, as well as, their remuneration details. It is a fact that now-a-days, all women are engaged in different types of work. But they mostly do not get any proper recognition as per their working hours

from the society. Their work is always underestimated and is not counted and their payments are very low or minimum and even are unpaid.

Since 1950, the International Labour Organization (ILO) and the World Health Organization (WHO) have shared a common definition of occupational health. It was adopted by the joint ILO/WHO Committee on Occupational Health at its first session in 1950 and revised at its twelfth session in 1995. Now-a-days, working women generally balance between family, works and working places simultaneously. They try to maintain rules, regulations, time schedule as well as different types of circumstances prevailing in all domains. All of these create stress among most of the working women. All women face a stress in their occupational area as well as with the male co-workers, employers etc. Moreover, most of the time, they are not satisfied with their jobs at par with their capabilities, needs as well as resources. Most of the working women are employed mostly in the agricultural sectors, cottage industries, food processing, domestic service, street vendors etc. (Kumar and Jadav, 2014).

According to Census of 2011, the work participation rate for women is 25.51 percent, lower than what was in 2001, which was 25.63 percent. The total number of female workers in India is 149.8 million. Among them, in rural and urban areas, the number of female workers is 120.8 million and 28 million respectively (Govt. of India, 2015).

A Brief Outline of the Background of the Present Study:

Basically hazards posed by physical, chemical and biological factors in work place are similar for both male and female workers but women on an average have a smaller stature, less physical strength and their vital capacity is 11% less than males. Their hemoglobin is approximately 20% less and they have larger body fat content. They have lower heat tolerance and greater cold tolerance (Stellman, 1994).

A number of factors can cause stress among working women. Besides these, sexual division of labour affects women's health in various ways. Following is a brief account of the types of possible hazard (Messing, 1997):

(i) Women basically play multiple roles in family, society as well as at working places. They usually maintain carry on with responsibilities in all these domains.

(ii) Shifting duties especially night shifts may cause several inconveniences in family responsibilities as a wife and as well as a mother.

(iii) Part-time or semi-permanent working women are deprived from many medical benefits such as Sick leave and Maternity leave compared to permanently appointed working women.

(iv) Many equipments in the factories are prepared for males, not for females.

(v) Most of the occupational sectors always discriminate between men and women, which may create mental stress among working women. They usually feel physically and mentally deprived compared to male workers.

(vi) As female workers are usually submissive and are not vocal and may compromise to accept lower wages than male. This may be the reason for employer's preference to appoint the more of females than males.

(vii) Moreover, most of the women face sexual harassment in almost all types of occupational sectors with some exception.

Various types of infectious diseases are contracted by some working women due to continuously washing plastic bags with some chemicals atsome plastic recycling industry; contamination and inhalation of harmful chemicals in laboratory, pharmacy etc. As a result, several cases of abortion, fetal death, miscarriage, birth to premature baby, mal-development, congenital defect etc. may take place among female workers (Herdman, 1985).

Musculoskeletal problems also affect some of the working women because they engaged in long time cleaning and dusting jobs, standing for long period in sales and marketing, in office, service center, shopping malls, factories, tailoring, beauticians, hairdressers etc. (Yasmin.et.al.2010).

Moreover, reproductive health problems of working women like menstruation problems, pregnancy related inconveniences may occur generally in case of some occupational areas due to stressful physical work (Drozdowsky et.al.1999).

At present, occupational health hazards have given rise to a new concept, namely, affluent health hazards. This is due to computer exposure, which leads to Computer Vision Syndrome (CVS). Several women now-a-days are working as receptionist, customer call attendees, even in clerical jobs. They are continuously sitting in front of computer and are victims of this hazard.

Literature Review:

Kumar and Jadav (2014) critically examined the occupational stress factors among 600 working women in the National Capital regions. According to them, inexperienced working women feel inconveniences more than those of the experienced women. They are usually deprived of proper training, adequate feedback and promotion facilities. According to them, work pressure should be reduced. Suitable environment along with minimum facilities, especially for women workers must be provided at the workplaces. Another significant paper shows the aspects of women's occupational health together with some critical reviews and also has discussed some current issues in this respect (Messing, 1997). One of the interesting papers shows the women workers as a special population (Stellman,1999). He has documented some

employment issues in United States with adequate data. He also covered the occupational health hazards and safety measures, which majority of working women faces all time in their working places. Another article by the same author (Stellman,1994) is related to occupational hazards of women workers. He discussed specially about causes of cancer due to occupation of working women. His paper covered women, work, and cancer. A significant and interesting paper by Rim (Rim, 2017) shows hazardous effects of occupation on the women workers, especially in case of reproductive issues. It points out the impact of different types of hazardous chemicals which dangerously affects the women workers when they are in pregnant, carrying 2-3 months. The paper based on occupational hazards among migrant women workers written by Moyce, (2018), shows how the migrant workers are affected in their workplaces compared to non-migrant workers. Most of them feel discomfort and are dissatisfied with the higher rate of adverse environmental and occupational exposures, language as well as cultural barriers, documentation status and political climate and also behaviours as well as attitudes of the country where they are compelled to stay especially for their job.

Area Selected for the Study:

Present research work is based on intensive investigations of some industries, both large and small-scale industries, in Purba Medinipur, South 24 pgs., and Howrah districts. Industrial area selected are located in the following regions:

1. The industrial belts at Haldia in Purba Medinipur are taken into consideration. The administrative locations of the industries are as follows:

   A. Mitsubishi Chemicals Private India Ltd., Bhunia Chak, Haldia

   B. Indian Oil Corporation, Vidhyasagar, Haldia

   C. Exide Private Ltd., Durgachak

   D. Sree Renuka Sugar Mill Ltd., City Centre, Debhog.

2. Industries at Falta industrial area, namely, Falta Special Economic Zone located 60 K.M. away from Calcutta in the district of South 24 pgs, on the banks of the river Hooghly.

4. The area located at 16/5, M.L.B. road, Bally in Howrah. It is a bindi manufacturing factory named as Suchita Arts.

The main criteria for selecting above industrial areas is that good numbers of women workers are engaged in different types of occupation in the factories and are facing various types of health hazards.

Objectives of the Study

The focal theme of this research paper is to analyze the health hazards of working women engaged in different occupations. The researcher points out the variable natures of occupational health hazards faced by women workers, engaged in both skilled and unskilled

Jobs at the specific selected factories. She endeavored to find out whether both skilled and unskilled workers suffered from occupational hazards or not. The research has studied the prevalence of the hazards and classified them. Moreover, objective of the paper is to create awareness of the hazards among people and help to decide before taking up an occupation.

Methodology of the Present Study:

The present researcher collected data approximately from 100 working women from each of the above-mentioned factories through individual and group Interview and participant observation and case study methods. Purposive sampling method was used in this study. Their perceptions are thoroughly studied through open ended and close ended questionnaires and schedules. Primary data was collected during the months of January to June in 2014.

Hazardous situations as found in the Study:

1. ***Industries in Haldia:***

In Haldia four factories namely, Mitsubishi, IOC, Exide, and Shree Renuka Sugar were selected for the study. The factories produce essentials for modern living, but have some specific health hazards that affect a lot of women workers regularly. Below are accounts of some of the hazards.

A. *Mitsubishi Chemical Private India Ltd:* Use of Acetic acid and Parazylene, give rise to serious skin problems and eye infections. About twelve women workers are employed in management section. Some of them suffer from Computer vision syndrome (CVS).

B. *Indian Oil Corporation (IOC):* mainly refines Crude Oil and produces several types of products such as, Petrol, Naphtha, ATF and Diesel. Diseases like Cancer, Back ache, muscular-skeletal problems and eye irritation occurred. Heart disease is also found. 70 women workers are appointed in this industry. Among them, 30 women are working in construction activities, 20 are in management section and rest are engaged in cleaning activities.

C. *Exide Industries Ltd*: prepares battery. Sulphuric Acid, distilled water and lead are used in production of battery.These cause serious breathing problems as well as burning sensation in the hands of the women workers. 30 women workers are involved in this industry. Several types of reproductive health hazards such as immune-suppression, hormonal disruption and even endometriosis are prevalent among them.

D. *Sree Renuka Sugar Pvt. Lt:* Prepares Sugar. Some chemicals are used, such as, phosphoric acid, Telophord 100, Nacl, Megnaphord-lt 7991, Ca $(OH)^2$, HCl, SMTF, Alkaline, formic acid, morphic bio acid, amailej. Soda-ash, caustic flake etc. Sulphuric acid causes eye irritation, respiratory problems with suffocation among the workers in this industry. Waste product is formed from the reaction of Sodium Chloride (Nacl) and Hydrocloric

Acid (Hcl) etc. This seriously affects the water of the surrounding areas. 8 -10 working women suffer in this factory. They are appointed as cleaners on purely contract basis.

2. ***Falta special Economic Zone (Plastocene Polymers factory):*** In Falta Special Economic Zone, there are 5 (five) sectors and the concentration of working women is mainly found in Sector I and II. They all work in the Plastocene Polymers factory in the Falta SEZ as unskilled labour. This factory imports plastic wastes from the U.S. or European countries. Wastes are brought in by ships. These are then washed, cleaned, dried, and sorted out. Thereafter, these are melted in machines to make plastic granules. Women mainly are appointed for this job. Generally, women always enter the vats and are engaged in cleaning and rubbing the plastics.

Most of the women workers came from Diamond Harbour, Dostipur, Digha, Sarisha etc. Normally, there are three daily 8 hourly shifts.The women are paid a daily wage of Rs.65. The labour contractor deducts Rs.5 as commission. Most of the women work in the morning and day shift (i.e. from 6a.m.to 2p.m.and 2p.m.to 10 p.m.). A few of them work in the night shift.There is a half hour Tiffin break. No place is set aside to take their lunch. They take food in the fetid atmosphere-sitting beside this pile of rubbish and waste. Although their toilets, no separate facilities exist for the women. There are not many holidays-the factory was closed for three days. In any case, no wages are paid during holidays. There is no bonus, no emergency medical arrangements even they experienced an accident. The workers here must make their own arrangements for their medical treatment. Company does not give any facilities to their workers.

Skin ailments are one of the most common diseases among these working women as because, they working continuously in water throughout all the working hours. As there are no such fresh water facilities, most of the time, women workers compelled to take their lunch along with their dirty hands. As a result, liver problem arises. Moreover, recurrently using chemicals along with their hands during working hours may increases the fatal risk to pregnant working women.

3. ***Suchita Arts***: The main function of the factory is decoration and ornamentation of the Bindi of various sizes and shapes. Twenty-five female workers are working here belong to age group of 18 to 35 yrs. The work starts at the factory at 9A.M. and closes at 6P.M. with half an hour recess at 1 P.M.

The workshop is functioning in a room having size of 20ft. and 10ft. Each worker sits on the cemented floor and provided with a small wooden tool in front for working.

The factory is not manufacturing any type of bindi. They purchase the already cut out shapes from market. These are arranged in decorative manner and arranged on laminated cardboard numbering 144 bindis on each piece. These bindis are made decorative and attractive by the female labourers in this factory, using various kinds of materials.The total

production of the factory varies from 2500-2600 gross (1 gross =12 dozens) per month. The output per worker per day is approximately 4 gross. The names of bindi that are decorated here are Shee, Sarmili, Bobby, Kohinur, Memshab and Joygobindra. The owner reported that a labour is paid Rs.20/ per day for decoration of four sheets of bindi. A sheet contain one gross of bindi. The labour cost comes to approximately Rs.5/ per sheet of Bindi. The sale price of 1 sheet of bindi is Rs.15/. Hence, the total sale per month comes to 38,000/-40,000/. The bindis are sold in the wholesale market through the agents.

Various types of raw materials are used for decoration of different types of Bindi. Gum made by Mafatlal Company is used here as adhesive material. Decorative materials, such as Velvet cloths, golden stick, metal balls of different sizes, ring, softone, kundan plastics, seasame seed and plastic beeds are used. These materials are purchased from Bagri market, Canning Street in Calcutta. Equipments, which is mainly required for this job are, a wooden tool of low height, a forceps, and a pointed needle with handle.

As a result of discussion with the owner of the factory, it was found that the factory was running with profit to the tune of 25% to 30% of the total sale per month. It can also be observed that women suffered from various occupational health hazards in this factory. They mainly suffered from headache, eye irritation, backache, Joint pain, suffocation, and other job-related health problems. As they spend a couple of hours sitting on the floor or small tools bent over their jobs, backache is the most common occupational health problem among them.

Table No.1: Participation of women in different jobs across the Industries

Name of the Industries	Different types of job categories									
	Construction Engineer		Management Workers		Semi-Skilled Workers		Unskilled Workers		Total Workers	
	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%
Mitsubishi	-	-	1	5	-		10	20	11	11
IOC	10	100	10	50	-		15	30	35	35
Exide	-	-	7	35	-		5	10	12	12
Renuka Sugar	-	-	2	10	-		5	10	07	7
Falta Plastic Recycling	-	-	-	-	5	25	10	20	15	15
Suchita Arts	-	-	-	-	15	75	5	10	20	20
Total	10	100	20	100	20	100	50	100	100	100

Following tables show the distribution of women workers in terms of job and the factories they are employed in and the kind of health hazards suffered by the women workers.

Table - I, shows that there are four different occupational types exist in the selected factories. These are construction engineer, management workers, semi-skilled and un-skilled workers. In the six factories 50 women workers are engaged in unskilled work. Jobs are given to the workers according to their age, educational qualifications, working skills as well as efficiency. Unskilled workers generally came from lower income group families. They were mostly illiterate. Some are also class V passed. Their economic condition is poor. They have taken up unskilled work in order to maintain their subsistence. Occupational hazards found among them are more compared to those engaged as construction engineer and those working in Management section and as Semi-skilled workers.

Table no.2 Health Hazards of women associated with different categories of job

Job Category	Different types of Health Hazards											
	Muscular-Skeletal disorder		Head ache		Eye irritation		Skin problem		Reproductive problem		CVS (Computer Vision Syndrome)	
	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%
A	2	25	3	15	-	-	-	-	-	-	5	33.33
B	3	37.5	4	20	-	-	-	-	3	15.78	10	66.66
C	3	37.5	3	15	4	25	5	20	5	26.32	-	-
D	-	-	10	50	12	75	20	80	11	57.89	-	-
Total	8	100	20	100	16	100	25	100	19	99.99	15	99.99

A: Construction Engineer

B: Management Worker

C: Semi-skilled Workers

D: Unskilled Workers

Table-2 presents the levels of different health hazards among the selected job categories of all the female workers of the present study. Skin problems (n=25) and headache (n=20) are two major health problems among them. These are mostly with un-skilled jobs rather than other jobs. Unskilled jobs are with long-working hours and are painstaking. Women are continuously confined at one place. They are low paid. Reproductive problem (n=19) is marked

among them. It is also noted that muscular-skeletal disorder (n=8) higher both in Management and Semi-skilled Section. CVS (n=15) is highest (=10) in Management Section. This type of ailment is very common among other white-collar jobs compared to unskilled jobs. These are Computer based job which results in CVS.

Concluding Observations:

We have come to know from this study that working women from different social strata face various kinds of occupational health hazards. Therefore, they need to be protected. If the employers are made aware of the types of hazards at different occupational sectors, only then it can be minimized. The prevention of CVS can be done if the employers give respite from continuously working in front of the computer. Proper computer table, chair, proper colour monitor along with proper positioning of light are needed for solving these problems. Next generation will be endangered if women folk are not protected from health hazards. Moreover, the educated employers should take adequate measure and minimize health hazards of their women employees.The women workers should also be made conscious about occupational health hazards and subsequent preventive measures through mass media.

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Wool Weavers of Deccan: History, Social Life and Demand for Reservation

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Abstract:

The article gives the historical account of the wool weavers and their social life. They are known as Kuruba/va/ma in Karnataka; Kuruma Gollas in Telangana and Andhra Pradesh; Dhangars in Maharashtra; Ahirs in Central India; Pals, Bhagel and Gaderias in Western India, and Yadavs in North India. It also examines how the regional language labelled them with various parochial names, discusses the socio-cultural importance of Gongadi (traditional woollen blanket) in the everyday life of Golla-kurumas living in Telangana State. Eventually highlights their socio-political movement voicing for the status of reservation as Semi-Nomadic Tribe (SNT).

Keywords: *Wool Weavers; Semi-Nomadic Tribe; Golla-Kuruma; Puttu Gongadi; Shepherds; Deccan Plateau, Woolen Blanket*;

Introduction

India is a conglomeration of divergent factor, namely, ethnicities, languages, occupations, castes, produces and so on. *Golla-kuruma* is one of the castes that is predominately engaged in sheep and goat rearing. They are also known for weaving woolen blanket, locally known as *Gongadi* (Dandeboina, 2022a; Ghotge & Ramdas, 2010). They are considered one of the five numerically dominant castes among the Telugu people. The *Golla-kuruma* population constitutes around 12 percent of the Telangana State's population (Menon, 2017; The New Indian Express, 2017b). Though the community is numerically dominant, still are backward socio-economically and politically.They are confined to their own traditional way of living and world of life. Sheep and goat rearing, milk selling, and *gongadi* making are the major occupation of the caste and are being widely practiced by them. They are a little bit away from the mainstream society and culture (Ilaiah, 2009). School drop-out, nomadic lifestyle, usage of indigenous ways of medicine, and ancient form of language and dialect are prevalent signs of backwardness of the community. However, *Golla-kurumas* are leading traditional and vernacular life (S. S. Reddy et al., 2022).

The writers and historians from leisure classes usually portray and popularize the history of rulers and leisure classes. They deliberately ignore and are reluctant to record the history

of productive masses. As a result, wrong may be known as right and right may not be noted as right at any time. This is true in the case of *Golla-kurumas*. This is why, we need to understand the genesis, evolution, and original history of *Golla-kurumas* in a more rationalistic way by considering all shreds of evidence that we come across. However, a new perspective of understanding is highly prerequisite for knowing the original history of *Gollakurumas*.

Gensis and History of Golla-Kurumas

'Golla-kuruma' is a combined nomenclature derived from the Telugu word 'Golla' and the Kannada word 'Kuruma/Kuruva/Kuruba'. In fact, they are linguistically different but share similar socio-cultural life and spiritual pantheism across the country. The term 'Golla' is derived from 'Gorrelollu' which means shepherds in Telugu (Dalwai, 2019; Thurston, 1906). 'Gorrelollu' became 'Gollollu' which is refined and polished as 'Gollavaru' or 'Golla'. The term 'Kuruma/Kuruva/Kuruba' is derived from 'Kuri' which means 'sheep' in the Kannada language and 'Kuruma' is nothing but a shepherd in Kannada (Nanjundayya, 1906; Saxena & Saxena, 2012). The shepherds in and around the Godavari River basin are called 'Kurumas', in and around of Krishna River basin are denoted as 'Kuruva', and 'Kuruba' is in and around of Thunga and Bhadra rivers. This variation of pronunciation exists due to the climatic conditions of regions. The fact Telugu and Kannada languages were born around the 3rd century BC and by that time, the terms 'Golla' and 'Kuruma' were not present, but the shepherds widely existed and were used to call - 'Hatkars' in the Maratha language. Hatkar isa sub-group of Dhangars (Shashi, 1977).

According to Ramayana, Abhiras are non-aryan dayaus, who were organized in the form of ganas (republic) engaged in cattle-rearing and also were brave fighters who fought against the Aryas (Suryavanshi, 1959) but lost their homeland in battles and were forced to move towards Krishna and Godavari planes with their herds. Later, they were called Dhanghars in Sanskrit. Dhangharis originated from 'Denu' means cow and 'Khar' means worker/herder. However, Dhanghar means the people who rear animals like cows, sheep, goats, and buffalos. Over some time and in the course of migration, Dhanghars were divided into four sub-groups namely Ahirs (Cowherds), Hatkars (Shepherds), Gujjars (Buffalo-herders), and Kutekars (wool weavers) (Singh et al., 2004).

Hatkars became 'Gollas' in Telugu-speaking regions and 'Kuru-ma/va/ba' in Kannada-speaking areas since they are engaged in sheep and goat rearing. Thus, it is inferred that language has is differentiating these two communities but their ancestral origin is the same. This is the reason why, people used to say that '*kulampotthuvunnadikani, viyyampottuledu*' (caste alliance is permitted but marriage alliance is not). However, not just caste itself follows endogamy but, here the sub-castes are also restricted in terms of marriage tie-ups to their specific categories. Even today this practice is largely noticed among cattle-herders found among the Abhira tribe, namely, Dhanghars, Gollas, Kurumas, Kurubas, Pals, Gaderiyas,

Gujjars, Yadavs (N. S. Ghotge, 2004). Consequently, each sub-caste evolved as an independent caste and tried to trace its identity and roots in the epics written by so-called dominant class writers who had not intended to record the accounts of productive masses.

Among Ahirs (Cowherd Dhanghars), Yadu becomes a leader of prominence with his brave efforts and generosity (Michelutti, 2020). Since the name of Yadu is found in Vedas, all Ahirs were suffixed with the title of 'Yadav' to gain a substantial social status in caste-hierarchical society. This is merely an imitation of the dominant culture mentioned in Sanskrit texts, and it is widely known as 'Sanskritization'. In fact, Yadav is not a caste but a lineage succeeded by Yadu, and Yadavs of north India are historically known as 'Ahirs' who are primarily cattle-herders (Prasad, 2015) and a major sub-group of the Dhanghar community (Dhere and Feldhaus, 2011).

With the deprivation of education for generations together and for the lack of proper research on the genealogy of caste, the history of shepherds and cowherds became much more confusing, complicated and misleading too. The researchers and intellectuals should explore the realities by studying deeper into the core of the problem for its validations.

In the year 1975 in Karnataka Kuruba Sangha submitted a memorandum to the Chairman of Backward Classes Havanur Commission, Bangalore. It says that "the Kuruba community is called by different names in the state such as Halumatha Kuruba, Vokkaliga Kuruba, Kurikayuva Kuruba, Gondaru, Gonda Kurubaru,Unne Kankanadavaru, Hattikankanadavaru, Kadu Kurubaru, Voggaru, Kadusiddayyaru, Kilari, Dhangar, Bhaawar, Kurumbaru, Hande Kuruba, Kavadi and Makadivales, Jagayyagalu, Kurigararu, Hanabaru, Hankara, Peddaru, Sudugadusiddaru, Gavaligalu, Sandaru, Odeyaru, Kambi Kurubaru, Kankayyan Jatiyavaru, Prathamasudraru, Indrasudraru, Varada Kurubaru, Dasayyagalu, Golla, Gorava, Jenukunbaru, Urukurubaru, Hosakurubaru, Hale Kurubaru, Sada Kurubaru, Kanchi Kurubaru, Mullu Kurubaru, Betta Kurubaru (Heggadae, 2005)".

However, the name 'Kuruma or Kuruba or Kuruva' is derived from 'Kuri' or 'kuru' which means sheep-thus referring to 'sheep' in the Kannada language. There are many sub-groups of Kurumas; - the Unnikankan Kurumas (who weave woollen blankets); Hattikankan Kurumas (Who rear sheep), here 'Hatti' means 'flock or heard' in Marathi language; Halamuntha Kurumas who are milk sellers, - 'Hala' means milk in Kannada (Murty & Sontheimer, 1980); Madasi Kuruvas who are servants or dependent on shepherds; Maldari Kuruvas who are also shepherds migrated from Gujarat and Rajasthan (Rao, 1995). The last two communities were/are classified as Scheduled Castes (SCs) in erstwhile Andhra Pradesh (The Hans India, 2018b). In Medak region, only Hatti Kankan and Unni Kankan are present. Unnikankan Kurumas are called Unni Gollas in the villages and are identified as part of the Yadava community at pan-Indian level.

There is a misconception that is widely prevalent among the Golla-kurumas that *Hattikankan or Pattikankan* Kurumas wear cotton bracelets. In fact, Golla-kurumas are nowhere connected with the 'Patti' (cotton). The Marathi term 'Hatti' was wrongly assumed as 'Patti' in Telugu, later in the course of Sanskritization, and in inferring it, brahmin priests named them as 'Patti Kankan'. There is a myth that was constructed around the deity Mallanna, who is considered as 'Kuladevudu'; meaning Community Deity (P. C. Reddy, 2016). According to folklore Mallanna has five wives namely; 1) Pavidikandla Padmakshi, who belongs to Kapu Community; 2) Golla Kethamma, who is from the Golla-Kuruma community; 3) Balija Medalamma, of Lingayat community; 4) Brahmana Ratnagi, hailing from Brahmin community and 5) Bramarambika is also from Brahmin community. If one deconstructs the folk tales, one can realize that Golla Kethamma was the only wife to Mallanna as the genre and content of Oggu Kathas surrounded by Mallanna and Kethammanarrates (P. C. Reddy, 2016). The other persons might have dedicated themselves as wives of Deity Mallanna like the dedication of Vakulamba or Bibi Nancharito to Lord Venkateswara.

In fact, it is only constructed from the folk tales that cotton is the symbol of the Unnikankan Kurumas who are supposed to have been born from the first wife of lord Mallanna. Wool is the symbol of those who were born to his second wife. There are various versions of the legend about the origin of Kurumas and the division between the *Hattikanan* and *Unnikankan* Kurumas. One of the legends says that Mallanna is thought to be an incarnation of Shiva, who had two wives; one was Padmaashki, a Kapu girl, who was married by having cotton bracelets tied to the wrists of the bridal couple. The second wife was Ratnangi, the daughter of a Brahmin woman who had been devoured by a female demon. The demoness had raised the new-born child. One day as Mallanna was grazing his sheep in the jungle, he came close to the girl. He was so overwhelmed by the girl's beauty that he fell in love with her. He killed the demoness and married the girl and the wedding bracelets were made of wool instead of cotton, as cotton was not available in the forest. That is why wearing a woollen bracelet distinguishes the descendants of Ratnangi from those of Padmaakshi, the latters wear cotton bracelets. The fact remains that wool and woollen Gongadi had existed much before this story.

Beerappa is considered another prime deity as a plethora of folklore exists about him in the forms of ballads, especially in Oggukatha, which is a traditional folklore of singing, praising, and narrating the stories of community deities (Boivin, 2004; Murty & Murthy, 1991). Golla-kuruma community celebrates Beeraiah Patnalu, which is generally called 'Pedda Pandaga'. It is a celebration of God Beeraiah Marriage every 5 or 7 or 9 years. Beerlollu/ Beerlavaru, who are the community priests of Golla Kuruba or Kurumas, perform the marriage of Beerappa with Kamaraathi.

The essence of Beerappa's story reveals that, since Beerappa's parents did not have children

for long, they undertook severe penance addressed to Shiva and pleased him with their devotion. They got a son called Beerappa. But, owing to the mischief of Beerappa's maternal uncle (mother's brother), the child is abandoned in a forest. There, one Maayavva (Mankali), the daughter of the king of Devagiri, finds the child and nourishes it (Prasād et al., 2001). Under her care, Beerappa grows into a very powerful youth and successfully performs many adventures. When he reaches adulthood, he vows to marry his maternal uncle's daughter; goes through many tests and ordeals, and finally succeeds in marrying her. After marriage, he undertakes long journeys accompanied by his mother; and through his adventures and miracles he establishes his divinity (Ramachandran, 2004).

The Oggu folklore also tells about the modes of grazing of sheep, struggles of shepherds, the ways of migration in the quest for fodder, the glories of Chieftains, important personalities, and places. Moreover, the culture of Golla-kurumas will commonly be depicted by a team of artists constitute 5 – 6 members. Oggu (Damar), Flute, Napire (trumpet), Dolu (Drum), and Talas are prime musical instruments used in the performance (Prasād et al., 2001). Only a few Sudra communities have rich folklore and history as Golla-kurumas have. Similarly, their cattle rearing occupation also forced them to expose and learn the indigenous way of treatment to heal their sheep, goats, cows, buffaloes etc. Thus, they are well-known as veterinary doctors in villages. They observe all kinds of leaves and herbs in the forest and conduct trial and error based experiments on the goats. Eventually identification of useful herbs and leaves are made. Their indigenous wisdom of herbs is imperative and effective in curing, so that most of the village folk still approaches them to cure their sick livestock. Nomadic lifestyle exposes them to different geographical and climate settings in the course of migration.They meet different people, cultures, and languages so that Golla-kurumas are recognized as unique. They gained a unique identity in the society for themselves. As a result, their everyday life is somewhat unique and different from others too.

In folklore, it also is believed that the deity Mallanna had used the bones of the demoness to make all the tools required to weave wool into Gongadi (Murty and Sontheimer, 1980). This is the reason why Golla-kurumas believe that Mallanna was the first person to weave a Gongadi and is considered as the inventor of wool weaving technology.

Caste Political System

Golla-Kuruma communities in a village collectively choose an elderly male or female to be the community headman/headwoman, known as *"Pedda Golla or Pedda Kuruma".* Usually, a male by tradition becomes headman but there are several incidents wherein a woman also takes up those responsibilities. *Pedda Golla* plays a key role in finding the grazing lands, exploring routes for migration, planning and organizing festivals, conducting rituals, finalizing marriages, presiding over wedding ceremonies, and resolving community disputes too. Generally, the community collectively celebrates many festivals and fairs.

The family of Golla-kurumas is patriarchal but females are also given priority and status to run the family as males or head of household. Men mostly roam in the forest or around grazing lands with a flock of sheep, thereby have less time to interact with family and neighborhood. Consequently, women tackle all the domestic and political activities; thus, women of this community are different compared to other communities. Sometimes, women also graze the flock but are mostly involved in weaving *Gongadi* (woolen blanket) at home. They also know how to treat the lambs when they are separated from the flock of adult sheep.

Language of Wool Weavers

The Golla community speaks Telugu, while the Kuruma community also speaks Telugu. However, once they used to speak Kannda as their native tongue. 'Kuruma Basha' is another name for it. The shepherds who migrated from Kannadiga region were/are known as 'Kuruma/ba/va' in Telugu land. However, the ancestral root of Golla, Kuruma, Dhangar, Ahir, Pal, Ganderia, and Bhagel is one, yet some have sanskritized themselves and were identified with 'Yadav' titles. In the state of Telangana, the bulk of Golla-Kurumas speak Telugu, which is laced with Urdu. They also speak Kannada in the settlements that are nearer to the border with Karnataka.

Purudu Ceremony

Special rituals are performed to welcome a new-born baby into the community. The *purudu* (naming ceremony) is done when a child is three days old. For a male child, wool is put into a basket and covered with a white fabric. The baby boy is placed in the basket over the white fabric. The tools that are used for shearing and a small basket of wool are placed next to the baby.

For a baby girl, the same ritual is followed, but instead of the shearing tools and wool basket, carding and spinning implements like *ekubadda/ekunara* (carding bow) and *kadaru* (spindle) are placed, signifying that she will grow up and learn to spin wool into fine yarn.

It is interesting to see how the colours black and white have their meanings and use. White wool is used as a *kankana* or wristband during all festivals, weddings, and other such occasions. Black wool is used for example when the child is 21 days old, when the naming ceremony is performed and the *kurumadaram,* a piece of black wool yarn is tied to the wrists and ankles of the baby to ward off any kind of evil. For male babies additionally, the black wool yarn is tied around the waist. It is believed that black wool will protect the child.

The birth ceremony is followed by a naming ceremony. The Father of the child with his friends and relatives goes to consult a priest for a name to be given to the child. Normally the children have been named after the Kuruma community deities and goddesses. The cradle is washed and decorated with flowers. The mother and the child are draped in new garments.

The paternal aunt (father's sister) of the child or its grandparents plays a notable role in the ritual. They will whisper the name to be given to the child into its ear. The guests will present new garments or money to the child and the mother. The guests are fed a delicious feast.

Puttugongadi Ceremony

When a Golla-kuruma boy turns 10 years, a unique ceremony called the *puttugongadi* is to be performed. This ceremony is held so that the young Golla-Kuruma realizes that the Gongadi is going to be an important part of his life. The maternal uncle or grandparents present a newly woven Gongadi to the boy, who is going to be entered into teen age. The Gongadi presented for the *puttugongadi,* has a special meaning. It is believed that it gives real birth to the individual and inculcates the value of production into the minds of growing young children. It has identical dimensions to other *gongadis* but is never doubled, stitched, or given a finishing *kada* or *kuncha.* The *puttugongadi* always has 2 white lines or *sulupu*. This *puttugongadi* is used in all other rituals, festivals, and fairs.

Puttuventrukalu (First Haircut)

The ceremony of 'cutting the first hair' of a child has got a ritual place among Golla-Kurumas like others. This is a rite that must be observed and conducted at the shrine of the family deity. The Golla-kuruma families perform it customarily by going to the temple of the family deity. This rite must be observed without fail in case of all male children among them. All family members, relatives, and family friends visit the temple of the family deity to observe this ceremony. First, the baby whose hair is to be offered to the deity getsa bath, mostly in *koneru*, and is made to sit on the lap of the mother or grandmother. Then, his/her maternal uncle (mother's brother) will symbolically cut a bunch of hairs above the forehead and offers it to the deity. Finally, all the members visit the shrine of the deity.

Gongadi at Weddings

Selection of mate or life partner among Golla-Kurumas is not of own choice ofthe bride or bridegroom. Therefore, among Golla-Kurumas also the marriage activity begins with the groom's parents looking for a suitable bride for their son. They expect that the girl should be young in age, good in manners, coming from good parental and family background. Further, they want to choose a bride from a family which is equal or superior in terms of economic status.

On the wedding day when the bridegroom is taken to the bride's residence where the marriage ceremony takes place. After completion of marriage, the newly married couple has to make a walk around the *polu*, a design made with rice grains on the floor. The husband keeps the gongadi on his shoulder while moving around the *polu*.

The wrap of the Gongadi is also used in the wedding ceremony. The knitted wrap is given to the bride and the groom to sit on. There is a story associated with this ritual: Mallanna kidnaps a girl with the intent to marry and did not find anything for her to sit on. He wraps the wrap that he was going to weave and places it on the ground for her to sit upon, which has now become a custom. Animal sacrifices form a part of the rituals. Two days after the wedding, a sheep is sacrificed. The gongadi is folded and kept on the floor near a wall. The shearing scissors are kept on it. On the folded gongadi five lines with rice flour and 5 lines of turmeric powder are drawn alternately. The sheep are sacrificed in front of this and the meat is offered to their Gods.

Death and Gongadi

In case of a death in the family, touching Gongadi is strictly prohibited for about ten days. If someone in the family comes in contact with the Gongadi, it is purified by sprinkling turmeric water. This is done because the Gongadi is considered to be a deity. However, most of the Golla-kurumas believe that a Gongadi can never become impure. Hence, the practice cannot be seen in many villages.

Pilgrim centers of Wool Weavers :

Oggukatha is a popular play that deals with oral histories of Akka Mankali, Mallanna, Beerappa, Katamaraj, Yellamma, Soudalamma, and other *kuladevas* (family Gods). The specific dependent group; namely Ogguvarau, Berlavaru, Manda Gollavaru, Tagari Jogulavaru, and Bykanivaru particularly; transfer the oral traditions through generations together and preserve wonderful cultural history. Patnalu is a unique festival usually observed by both Golla and Kuruma across the Telangana state.

Mallanna temples are located at Srisailam, Komuravelli, Odela, Inoholu, Katta, Katterashala, Peddapuram, and Kolanupaka. The famous Beerappa temple is located in Jatrapolu of Nagar Kurnool District. A temple in the name of Lingamanthula is situated in Durajpally near Suryapet town. Besides, many temples can be seen in the villages wherein Golla-kurumas predominately live.

Gollakurumas and Issue of Reservation:

During post-Independence, Indian Government has started reservations as part of affirmative action for historically underprivileged and underrepresented communities to participate in government programs, scholarships, and politics (Das, 2000). Based on Indian Constitutional provisions, it permits the Union Government and the States and Territories of India to impose reserved quotas or seats, at a specific proportion in educational admissions, employments, political bodies, promotions, etc. for "socially and educationally disadvantaged persons'' (Shah, 1991).

Kaka Kalekar reported a list of 2,399 backward castes or communities for the entire country and of which 837 (* starred communities) had been classified as the 'most backward' (Agrawal et al., 1991; Ramaiah, 1992; Suri, 1995). The shepherding castes of Golla, Kuru-ma/ba/va, and Hatkar, who live in the erstwhile Nizam-Hyderabad state, were also identified as extremely backward castes, with the star (*) symbol. Following that, the Government of Hyderabad State designated the Golla-Kuruma community as a Semi-Nomadic Tribe (SNT) and granted reservation in 1955, which was extended from 1955 to 1970. The Government of Andhra Pradesh constituted the Anantaraman Commission in 1965 (Dandeboina, 2022b), and in 1970, it placed Kuru-ma/bas under the BC-B category by considering them as a wool weaving occupational caste and Gollas under the BC-D category by considering them an agricultural group. This was a manipulative strategy to weaken the community by dividing it. Golla-kurumas who were illiterate and innocent did not object to this drastic change and were classified as Backward Classes. More specifically, it split the caste into two factions, causing Golla-kurumas to unintentionally distinguish themselves as belonging to BC-B and BC-D. In reality, BC-B and BC-D are social statuses assigned by government orders rather than castes, and they may change in accordance with rules and legislation (Bheenaveni, 2019). However, due to widespread illiteracy and ignorance, they were not yet aware of the reservation problem.

It is important to note that Dhangars, Marathi Shepherds, are availing the status of Nomadic Tribe (NT) Reservation in the state of Maharashtra for decades, yet they are included under the category of "Other Backward Class (OBC)" on the central list of reservation since 1990. The community, however, is seeking for a reservation under the Schedule Tribe (ST) category (Bose, 2019). Members of the community feel that they have been denied reservation in Union government services since the Nomadic Tribe (NT) category is not recognized at the central level (Dadas, 2021). Being the Chief Minister of Maharashtra, Devendra Fadnav has also assured the Dhangar community that his government would guarantee that they get the reservations promised by the BJP before to the Maharashtra assembly elections (The Economic Times, 2015). Even at present, Maharastra continues to experience social and political unrest as a result of the unmet demand for a Schedule Tribe (ST) reservation for Dhangar shepherds (Bose, 2019). This socio-politico movement for tribal reservation has inspired the other cattle rearing communities viz, Gujjars in Rajasthan (Jha, 2014), Kurubas in Karnataka (Natraj, 2007) and Golla-kurumas in Telangana and Andhra Pradesh (Bheenaveni, 2019). Political aspirations and social backwardness eventually came together to create new identity-based community movements with fresh voices and tag lines across India.

On the other hand, Vajpayee lead BJP Government has appointed Balakrishna Renke Commission to study the socio-economic status of De-notified, nomadic and semi-nomadic communities in 2003 (Baxi, 2022) and the commission identified 496 De-Notified Tribes

(DNTs), 914 Nomadic Tribes (NTs) and 139 Semi-Nomadic Tribes (SNTs) across Indiawith state-wise classification (Shah & Bara, 2020). Golla and Kurumas of Andhra Pradesh and Telangana states were also placed as nomadic tribes in the draft list prepared by National Commission for Denotified, Nomadic and Semi-nomadic Tribes (NCDNSNT, 2016).

In the lines of leftist and subaltern viewpoints, Dolu Debba (Drumbeat), a socio-political movement founded by Golla-kurumas in the 1990s, advocated for substantial political representation and budgetary funding for their welfare (Chalamalla, 2011) but it was stymied by the repressive state apparatus for various of reason s (G. K. Reddy, 2002). Consequently,the community leadership took paradigm shift from left-inclined subaltern ideology to constitutional affirmative standpoint by demanding Schedule Tribe (ST) status for these shepherding communities (The Hindu, 2015).

Since including the semi-nomadic shepherding Golla-kuruma community on the ST list is literarily impossible and unjustifiable, the community intelligentsia, especially professors at Osmania University, drew and propagated an alternative strategy to fight for semi-nomadic tribe (SNT) reservation by outlining three compelling arguments as follows: (1). The semi-nomadic tribe reservation was put into place in Hyderabad and erstwhile Andhra Pradesh states from 1955 to 1970. (2). For a longer period of time, the Maratha shepherds have been granted with a reservation of nomadic tribe (NT) category in their neighboring state of Maharashtra and (3). In the draft list of the National Commission of Denotified, Nomadic, and Semi-Nomadic Tribes, the Golla kuruma community was identified as a nomadic tribe and recommended for reservation.

With this conceptual framework and credibility of professors, educated youth of Golla-kuruma community stepped up and started a new association called 'Gollakuruma Navanirmana Samithi (GKNS)' with tag of 'self-respect, power and development'. It has brought together regardless of ideology and affiliation people of other professions, such as, teachers, doctors, bureaucrats, engineers, advocates, and students. The movement quickly spread to every corner of the state and geared up to put pressure on the state government to classify them as semi-nomadic in order to receive all the advantages for which they are constitutionally qualified (The New Indian Express, 2017a). However, it was suppressed by the state government (The Hans India, 2018a).

The state government explicitly designed and implemented a subsidized sheep distribution scheme for Golla-kurumas (Dileep, 2018) as part of the appeasing of the shepherds and inversion as a political maneuver in disguise. But, GKNS are persistent in its efforts to connect with the public and various political platforms. As a result, in their respective election manifestos for 2019, the state-level bodies of the Indian National Congress (INC) and Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) both made the commitment to introduce and implement reservations of semi-nomadic tribe for the Golla-kurumas. In order to get nation-wide attention and solidarity,

GKNS is also trying to create a pan-Indian identity and platform with all cattle rearing communities deserved for nomadic and semi-nomadic reservation. Nonetheless, in the contemporary epoch of reservations for Economically Weaker Sections (EWS), the GKNS's experimentation may spark a new discussion over reservations by vouching the voice of historical socio-economic marginalization, educational backwardness and the recommendations of Renke Commission for denotified, nomadic and semi-nomadic communities.

Summing up

The present article depicted the social life of wool weavers who are part and parcel of the Golla-kuruma community which has historical connectivity with communities like Dhangars of Maharashtra, Ahirs of Central India, Pals, Gaderias of Western India, and Yadavs of North India. They are labelled with various regional names based on regional languages. Gongadi, the traditional woollen blanket is their major cultural symbol and occupies an important place in their everyday life. Martyr shepherds Mallanna and Beerappa are revered as the community deities of shepherds across South and West India. They frequently migrate from one place to another in the quest of fodder for their sheep, goat and other livestocks. Despite their nomadic and semi-nomadic lifestyle, they are classified as Other Backward Classes (OBCs) in several states. However, they started demanding for nomadic and semi-nomadic reservationas tribes. They were identified as a semi-nomadic community in Hyderabad and erstwhile Andhra Pradesh but lost their reservation for unknown reasons. In recent times, Golla-kurumas in Telugu-speaking states launched a neo-socio-political movement in the spirit of Maharashtra's nomadic tribal category and the Renke commission's recommendations.

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Linguistic Characteristics of Legal English: An Evaluation

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Abstract

The main objective of this work is to show the Linguistic properties of Legal English as they are the matter of criticism for their static behaviour. It is claimed that the writing style of law professionals is "dull, wordy, pompous and unclear" (Malakoff, 1963:25). "They prefer to write eight words to say what may be said in two. Seeking to be precise they become redundant" (Wydick, 2005:3). Due to complex legal language, it is the common man who is most ignorant of the system because he or she neither gets the system nor law. Thus, his or her linguistic right is violated in the legal system. The criticism of Legal English is not new and not only raised by non-law people and it is not limited to a country. More or less, it is criticised universally due to its identical and static nature unlike normal languages. Swift (1726) and Jefferson (1817) and many European scholars have criticized Legal English for its static nature. In this analytical study our aim is to observe the lexical features of Legal English which causes complexities. This study is both analytical and descriptive in nature. It is based on a common hypothesis that the Legal English used in the legal system is highly complex and its comprehension needs proper training and practice. We have collected lexical items from different Indian Legal texts that represent the lexical features of Legal English. The main concern in this study is to point out the lexical properties that make Legal English different from general English. It also traces the causes of those properties that make Legal English 'frozen' and a matter of criticism.

Keywords: *linguistics, Legal English, doublets, latent ambiguity, morphology, syntax, semantics.*

1. Introduction

Legal English is the formalized language used in the legal system by law professionals, which is slightly different from plain English in terms of vocabulary, morphology, syntax, semantics and other linguistic features. It has particular relevance when it is applied to the legal drafting such as Acts of Parliaments, court pleadings, summons, and judgments, etc. Its development has been melded together with the history of Great Britain and its legislation and common law. French and Latin mutually influenced Legal English by major political, social and industrial growth in Europe. The current form of Legal English is therefore the result of many invasions in Britain (Shiflett, 2017:109).

The major impacts can be observed in the form of excessive use of Latin and French terms such as *pledge, obligation, debt, agreement, attorney, claim, contract, trespass* etc. The invasion that highly influenced the Legal English took place in 1066 by French forces, which dominated the British culture and made French the official language of the court in England. Since common men were not trained in the comprehension of French, they used English. When French power started disappearing from England, a statute of pleading was implemented in the 14th century which ordered English to be the official language of court proceedings but law professionals continued to use the legal terms from French and Latin for prestige and sometimes for the sake of avoidance of confusion. Thus, Latin and French became an integral part of Legal English used in Britain (Shiflett, 2017:110).

Properties of Legal English makes it complex for non- experts and a matter of negative criticism among the supporters of the plain language campaign. It is observed that linguistic features of Legal English create some undesirable barriers for laymen in approaching the court without the help of law professionals. For instance, some scholars such as Mellinkoff (1963), Charrow and Charrow (1982), Crystal and Davy (1969) believe that the distinct linguistic properties of Legal English are ample to consider it as a socio-dialect or a separate language from English. Some other scholars such as Dante (1979), Tiersma (1999), consider L.E[1] as a Register[2] of English used for expert communication, depending on socio-pragmatic context. A common thought has been built up among the supporters of plain language that linguistic complexities are the main hindrance for the common people in the participation of legal proceedings in the court. While law professionals are not ready to compromise with their professional monopoly. They have their strong argument that legal language or Legal English is a domain specific language that functions in a frame of a legal system like medical jargon has its own importance in the medical field, therefore linguistic liberalism in Legal English will lose its significance. Although this argument has its own strength, the claim of plain language supporters cannot be ignored. Mellinkoff (1963), Wydrick (2005), Madrunio (2013), Gocic (2012), Sagar (2017) and many more emphasize on using plain language in legal documents so that a person with average intelligence could comprehend the legal system without the help of trained law professionals.

The main concern in this study is to point out the lexical properties that make Legal English different from general English. It also traces the causes of those properties that make legal English 'frozen' and a matter of criticism. In this study we have collected many lexical items from various Indian legal texts that represent the lexical features of legal English. Supporters of *plain language movement*[3]consider that the distinct lexical items in legal English are the prominent cause of incomprehensibility for untrained people. In Spite of having suitable equivalence, law professionals are prone to use uncommon jargons in their linguistic behaviour deliberately with a view to making legal texts complex, uncommon, circumlocutory,

and full of linguistic burden. Thus, their writing is assumed *"dull, wordy, pompous and unclear"* (Malakoff, 1963:25).

2. Lexical Features

Lexical features of Legal English are one of the most complex aspects that make it unfamiliar to laymen. As Garzone and Salve (2007:12) have pointed out about the ritualistic lexical properties of Legal English which includes archaism[4] and high level of formality in legal texts. Most of the key terms in Legal English have either Latin or French origin.

Table: 1
Abolish *(from Old Frenchaboliss)*
Advocate *(from Old Frenchavocat, via from Latin'advocatus)*
Assurance *(from Old French assurer)*
Battery *(from Old Frenchbaterie)*
Contract *(Middle English: via Old French from Latincontractus)*
Counsel *(Old Frenchcounseil)*
Culprit *(Anglo-Norman French Culpable)*
Defendant *(from Latin defendere)*
Demise *(from Anglo-Norman French desmettre)*
Effect *(from Old French, or from Latineffectus)*
Heir *(Old French from Latinheres)*
Jury *(from Old Frenchjuree)*
Plaintiff *(from Old Frenchplaintif)*
Proposal *(from Old French proposer)*
Recovery *(from Anglo-Norman Frenchrecoverie)*
Reprieve *(from Anglo-Norman Frenchrepris)*
Resume *(from Old French resumer or Latin resumere)*
Society *(from French socio from Latin societas/ from socius)*
Suit *(from Anglo-Norman French siwte)*
Tort *(from Old French, from medieval Latintortum)*

Most of the borrowed lexical terms have been integrated in plain English by the process of adaptation[5]. Some of them are given in the Table 1 above.

Whereas some borrowed terms are used in their original forms which play an important role

in making Legal English complex and less comprehensible to the common masses. Table 2 and 3 represent some of these words.

Table: 2 (From Law French)

Assizes	*'settings'*
Estoppel	*'a legal principle that stops anyone from denying or alleging a certain fact due to previous conduct'*
Force majeure	*'superior force'*
Laches	*'defence to a proceeding in which a plaintiff seeks equitable relief'*
March overate	*'open market'*

Table: 3 (From Law Latin)

Amicus curiae	*'who assist the court but not a party/ court's friend'*
Alibi	*'elsewhere'* ("Accused was not at the place of crime, he was at another specified place")
Ex prate	*'one side only'* (on the application of one party only)
Ex post facto	'*retrospective*' (Ex post facto law)
Prima facie	'*at first sight'*

Legal writing becomes more complicated when law professionals use archaic and unusual words to express simple and common ideas with a view to show their professionalism in their writing. Although this habit is universally criticized, it is observed that despite having common equivalence, legal drafters use unusual words. Consider Table 4-7 which underlie some of these expressions under different categories.

2.1 Archaic, Formal, Unusual or Difficult Vocabulary

Table: 4

Legal	**Common**
Aforesaid	*'said'*
Forthwith	*'immediately'*
Herein	*'within'*
Hereinafter	*'further'*
Therein	*'here'*
Therewith	*'with that/with this'*
Whereby	*'by which'*
Witnesseth	*'eyewitness'*

2.2. Latin Words and Phrases, not in Common Use

Table: 5

Legal	Common
A non-domino	*'from one who is not the proprietor'*
Ab initio	*'from the beginning'*
Ab ante	*'before'*
Actus animi	*'act of mind'*
Ad idem	*'to the same effect'*
Ad infinitum	*'without limit'*
Alma mater	*'being mother'*
Alias	*'otherwise called'*
Billavera	*'a true bill'*
De facto	*'in fact'*
De jure	*'as the matter of legal right'*
De novo	*'a new, a fresh, a second time'*
Ex officio	*'from office'*
Fait accompli	*'an accomplished act'*
Felo de se	*'a felon as to himself'*
Fiat Justica	*'cause to be done'*
In limine	*'at the threshold'*
Laudatio	*'testimony in the favour of court'*
Lagalis homo	*'a lawful man'*
Novus homo	*'a new man'*
Nullius filius	*'the son of nobody'*
Nillumartitrium	*'no award'*
Prima facie	*'at the first sight'*
Suo moto	*'self-cognizance'*

2.3. French Terms not in General Use

Table: 6

Legal	Common
Abutting to	*'near to'*
Decree	*'judicial order'*
Herein	*'within the document'*
Hereto	*'in the document file'*
Patent	*'an official document granting rights'*
Petition	*'a formal written request'*
Pursuant	*'according to'*

2.4. Use of Formal Words/Professional Argot for Maintaining a Separate Identity

Table: 7

Formal Legal Expressions	Common
Accede	*'agree, grant, allow'*
Accordingly	*'according to'*
Accustomed to	*'used to'*
Alleviate	*'ease'*
Approach the bench	*'come here'*
Despite the fact that	*'although'*
In flagrante delicto	*'caught red handed'*
Inferior court	*'lower court'*
Issue of fact	*'denied fact'*
May it please the court	*'pleasant and courteous to the judge (before as king, doing or presenting something)'* Prior*'before'*
Your honour	*'thank you'*

2.5. Ordinary Words with Special Meaning

Common words with uncommon meanings are one of the important linguistic complexities for common people. When they try to interpret the text with general sense, they do not achieve the legislative intentions. For example, the term ***person*** refers to human beings and excludes animals, associations, and others; however, the legal definition includes firms, labour organizations, partnerships, associations, corporations, and legal representatives, among other things. The dictionary of Law defines "person-the object of legal right". There are two kinds of legal people: (1) *"human beings"* and (2) *"artificial people"*such as corporations. Another difference related to meaning in the legal system is its persuasive definition of key words depending on the scope of statues and the legislature's intention, i.e., 'person' in the Indian Citizenship Act-1995 does not include any company, association or body of individuals. The term 'child' in general means a person who is not mature, while in the legal system, child is defined by age. "Child means a boy who has not attained the age of sixteen years or a girl who has not attained the age of eighteen years". Another relevant example is the word consideration refers to *"an act of thinking carefully about something"* (Hornby, Ashby, &Wehmeier, 2009). While in legal system it is used for a *"payment or something in return"*[6] (Indian Contract Act, 1872:11).

Due to semantic differences between legal use and general use, legal writing becomes more complicated. It seems the writings of law professionals target a particular community and avoid the common mass of the state.

The use of common words with uncommon meanings may be more misleading than the use of Latin or some unfamiliar term of art. See Table 8 for some examples of common words having different senses in the legal system.

Table: 8

Words	**Legal Meaning**	**Common Meaning**
Action	*Lawsuit*	*deed*
Assign	*party to whom something is transferred*	*to give out as a task*
Damages	*money compensation for loss*	*defected*
Demise	*to transfer property by lease*	*a person's death*
Man	*legal person*	*adult male*
Motion	*application to the court*	*movement*
Of course	*as a matter of right.*	*yes*
Party	*person litigating*	*a social gathering*
Save	*Except*	*store for the future*
Serve	*to place food before*	*deliver legal papers*
Virtue	*face or authority*	*behaviour*
Action	*Lawsuit*	*deed*

2.6 Doublets or Binomials

The term doublets or binomials refer to the pair words used together in a fixed order. In Legal English the term 'doublet' is famous although Binomials and doublets are nearly synonyms. As Gustafson (1982) cites the term 'doublet' used for this expression was coined by Yakov Malkiel (1914)[7] as a *"sequence of words pertaining to the same for class placed on an identical level of syntactic hierarchy and ordinarily connected by some kind of lexical link"*(Gustafson, 1982:72). Such as *aid and abet* (to assist another in the commission of a crime by words or conduct), *goods and chattels* (All kinds of goods and professions), etc. Koskenniemi (1968:108) points out the doublets are the matter of reference which are in dual nature qualitative and quantitative[8]. Qualitative doublets keep two items together of different semantic value. For instance, *'salinityand reason', 'law and order', up 'and down', 'all and singular'*, etc. Whereas quantitative doublets are the pair of two words, expressing the same concept. Such as 'rule and regulation', 'fit and proper', 'null and void', 'far and wide'.

The important feature of legal doublets is that both the lexical items belong to same grammatical category:

Adj+Adj

- Null and Void,
- Fit and proper,
- Black and white
- Dead and alive
- Legal and valid
- New and novel

N+N

- food and drink,
- Soul and spirit,
- horse and carriage,
- Dollars and Cents

V+V

- shoot and kill
- order and direct
- Aid and abet.

Legal doublets have a history of its own. Most of them were formed during the transition period of England. In the 14th century in Britain, the court language was French. The elite class was dominant in the legal system. Uneducated or common people of English did not understand the court's proceedings. At the beginning of English control in England, a statute of pleading was implemented which ordered English language to be the official language of all the courts' proceedings in Britain, but it did not mean that French and Latin disappeared from Legal English. Law professionals continued to use Latin and French terms for the matter of prestige and sometimes they used them to avoid confusion during the time of transmission and its significance was also to give rhetorical weight and balance to the phrase and to maximize the understanding of readers or listeners (Bryan, 1987:198). The combination of synonyms or near synonyms of Latin, French and English, has become an integral part of Legal English such as *null and void* (Latin and old French), *save and except* (French and Latin**),** *fit and proper* (English and French), etc. This habit was extended to using two words from the same origin carrying the same concept such as *form and after* (old English), *each and every* (English), *have and hold* (English). Some scholars are of the opinion that doublets have more rhetorical and oratorical significance than etymology. For instance, George (1987) and Malakoff (1963) recommend avoiding the doublets from legal drafting. They consider them the cause of verbosity and complexity. Whereas some scholars consider the semantic significance of doublets. They view that doublets give the beauty of writing without losing the clarity. For instance, Bryan (1987) *"The purpose of doubling was dual to give rhetorical weight and balance to the phrase and to maximise the understanding of readers or listeners"*(Bryan, 1987:198). Charrow (1983) considers doublets to have the special purpose of balancing the phrase. He argues: *"Since coupled synonyms are by definition redundant, they rarely endanger its clarity. Since coupled*

synonyms add beauty to writing without sacrificing clarity, I see nothing sinful in their moderate use"(Charrow, 1983:1094).

Although doublets have linguistic beauty but it cannot be ignored that, they do not have a rhetorical impression. They play a vital role in adding verbosity to the writing and bringing a linguistic burden to common men. Their uses for following tradition, despite having suitable equivalence is not a good practice.

Table: 9 (List of some legal doublets usually found in legal texts)

Doublets	**Origin**
Act and deed	*Latin-German*
Aid and abet	*Lain-old French*
All and sundry	*German-Swedish*
All and singular	*German- French*
Any and all	*English-German*
By and under	*Middle Dutch-old English*
Custom and usage	*French-French*
Each and every	*English-English*
False and untrue	*Latin-English*
Fit and proper	*English-Latin*
Kind and character	*German-Greek*
Mind and memory	*German-Latin*
New and novel	*German-Latin*
Null and void	*Latin-French*
Order and direct	*French-Latin*
Over and above	*English-English*
Pardon and forgive	*French-English*
Save and except	*French Latin*
Null and avoid	*Old English- French*
Similar and like	*Latin-English*
Terms and conditions	*Latin -Latin*
Total and entire	*French -Latin*
True and correct	*Old English Latin*
Will and testament	*German Latin*

3. Syntactic Features

3.1. Long and Complex Sentences

Tiersma (1999) observes that legal language is too difficult for the general public to understand because it is riddled with wordiness, redundancy, and specialized vocabulary, and is frequently characterized by lengthy, complex, and unusual sentence structure. If a drafter writes a long and complex sentence, it must have one of two reasons: either he wants to fit

more information into a single sentence or he circumrotates it. Both Possibilities are considered barriers to clear communication. Long and complicated sentences are common among legal professionals. Usually, they use punctuation to guide oral delivery rather than to help in conveying the semantic importance. They prefer to include the introductory part, main content, reason and conclusion in a single sentence. Thus, sentences become long, complicated and complex. Long and complex sentences pack information tightly in intricate patterns of coordination and subordination (Crystal & Davy 1969:204; Gustafsson 1975: 22; Bhatia 1982:7). Gustafsson (1975) finds an average of 2.86 clauses per sentence and the average sentence contains about 55 words, almost twice as many as the average sentence of scientific English, and nearly eight times the number in dramatic texts. Length and complexity of structure tend to go together. Mackinlay (2004) considers syntactic discontinuity a major problem in comprehensibility of legal documents. Syntactic discontinuity creates a semantic and syntactic gap between components of a sentence. For instance we may see the length of sentences in Indian Penal Code-1860. Section 201 of Indian Penal Code[9] contains 258 words in a sentence which is not only complex but also against the cognitive system of the person with average intelligence. As psycholinguistic studies have revealed that the accessibility and understandability of long sentences are difficult for an untrained mind. The short-term memory may keep around seven unrelated pieces of information at a time (Miller, 1956). According to Wearing (1973), the length of sentences in texts affects readers' ability to understand and remember. More words in a sentence make sentences harder to understand and remember.

3.2. Passive structure of Sentence

A Passive voice stresses the recipient (object) of action. It hides the role of agent. The usual constructions of passive sentences use auxiliary to be or to get together with the past participle of the main verb.
Active – They filed a complaint.
Passive – A Complaint was filed.

Both sentences (A) and (B) give the same sense but the intention of the speaker/writer seems different, sentence (A) has focused on agent 'They' while sentence (B) has focused on the term 'complaint'. Despite the fact that many language critics of the twentieth century discouraged the excessive use of passive construction, law professionals are forced to use it in their writing on a regular basis. Willam Strunk (1918) suggests not to do excessive use of the passive voice. "The active voice is usually more direct and vigorous than the passive .... This rule does not, of course, mean that the writer should entirely discard the passive voice, which is frequently convenient and sometimes necessary"(Willam,1918) Passive construction omits the agent even where its role is important. Focuses on the transitivity of action, whereas sentences in active construction are more muscular, direct and succinct.In his essay "politics

and the English language", George Orwell recommends the active voice as an elementary principle of composition. He writes "never use passive where you can use active'' Critics of passive voice focus on mainly two issues (1). It requires more words than activity, so it violates the "principle of economy". Which seeks to save time and energy by conveying more information with less effort.Its aim is "to make things easy for our organs of speech,to economize time and effort in the work of expression" (Whitney 1877: 345).

Comparison between Active and Passive.

Active – (A) The trial judge will deny your motion. (7 words)

Passive– (B) Your motion will be denied by the trial judge. (9 words)

Active – (C) The legislative history supports our conclusion. (6 words)

Passive– (D) Our conclusion is supported by the legislative history (8 words)

Active – (E) The state will punish him. (5 words)

Passive– (F) He will be punished by the state (7 words)

Active– (G) The state should ensure the safety of every citizen. (9 words)

Passive– (H) The safety of every citizen shall be ensured by the state. (11 words)

In the above examples, both sentences in active and passive construction convey the same information, but sentences in passive voice are longer than those of Active. As a result, "one good reason to prefer the active voice is economy—the active voice requires fewer words."(2)a passive voice can create ambiguity.Through the active voice, we can easily express who is doing what to whom, while the passive voice hides the identity of the actor. Thus, sentences become impersonal such construction is called truncated passive, whose actor is hidden in fog. Bureaucrats and legal professionals purposefully write sentences in the truncated passive to conceal the actor's responsibility. Richard Wydick suggests law professionals prefer active sentences for comprehension of legal text clearly. He points out the shortcoming of truncated passive.

Bureaucrats love to write in the truncate passive because it allows them to hide in the fog: the reader is unable to determine who is responsible for the action or lack thereof."(Wydick, 2005). Krista Ratcliffe, professor at Marquette University, cites the use of passive as an example of the role of grammar as to establish relation between words and magical conjuring where passive voice mystifies accountability by erasing who or what does an action. The Order and command by truncated passive in statutes hide accountability of authority. Here we can understand with the following examples. If draft author writes **"**Notice shall be issued", then who will issue the notice? Which authority? It raises questions because he should have written, "The district collector (authority) shall issue the notice."

The criticism of passive construction does not imply that it has only flaws; it does convey the intended message; the issue is its overuse in legal writings. Agent is less important or no matters of accountability or you have good reason for its use, the passive can be used.

Conclusion

Psycholinguistic studies such as Charrow and Charrow, (1979), Sales et. al. (1977), Elworket. al. (1979) have proved that the uncommon and low frequent lexical items are less comprehensible and hard to understand than those of high frequent and common in general use. Most of the studies have discovered that word frequency and memory are correlational. High frequency words are easier to decode (Baddely and Scott, 1971) and (Duncan, 1973).

Thus, above identified Linguistic features of legal English are enough to consider that the comprehension of Legal English needs practice and training. Uncommon, archaic and distinct lexical items used in legal English contribute much to make it incomprehensible for laymen. They also give it an identity of English for specific purpose (ESP)[10] The concept of ESP emerged during the post-World War II development of science and technology, as an answer to students and specialists' needs to learn English to communicate in their fields of work. Hutchinson and Waters (1987: 6) have identified three main factors that have led to the development of ESP: the demands of a "brave new world", a revolution in linguistics, and the birth of the Learner-Centred Approach.

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End Note:

[1] Legal English

[2] A set of features of speech or writing characteristic of a particular type of linguistic activity or a particular group when engaging in it (Matthews, 2007:339).

[3] A linguistic movement for determining simple language in public communication so that public participation in proceedings could be assured.

[4] In language, an archaism is a word, a sense of a word, or a style of speech or writing that belongs to a historical epoch long beyond living memory.

[5] The process by which loan words are changed to fit the sound patterns of the language into which they are borrowed.

[6] Consideration is the price of the contract and it can be right, interest or responsibility etc. According to section

2(d) of the Indian Contract Act "when at the desire of the promisor, promise or any other person has done or abstained from doing or does or abstains from doing or promises to do or to abstain from doing something, such act or abstinence, or promise is called a consideration for the promise." (Indian Contract Act, 1872:11)

[7] Yakov Malkiel is a Roman etymologist and founding member of journal Romance philology. One of his major contributions is the development of Latin words, roots, prefixes, and suffixes in modern Romance languages. (https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Yakov_Malkiel)

[8] There are referents, which are inherently dual in character. They may be things composed of two parts or containing two poles. The duality of the referent easily calls for the use of two symbols" (Koskenniemi,1968: 108).

[9] Causing disappearance of evidence of offence, or giving false information to screen offenders.—Whoever, knowing or having reason to believe that an offence has been committed, causes any evidence of the commission of that offence to disappear, with the intention of screening the offender from legal punishment, or with that intention gives any information respecting the offence which he knows or believes to be false; if a capital offence.—shall, if the offence which he knows or believes to have been committed is punishable with death, be punished with imprisonment of either description for a term which may extend to seven years, and shall also be liable to fine; if punishable with imprisonment for life.—and if the offence is punishable with 1[imprisonment for life], or with imprisonment which may extend to ten years, shall be punished with imprisonment of either description for a term which may extend to three years, and shall also be liable to fine; if punishable with less than ten years' imprisonment.—and if the offence is punishable with imprisonment for any term not extending to ten years, shall be punished with imprisonment of the description provided for the offence,..... for a term which may extend to one-fourth part of the longest term of the imprisonment provided for the offence, or with fine, or with both. Illustration A, knowing that B has murdered Z, assists B to hide the body with the intention of screening B from punishment. A is liable to imprisonment of either description for seven years, and also to fine." (Section 201 in The Indian Penal Code).

[10] The concept of ESP emerged during the post-World War II development of science and technology, as an answer to students and specialists' needs to learn English to communicate in their fields of work. Hutchinson and Waters (1987: 6) have identified three main factors that have led to the development of ESP: the demands of a "brave new world", a revolution in linguistics, and the birth of the Learner-Centred Approach.

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Techno-militia: Rightwing, Fake News and Cyberspace in India

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Abstract

Internet is increasingly seen as a war machine where ideas otherwise defeated are deployed for political mobilization. This new form of expression is made possible by an organized army of activists whose true identities remain hidden. Though the forces across the political spectrum are deploying the Internet as a theatre of articulation of their political doctrines, this paper tries to investigate only the activism of right-wing forces that converts the Internet into a war machine. The transformation of the Internet as an ideological apparatus which emphasizes social norms favourable for conservative forces; this research presumes, is made possible by secret band operating through the selective deployment of hashtags, Facebook pages, blogs, YouTube, websites, Instagram, Twitter and Facebook profiles. However, the nature of their activism can be tracked, identified and analyzed to predict their behaviour. Through a digital ethnography on the platform described above and content analysis of material produced and shared for public consumption by these secretive forces, this paper argues that a cultural atmosphere useful for the defense of conservative society is reinvented on the Internet; this paper refers to it as *techno-militia*. Through a networked channel of activists, who are united for a perceived clan consciousness, worked upon by certain identifiable characteristics is identified and discussed in the paper.

Key Word: *Techno-militia, Social Media, Right Wing, Hindutva, Internet, Hate Speech, Conservative Forces.*

Introduction

This paper presumes that the Internet is deployed for conservative politics in a way that helps mobilize the mass on cultural lines. The labels *techno-militia*, according to this paper is the new face of rightwing politics in India. The idea of an imagined community that had inherited a god world is the fuel that fires it. Powered by conservative insignia like mythical Rama, Ayodhya, Krishna, temples and *gaumata- Gau* means cow and *Mata* means mother- and united by anti-Muslim narratives, the rightwing ideology operates distinctly on the Internet. Hate is the operational mechanism of this militia, which operates through hydra-headed hashtags, Facebook timelines and online publishing platforms. WhatsApp, Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, and YouTube have emerged as their war machine. Here hidden actors behind the screen spaces on social media platforms deploy conspiracy theories to justify violence that followed the partition of India, re-script the history of India, in particular those in ancient India, the Varna system, the four-fold classification of society based on one's birth; is corroborated, caste fan pages exhort caste pride and perpetuate casteism, and even caste violence is glorified. Even crimes like honour killing are justified to defend the greater cause

of the nation made of pure blood, according to their imagination. The open practice of racism and making the nation a homogenous race is its priority. This militia's socio-economic composition comprises young, urban, educated, and middle-class India. The nexus between conservative radicalism and cyberspace in the Indian social context and fake news' role in the linkages finds space in the paper.

Literature review

Rightwing politics in India as a political doctrine evolved through canonical writings (Savarkar, 1925; 1928; 1949/1984; 1949/1984; 1985; 1970/1908; Golwalkar 1966; 1939; Upadhyaya, 1958, 1965, 1968). The piecing together of this literature forms what may be called Sangh literature. A plethora of scientific interpretations and anecdotes on the same had opened a vista of scholarship. Hindutva, one of the major forms of it, emerge as a political doctrine that mobilizes the mass in the cultural realm, according to several writers and scholarships in this area (Hansen, 1999; Andersen and Damel, 2018; Jaffrelot, et. al., 2019; Jaffrelot, 2005; 2007; Chatterjee, 1986; Mukhopadhyay, 2019; Noorani, 2019; Chopra, 2019; Dasgupta, 2019). Some literature that connects *Sangh* ideology with populism and other political ideology programmes shows how different organizations and political actors are attaining comparative advantage in visibility over the years by deploying populist tactics (Jha, 2019; Sharma, 2019; Ganguly & Dwivedi, 2019; Ullekh, 2015). Rightwing political actors' use of the Internet to mobilize support basis in India in the cultural realms to attain visibility and more public acceptability found space of attention in a couple of works (Laul 2018; Adhikari 2011; Guha 2013; Chaturvedi 2016; Overdorf, 18 June 2012; Rushdie, 1 February 2013). These writings show the troublesome nature of rightwing hate messages on the Internet.

The literature reviewed points toward the scholarship that is currently in vogue. That all furnishes the abundance of information about the rise of rightwing politics, the arch pillar of which is Hindutva; that the journey over the last seven decades from a state of the least accepted entity to a state of dominating political actor is not a simple one. Though the literature reviewed documented plenty of works related to the rise, modus of organization, tactics and propaganda mechanism of rightwing forces in India, the least attention is currently found on how the Hindu social order and organized campaigns by rightwing forces find expressions profoundly on the Internet. The literature that sheds light on the fact that it is through organized hate-filled propaganda on the Internet that the *rightwingers* in India cultivate a cultural capital is scanty. So this review of the literature finds that there exist literature gaps in investigating the synergy developed between rightwing forces and cyberspace, towards which this paper caters attention.

In the light of extensive literary surveys undertaken for this work, we have used conceptual models, social media, saffron science, rightwing, Hindutva, Internet, hate speech, and conservative forces. These concepts are extensively used in this work. *Social Media* refers to any media platforms on Internet where content in the medium is created by those who use the platforms. *Right Wing* refers to any ideology propagating a society based on the glory of

the cultural past. *Hindutva* refers to a political ideology that tries to execute a polity in India that is pure by blood, race, language, and broadly Indian culture sanctioned by Hindu scriptures. *Internet* refers to any system of computer networks where data is transported from one end to another. *Hate Speech* refers to politically motivated information dissemination in which a 'perceived' enemy is targeted, and their sentiments are hurt on the question of their loyalty to nation, religion, caste, race, region, or language, who are more likely minorities in a majoritarian state. *Conservative Forces* refer to any social groups that believe in undisputed loyalty to culture, scripture and tradition. In this paper, this expression is used interchangeably with the expression right Wing.

Methodology

This paper presumes that a techno-militia operates on Internet, the basic traits of which are as follows: fake profiles, Hindu, upper caste, male, blind faith in the leader, irrational logic to scientific questions, lack of reasoned thinking and poor sense of history. Accordingly, the paper randomly collected profiles and hashtags on Twitter and Facebook as well as websites and blogs that cater to a conservative society in which fake news is a feeder that spreads information of a sort pushing conservative political mobilization on cultural lines. A select number of profiles of politicians, political parties and their followers were scrutinized, which are then analyzed on www.trackalytics.com as well the researchers themselves reviewed it to trace the analytics such as the number of posts, followers, likes, and most discussed topics. From the profiles of politicians and political parties, a series of fake social media accounts is collected to reference them with viral hashtags, where this paper presumed that techno-militia are active promoters of false political information. The followers of politicians and political parties are traced in order to find out fake social media profiles, which this paper defines as social media accounts with no profile picture, no activities and engagements, no followers and are primarily inactive and where the online activities are reviewed to infer the mechanism by which techno-militia furthers false information through a process which this paper called rightwing radicalism. This paper presumes that techno-militia is closely affiliated with fake profiles that explode a list of similar profiles across the social media landscape. Hashtags and their nature are examined with reference to the conflict zones of India, such as religion, caste, and gender. Content analysis is organized to evaluate the nature of engagements and type of information being shared through hashtags, and equal attention is furnished to examine the affiliation of the inactive, fake profiles vi-a-vis hashtags. The paper also sourced evidence of techno-militia that is likely used by rightwing forces to prove the argument that rightwing forces have more proclivities towards perpetuating conflict zones of India through the dissemination of false information.

Analysis of Social Media Activism

Social media platforms of information dissemination are selectively deployed as an ideological apparatus by a secret band of activists affiliated with rightwing politics. This

paper first surveyed social media profiles of politicians and political parties on Twitter, Facebook, Website, and Instagram. Their selection is executed objectively. The most popular profiles of politicians and political parties across the broad political spectrum are surveyed over a period of two general elections- 2014 and 2019, see *Table I*. Research assumes that hate-filled trolls, fake accounts that secretly function for the right wing and false news that are deployed for indoctrinating ordinary users are found in the follower list of the politicians, see *Table I*. However, this paper does not find evidence to prove a correlation between these fake profiles and political actors surveyed for their direct involvement. Fake profiles follow the politicians surveyed on social media sites, and the paper does not find evidence for their direct knowledge of the followers and their fake character.

Table I
Politicians on Website, Twitter, Facebook, Instagram, YouTube October 2021

Politicians	Website	Twitter	Facebook	Instagram	YouTube Subscribers
Narendra Modi	narendramodi.in	72.1m	46.78m	61.5m	9.3 m
Amit Shah	amitshah.co.in	27m	14m	3.8m	35.9k
Aravind Kejriwal	aamaadmiparty.org	23.2m	8.8m	1.1m	41.1k
Rajnath Singh	rajnathsingh.in	20.7m	6.9m	1.1m	36.3k
Rahul Gandhi	rahulgandhi.in/en	19.5m	4.5m	1.7m	513k
Yogi Adityanath	yogiadityanath.in	15.5m	6.7m	2.4m	3.9k
Akhilesh Yadav		14.83m	7.4m	590k	
SmritiIrani		11.8m	5.3m	1.1m	
Piyush Goyal	piyushgoyal.in	10.4m	9m	922k	83.7k
Shashi Tharoor	shashitharoor.in	8.1m	1.5m	551k	423k
Nitish Kumar		7m	1.7m	14.1k	
Lalu Prasad Yadav		5.9m	1.1m	44.8k	
Sambit Patra	sambitpatra.in/	5.2m	1.6m	60.1k	2.88k
Vasundhara Raje	vasundhararaje.in	4.5m	9.3m	367k	18.6k
Nirmala Sitharaman		4.4m	Less than 1m	259k	
Priyanka Gandhi Vadra		4.1m	4.4m	512k	
M.K.Stalin	stalinani.com, mkstalin.in	2.7m	10m	884k	199k
Sharad Pawar	sharadpawar.com	2.3m	Less than 1m	696k	
Jagat Prakash Nadda	jagatprakashnadda.in	2.3m	1.1	209k	604
Mayawati		2.1m		47.8K	
Mamata Banerjee		6.2M	4.7M	177K	

The *Table I* indicates that political actors on the right of the political spectrum have fan following bigger than the rest of the players. The table included prominent politicians in national politics, where the audience is comparatively higher for BJP. That also means their messages directly go to a wider audience. The table also shows that compared to other players, the leadership of the BJP has a higher fan following. The survey randomly selected possible fake profiles operating in the profiles to understand further the fan following.

The number of fake profiles among the BJP audience is higher, as with the number of followers. Though most profiles surveyed have the existence of fake fan profiles, those among the rightwing political players have a distinct pattern. Its identity cannot be established, but its activities tell something unique about its existence. See column I of *Table III* about fake accounts on rightwing social media profiles. They have similar nature- images denoting Hindu deities, posts praising rightwing leaders and demonizing opponents, and their activities identify with hate against minorities. Hashtags seen tagged by fan following of the rightwing profiles are similar when compared with others in the political spectrum. *Table III* shows hashtags that were viral over the election seasons. Some of the rightwing hashtags closely observed under this survey indicate that it originates from a clear motif.

A Twitter profile @Maryam89837825, which follows Prime Minister, Narendra Modi, has no profile picture, followers, or tweets. There are plenty like this; for instance, @GN3366, @Sunilsabal13, @Mechmagic2, @abhishe36556828 do not have a profile picture, followers, and tweets which are created recently and seem to increase the followers of the Prime Minister. But there is more to this story as a scroll down gives the clear impression that these profiles, which are most probably fake, operate as a bridge, as a facilitator and a potential re servoir of something hidden in the architecture of the communication possibilities of the Internet.

Political parties, whose huge followers are also clear instances of how techno-militia can operate and perpetuate fake news in a system where technology architecture helps actors to disseminate information in their favour, see Table II.

Table II

Political Parties on Facebook, Twitter by October 2021

Political parties	Website	Twitter	Facebook	Instagram	YouTube
Congress	aicc.org.in	8.4m	6.1m	1m	1.66m
Bhartiya Janata Party	bjp.org	16.8m	16 m	4M	3.89m
Samajwadi Party	samajwadiparty.in	2.6 m	2.8 m	89.3K	185K
BahujanSamaj Party	bspindia.org	15.9K	3,200	73.4K	231
AamAadmi Party	aamaadmiparty.org	5.7m	5m	560K	1.48m
DMK	dmk.in	735.5K	Less than1 million	89.1K	
Rashtriya Janata Dal	rjd.co.in	673.8K	Less than1 million	64.1K	
All India Trinamool Congress	aitcofficial.org	510.2K	1.3M	84.6K	400K

The same pattern can be traced here, too; for example, @leo36798 on the Congress profile, @Modiiiiiii7 on the BJP profile, @Amit69394171 on the Aam Aadmi Party profiles have no profile picture nor any tweets. More importantly, these profiles on verification found that they were created on October 2021. We have selected the profiles of politicians in *Table I* based on their social media presence, who represent different strands of political ideology in the political spectrum, and the same rationale has been applied to political parties.

BJP has the most considerable presence on the Internet, which outnumbers most political parties and politicians by many millions. It is clear from the data that BJP has a bigger audience; hence their narratives are likely to get more acceptability among its fan followers.

Table III

Fake Profiles and Hashtags

Twitter Profiles Surveyed		**Hashtag**
1	**2**	**3**
Fake Twitter Profiles	**Twitter Profiles where fake profiles with militant nature active**	**Activity Strong**
@imsumit99, @Internet_Hindus, @Damru, @68e11543967046d, @atulkumarawasth, @as_465, @PBhavit, @RAMESHK43308659, @valaramkalbi981, @Prakash9696P, @Ganesh47224, @laxminarayan793, @ashutosh6485, @sunnytyagi545, @HinduDharma1, @sagenaradramuni, @Bhaskarg77G	@SwamyBhakt, @68e11543967046d, @vhskerala, @vhs_karnataka , @vhsindia, @harishmohamed58, @psjangin, @tiwariumeshlkw, @yogeshjangid592, @imaakhyan, @nimi2biju, @MukeskK, @atulkumarawasth, @avinashchoubey, @Prakash9696P, @Ganesh47224, @valaramkalbi981	#RamMandir, #Remove Mughal History, #Gaumata, #Prayagraj, #Ayodhya, #Hindutva, #hindunationrow, #Nationwantsrammandir, #NaamVaapsi , #RamMandir, #AntiNationals, #TajMahal, #Tejomahalya

Filtering is a strategy in which information is disseminated to the target audience. On Twitter, the profiles we have tested in column 1 in *Table III* indicate that fake profiles with no profile picture are intentional with a hidden purpose. The profiles we have discovered are fake news sources in the landscape of political communication. Here, when one politician posts a particular message, it goes to a target audience networked through these profiles.

There are blogs and Facebook that talk to a conservative audience; the information disseminated through these blogs is less scientific. However, they are opinionated and partisan, which get high treatment, appreciation and acceptance among a vast audience, see *Table IV*.

Table IV

Blogs and Facebook Speaking to Conservative Audience	
Facebook Page	**Blogging Site**
1	**2**
the sanatanadharmis, *Anti Reservation India*	indiannationalisticpost.blogspot.in, hinduonline.blogspot.in, varnam.nationalinterest.in, opindia.com, hindujagruti.org

Posting and information contents that prefer divisive nationalistic sentiments have more takers; Facebook pages are proofs; see column 1 of *Table IV*. Hashtags subjected to rigorous digital ethnographic scrutiny give hindsight to the increasing attempt to discredit nationalist leaders and stalwarts of the freedom movement in which polarizing the society on communal lines are commonplace (see column 3 of *Table III*). Political opponents being presented as inefficient and corrupt are more fashionable, for which scrutiny conducted on Twitter profiles are examples; see table V.

Table V

Populist Twitter Profiles	
Twitter profiles	**Hashtag Distorting History**
1	**2**
@PBhavit,	#Nationwantsrammandir,
@RAMESHK43308659,	#NaamVaapsi,
@valaramkalbi981,	#RamMandir,
@Prakash9696P,	#AntiNationals,
@Ganesh47224,	#TajMahal,
@laxminarayan793,	#Tejomahalya
@ashutosh6485	

There were scenarios in profiles identified in column 1 of *Table V* in which they were found aggressively sharing and promoting caste-related news; see column 1 in *Table IV*. We have found that hashtags are created and shared by well organized cyber armies; see column 2 in Table III. The content goes to the fan following, who further shares the same with their extended networks. Thereby they are writing down their perspectives on the head of the audience.

We had undertaken a keyword search on Facebook with the hashtag- #Nationwantsrammandir, which led us to a whopping list of profiles, Facebook forums and discussions about Ram Mandir, a disputed site in India that, according to both Hindus and Muslims, is a sacred place of their faith. Some profiles which were tagged by the hashtag are listed in *Table VI*

Table VI

Profiles Tagged with #Nationwantsrammandir			
Pages	**Followers**	**Personal Profiles**	**Followers**
@Resurgingdharma	32826	ShivangiKharwal (facebook.com/shivangiABVP1)	17157
@pratapgarhdevelopment	223862	R J Kiran (facebook.com/Kiranmai.RJ/)	80543
@bhagwanshriganesh	14720	Niladri Bose (facebook.com/NiladriBose2015)	5232
@swayamsevaks	23944	Vishal Sharma (facebook.com/vishalsahotas)	

These fan pages and profiles aggressively follow Hindutva, rightwing ideologies and share partisan information. However, the authenticity of the shared news is not their priority; rather, ardent faith in leaders, ideologies and rightwing causes defined their activities, see *Table VI*.

Consider the profile description of a Twitter user we studied in the digital ethnography, @avinashchoubey on 12 June 2014. It showed that "IT professional. Honorable PM Shri Modiji follows me. Blocked by Anti Modi Folks- Sushma, Rajdeep, Sagarika, Farhan, Mahindra, Javed Akhtar, etc". This profile is an example for partisan political communication. The user describes that the anti-Modi faction blocked him, so he may not be seeing competing perspectives on the Internet. Our survey on Twitter profiles like @HinduDharma1, @sagenaradramuni, @Bhaskarg77G have found that aggressive partisan sharing of information is most sought after; see coloumn 1 in Table III. Twitter activities, Facebook posts, and streaming videos appear on parochial and subjective political culture. The caste splinter group, communal factions, lobby bloc, militants, and hate mongers take up on their partisan dialogue colonies spreading fake news.

Results

The following section discusses the variables derived from the data profiled from social media profiles. The profiles surveyed are distinct by their themes that serve rightwing radicalism: justifying violence for the cause of an imagined culture, dogmatizing the Varna system - the Indian form of racism, inactive profiles to push hate, fan pages catering to the caste system, glorification of caste violence, open expression of caste pride, open use of caste surname, friend request just because of caste names, justifying honour killing. Making cyberspace a conservative social order, users' activities draw some patterns analogous to a hierarchical feudal social order. Below are some patterns that the Internet gives way to perpetuating a feudal caste social system using fake news as a weapon of social mobilization.

The science of violence

Scanning news feeds or comments on Facebook and Twitter, we have found that there are attempts to portray that some types of violence in the past are scientifically justifiable. There are pieces of information in the news feeds that draw scientific explanations to the Sati system- The Indian tradition of a wife immolating herself on the funeral pyre of her dead husband. Partition violence is a fake story to some people; communal riot is a fabricated narrative because violence is not the Indian culture. Justification for honour killings, gender violence and mob lynching goes to the consumption of an audience formed and united by divisive ideas. Narrative and conspiracy theories justify rape to execute a higher political goal. Consider the Facebook profile of Internet Hindu facebook.com/thesanatanadharmis, a group which says it is against all those who were 'sickular' and pseudo secular. The page says:

'If we find out that you are nothing but a leftist/communist/secularist/Marxist/Hindu-hating who is only here to spread discord among fans, you will mercilessly be thrown out'.

The Twitter profile of Internet Hindu, @Internet_Hindus, claims to protect the motherland from pseudo secular. It is one among the cyber army recruits whose only purpose is to give logic to an irrational social system by hate trolls and fake news. One can get enormous information about blogs and websites like indiannationalisticpost. blogspot.in, hinduonline.blogspot.in and varnam.nationalinterest.in, which disseminate the idea that presents logic to a feudal social system. These types of blogs and web links give one a detailed description of the Mahabharata date based on Archaeology and other information that explains ancient knowledge and technique in India with claimed scientific evidence.

Fake Profiles

The social media profiles that follow conservative political actors have profile pictures decked by fake images. It is unclear why they were not using the real picture, but we have assumed it got a purpose, see *Table III*. Their activities are proof of their hidden intentions. Following

political actors standing the right of the political spectrum, culture, history, ancient science, and religious insignia are favourite discussion topics. Nothing falls to their attention except their levels of engagement to feed conservative politics. But their fake pictures try to hide identifying information, all because they engage in hate speech that perpetuates deep fissures in the conflict zones of India.

Science of the Varna

Some profile pictures and bio lines directly refer to a feudal social order. It glorifies the Varna system, which according to many user profiles, is scientific. They have deities, temples and saffron-coloured flags as profile pictures. Some profiles claim that the Varna system — the four-fold classification of society in early Indian history based on birth was a superior social order. It gives what is due to each individual according to their virtue. They claim that those who criticize the Varna system are mean who lack the correct perspective about Indian society and its history. The essay posted on sulekha.com shared by a Facebook user and reviewed by this paper discusses the science behind the Varna system. It says that linking the Varna system with caste is unfortunate. An average citizen passing through this discussion shared on social media newsfeeds fails to think about the veracity of shared information.

Inactive Profiles

Some profiles are inactive see *Table III*. All the repeated visits to Twitter handles would find that not only are they inactive, but the profiles give the impression that they follow some select political leaders. Hence, they can increase the list of followers and the particular leader can boast of the increasing fan following. A quick survey of the list of huge fan followings of political actors provides hints to the plenty of idle profiles. Interestingly, they follow none other than a particular leader and no longer are they followed by any other profile. Then what is the purpose of profiles like this remains curious.

Caste Fan Pages

People with similar interests find solidarity in caste forums see *Table III* and *V*. AI based news feeds in the caste pages on Facebook enable its huge audience to see an ocean of caste news. The pages glorify *Manu*, the ancient lawgiver, and endorse the idea that 'Manu the progenitor of humanity, and the initiator of the Indian Varna system'. Facebook pages like 'Anti-Reservation Community', and 'India Against Reservation' are disseminating information that disowns any affirmative policies giving caste-based reservation. There are conversations about the superiority of one's caste; such divisive conversations were uncommon in traditional public spaces. The commutation of caste solidarity within the caste forum is higher than those between different caste groups. Caste groups look at each other with contempt and belittle the other by sharing mythological stories. The exchange of

information among members of each caste forum is greater. No traditional media or public forums give space to articulate caste feelings like this.

The profiles and caste fan pages are testimony to the fact that three or four people can go to any extreme to push an agenda and set prime-time TV debates in the nation. These feudal actors can make any information trending and viral among a greedy audience of caste news. It is an army of the conservative political constituency defended by rightwing politics.

Caste violence glorified on Social Media

Hate messages circulated through WhatsApp have contributed to violence against the lower caste communities in Karnataka in 2017 (Agarwal, July 15, 2017). Similar other incidents reported in different parts of India pointed that they are not stray incidents. There are clear patterns. Social media profiles glorify members of the caste community involved with caste-based violence; see *Table III*, *IV* and *V*. Using memes and selfie videos to spread messages of hate against other caste, exchanges based on caste feelings are not only fanning hate, but it also glorifies violence to protect a perceived sense of purity of the clan. Members of other communities retaliate similarly on cyberspace, mainly on WhatsApp and Facebook. Those creating abusive casteist videos, memes and spreading hate are young people; actors who find vote banks on caste identity taps on their innocence. The caste violence celebrated contains selfie videos where some show weapons like swords and praise their own caste while threatening members of other castes.

Caste Pride

We found that people who otherwise never openly use their caste identity are copiously using it on cyberspace. Profiles and fan groups where people mask their identity with fake profiles engage in activities that extol their caste and openly showcase caste pride. Some other groups would go farther and talk voraciously about the merits of their caste and brag a lot about famous people from the world of sports, business tycoons, literature and film. They persuade other members in the caste forums to be proud of famous people of their caste. The discussants in caste fan pages find nothing wrong in praising caste status; they extol the legends and more popular figures of their caste.

Open Use of Caste Names

People find it easy to appear as Majumdar, Patel, Awasthi, Aiyar or Kapoor on social media sites and form an audience for casteist fake news with like-minded people who love to hear similar news. They engage in hate activities and perpetuate caste pride. At the same time, people from the lower castes are usually hesitant to appear with their caste names on social networking profiles. There are different caste names in different states and languages. Menon, Nair, Nambiar, Reddy, Naidu, Rao, are examples of caste names in south India. In North

India, names such as Sharma, Verma, Shastri, Mishra are dominant. In western India, Patel, Shah, Desai, Naik and Shinde are the forward castes. Chatterjee, Mukerjee, Patnaik, Hota, Panda, Banerjee, Sen, and Roy are forward castes in Eastern parts of India. These are invariably, caste, sub-caste, clan or sect names. These names have increasingly been cited on social media profiles, with updates, photo shares, chat and forums. They boast of their upper-caste heritage.

Friend Request on Caste Name

Sometimes one receives friend requests only because of caste names. Groups update their status almost frequently, and some churn out hate via 'posts', 'likes' and 'shares'. On community pages, admins sometimes post questions to members about their caste identity. While doing so, their sentiments are against those who decry upper caste. The paper found that fault lines in the social system are rattling on social media. Social networking sites are not only places where citizens can connect with fellow nationals, meet friends, and talk to a wider audience, but also places where one can meet others of one's own caste, race, and religion. All of them shape one's identity, which divides society rather than unites it also finds expression in cyberspace. The Internet attains a perilous combination in the conflict zones of India.

Justification to Honour Killing

Some profiles justify caste-based honour killings. They are against inter-caste love and inter-faith marriage. Caste and gotra are pure, which cannot be mixed according to them. You can meet people who find no remorse in the rape of a woman born in a lower caste, who are still considered the property of men in the upper caste. There is nothing wrong with caste-based mob lynching, according to them.

Young, Urban Educated Middle Class

The caste-based groups are young, and few are engineers, commerce degree holders, software professionals, post-graduates and doctors. Such online groups are made up of people from the metropolises like Mumbai, Delhi, Pune, Kolkata, Hyderabad and Bangalore.

Open Racism

We have found that social media users are practising racism. Hima Das, an eighteen-year-old girl from the Indian state of Assam, won track gold in the 400 metre final at the Tampere's World U20 Championships held in Finland; the online news shared plenty on social media sites. However, a curious section on social media was busy searching her caste. Anti-reservation and racist campaigns have gone viral on social media following the appointment of Sreedhanya Suresh, who became the first tribal girl to win the civil services examination

in Kerala; as Assistant Collector in Kozhikode district on May 2020 (Express News Service 7 April 2019).

In the past, racist discrimination was confined only to a particular locality and community. Now it got huge visibility as social media can bring news and trolls to as many people as possible within the blink of an eye. Fake news and hate trolls normalize racism through seemingly lighthearted humour and satire. Neo-Brahmanic and reactionary groups strategically tap social media through fake news, trolls, and other jokey content degrading and dehumanizing people. By using distorted facts and false history to propagate that Brahmins are vegetarians and never practice violence, these news contents connect with new members who love to see more of this and spread casteism in an online culture that deliberately uses media platforms to legitimize Varna social hierarchy. Several casteist and racist groups have already peppered their social media pages with misinformation implying that their race and caste are natural. They brag a lot about their *gotra*, and belittle others.

Caste Conspiracy Theories

Fake news is the only single route that unites all these identity formations on the Internet. It creates fiction, which serves the role of history. The Internet meticulously reproduces what people have been doing in the physical life world. Notions of family, gender, language, territorial affinity, etc., have been reproduced on social media. One can even construct all these on the Internet by one's fancies. Since fake news is the preferred communication style among these hidden forces, they can go to any extent.

Conspiracy theories are everywhere, perhaps the most widely circulated one being the claim that upper caste Brahmins are vegetarians; they never use violence, nor are they aggressive. Then how do they practice caste violence, they ask followers. One can find comments like these being stated in the social media updates, which goes to consumption among a growing caste audience. Caste violence is doctored, a conspiracy theory of the leftists and liberals, who plans to destroy India's age-old social system; discussions are going on among caste-based social media forums like this.

There are also dozens of racist conspiracy theories on social media, including one that weaves narratives about India's past glory by giving credit to the Vedas for the discoveries of aircraft, plastic surgery, the Internet, and others. Ancient Brahmins were scientists who discovered state-of-the-art technologies. According to them, the constitution is not a correct document, secularism is a pseudo-idea, Nehru was empty, and the Ram temple existed in the disputed structure at Ayodhya. Upper caste and the practice of untouchability were good things. They claim to have scientific explanations for the practice of untouchability. Ironically, one can discover that hundreds of profiles like this subscribed to a conspiracy theory called "Neo-Brahmanism".

Caste Psychology

How this caste mindset works on the Internet is a curious question. Malathy PK, for instance, is an undergraduate student in a government college in India. All official documents cite her name, including her Higher Secondary Certificate and Secondary School Leaving Certificate. However, social media platforms gave her a new social identity, to present herself with her '*gotra*' or caste. She frequents social media as Malathy Varrier— Varrier being an upper-caste community in India's *Varna* fold, where she finds a new form of caste identity assertion. Harikrishnan has become Harikrishnan Pillai- Pillai is upper caste; Shalini CK has become Shalini Nambiar- Nambiar is an upper caste in India.

Findings

The analysis furnished in the result section draws on a few cases of social media *weaponization* in India's conflict zones. The above cases prove the growing use of social media for racist and casteist discrimination. It hints at how social media expresses caste identity, where people engage in activities that uphold caste pride and call attention to the *gotra* and *kula*, which otherwise remain impossible to transact in the social world.

On Internet based political communication surveyed, words like migrants, nation, and Muslims figure out the first. Partisans and populists have deployed these words frequently. Metaphors for the Indian nation were great; India had a glorious past, Muslims were enemies who overpopulated India, and Muslim rulers discriminated against Hindus during the medieval age. They are partisan narratives to divide society into "us" and "them", creating huge social visibility for hate-filled populist politics. Thus they create a specific mentality that we are good and they are wrong. The immediate effect of this is the deterioration of civic discourses. However, the long-term debacle is pernicious. It will destroy the cognitive capabilities of the audience of such information. Social media is partly responsible.

Unlike other organized militia activities that use the Internet, there is specific sociology to rightwing activism on cyberspace. It is the new face of populist politics in India. In part, god world is the fuel that propagates it. Powered by the Indian myth of Ram, the disputed structure of Ayodhya, Indian god Krishna, problematizing several religious structures and *gaumata* and united by anti-Muslim narratives, the hate trolls operate distinctly, often appearing as news to a greedy audience. This sort of hate escapes law and libel just because it happens in the name of a glorified culture which gets popular support. Hate is the operational mechanism of this troll world. There is a point of convergence, a way of emotional appeal and what better than the hydra-headed hashtags, Facebook timelines and online publishing platforms, hate speakers spread messages. Hate trolls give cues to a militia polity. The root of this polity is fiction narrated as history. It is a feel-good narrative, and its

proponents have little time for tedious qualifications such as Babri Masjid, communal riots, and caste violence — all eloquent testimony to the persistence of Indian unreason.

Nevertheless, for anyone who wants to valorize the long and notionally successful march of reforms and freedom struggle, an uncomfortable truth presents itself in the state of India today. Indian politics is hijacked by the intermingling of irrational arguments spread over the computers and digital technologies of connection. The proofs are enough on the fake news narratives shared widely on social media and reviewed across various tables used.

There is no room for debate; one can expect an organized online attack if the comments are against their version. They are hardcore defenders of a mythological society. These profiles are hard-line. Online vigilantism is too high on the part of these defenders of feudal social systems. Fake profiles can quickly troll, vilify and attack if one uses the democratic right to freedom of expression and the right to think logically, which seems to be against the ideology they align.

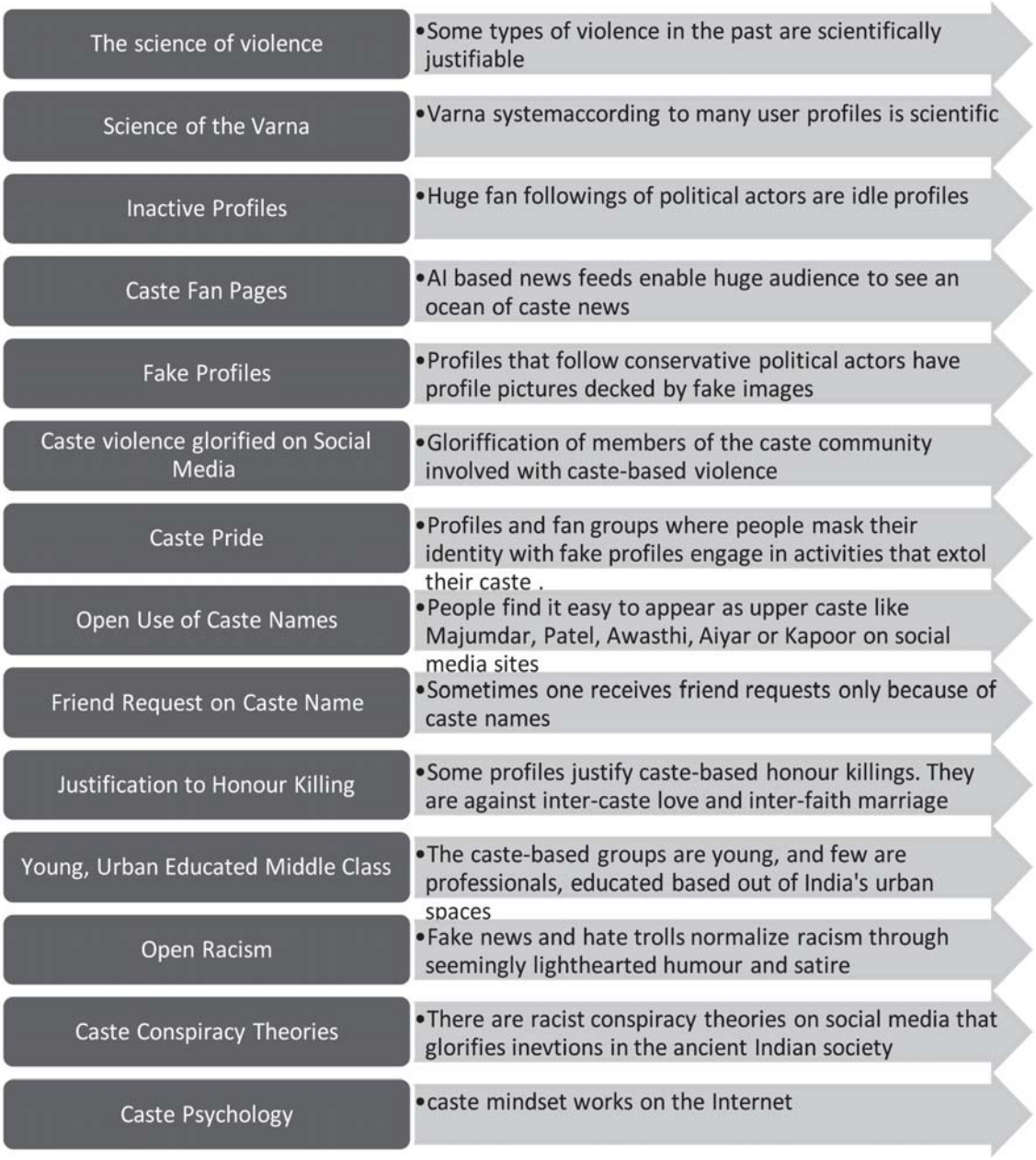
Not only are fan following being increased on these types of feudal social media profile pages, but intolerance of fans also seems to have reached the peak. Discussions turn hostile with the foulest of language. One can propagate extremist ideas like Naxalism, shame enemies and tarnish the image of the perceived enemies. But laws will quickly book one under relevant sections of the Information Technology Act (IT Act). Here comes the significance of fake news and its complicity with feudal ideologies on the Internet. They appeal to a critical audience. Their advantage is that a cultural capital operates in favour of them, unlike extremist ideas such as Naxalism, which law enforces track and punish under the law if found guilty.

Feudal-minded profiles use the Internet to spread hate messages, attack their perceived enemies and diffuse retrogressive ideas. Using abusive language against opponents, minorities and people who uphold secular and liberal ideas, propagators of fake news are reinventing a social order similar to those imagined in the scriptures by Ancient Hindu society. The hate troll is a project. There are unknown people behind it. Nonetheless, 'othering' the minorities and lower castes and validating a graded society are its functional mode. There is a history department and a current affairs desk behind the propagators of this troll nation. Their operations are corporatist, Twitter-'ized', Facebook-'ized', weapon-'ized', and WhatsApp-'ized'.

A graphical account can be drawn which blends rightwing, social structure, fake news and cyberspace on certain identifiers of techno militia according to this research findings. See, Illustration I.

Illustration I

Techno Militia: Rightwing+Social Structure+ Fake News + Cyberspace



Conclusion

This study about the interplay between social media and fake news in cyberspace tries to understand the transformation of the Internet as an ideological apparatus that popularizes and legitimizes social norms favourable for conservative forces in India. The study systematically studied scientifically selected profiles of politicians and political parties on the Website, Twitter, Facebook, Instagram, and YouTube, randomly selected fake profiles and hashtags on Facebook and Twitter, blogs and Facebook perpetuating a conservative audience, populist Twitter profiles and profiles tagged with conservative political themes. According to the data collected and analyzed, the study consistently revealed the greater vulnerability of fake news from conservative and right-wing forces.

Overall our study found that fake news deployed by unidentified and anonymous forces operationalizes a collective and organized but anonymous and well-recruited entity which this study calls techno militia. The study consistently exposes the organized force's basic traits through a systematic review of the contents created by the profiles observed and presents a series of characteristics associated with the force. The contents created in the techno militia can be upper caste men. The entity's men seem to have blind faith, irrational arguments and a poor sense of history. This militia is an organized group committed to propagating disinformation and misinformation to serve the interest of a conservative audience. The content review postulated that hidden forces distort history and arguably present fiction as evidence for factual questions raised by men with logic in the opposite camp.

The paper corroborates that the tables where profiles are systematically content reviewed represent a microcosm of the techno militia on the rise in cyberspace, which is just the tip of the iceberg. Further studies can dissect it, thereby understanding the linkages between fake news and right-wing in the digital media landscape. The forces behind it remain unknown, but certain character traits can identify them, which opens further scope for future studies. This study identifies them as follows:

- Forces behind the group justify violence for the sake of a mythical culture.
- There are fake profiles following conservative actors.
- Several contents studied irrationally justify a four-fold ancient Hindu social structure.
- Several profiles are inactive, having no followers or likes or no activity.
- Several profiles studied are caste fan pages.
- Contents that justify honour killing in the name of family embedded in the purity of an imagined homogenous national community are enormous.

These markers of a fictional nation seen on the profiles surveyed hint at the organized nature of a much larger techno militia on the Internet. Indeed, they stand on the right of the political spectrum for the kind of cultural politics they articulate. The sociology of the force behind

this organized polity must be systematically studied further to understand its effect on democratic dialogues and political communication.

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ভারতীয় দন্ডবিধির ৩৭৭ ধারা বিলোপ ও সমকামী মানুষদের লড়াই : একটি পর্যালোচনা

বিশ্বনাথ সরকার

সারসংক্ষেপ

যৌন রুচি মানুষের একান্ত নিজস্ব বিষয়, মানুষ তা নিয়েই জন্মায়। কিন্তু প্রাকৃতিক নিয়মের সেই সহজাত রুচিকেই ভারতীয় দন্ডবিধির ৩৭৭ ধারায় ফৌজদারি অপরাধের তকমা দেওয়া হয়েছে। সমকামী যৌন সম্পর্ককে সেখানে প্রকৃতিবিরুদ্ধ বলা হয়েছে। বিষয়টির সঙ্গে যৌন প্রবৃত্তি ছাড়াও লিঙ্গ পরিচয়ের বৃহত্তর প্রশ্ন জড়িত। আইন পরিবর্তিত হলেও প্রত্যেক নাগরিকের মৌলিক অধিকার থেকে সমকামী মানুষেরা এখনও ব্রাত্য। ফলে, সমকামী, উভকামী ও রূপান্তরকামীদের সুরক্ষা, বিবাহ, উত্তরাধিকার, দত্তক সংক্রান্ত অধিকার নিয়ে সাংবিধানিক স্বচ্ছতা দরকার। এখনও The World Values Survey (2006) থেকে প্রাপ্ত পরিসংখ্যানের খুব একটা পরিবর্তন হয়নি। এই সমীক্ষা অনুযায়ী ৪১ শতাংশ ভারতীয় তাদের প্রতিবেশি হিসেবে কোন সমকামীকে চাননা। ৬৪ শতাংশ ভারতীয় আবার কোনভাবেই সমকামকে সমর্থন করেন না। শুধুমাত্র সমকামী যৌন পরিচিতির কারণে ভারতে ৫৬ শতাংশ সমকামী মানুষ তাদের কর্মক্ষেত্রে নানাভাবে হেনস্থা ও বৈষম্যের শিকার হন।[১] ভারতবর্ষের জনসংখ্যার একটা বড় অংশ এখনও LGBTQIA-দের (LGBTQIA Community-Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer, Intersex and Asexual) নিয়ে 'হোমোফোবিয়া'-য় ভোগেন। এখনও সমলিঙ্গের বিয়েতে কেন্দ্র সায় দিয়ে উঠতে পারেনি। আসলে সমকামিতার শরীর থেকে অপরাধের তকমা তুলে দিলেই দায়িত্ব শেষ হয়ে যায় না, পথ এখনও অনেক বাকি। সেজন্য, আধিপত্যকামী যৌন বয়ানের অনুসঙ্গে থাকা এই মানুষগুলির 'না-মানুষ' বা প্রান্তিকতা অনুধাবনে '৩৭৭ ধারা' পাঠও তার ধারাবাহিক মূল্যায়ন একান্ত জরুরি।

সূচক শব্দ: *ভারতীয় দন্ডবিধির ৩৭৭ ধারা, সমকামিতা, উভকামিতা, রূপান্তরকামিতা, যৌন পরিচিতি, ব্যক্তিগত পরিসর।*

ভূমিকা: জীবনের সাথে যৌনতা গভীরভাবে সম্পৃক্ত। যৌনতার ক্যানভাসটা অনেক বড়, অনেক প্রশস্ত। গোটা জীবন জুড়ে রয়েছে যৌনতা। সুখ-দুঃখ, ভালবাসা, ভাললাগা, হতাশা, ব্যর্থতা, সৃজনশীলতা ও ধ্বংসাত্মক কাজের পেছনে রয়েছে যৌনতার সুক্ষ্মাতিসুক্ষ্ম ছোঁয়া।[২] সমান্তরাল যৌনপ্রবৃত্তির সুবিশাল ক্যানভাসে যৌনতা এক রকমের নয়। সাধারণভাবে যৌনতার চারটি অভিমুখ লক্ষ্য করা যায়। যথা-বিষমকামিতা (heterosexuality), সমকামিতা (homosexuality), উভকামিতা (bisexuality) ও রূপান্তরকামিতা (transsexual/transgender)। মানব সমাজের আধিপত্যকারী, একমাত্রিক ও একপাক্ষিক বিষমকামী যৌনবিধির পাশাপাশি বা সমান্তরালে অন্য যৌন পরিচয়গুলিও আবহমানকাল ধরে চলে আসছে। সমকামিতা কোনও হঠাৎ উদ্ভব হওয়া বিষয় নয়। সুপ্রাচীন কাল থেকে বৃহত্তর মানব সম্প্রদায়ের মধ্যে বিষমকামী ধাঁচার একবগ্গাগামি প্রবৃত্তির পাশাপাশি অন্যান্য যৌন অভ্যাসগুলিও লক্ষ্য করেছেন বিভিন্ন নৃবিজ্ঞানী, চিকিৎসা বিজ্ঞানী, ঐতিহাসিক ও সমাজ-মনোবিজ্ঞানীরা। যদিও, বিষমকামী যৌন অক্ষের বিপরীতে সমান্তরাল যৌন পরিচিতিগুলির পারস্পরিক সম্পর্কের কারণে উল্লেখিত তিনটি স্বতন্ত্র চৌহদ্দির মধ্যে এদের আটকে রাখা সব সময় সম্ভব হয় না।

এই প্রবন্ধে ভারতীয় দন্ডবিধির ৩৭৭ ধারা থাকা না থাকার পাশাপাশি বিষমকামী মূলধারার প্রান্তে থাকা সমকামী জীবনের প্রতি দৃষ্টি আকর্ষণ করার মূল উদ্দেশ্য এই নয় যে, সমাজের মূলস্রোত যেন সমকামীদের প্রতি আরও সহানুভূতিশীল হয় বা তাদের যন্ত্রণা, ব্যথাতুরতাকে যথেষ্ট গুরুত্ব দিয়ে সহমর্মিতার হাত বাড়িয়ে দেয়। অথবা সমকামী প্রান্তিক পরিসরের প্রেক্ষিত থেকে উদ্ভূত তথ্যকে অভিনব, অনন্য বলে দাবি করে তাদের জীবনের এক তথ্যনিষ্ঠ, নিরপেক্ষ, সত্য বয়ান নির্মাণের মাধ্যমে বিষমকামের চলতি বিধিব্যবস্থাকে সংশোধন, সংস্কারের মধ্যদিয়ে আরও সহনীয়, বাসযোগ্য বা সমদর্শী করে তুলতে চাই। বরং, সমকামী জীবনের ধরনধারণ, তাদের জীবন-বিশ্বের দিকে ফিরে তাকানো, ফিরে ভাবার প্রয়োজন; কারণ, আমরা যৌন আত্মপরিচিতির, অন্তরঙ্গতার চলতি ধারণার আধিপত্যকে ভালো করে চিনতে, বুঝতে ও তার পুনর্মূল্যায়ন করতে চাই। যে চাওয়া, প্রবেশকামী, আত্মসাৎকারী, পীড়নকারী, দমনমূলক, দখলদার যৌন পরিচয়ের আঙিনা থেকে আমাদের সরিয়ে নিয়ে যেতে পারে কোন কোমল পরশ, আশ্লেষ ও পারস্পরিক বিনিময়ের এক উন্মুক্ত প্রান্তরে। যেখানে থাকবে বা থাকতে পারে সংলগ্নতা, সংঘবদ্ধতা বা যৌথ সেবাযত্নে সিক্ত গোষ্ঠীনির্ভর এক সম্পর্কের আবেশ।

সমগ্র গবেষণা প্রবন্ধটি লিখিত হয়েছে মূলত মাধ্যমিক স্তরের তথ্য ও 'ডকুমেন্টস্টাডি' পদ্ধতির উপরে ভিত্তি করে। মাধ্যমিক স্তরের তথ্য সংগ্রহের জন্য মূলত প্রাপ্ত বিভিন্ন গ্রন্থ, প্রবন্ধ ও দৈনিক সংবাদ পত্রের সাহায্য নেওয়া হয়েছে।

সমকাম ও ভারতীয় দন্ডবিধির ৩৭৭ ধারা:

বাংলায় 'সমকামিতা' শব্দটি এসেছে 'সমকামী' নামক বিশেষণ পদ থেকে। আর এই 'সমকামী' শব্দের উৎস নিহিত রয়েছে সংস্কৃত ''সমকামিন'' শব্দের মধ্যে। যে ব্যক্তি সমলিঙ্গের প্রতি যৌন আকর্ষণ অনুভব করেন তাকে 'সমকামিন' বলা হত। 'সম' উপসর্গপূর্বক 'কাম' শব্দের সঙ্গে 'ইন' প্রত্যয় যোগ করে 'সমকামিন' শব্দের সৃষ্টি হয়েছে। ইংরেজিতে সমকামিতাকে বলে 'homosexuality'। গ্রীক শব্দ 'homo' এবং লাতিন শব্দ 'sexus' থেকে ইংরেজীতে এই শব্দটির উদ্ভব হয়েছে। একই ধরনের দু'জনকে বোঝাতে 'homo' শব্দটি ব্যবহৃত হয় এবং 'sexus' কথার অর্থ যৌনতা। অর্থাৎ সমলিঙ্গের প্রতি যারা যৌন আকর্ষণ অনুভব করেন তাদের এই প্রকৃতিকে সমকামিতা বা 'homosexuality' বলে।

সমকামিতা প্রধানত দু'ধরনের- জন্মগত ও আচরণগত। জন্মগত সমকামী কৈশোরে যৌনতার উন্মেষকালে সমলিঙ্গের প্রতি যৌন আকর্ষণ অনুভব করেন। এই আকর্ষণ সহজাত মনো-দৈহিক অপরিবর্তনীয় প্রবণতা। অন্যদিকে, আচরণগত সমকামী আসলে বিষমকামী। ক্ষণিকের যৌনক্ষুধা নিবৃত্তির জন্য সে সমলিঙ্গের কোন ব্যক্তিকে বিষমলিঙ্গের মানুষ বলে কল্পনা করে তার সাথে যৌনসঙ্গমে লিপ্ত হন। ফলে, আচরণগত দিক দিয়ে একে সমকামী বললেও, যৌনপ্রবণতায় এই মানুষটি বিষমকামী। বিপরীত লিঙ্গের মানুষ পেলে আচরণগত সমকামিতা কমে আসতে পারে। সমকামিতা সম্পর্কিত গবেষণার প্রথম দিকে একে এক বিশেষ ধরনের অসুস্থতা বলে অভিহিত করা হত। এর অস্তিত্বকে স্বীকার করে নিয়ে অনেকে আবার একে কামবিকৃতির পর্যায়ে ফেলতেন। ফলে, চিকিৎসার নামে নিদারুন শারীরিক ও মানসিক অত্যাচারের শিকার হতেন সমকামী মানুষরা। পাশাপাশি রচিত হত বা করা হত 'না-মানুষ' হিসেবে প্রান্তিকায়নের বয়ান। বিষয়টি যেহেতু স্বল্পসংখ্যক মানুষের মধ্যে সীমাবদ্ধ, তাই মূলস্রোতের কাছে তা উপেক্ষিত। সামাজিক ও রাষ্ট্রিক নানা কারণে অনেকের কাছেই তা গ্রহণযোগ্য নয়। সমাজে, ধর্মশাস্ত্রে ও রাষ্ট্রীয় আইনে এর কোনও অনুমোদন নেই। অপরাধ, বিকৃতি ও অস্বাভাবিক বলে এর গায়ে নানাধরনের তকমা এঁটে দেওয়া হয়েছে। আবার অনেক সময় এই ভিন্নধারার যৌন প্রবণতার অস্তিত্বকে স্বীকারই করা হয় না।

উনিশ শতক পরবর্তী নৃতাত্ত্বিক, ঐতিহাসিক, সাহিত্যিক, সমাজতাত্ত্বিকদের গবেষণা ও রচনার মধ্যে দিয়ে উঠে আসতে থাকে সমান্তরাল যৌনতার নানা অবস্থার কথা। প্রাচীন গ্রীস থেকে ভারতবর্ষ পর্যন্ত সমান্তরাল যৌনতার স্পষ্ট উপস্থিতির

প্রমাণ পাওয়া যায়। K.J. Dover-এর Greek Homosexuality (1978) গ্রন্থ থেকে প্রাচীন গ্রীসে বয়স্ক পুরুষদের বালকদের প্রতি উপগত হওয়ার কথা জানা যায়। বাৎস্যায়নের কামসূত্র গ্রন্থে পুরুষ রুপান্তরকামীদের 'ঔপরিষ্টক' নামে চিহ্নিত করা হয়েছে। এরা নানাবিধ উপায়ে যৌনকর্মী হিসেবে পুরুষদের মনোরঞ্জন করতো। রামায়ণ, মহাভারত, পুরাণেও সমকামের কথা সূক্ষ্মভাবে বিধৃত আছে। নৃতাত্ত্বিক ও পর্যটকদের রচনা থেকেও বিভিন্ন দেশের সমকামী মানুষের জীবনচর্য্যার অনেকগুলি দৃষ্টান্তের কথা জানা যায়। যেমন- ওমানের 'জানিথ', সুদানের 'জার', মিশরের 'খাওয়াল', থাইল্যান্ডের 'কাথোই', চীন ও তাইওয়ানের 'তংজি', অ্যাঙ্গোলার 'চিবাদোস', ইন্দোনেশিয়ার জাভা অঞ্চলের 'লুড্‌রক' প্রভৃতি সম্প্রদায় হল দেশজ সংস্কৃতি ও সামাজিক অনুশাসনের প্রেক্ষিতে গড়ে ওঠা সমকামী মানুষদের এক একটি গোষ্ঠী। প্রতিটি দেশের ভিন্ন ভৌগোলিক পরিমন্ডলে, রাষ্ট্রীক ব্যবস্থা ও সমাজ-সংস্কৃতির চৌহদ্দির মধ্যে ভিন্ন ভিন্ন ধারায় এদের বৃদ্ধি ও বিকাশ ঘটেছে।

বাস্তব প্রেক্ষিতে 'সমকামিতা' শব্দটির সাধারণ ও বিশেষ এই দু'টি অর্থ দেখতে পাওয়া যায়। সাধারণ অর্থে সমকামিতা সমান্তরাল যৌনতার সমার্থক। সমলিঙ্গের যৌন সম্পর্ককে চিহ্নিত করতে আমরা সমকামিতা শব্দটি ব্যবহার করি। রূপান্তরকামিতা, উভকামিতা প্রভৃতি যৌনতার বিভিন্ন রূপ ও পরিচয় সমকামিতার পর্যায়ভুক্ত। বস্তুত সমকামিতার সাধারণ অর্থের মধ্যে সমান্তরাল যৌনতার সমস্ত রূপই ধরা পড়েছে। অন্যদিকে, সমকামিতা যখন বিশেষ অর্থে ব্যবহার করা হয় তখন তার ব্যঞ্জনা স্বতন্ত্র। তখন কেবলমাত্র সমান্তরাল যৌনতার একটি নির্দিষ্ট রূপকেই চিহ্নিত করা হয়। এই নির্দিষ্ট রূপের মধ্যে বিষমকামিতার কোন চিহ্ন নেই। এখানে কোনও ব্যক্তি নিজেকে বিষমলিঙ্গের মানুষ হিসেবে কল্পনা করেন না, সমলিঙ্গের যৌনসঙ্গীকে বিষমলিঙ্গের সদস্য হিসেবে ধরে নেন না বা পর্যায়ক্রমে সমলিঙ্গ ও বিষমলিঙ্গের সঙ্গে যৌন সম্পর্ক স্থাপন করেন না। আসলে সমকামিতার এই সংকীর্ণ পরিসরে বিষমকামিতার অস্তিত্বকে অস্বীকার করা হয়। ইংরেজীতে ওথা (পুরুষ সমকামী) ও Lesbian (স্ত্রী সমকামী) শব্দদুটি সমকামীর সমার্থক। প্রথম দিকে যৌন ব্যভিচার ও নারী যৌনকর্মীর প্রতিশব্দ হিসেবে ওথা শব্দটির প্রচলন হয়। পরে বিশ শতকের গোড়ার দিকে ব্রিটেনের সমস্ত সমকামীরা নিজেদের মানসিকতাকে বোঝাতে ওথা শব্দটি ব্যবহার করতেন। অন্যদিকে, প্রাচীন গ্রীসের লেস্‌বস্ দ্বীপে সমলিঙ্গের প্রতি গভীর ভাবে অনুরক্ত Sappho নামে এক নারী বাস করতেন। পরবর্তীকালে এই দ্বীপের নাম অনুসারে সমলিঙ্গের প্রতি আসক্ত সমস্ত নারীই Lesbian বলে পরিচিত হয়ে ওঠেন। সম্প্রতি পুরুষ সমকামিতার ব্যাপক রূপকে বোঝাতে MSM (Men who have sex with men) শব্দবন্ধটি চালু হয়েছে। Gay হল MSM-এর একটি বিশেষ রূপ বা অংশ মাত্র। অর্থাৎ, সমকামিতার সাধারণ অর্থ বা সমান্তরাল যৌনতার দুটি ভাগ হল-স্ত্রী-সমকামিতা এবং পুরুষ সমকামিতা। MSM হল পুরুষ সমকামিতার সামগ্রিক রূপ।[৩]

বিষমকামিতার পাশাপাশি সমান্তরাল যৌন পরিচয়ের বৃহত্তর সম্প্রদায়ের সংখ্যাগত কোন নির্ভরযোগ্য পরিসংখ্যান সে ভাবে ছিল না। ২০১১ খ্রিস্টাব্দের জনগণনায় প্রথম যৌন পরিচয়ের স্থানে নারী, পুরুষের পাশাপাশি 'অন্যান্য' বা 'other' বিভাগটি যুক্ত করা হয়। সেখান থেকে উঠে আসে, সমগ্র ভারতে সমান্তরাল যৌন পরিচয়ে অবস্থান করেন ৪.৯ লক্ষ মানুষ।[৪] কিন্তু স্বাধীনতা পূর্ব সময় থেকে আধিপত্যকারী বিষমকামী যৌনবিধির পাশাপাশি আবহমানকাল ধরে চলে আসা সমান্তরাল অন্য যৌন পরিচয়গুলির সামনে ভারতীয় দন্ডবিধির ৩৭৭ ধারা ছিল হুমকি স্বরূপ। সেজন্য, আধিপত্যকামী যৌন বয়ানের অনুসঙ্গে থাকা এই মানুষগুলির 'না-মানুষ' বা প্রান্তিকতার অনুসন্ধানে '৩৭৭ ধারা' পাঠও মূল্যায়ন আমাদের নতুন দিক নির্দেশ দিতে পারে।

১৮৬০ খ্রিস্টাব্দের ৬ই অক্টোবর রানি ভিক্টোরিয়ার আমলে লর্ড ম্যাকাউলে (Lord Macaulay)-এর সভাপতিত্বে ব্রিটিশ ভারতের ভারতীয় আইন কমিশন ভারতীয় দন্ডবিধির সাথে ৩৭৭ ধারাটি চালু করেছিলেন।[৫] ব্রিটিশ প্রণীত আইনের

৩৭৭ ধারা অনুযায়ী ভারতে সমকাম ছিল একটি শাস্তিযোগ্য ফৌজদারি অপরাধ। স্বাধীন ভারতের সংবিধানের পরিপন্থী হলেও, ধারাটি রেখে দেওয়া হয়েছিল। ১৯৫০ খ্রিস্টাব্দের ২৬শে জানুয়ারি কার্যকরী হওয়া ভারতীয় সংবিধানের ভারতীয় দন্ডবিধির ৩৭৭ ধারা [Section 377 of the Indian Penal Code (IPC)] অনুযায়ী সমকামকে অপ্রাকৃত শাস্তিযোগ্য অপরাধ হিসেবে গণ্য করা হত। যে ব্যক্তি স্বেচ্ছায় অন্য কোনও পুরুষ, মহিলা বা পশুর সাথে প্রকৃতি বিরুদ্ধ শারীরিক যৌন মিলন করবে তাকে যাবজ্জীবন কারাদন্ড বা দশ বছর মেয়াদের কারাদন্ডের সাজা ও জরিমানাও হতে পারে। তবে, এই অপ্রাকৃত অপরাধের জন্য যৌন মিলনের সময় 'অনুপ্রবেশ' বিশেষ ভাবে প্রয়োজনীয়।[৬] ৩৭৭ ধারা এখনো বলবৎ আছে অপ্রাপ্তবয়স্কদের সাথে যৌন সম্পর্ক, অসম্মতিমূলক যৌন ক্রিয়াকলাপ এবং পশুর সাথে যৌনক্রিয়ার উপরে।

এখন প্রশ্ন হল, মানুষের ব্যক্তিগত যৌন আচরণকে অপরাধ বানিয়ে, রাষ্ট্র তাঁদের অস্তিত্ব, তাঁদের ভাগ্য নিয়ন্ত্রণ করতে পারে কিনা? ভারতবর্ষে ধারা ৩৭৭-এর মাধ্যমে সংখ্যালঘু নাগরিকের মর্য্যাদা প্রদাণ ও প্রকৃত মানবতার অনুশীলনে কোন ফাঁক থেকে যাচ্ছে কিনা সেটাও ভাবা দরকার।[৭]

আত্মপরিচিতি, ব্যক্তিগত পরিসর ও এলজিবিটি আন্দোলন:

'sex' ও 'gender' সম্পর্কিত আলোচনা সমান্তরাল যৌন মানসিকতাগুলিকে বোঝবার ক্ষেত্রে নতুন দিশার সন্ধান দিয়েছে। বস্তুত 'gender' সম্পর্কিত ভাবনা যত ঋদ্ধ হয়েছে, ততই সনাতনী লিঙ্গবৈষম্যের প্রাচীর ভেঙে পড়েছে। 'gender' একটি সামাজিক-সাংস্কৃতিক নির্মাণ। একে সাংস্কৃতিক লিঙ্গ বলা হয়। অন্যদিকে 'sex' একটি জৈবিক বা শারীরবৃত্তীয় ধারণা। প্রত্যেক সমাজ ব্যবস্থায় সামাজিকীকরণ প্রক্রিয়ার হাত ধরে নারী 'নারী' ও পুরুষ 'পুরুষ' হয়ে ওঠে। সমাজ ও সংস্কৃতি আরোপিত নারী-পুরুষ উভয়ের যে বৈষম্যমূলক ও ভিন্নতর নির্মাণ তা দুই লিঙ্গকে কেন্দ্র করে গড়ে তোলে দুটি স্বতন্ত্র বলয়। আরোপিত এই চৌহদ্দির বাইরে তারা বেরিয়ে আসতে পারে না। ফলে, সমস্যা সৃষ্টি হয় সমকামী, উভকামী, রুপান্তরকামী মানুষদের নিয়ে। এরা যেমন আরোপিত পরিধিতে খাপ খায় না তেমনি আরোপিত পরিধিকে অতিক্রমও করে যেতে চায়। সেইজন্য, লিঙ্গ এবং যৌনতাকে একে-অপরের পরিপূরক করে তোলার যে প্রবণতা যুগ-যুগ ধরে চলে আসছে, তার বিরুদ্ধে বার বার প্রশ্ন তুলেছেন লিঙ্গসাম্য আন্দোলনকারীরা।

সমান্তরাল যৌনতার একটি বিশেষ দিক হল উভকামিতা। কোন ব্যক্তি যখন সমলিঙ্গ ও বিষমলিঙ্গের প্রতি যুগপৎ যৌন আকর্ষণ অনুভব করে তখন তাকে উভকামী বলে। অন্যদিকে, নারী-পুরুষ উভয়ের মধ্যেই রূপান্তরকামিতা পরিদৃষ্ট হয়। পুরুষ হওয়া সত্ত্বেও যারা নিজেদের নারী ভাবেন, তারা হলেন পুরুষ রূপান্তরকামী। আর যেসব নারী নিজেদের পুরুষ হিসেবে ভাবেন, তারা হলেন স্ত্রী-রূপান্তরকামী। যৌনপ্রবৃত্তির দৃষ্টিকোণ থেকে দেখলে দেখা যাবে সব রূপান্তরকামীরা সমকামী। যদিও এরা নিজেদের বিপরীত লিঙ্গগোষ্ঠীর সদস্য হিসেবে মনে করেন। তাই সমকামী না বলে নিজেদের তারা বিষমকামী বলতেই বেশি আগ্রহী। সমকামীদের মতো তাদের মধ্যেও যৌন পরিচয়ের সংকট (sexual identity crisis) আছে। অর্থাৎ সমলিঙ্গের প্রতি যৌন আকর্ষণের সমস্যায় তারা দীর্ণ হয়। কৈশোরে এই আকর্ষণের ফলে নিজের শারীরিক লিঙ্গ বিষয়ে সমকামীদের নানা প্রশ্ন জাগে। পুরুষের মনে সত্যিই সে পুরুষ কিনা সে বিষয়ে নানাবিধ প্রশ্ন দেখা দেয়। নারী চিন্তিত হয়ে ওঠে তার নারীত্ব নিয়ে। পুরুষের আকর্ষণ থাকবে নারীর প্রতি, আর নারীর পুরুষের প্রতি। এর উল্টো হলেই সংশ্লিষ্ট ব্যক্তি নিজেই ধন্দে পড়েন। যদিও তার আচরণে বা বেশভূষায় এর কোন প্রতিফলন লক্ষ্য করা যায় না। রূপান্তরকামীরা যৌন পরিচয়ের (sexual identity) এই সমস্যার পাশাপাশি আর একটি বাড়তি সমস্যার সম্মুখীন হন, তা হল লিঙ্গ পরিচয়ের সংকট (gender identity crisis)।[৮] ফলে সমস্যা শুধু বাইরে নয়, ভিতরেও। আর এই কারণেই রাষ্ট্রীয়

পরিমন্ডলে আত্মনিয়ন্ত্রণের অধিকার এবং ব্যক্তিগত পরিসর সমকামী মানুষের প্রান্তিকতার বয়ানে খুব গুরুত্বপূর্ণ হয়ে ওঠে।

ব্যক্তির ব্যক্তিগত গোপনতায় রাষ্ট্র কতদূর হস্তক্ষেপ করতে পারে সে বিষয়ে ভারতীয় সংবিধানের মৌলিক অধিকারের সঙ্গে এক পরস্পর বিরোধীতার ক্ষেত্র, বিশেষ করে সমকামী মানুষদের অধিকারকে কেন্দ্র করে, অনেক দিন ধরেই তৈরি হচ্ছিল। মূলত আধার কার্ডকে প্রায় সব ক্ষেত্রে বাধ্যতামূলক করার কেন্দ্রীয় সিদ্ধান্তের পরেই ফের গোপনতার অধিকারের সেই পুরানো প্রশ্নটি নতুন করে সামনে আসে। ঐ বিষয়ে একাধিক মামলা হয় শীর্ষ আদালতে। এই মামলাগুলির শুনানি চলার একটা পর্যায়ে এসে আদালত গোপনতা আদৌ মৌলিক অধিকার কিনা সেই প্রশ্নের উত্তর খোঁজার চেষ্টা শুরু করে। সেই উদ্দেশ্যকে সামনে রেখে ১৮ই জুলাই ২০১৭, নয় সদস্যের একটি সাংবিধানিক বেঞ্চও গঠিত হয়। এই বেঞ্চের নেতৃত্বে ছিলেন সুপ্রিম কোর্টের তৎকালীন প্রধান বিচারপতি জে. এস. খেহর। এই সাংবিধানিক বেঞ্চের অন্যান্য সদস্যরা ছিলেন- বিচারপতি জে. চেলমেশ্বর, এস. এ. বোবদে, আর. কে. অগ্রবাল, আর. এফ. নরিম্যান, এ. এম. সাপ্রে, ডি. ওয়াই. চন্দ্রচূড়, এস. কে. কল, এবং এস. আব্দুল নাজির। ২৪ অগস্ট ২০১৭, বৃহস্পতিবার, পুত্তাস্বামী মামলার রায়ে এই বেঞ্চই জানিয়েছিল, নাগরিকের গোপনতা আসলে তাঁর মৌলিক অধিকার। ঐ রায়ে সুপ্রিম কোর্ট জানায়, জীবন এবং ব্যক্তিগত স্বাধীনতার অধিকারের সঙ্গে ওতপ্রোতভাবে জড়িয়ে রয়েছে নাগরিকের গোপনতার অধিকারও। সংবিধানের ২১ নম্বর ধারায় ওই দুটি মৌলিক অধিকারের কথা বলা হয়েছে। আদালতের মতে তাই গোপনতা মৌলিক অধিকারের পর্যায়েই পড়ে।

১৯৫৪ খ্রিস্টাব্দে সুপ্রিম কোর্টের আট সদস্যের সাংবিধানিক বেঞ্চ এম. পি. শর্মা মামলায় রায় দিয়েছিল, ব্যক্তিগত গোপনতা মৌলিক অধিকার নয়। পরে, ১৯৬২ খ্রিস্টাব্দেও সুপ্রিম কোর্টের ছয় সদস্যের সাংবিধানিক বেঞ্চও খড়ক সিংহ মামলাতেও একই রায় দিয়েছিল। ২৪শে অগস্টের রায়ের ফলে পুরানো ঐ দুই রায় বাতিল হয়ে যায়।[৯]

উল্লেখ্য, গোপনতার অধিকার নাগরিকের মৌলিক অধিকার কিনা তা নিয়ে প্রথম বিতর্ক দানা বাধে ৬০-এর দশকের খড়ক সিংহ মামলাকে কেন্দ্র করে। পুলিশ কনস্টেবল খড়ক সিংহের উপরে সুনির্দিষ্ট কারণে সরকারি নজরদারি চালানো হচ্ছিল। খড়ক সিংহ এই নজরদারির বিরুদ্ধে আদালতের দারস্থ হন। এই নজরদারিতে তার গোপনতা ক্ষুন্ন হচ্ছে তথা মৌলিক অধিকার খর্ব হচ্ছে বলে তিনি অভিযোগ করেন। সুপ্রিম কোর্টের যে ছয় সদস্যের সাংবিধানিক বেঞ্চ খড়ক সিংহ মামলার বিচার করছিল, সেই বেঞ্চের সংখ্যাগরিষ্ঠ সদস্য কিন্তু গোপনতার অধিকারকে মৌলিক অধিকার হিসেবে স্বীকৃতি দেননি। শুধু বিচারপতি সুব্বা রাও গোপনতাকে নাগরিকের মৌলিক অধিকার হিসেবে স্বীকৃতি দিয়েছিলেন। সংবিধানের ২১নং অনুচ্ছেদকে ঠিকমতো ব্যাখ্যা করলেই দেখা যাবে, গোপনতার অধিকার নাগরিকের মৌলিক অধিকার- নিজের রায়ে এমনই লিখেছিলেন বিচারপতি সুব্বা রাও। কিন্তু বেঞ্চের অন্য সব সদস্যরা তাঁর সঙ্গে ভিন্নমত পোষণ করায়, তাঁর রায় গ্রাহ্য হয়নি। ১৯৭৮ খ্রিস্টাব্দে মানেকা গান্ধী বনাম ইউনিয়ন অব ইন্ডিয়া মামলায় গোপনতার অধিকার সংক্রান্ত বিতর্ক নতুন মাইল ফলকে পৌঁছে গিয়েছিল। ঐ বছর গোপনতার অধিকার সংক্রান্ত বিষয়ে রায় দিতে গিয়ে সাত সদস্যের বেঞ্চের অধিকাংশ সদস্যই জানিয়েছিল ১৯৬২ খ্রিস্টাব্দে বিচারপতি সুব্বা রাও যে রায় দিয়েছিলেন, সেটাই ঠিক রায় ছিল। অনুচ্ছেদ ২১এর সবিস্তার ব্যাখ্যা দিয়ে বেঞ্চের সংখ্যাগরিষ্ঠ সদস্যরা জানিয়েছিলেন, গোপনতা নাগরিকের মৌলিক অধিকার। ফলে, সুপ্রীম কোর্ট ২৪শে অগস্ট, ২০১৭ গোপনতার অধিকারকে যে মৌলিক অধিকার হিসেবে প্রথম স্বীকৃতি দিল, এমনটা নয়।

সংবিধানের ২১ নং অনুচ্ছেদে বলা হয়েছে, 'আইন নির্দিষ্ট পদ্ধতি ছাড়া কোন ব্যক্তিকে তার জীবন ও ব্যক্তিগত

স্বাধীনতা থেকে বঞ্চিত করা যাবে না।'[১০] আর, ১৯৭৮ খ্রিস্টাব্দে যে রায় হয়েছিল সংখ্যাগরিষ্ঠতার ভিত্তিতে, ২০১৭ খ্রিস্টাব্দে আরও বড় বেঞ্চ সংখ্যাগরিষ্ঠতা নয়, সর্বসম্মতির ভিত্তিতে বললো সেই একই কথা, 'গোপনতার অধিকার নাগরিকের মৌলিক অধিকার'। কিন্তু এখানেই সুপ্রীম কোর্টের প্রাক্তন বিচারপতি অশোককুমার গঙ্গোপাধ্যায় প্রশ্ন তুলেছেন, গোপনতার অধিকার অনিয়ন্ত্রিত বা অপরিমিত হতে পারে কিনা। তাঁর মতে, 'শুধু গোপনতার অধিকার নয়, কোনও মৌলিক অধিকারই অনিয়ন্ত্রিত বা অপরিমিত হতে পারে না। জাতীয় নিরাপত্তার প্রশ্নে, অপরাধ দমনের স্বার্থে, আইনশৃঙ্খলা বজায় রাখার তাগিদে রাষ্ট্রকে প্রতিনিয়ত নানা রকমের চ্যালেঞ্জের মোকাবিলা করতে হয়। তার জন্য অনেকের গতিবিধির উপরেই নজরদারি চালানোর দরকার পড়ে। দেশের সিংহভাগ নাগরিককে নিরাপদে রাখতে, কোনও কোনও নাগরিকের কার্যকলাপে বা ব্যক্তিগত পরিসরে অনেক সময় রাষ্ট্রকে উঁকি দিতে হয়। সামাজিক নিরাপত্তার স্বার্থেই সেই অধিকার রাষ্ট্রের থাকা উচিত বলে আমার মনে হয়।'[১১]

কিন্তু ২৪শে অগস্ট, ২০১৭ সুপ্রিম কোর্ট যে রায় দিয়েছিল, তার সাথে খুব পরিষ্কার ভাবে ভারতীয় দন্ডবিধির ৩৭৭ ধারার একটা স্পষ্ট বিরোধ আছে। ৩৭৭ ধারায় সমকামিতাকে ফৌজদারি অপরাধ বলা হয়েছে। কিন্তু ব্যক্তিগত গোপনতার অধিকারকে যদি নাগরিকের মৌলিক অধিকার বলে মেনে নিই, তাহলে নাগরিকের যৌন জীবনে রাষ্ট্র উঁকি দিতে পারে কিনা, সেই প্রশ্ন থেকে যাচ্ছে। কারণ, যৌনতা প্রত্যেকের ব্যক্তিগত ও গোপনীয় বিষয়। প্রাপ্তবয়স্ক নাগরিক কী ধরনের যৌন সঙ্গম করবেন, কার সঙ্গে যৌন সঙ্গম করবেন, তা নির্ধারণ করার অধিকার একমাত্র তাঁরই। নাগরিকের জীবনের সেই গোপন পরিসরে উঁকি দেওয়ার কোন অধিকার রাষ্ট্রের নেই। সেই কারণে বিশেষ করে সমকামী মানুষদের অধিকারের স্বার্থে ৩৭৭ ধারা সমালোচনার ঊর্ধ্বে তো নয়ই, উপরন্তু এর পুনর্বিবেচনা বা বাতিল হওয়া উচিত বলে দাবি উঠতে থাকে।

ভারতীয় সংবিধানের আইনি অবস্থানের আরও কয়েকটি ক্ষেত্রে ভারতীয় দন্ডবিধির ৩৭৭ ধারার বিরোধাভাষ বা সীমাবদ্ধতা খুব স্পষ্ট। যেমন-

(১) ভারতীয় দন্ডবিধির ৩৭৭ ধারাটি মূলত তৈরি করা হয়েছে সনাতন জুডো-খ্রিস্টান (Judeo-Christian) নীতি ও নৈতিক মানদন্ডের উপর ভিত্তি করে, যা বিষমকামী যৌন সম্পর্ককে কেবলমাত্র সন্তান উৎপাদনের লক্ষ্যে বিশুদ্ধরূপে কল্পনা করে। সেখানে যে কোন 'অপ্রচলিত' যৌন ক্রিয়াকলাপকে দেখা হয়, "against the order of nature"। এই আইন বলে, সম্মতিসূচক মৌখিক ও পায়ু যৌন ক্রিয়া (oral and anal sex)-কেও অপরাধের আওতায় ফেলা হয় এবং আধুনিক সমাজে এর কোনও স্থান নেই। অনেক সময়, শিশু যৌন নির্যাতনের বিচারে বা সমকামী প্রান্তিক মানুষগুলির উপরে পুলিশি নির্যাতনের হাতিয়ার হিসেবেও এই ধারার অপব্যবহার হয়ে এসেছে। পাশাপাশি এই সংখ্যালঘু যৌন সম্পর্কের অস্বীকার যেমন সমকামী মানুষদের প্রতি নেতিবাচক ও বৈষম্যমূলক বিশ্বাসকে স্থায়ী করতে সাহায্য করেছে, তেমনি HIV/AIDS প্রতিরোধের মতো জন স্বাস্থ্যের সঙ্গে সম্পর্কিত প্রচেষ্টাকেও অনেকাংশে পঙ্গু করে দিয়েছে। মূলত ধারা ৩৭৭ সমাজে একটি বিশেষ শ্রেণি তৈরি করে যারা নিয়মিত ভাবে এই ধারার বিধান দ্বারা ক্ষতিগ্রস্থ এবং সরাসরি নেতিবাচক ভাবে প্রভাবিত হন। সেই সঙ্গে এটিও লক্ষণীয় এই ধারা সমকামীতাকে নিষিদ্ধ করে না, কেবল নির্দিষ্ট যৌন ক্রিয়াকলাপকে নিষিদ্ধ করে; যাতে সমকামী, বিষমকামী, বিবাহিত, অবিবাহিত যে কেউ লিপ্ত হতে পারেন। কিন্তু 'carnal intercourse against the order of nature' -এর কারণ দেখিয়ে ধারাটি কেবল মাত্র যৌনক্রিয়ায় সংখ্যালঘু জনগোষ্ঠীর বিরুদ্ধেই ব্যবহৃত হয়।

(২) সংবিধানের ১৪ নং অনুচ্ছেদে বলা হয়েছে, আইনের দৃষ্টিতে সমতা ও আইনের দ্বারা সমান সংরক্ষণের কথা। অর্থাৎ রাষ্ট্রকে মেনে নিতে হবে যে, ভারত রাষ্ট্রের সীমানার মধ্যে সব ব্যক্তি আইনের চোখে সমান এবং সকলেই

আইন দ্বারা সমান সংরক্ষণের অধিকারী। এই সমতা মানে 'আইনি সমতা', কখনই 'প্রাকৃতিক সমতা' নয়। আইনের দৃষ্টিতে সমতা মানে একই অবস্থায় প্রতিটি ব্যক্তির ক্ষেত্রে আইন সমান ভাবে প্রযুক্ত হবে। কিন্তু ধারা ৩৭৭ এর বিপরীত বক্তব্যকেই তুলে ধরে।

(৩) সংবিধানের ১৫ নং অনুচ্ছেদেও বলা হয়েছে, রাষ্ট্র এবং ব্যক্তি কেউই নাগরিকদের মধ্যে ধর্ম, জাতি, বর্ণ, যৌন পরিচিতি (sex) অথবা জন্মস্থান বা এর কোনটির ভিত্তিতে বৈষম্য করতে পারবে না। অর্থাৎ রাষ্ট্রকে ভেদাভেদ করতে নিষেধ করা হয়েছে। উল্লেখ্য, এই অনুচ্ছেদে কিন্তু লিঙ্গ (gender) শব্দটি ব্যবহার করা হয়নি, বলা হয়েছে 'যৌনতার অভিমুখ' (sexual orientation)-এর কথা। অর্থাৎ ব্যক্তির যৌন অভিমুখের প্রেক্ষিত থেকে সাম্য হল বৈষম্যের বিরুদ্ধে এক মৌলিক অধিকার, যা প্রতিটি নাগরিকের ক্ষেত্রে সমান ভাবে প্রযোজ্য হবে। এখানেও ধারা ৩৭৭ এর সঙ্গে পারস্পরিক বিরোধিতার ক্ষেত্র তৈরি হয়েছে।

(৪) সমকামিতার বিরুদ্ধে নিষেধাজ্ঞা (Section ৩৭৭ IPC) অনুচ্ছেদ ১৯ (১)-এর ক, খ, গ ও ঘ'তে সংবিধান প্রদত্ত স্বাধীনতার অধিকারগুলিকেও লঙ্ঘন করে। বাক ও মতামত প্রকাশের স্বাধীনতা (ক), শান্তিপূর্ণ ও নিরস্ত্রভাবে সমবেত হবার স্বাধীনতা (খ), সংঘ বা সমিতি গঠনের স্বাধীনতা (গ) এবং ভারতীয় ভূখন্ডের সর্বত্র স্বাধীনভাবে চলাচলের স্বাধীনতা (ঘ)- এই সমস্ত অধিকারগুলি ৩৭৭ ধারার কারণে সমকামী মানুষদের কাছে সীমিত হয়ে পড়েছে। বিশেষ করে সমকামী যৌন আচরণে যুক্ত থাকার কারণে নাগরিক হিসেবে ব্যক্তি তার যৌন পছন্দ সম্পর্কে ব্যক্তিগত বিবৃতি দেওয়া থেকে, অবাধ চলাচলে, সমিতি, সমাবেশে যোগদানের ক্ষেত্রে সীমাবদ্ধ হয়ে পড়েছেন।[১২]

গত কয়েক দশক ধরে LGBT (lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender)/Queer মানুষদের মানবাধিকার ও সাম্যের অধিকারের বিষয়গুলি সামাজিক, সাংস্কৃতিক ও নৈতিক দৃষ্টিকোণ থেকে বিশ্বব্যাপী মনোযোগ আকর্ষণ করেছে। এই অধিকারগুলির স্বীকৃতি মূলত এই প্রান্তিক মানুষগুলির প্রতি সমতার প্রতিশ্রুতি এবং সর্বজনীন স্বাধীনতা প্রাপ্তিকে নিশ্চিত করে। প্রকৃত সাম্য অর্জনের জন্য এই অধিকারগুলি কার্যকর করার অর্থ এলজিবিটি মানুষদের বিরুদ্ধে বৈষম্য ও সহীংসতা দূরীকরণের জন্য কাজ করা। কিন্তু ভারতবর্ষসহ সারা বিশ্বব্যাপী এলজিবিটি মানুষদের সম্পর্কে নেতিবাচক আচরণ বা দৃষ্টিকোণ (stigma) মূলস্রোতে তাঁদের অন্তর্ভুক্তিকরণের পরিবর্তে বিভিন্ন সামাজিক প্রতিষ্ঠান যেমন- শিক্ষা, কর্মনিয়োজন, পরিবার, স্বাস্থ্য পরিষেবা প্রভৃতি থেকে তাঁদের বহিঃস্করণ ঘটিয়েছে। পাশাপাশি এলজিবিটি মানুষদের সাম্যের অধিকার ও অন্তর্ভুক্তিকরণ যে কোন দেশের অর্থনৈতিক উন্নয়নেরও একটি অন্যতম ইস্যু।[১৩]

অন্যদিকে, নারীবাদীদের এলজিবিটি রাজনীতি নিয়ে তাদের প্রতিক্রিয়া সাধারণত সমান্তরাল পথ অনুসরণ করে চলে না। পণপ্রথা, ভ্রূণহত্যা, গার্হস্থ্য হিংসা এইসব বিষয় বা ইস্যু নারীবাদী আন্দোলনের মূলে থাকার ফলে এবং এলজিবিটি আন্দোলনের প্রতি সহানুভূতি প্রকাশের কারণে আধিপত্যকারী বিষমকামী যৌন পরিচিতির কাঠামোটি অপরিবর্তীত বা অসমস্যায়িত থেকে গেছে। ভারতবর্ষের স্বতন্ত্র নারী আন্দোলন (Autonomous Women's Movement) নারীর প্রতি প্রত্যক্ষ সহিংসতার নিরিখে তাদের সকল পাবলিক বা প্রকাশ্য তর্ক-বিতর্ক ও সেইসঙ্গে সচেতনতার প্রচারাভিযান সংগঠিত করেছে। কিন্তু এলজিবিটি জীবন নিয়ে উঠে আসা প্রশ্নগুলো বন্ধ ঘরে বা প্রাইভেট পরিসরের আলোচনায় সীমাবদ্ধ থেকেছে। যে নারীবাদীরা এলজিবিটি সম্পর্কের প্রবক্তা বা অনুসরণকারী তাঁরা চিরকালই আন্দোলনের প্রান্তে রয়ে গেছেন। ফলে, ভারতীয় সমাজে এলজিবিটি ও তৎ-সম্পর্কিত বৃহত্তর সম্প্রদায়ভুক্ত (LGBTQIA Community-Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer, Intersex and Asexual) মানুষদের আন্দোলন বা তাঁদের প্রতি সামগ্রিক বৈষম্যের অবসান কেন্দ্র-প্রান্তের চক্রব্যূহে আজও যে অনেকাংশে আটকে আছে তাতে কোন সন্দেহ নেই।

৩৭৭ ধারা সম্পর্কে আদালতের পর্যবেক্ষণ ও ঐতিহাসিক রায়:

সমকামকে ভারতীয় ফৌজদারি দন্ডবিধির ৩৭৭ ধারায় 'অবৈধ' বলা হয়েছে। ফলে আইন আনুযায়ী সমকাম একটি শাস্তিযোগ্য অপরাধ। বিশ্ব পরিস্থিতি ও সামাজিক সচলতার প্রেক্ষিতে সারা পৃথিবীর মত ভারতবর্ষেও সংশ্লিষ্ট আইনটির সংশোধনের মাধ্যমে সমকামিতাকে অপরাধ মুক্ত করার জন্য দাবি উঠেছে। ২০০৯ খ্রিস্টাব্দে নাজ ফাউন্ডেশন-এর মামলায় এক ঐতিহাসিক রায়ে দিল্লী হাইকোর্ট সম্মতিক্রমে সমকামী সম্পর্ককে মান্যতা দেয়। ঐ রায়ে দিল্লী হাইকোর্ট বলে, ৩৭৭ ধারার 'প্রকৃতিবিরুদ্ধ যৌনকর্ম' সংক্রান্ত অংশটি অসাংবিধানিক। এই রায়ের বিরোধিতা করে সুপ্রীমকোর্টে বিভিন্ন ধর্মীয় সংগঠনের তরফ থেকে বহু আবেদন জমা পড়ে। ১১ ডিসেম্বর ২০১৩ খ্রিস্টাব্দে সুরেশ কুমার কৌশল বানম নাজ ফাউন্ডেশন মামলায় সুপ্রিমকোর্টের দুই বিচারপতির বেঞ্চের রায়ে ফের বহাল থাকে ৩৭৭ ধারা। তৎকালীন ইউপিএ সরকার রায় পর্যালোচনার দাবিতে সুপ্রিম কোর্টে আর্জি পেশ করলেও লাভ হয়নি। এরপর নভতেজ সিংহ জোহর, কেশব সুরি, আমন নাথ, আয়েষা কাপূরের মতো বিশিষ্ট ব্যক্তিরা এবং নাজ ফাউন্ডেশনের মতো সংগঠন সুপ্রিম কোর্টে ৩৭৭ ধারার বিরুদ্ধে কিউরেটিভ পিটিশন দাখিল করেন। প্রধান বিচারপতি দীপক মিশ্রের নেতৃত্বাধীন সাংবিধানিক বেঞ্চে তার শুনানি চলেছিল। তবে, ২০১৩ খ্রিস্টাব্দের রায়ে আরও বলা হয় যে, সরকার চাইলে সংশ্লিষ্ট বিষয়ে নতুন আইন তৈরি করতে পারে। এই পরিস্থিতিতে দক্ষিণপন্থী রাজনৈতিক দল বিজেপির নেতৃত্বে চলা এনডিএ সরকার ৩৭৭ ধারা নিয়ে স্পষ্ট অবস্থান নেওয়ার পথে না গিয়ে সিদ্ধান্তের ভার সুপ্রিমকোর্টের বিবেচনার উপরে ছেড়ে দেয়। তবে কেন্দ্রের আর্জি ছিল, কোর্ট যেন ৩৭৭ ধারার সূত্র ধরে সমকামী বিবাহ, দত্তক আইন, সম্পত্তির উত্তরাধিকারের মতো অধিকারের বৃহত্তর প্রশ্নগুলিরও বিচার করতে না বসে। কারণ সেক্ষেত্রে কেন্দ্রকে অবস্থান জানানোর জন্য সময় দিতে হবে। মোদী সরকারের আরও দাবী ছিল, জীবনসঙ্গী বাছার অধিকারের নামে যেন অজাচারের অধিকার দেওয়া না হয়। কারণ তা হিন্দু আইনের বিপক্ষে।[১৪]

এই প্রেক্ষাপটে, বিভিন্ন বিচারপতিদের ও সুপ্রিমকোর্টের সামগ্রিক পর্যবেক্ষণ ৩৭৭ ধারার ভবিষ্যৎ নির্ধারণে গুরুত্বপূর্ণ ভূমিকা পালন করে। তৎকালীন প্রধান বিচারপতি দীপক মিশ্রের নেতৃত্বাধীন পাঁচ সদস্যের (বিচারপতি এ.এম. খানউইলকর, ধনঞ্জয় চন্দ্রচূড়, রোহিংটন নরিম্যান, ইন্দু মলহোত্র) সাংবিধানিক বেঞ্চ সিদ্ধান্ত নেয় যে, ভারতীয় দন্ডবিধির ৩৭৭ ধারা অসাংবিধানিক কিনা, সেই প্রশ্নটি সবার প্রথমে খতিয়ে দেখা হবে। প্রধান বিচারপতি আরও বলেন, যদি ৩৭৭ ধারা বাতিলের সিদ্ধান্ত হয়, তবেই সমকামী বিয়ে, লিভ-ইন ইত্যাদি প্রসঙ্গ উঠবে। তবে তিনি মেনে নেন যে, ৩৭৭ ধারা ব্যক্তির সংবিধান সুরক্ষিত মর্যাদায় আঘাত করে।

৩৭৭ ধারার সমালোচনা প্রসঙ্গে আইনজীবী রোহতগি বলেন, যৌন রুচি মানুষের নিজস্ব বিষয়, মানুষ তা নিয়েই জন্মায়। কিন্তু প্রাকৃতিক নিয়মের সেই সহজাত রুচিকেই ৩৭৭ ধারায় ফৌজদারি অপরাধের তকমা দেওয়া হয়েছে। সমকামী যৌন সম্পর্ককে সেখানে প্রকৃতিবিরুদ্ধ বলা হয়েছে। তিনি আরও দাবি তোলেন, রূপান্তরকামী, সমকামী, উভকামীদের সুরক্ষা, উত্তরাধিকার, দত্তক সংক্রান্ত অধিকার নিয়েও ফয়সালা হওয়া দরকার। বিচারপতি ডি.ওয়াই. চন্দ্রচূড় বলেন, বিষয়টির সঙ্গে যৌন প্রবৃত্তি ছাড়াও লিঙ্গ পরিচয়ের বৃহত্তর প্রশ্ন জড়িত।[১৫] তিনি আরও বলেন, কোন ব্যক্তির যৌন পছন্দ কিম্বা যৌনতার অভিব্যক্তিকে কীভাবে দেখা হবে, সংবিধানের ১৫ নং ধারায় তা স্পষ্ট বলা আছে। দন্ডবিধির ৩৭৭ ধারায় এই বিষয়টিকে যে ভাবে ছকে বাঁধা হয়েছে, সেটা সংবিধানের ১৫ নং ধারার পরিপন্থী।

৩৭৭ ধারার সাংবিধানিক বৈধতা বিচার কালে, ৩৭৭-পন্থী আইনজীবীদের একদল সওয়াল করেন যে, এ ব্যাপারে জনমত কি বলছে সেটাও বিচার্য। বেঞ্চ তা খারিজ করে বলে, এটা গণভোটের বিষয় নয়, সাংবিধানিক নৈতিকতার বিষয়। বিচারপতিদের কথায়, 'আমরা ৩৭৭ ধারাকে সংবিধান প্রদত্ত সাম্যের অধিকার, জীবন ও স্বাধীনতার অধিকার এবং মতপ্রকাশের

অধিকারের আলোয় বিচার করব।' সেই সূত্রেই বেঞ্চ আরও বলে যে, অপরাধের তকমা গেলে সমকামিতা নিয়ে সামাজিক দৃষ্টিভঙ্গিও বদলাবে। আদালতের মতে, 'ভারতীয় সমাজে পারস্পরিক সম্মতিতে রচিত সমকামী সম্পর্ক নিয়েও তীব্র বৈষম্যের মনোভাব কাজ করে। আমাদের মানসিক স্বাস্থ্যে এর প্রভাব পড়েছে।'[১৬]

Indian Psychiatric Society (IPS)-এর তরফেও এক বিবৃতি জারি করে বলা হয়েছিল, 'সমকামিতা কোনও মনোরোগ নয়, বিষমকামিতা বা উভকামিতার মতো যৌনতার একটি স্বাভাবিক ভিন্নতা মাত্র।' ৩৭৭ ধারা খারিজের পক্ষে সওয়াল করে IPS আরও বলে যে, ১৯৭৩ খ্রিস্টাব্দে মার্কিন মনোরোগ সংস্থা এবং ১৯৯২ খ্রিস্টাব্দে বিশ্ব সাস্থ্য সংস্থার নির্ধারিত মনোরোগের তালিকা থেকে সমকামিতাকে বাদ দেওয়া হয়েছে। আমরাও সেই মতটিকে সমর্থন করি। পাশাপাশি ১৪ই জুলাই ২০১৮ All India Muslim Personal Law Board-ও জানিয়ে দেয় যে, শীর্ষ আদালতের নির্দেশে ভারতীয় দন্ডবিধির ৩৭৭ ধারাটি যদি খারিজও হয়ে যায়, তাহলেও তারা তার বিরোধিতা করবে না। যদিও এর আগে সুপ্রিম কোর্ট এবং দিল্লি হাইকোর্টে যতবারই ৩৭৭ ধারা খারিজের মামলা উঠেছিল, ততবারই ধারাটি বহাল রাখার পক্ষেই সওয়াল করেছিল ল বোর্ড।[১৭]

কংগ্রেস সাংসদ শশী তারুর সমকামকে আইনি অপরাধ-মুক্ত করতে লোকসভায় দু-দুবার বেসরকারি বিল আনার চেষ্টা করেছিলেন। একবার ২০১৫-র ডিসেম্বরে এবং ফের ২০১৬-র মার্চে।[১৮] কিন্তু ভারতীয় সংসদের হোমোফোবিয়া বা সমকামী বিদ্বেষ এমন পর্যায়ে ছিল যে, সরকার ও বিরোধী সকলে হাত মিলিয়ে বিলটি প্রথমবার উপস্থাপন পর্যন্ত করতে দেয়নি। বেজেপি এমনকি নিজের দলের সবার কাছ থেকেও তিনি সেভাবে সমর্থন পাননি। প্রসঙ্গত, বিল পেশ করলেই তার আলোচনা যেমন নিশ্চিত হয় না, তেমনি বিল আলোচিত হলেও তা পাশ হওয়া আরও কঠিন বিষয়। বহু সাংসদ বিল উপস্থাপনের পক্ষে ভোট দেবেন না বলে সেদিন অনুপস্থিত থাকেন। পরে, ভোটে হেরে সেই বিল আর পেশই করতে পারেননি তারুর।

অবশেষে, ৬ই সেপ্টেম্বর, ২০১৮ সুপ্রিম কোর্টের পাঁচ বিচারপতির সাংবিধানিক বেঞ্চ ঐক্যমতের ভিত্তিতে ৪৯৫ পাতার রায়ে জানিয়ে দিল যে, ভারতবর্ষে সমকামিতা অপরাধ নয়। ফলে, ২০১৩ খ্রিস্টাব্দে দেওয়া সুপ্রিম কোর্টের রায়ের বিরুদ্ধে গেল এই রায়। ব্রিটিশ আমলের ১৫৬ বছরের পুরানো দন্ডবিধির ৩৭৭ ধারাকে অযৌক্তিক ও অসাংবিধানিক বলেও মন্তব্য করেছেন সুপ্রিম কোর্টের বিচারপতিরা। রায় শুনিয়ে সুপ্রিম কোর্টের প্রধান বিচারপতি দীপক মিশ্র মন্তব্য করেছেন, পুরনো ধ্যানধারণাকে বিদায় জানিয়ে সমস্ত নাগরিকদের সমানাধিকার আমাদের দিতে হবে। বিচারপতি দীপক মিশ্রের সঙ্গে সহমত পোষণ করে সাংবিধানিক বেঞ্চের অন্যান্য চার বিচারপতিও একই বক্তব্য রেখেছেন। পাশাপাশি তাঁরা আরও জানিয়েছেন, ব্যক্তিগত পছন্দ স্বাধীনতার অন্যতম শর্ত। ভারতীয় সংবিধানে এলজিবিটি গোষ্ঠীর সদস্যরা বাকিদের মতো একই অধিকার পাওয়ার যোগ্য।[১৯] সাংবিধানিক বেঞ্চের মতে, ৩৭৭ ধারা সমকামীদের সমানাধিকারে ধাক্কা দিচ্ছে। প্রধান বিচারপতি সমকামিতা সম্পর্কে বলেন, 'আমি যা, আমি তাই। আমাকে সে ভাবেই গ্রহণ করতে হবে।' পাঁচ বিচারপতির বেঞ্চের সদস্যরা চারটি পৃথক রায়ে একই সুরে লিখেছেন, যৌন পছন্দ মানুষের স্বাভাবিক প্রবৃত্তি। তাই তার ভিত্তিতে ভেদাভেদ করা সংবিধানের ১৪তম অনুচ্ছেদের বিরোধী। বেঞ্চের অন্যতম বিচারপতি ইন্দু মলহোত্র বলেন, 'বছরের পর বছর সমানাধিকার থেকে বঞ্চিত করার জন্য এলজিবিটি সম্প্রদায়ের কাছে ইতিহাসের ক্ষমাপ্রার্থনার দায় থেকে যায়।'

৩৭৭ ধারার বিরুদ্ধে সব থেকে বড় প্রশ্ন ছিল, পুলিশ তথা রাষ্ট্র কেন মানুষের ব্যক্তিগত পরিসরে নাক গলাবে? সুপ্রিম কোর্টের প্রধান বিচারপতিসহ পাঁচ বিচারপতির বেঞ্চ বলেছেন, সমকামী, রুপান্তরকামী, উভকামী তথা এলজিবিটি সম্প্রদায়ের মানুষেরও নিজের পছন্দ মতো সঙ্গী বেছে নিয়ে, ভালবাসা, যৌনতৃপ্তি পাওয়ার অধিকার রয়েছে। যেমন রয়েছে আর

পাঁচজন সাধারণ নাগরিকের। নিজস্ব ইচ্ছা প্রকাশের বাধা মৃত্যুর সমান। তাই পুরানো ধ্যানধারণাকে বিদায় জানাতে হবে। ভিক্টোরিয় নীতিবোধের ভিত্তিতে তৈরি আইন দিয়ে সমকামী মানুষদের নাগরিক অধিকার থেকে বঞ্চিত করা যায় না। রায় ঘোষনা করে প্রধান বিচারপতি বলে, '৩৭৭ ধারা অযৌক্তিক, নিয়মবহির্ভূত এবং বোধাতীত। কারণ এলজিবিটি সম্প্রদায়ের সমানাধিকারে তা হস্তক্ষেপ করে। সমাজের নৈতিক ধ্যান-ধারণা একজন নাগরিকের অধিকার লঙ্ঘন করতে পারে না। তাঁর যুক্তি, সংখ্যাগুরুর মত বা সমাজের জনপ্রিয় মত সাংবিধানিক অধিকার বাতলে দিতে পারে না। সংবিধান মেনেই সিদ্ধান্ত নেওয়া হবে। কার পক্ষে মত বেশি, তা দেখে নয়। রায় ঘোষনার পর নাজ ফাউন্ডেশনের কর্ণধার অঞ্জলি গোপালনের প্রতিক্রিয়া ছিল, 'সমকামিতাকে শুধু অপরাধ নয়, রোগ হিসেবে দেখা হত। সমকামিতা সারাতে ইলেকট্রিক শক দেওয়া হত। তার বিরুদ্ধে আমরা জাতীয় মানবাধিকার কমিশনে যাওয়ায়, কমিশন বলেছিল, এটি আইনত অপরাধ বলে কিছু করার নেই।' শশী তারুর বলেন, 'বহু পুরনো এই ঔপনিবেশিক আইন আজকের আধুনিক সমাজের সঙ্গে একেবারেই খাপ খায় না। সাংবিধানিক অধিকার প্রতিষ্ঠা করে বৈষম্যের অবসান ঘটলো।'[২০]

মূলত, ২০১৩ খ্রিস্টাব্দের কৌশল মামলার রায়ের পর থেকেই ভারতবর্ষে এলজিবিটি মানুষদের আন্দোলনের তীব্রতা বৃদ্ধি পায়। ইতিমধ্যে, ২০১৪ খ্রিস্টাব্দের ন্যাশনাল লিগাল সার্ভিসেস অথরিটি বনাম ইউনিয়ন অব ইন্ডিয়া মামলা ও ২০১৭ খ্রিস্টাব্দের পুত্তাস্বামী মামলা দুটির রায় তৃতীয় লিঙ্গের মানুষদের ন্যায়ের প্রতি আদালতের সংবেদনশীলতাকে স্পষ্ট করে। ২০১৪ খ্রিস্টাব্দের মামলার রায়ে আদালত তৃতীয় লিঙ্গকে পুরুষ এবং নারীর মতোই আর একটি লিঙ্গের স্বীকৃতি দেয় এবং জানায়, সংবিধান স্বীকৃত মৌলিক অধিকারে এই লিঙ্গের মানুষদেরও সমান অধিকার আছে। নিজেদের তৃতীয় লিঙ্গের মানুষ হিসেবে চিহ্নিত করার অধিকারকেও স্বীকার করে নেয় আদালত।[২১] অন্যদিকে, আইনজীবীরা বলেছেন, ২৪ অগস্ট ২০১৭ সুপ্রিম কোর্ট ব্যক্তিগত গোপনতার অধিকারকে মৌলিক অধিকারের স্বীকৃতি দেওয়ার পরেই বোঝা গিয়েছিল, ৩৭৭ ধারার উপরে এবার কোপ পড়বে। কারণ ৩৭৭ ধারায় পুলিশকে ব্যক্তি পরিসরে হস্তক্ষেপ করার ক্ষমতা দেওয়া হয়েছিল। এরপরে, ২০১৭ খ্রিস্টাব্দের মানসিক স্বাস্থ্য আইনেও কেন্দ্রীয় সরকার কার্যত সমকামিতাকে আইনত স্বীকৃতি দিয়েছে। বলা হয়েছে, সমকামিতা মানসিক অসুস্থতা নয়। রায় ঘোষণা কালে বিচারপতিরা এই দুটি বিষয়ের উপর অত্যধিক গুরুত্ব আরোপ করেছিলেন। তবে ৩৭৭ ধারায় শিশু ও পশুদের সঙ্গে যৌন সম্পর্ককে শাস্তিযোগ্য অপরাধ হিসেবে বহাল রেখেছে সুপ্রিম কোর্ট। অনেক ক্ষেত্রে বলা হয়েছে, ভারতীয় দন্ডবিধিতে পুরুষের ধর্ষণ সম্বন্ধে কোন স্পষ্ট বিধি নেই। তাই ৩৭৭ ধারা ব্যবহার করে অভিযোগ জানাতে পারতেন কোনও ধর্ষিত পুরুষ। তবে এই আশঙ্কা অমূলক বলে জানিয়েছেন ৩৭৭ বিরোধী আন্দোলনকারীরা। তাদের মতে, পায়ুকাম ও পায়ু ধর্ষণ, এই দুটো সম্পূর্ণ পৃথক। ঠিক যেমন ধর্ষণ ও যৌনমিলন আলাদা। বর্তমান রায়েও স্পষ্ট করে বলা হয়েছে যে, পারস্পরিক সহমতের ভিত্তিতে যে সমকামী সম্পর্ক তৈরি হয়, তাকেই আইনি মর্যাদা দেওয়া হচ্ছে। কোনও ধরনের ধর্ষণকে স্বীকৃতি দেওয়া হচ্ছে না। তাছাড়া, নির্ভয়া ধর্ষণ (২০১২) কান্ডের পরেও ধর্ষণ আইন সংশোধন (২০১৩) করা হয়েছিল। সেখানে মহিলা ও পুরুষ উভয়ের ক্ষেত্রেই 'পায়ু ধর্ষণ'কে ধর্ষণের আখ্যা দেওয়া হয়েছিল।

আইনজীবীদের ব্যাখ্যা, সুপ্রিম কোর্ট ৩৭৭ ধারায় সমকামিতাকে অপরাধ মুক্ত করে দেওয়ার পরে পুলিশের সমকামীদের হেনস্থা করারও কোনও ক্ষমতা রইল না। কারণ তা সংবিধান বিরোধী কাজ হবে। সুপ্রিম কোর্ট রায়ে আরও বলেছে, ৩৭৭ ধারায় যে সব মামলা ঝুলছে, সেখানেও এই বায় বিবেচনা করতে হবে। বিচারপতি রহিংটন নরিম্যান তাঁর রায়ে কেন্দ্রীয় সরকারকে নির্দেশ দিয়েছেন, সমস্ত রকমের গণমাধ্যমে এই রায়ের বিপুল প্রচার করতে হবে। বিশেষত পুলিশকে এ বিষয়ে সচেতন করতে হবে। এরপর যে সমকামীদের বিয়ে ও অন্যান্য অধিকারও প্রাপ্য, তার ইঙ্গিত দিয়ে বিচারপতি চন্দ্রচূড় বলেন, 'সমকামিতাকে অপরাধ মুক্ত করা প্রথম ধাপ। সংবিধান আরও অনেক অধিকার দিয়েছে।'[২২]

নভতেজ সিংহ জোহর মামলায় আদালত কোন ব্যক্তি বিশেষের যৌন পছন্দকে তাঁর মতপ্রকাশের স্বাধীনতার অঙ্গ হিসেবে এবং আত্মসম্মান ও স্বাধীকারের প্রকাশ হিসেবে দেখেছে। আদালত দ্ব্যর্থহীন ভাষায় জানিয়েছে যে, সমকামিতা কোনরকম মানসিক অসুস্থতা নয়। বিচারপতি নরিম্যান তাঁদের অবস্থানের স্বপক্ষে ২০১৭ খ্রিস্টাব্দের মানসিক স্বাস্থ্য আইনের প্রসঙ্গ উল্লেখ করে বলেছেন, সেখানে কারও যৌন পছন্দের নিরিখে বৈষম্য না করার নিশ্চয়তা দেওয়া হয়েছে। বিচারপতি চন্দ্রচূড় ও মলহোত্র উল্লেখ করেছেন যে, সমকামিতাকে অপরাধ হিসেবে দেগে দেওয়ার অর্থ ব্যক্তি বিশেষের স্বাস্থ্যের অধিকার লঙ্ঘন করা। কারণ, সমকামী সম্প্রদায়ের মানুষ তাদের যৌন পরিচয় গোপন করার তাগিদেই চিকিৎসকের কাছে আসতে ইতস্তত করেন এবং সেই কারণেই তাঁরা যৌন সংক্রামক অসুখেও অনেক বেশি আক্রান্ত হন ও ভোগেন।[২৩]

ঐতিহাসিক রায় পরবর্তী অভিমুখ ও সমকাম:

ভারতবর্ষের আইনি পরিসরে সমকামিতা এখন আর আপরাধ নয় এই রায় পরবর্তী অভিমুখ দু-ধরনের, এক, এর পক্ষে এবং দুই, এর বিপক্ষে। রায়ের বিপক্ষে বিজেপি নেতা সুব্রহ্মণ্যম স্বামী যেমন বলেছেন, সমকামিতা বৈধতা পাওয়ায় এডস বাড়বে।[২৪] এর উত্তরে আগেই উল্লেখিত বিচারপতি চন্দ্রচূড় ও মলহোত্রের বক্তব্য ধার করে বলা যায়, কোনও যুক্তিতে ব্যক্তি বিশেষের স্বাস্থ্যের অধিকার লঙ্ঘিত হলে এডস-এর মত মারণ রোগ আরও বাড়বে। কট্টরবাদী সংগঠনগুলি বলে চলেছে, সমকামিতা প্রকৃতির নিয়মের বিপ্রতীপ। তা হলেও ঐ ভ্রান্ত যুক্তির বিরুদ্ধে প্রশ্ন ওঠে, প্রকৃতির বিরুদ্ধে আমরা কি প্রতিনিয়তই যাই না? বিজ্ঞানের সৃষ্টিই তো অনেকাংশে প্রকৃতির বিরূপ প্রতিক্রিয়াগুলোকে নিয়ন্ত্রণ করার তাগিদে। গরমকালে এসি, কিম্বা ভ্রূনহত্যা সেও তো প্রকৃতিরই বিরুদ্ধাচারণ। বিষয়টা আসলে প্রকৃতির বিরুদ্ধাচারণ নয়। বিষয়টা হল, প্রকৃতির কোন ক্ষতি না করে বা ন্যূনতম ক্ষতি করে সেই কাজটা মানবজাতির সুবিধার্থে ব্যবহার্য কি না। সমকামে প্রকৃতির কোন ক্ষতিসাধন হয় না। তাই মূলস্রোতের যৌন অনুশীলনের বাইরে গিয়ে যদি কেউ সমকামে পরিতৃপ্ত হন, তা হলে বাকি সমাজের মাথা ব্যাথার যুক্তিযুক্ত কারণটা একেবারেই বোধগম্য হয় না! তাছাড়া সমকামী প্রবৃত্তির মানুষজনের শারীরবৃত্তীয় প্রকৃতিই সমকামিতায় আসক্তি- সেটাই তাঁদের প্রকৃতি। ফলে, সমকামী প্রবৃত্তির মানুষের কাছে সমকামিতা তাঁদের শারীরিক ও মানসিক গঠনগত প্রবৃত্তি, প্রকৃতিবিরুদ্ধ একেবারেই নয়।[২৫]

তাছাড়া, নভতেজ সিংহ জোহর বনাম ইউনিয়ন অব ইন্ডিয়া মামলার রায়ে প্রথমেই পরিষ্কার বলা হয়েছে, ভারতীয় দন্ডবিধির ৩৭৭ ধারা নিয়ে মামলায় বিচার বিভাগ স্পষ্ট করে দিতে চায় যে, আর সব ছেড়ে সাংবিধানিক নৈতিকতাই তাঁদের রায়ের প্রধান ভিত্তিভূমি। সংখ্যাগরিষ্ঠের নৈতিকতার বদলে সংবিধানে যে নৈতিকতা স্বীকৃত হয়েছে সেটাকেই মাথায় রাখতে চান তাঁরা। মামলার রায়ের লিখিত বক্তব্যগুলির প্রথম দিকেই প্রধান বিচারপতি দীপক মিশ্র বলছেন, 'কোন ব্যক্তির প্রকৃতিগত আত্মপরিচিতিকে তার অস্তিত্বের অত্যন্ত জরুরি অংশ হিসেবে মানতে হবে।' সংবিধানের ১৪, ১৫, ১৯ ও ২১ অনুচ্ছেদে খুব পরিষ্কার ভাবে যার উল্লেখ আছে। কিন্তু স্বাধীনতার পর এতগুলো বছর লেগে গেলো সাংবিধানিক স্ববিরোধীতা ঘুচাতে। ঐতিহাসিক রায়কে সে কারণে ভারতবর্ষের সমকামী মানুষেরা তাঁদের "দ্বিতীয় স্বাধীনতা"[২৬] হিসেবে উদ্‌যাপন করেছেন।

একটা ব্যাপার এখানে খুব পরিষ্কার। ধরা যাক, এক নম্বর ব্যক্তি যেভাবে জীবন কাটাচ্ছেন, তা নিয়ে দুই নম্বর ব্যক্তির যদি প্রবল 'নৈতিক' আপত্তি থাকে- সেটা কি দুই নম্বর ব্যক্তির বাকস্বাধীনতা নয়? ভারতের সংবিধান বলবে, দুই নম্বর ব্যক্তির আপত্তি গ্রাহ্য হতে পারে তখনই যদি সেটা রাষ্ট্রের সাংবিধানিক নীতির পরীক্ষায় পাশ করে। নতুবা সে আপত্তি স্বীকারযোগ্য নয়। মতপ্রকাশের অধিকার থাকতেই পারে, কিন্তু সেই মতপ্রকাশের উপর ভিত্তি করে কোন বৈষম্য করা চলবে না। আর মতপ্রকাশের ক্ষেত্রেও নাগরিকের কাছে নৈতিকতার একটাই মানদন্ড হওয়া উচিত- সেটা সংবিধান। কোন

ব্যক্তি, গোষ্ঠী, সংখ্যাগুরু, সংখ্যালঘু কারও আলাদা নৈতিকতার সঙ্গে যদি সংবিধানের নৈতিকতার সংঘর্ষ দেখা দেয়, তবে অবশ্যই দ্বিতীয়টিকে অগ্রাধিকার দিতে হবে।

লক্ষণীয়- সর্বোচ্চ আদালত যখন মনে করিয়ে দেয়, সাংবিধানিক নৈতিকতা তুলে ধরাই রাষ্ট্রের একমাত্র কাজ, তার অর্থ কিন্তু দেশের আইনবিভাগ ও শাসনবিভাগের দিকে একটি প্রত্যক্ষ বার্তা পাঠাতে চায় বিচার বিভাগ। সেই বার্তা কেবল ৩৭৭ ধারার ক্ষেত্রেই প্রযোজ্য নয়। বার্তাটি প্রথমবার দেওয়া হল, এমনও নয়। ২০১৭-র আধার মামলার রায়েও শোনা গিয়েছিল, নাগরিকের ব্যক্তি-পরিসর এতই গুরুত্বপূর্ণ যে, প্রশাসনিক যুক্তিতেও রাষ্ট্র সেখানে প্রবেশ করে ছড়ি ঘোরাতে পারে না। নাগরিক কী খাবেন, কী পরবেন, সে সব একান্ত ভাবেই তাঁর নিজের ব্যাপার, আর কারও নজরদারি সেখানে মেনে নেওয়া যায় না। ৩৭৭ ধারা সম্পর্কিত রায় পরবর্তী পর্যায়ে, সমকামী বলে যে সব ঠাট্টা-বিদ্রুপ অহরহ চলছে সেগুলোও সংবিধানসম্মত হচ্ছে না।[২৭] এখানেই দেশের সরকার তথা আইনবিভাগ ও নির্বাচিত জনপ্রতিনিধিদের পরবর্তী করণীয় ঠিক কী তা নির্ধারণের দায় ও দায়িত্ব থেকে যায়। বিচারপতি নরিম্যান ও চন্দ্রচূড় তাদের রায়ে সরকারের এই সাংবিধানিক দায়িত্ব পালনের কথা স্মরণও করিয়ে দিয়েছেন।

ঐতিহাসিক রায়ে আইনের পরিবর্তন হয়েছে ঠিকই, সমকামী মানুষেরা আর একটু সসম্মানে বাঁচবেন সেটাও ঠিক। কিন্তু এই আশাটুকুর বাইরে লড়াই থামার লক্ষণ নেই। অন্যায় আইনে শাস্তি পাওয়ার সম্ভাবনা নির্মূল হলেও যৌথ জীবনে পদে-পদে সমস্যা। এখনও, সমলিঙ্গের বিয়ে, একসঙ্গে ঋণ নিয়ে সম্পত্তি কেনা, সন্তান দত্তক নেওয়া থেকে পরস্পরের জন্য বিমার বন্দোবস্ত করা কোনও কিছুই প্রায় সম্ভব নয়। প্রতি ক্ষেত্রেই বাদ সাধছে সামাজিক চোখরাঙানি। তাই, এবার সমাজের মানসিকতার পরিবর্তন হওয়া প্রয়োজন।

উপসংহার

আদালতের এই রায়ে সমকামী মানুষদের সামাজিক জীবনের ছবিটা আমূল বদলে যাবে, সেই আশা বোধহয় কেউ করেন না। কিন্তু পরিবর্তনের পথে এই রায় এক মস্ত পদক্ষেপ তাতে কোনও সংশয় নেই। তবে, সুপ্রীম কোর্ট সমকামী মানুষদের সামগ্রীক সামাজিক অন্তর্ভূক্তিকরণের বিষয়টি তেমন গুরুত্ব দেয়নি। যদিও, ভারতীয় সংবিধানের কেন্দ্রবিন্দুতে রয়েছে বৈচিত্রপূর্ণ, বহুত্ববাদী গণতন্ত্রের ধারণা। ফলে, সংগ্রামটা যাঁরা করেছিলেন বা এখনও করছেন, তাঁদের জেনে রাখা দরকার, সংগ্রাম এখনও শেষ হয়নি। একটা বিরাট শৃঙ্খলকে সুপ্রিম কোর্ট ছিঁড়ে দিয়েছে, সে কথা ঠিক। সমকামী নাগরিকদের সামনে আর কোন রাষ্ট্রীয় অবরোধ বা আইনি সমস্যা নেই। কিন্তু, বাধা-বিপত্তি এখনও অনেক রয়ে গিয়েছে। সামাজিক অবরোধ যেমন থাকবে, তেমনি এখনও এলজিবিটি জনগোষ্ঠীকে অনেকেই বাঁকা চোখে দেখবেন, কটাক্ষ ছুড়বেন, সুযোগ পেলে হেনস্থাও করবেন।

সেজন্য সরকারের দায়িত্ব হল, এলজিবিটি সম্প্রদায়ের বিরুদ্ধে সহিংসতা, তাঁদের আত্মপরিচিতি, নিরাপত্তা, স্বাস্থ্যের অধিকার, লিঙ্গ সংবেদশীলতা, শিক্ষা, কর্মনিয়োজন, সাধারণ মানুষের সচেতনতা বৃদ্ধিতে প্রয়োজনীয় আইন প্রণয়ন, কার্যকরী পদক্ষেপ গ্রহণ ও সহায়ক ভূমিকা পালন করা। পাশাপাশি এলজিবিটি সম্প্রদায়কেও সমস্ত প্রতিকূলতার বিরুদ্ধে লড়াই চালিয়ে যেতে হবে লিঙ্গ ন্যায্যতা প্রতিষ্ঠার লক্ষে। সমাজের তৃণমূলস্তর পর্যন্ত তাঁদের আত্মপরিচিতি ও অধিকার বিষয়ক সচেতনতা ছড়িয়ে দেবার জন্য সরকারি ও বিভিন্ন বেসরকারি সংস্থার সাহায্য নিয়ে স্কুলে, কলেজে, বিশ্ববিদ্যালয়ে এ সংক্রান্ত সেমিনার, ওয়ার্কশপ বা সচেতনতা শিবির অনুষ্ঠিত করা যেতে পারে। নিজেদের শিক্ষাগত যোগ্যতা বৃদ্ধি, সংগঠিত ক্ষেত্রে কর্মনিয়োজনের মাধ্যমে অনুপ্রবেশ, রাজনৈতিক সচেতনতা ও সক্রিয় অংশগ্রহণ প্রভৃতি বিষয়গুলি বিশেষভাবে প্রয়োজন, কেননা এগুলি সাধারণ জনমানসে প্রভাব ফেলতে সমর্থ্য হয়। যা পক্ষান্তরে সমাজের মধ্যে চলে আসা এলজিবিটি

সম্প্রদায় সম্পর্কে ঘৃণা, অসম্মান, অগ্রহণযোগ্যতার মত নেতিবাচক মনোভাবের অপসারণে গুরুত্বপূর্ণ ভূমিকা নিতে পারে। পাশাপাশি দলিত, মুসলিম, আদিবাসি প্রভৃতি প্রান্তিক গোষ্ঠীগুলির সাথে সংযুক্ত আন্দোলনও আগামীতে নিজেদের অধিকার, দাবী ও আত্ম-পরিচিতির স্বীকৃত ক্ষেত্র নির্মাণে সহায়ক ভূমিকা নিতে পারে।

তাছাড়া, গণতান্ত্রিক সিদ্ধান্ত গ্রহণের প্রাতিষ্ঠানিক চৌহদ্দিতে সমকামী মানুষদের মতামত, অভিজ্ঞতা, স্বরসহ উপস্থিতি, জননীতি নির্ধারণের এত দিনকার পদ্ধতিকেও বদলে দিতে পারে। সেইসঙ্গে, যৌন প্রবৃত্তির সংখ্যালঘু সম্প্রদায়গুলির প্রতি সংখ্যাগুরু বিষমকামী মানুষদের যৌক্তিক, মুক্ত, চিন্তাশীল ও পক্ষপাতহীন দৃষ্টিভঙ্গি থাকতে হবে। তাদেরকেও অনুশীলন করতে হবে কিভাবে দখলদার, অভ্রান্ত ও একমাত্র যৌন পরিচয়ের আঙিনা থেকে সরে এসে পারস্পরিক বিনিময় ও স্বীকৃতিমূলক সম্পর্কে প্রবেশ করতে হয়। স্ব-গ্রহণযোগ্যতা, সান্ত্বনা, আত্মবিশ্বাস এবং বিকশিত হওয়ার সমান সুযোগ আরও বেশি সাম্যে উপনীত হতে সাহায্য করবে। তবেই, রাষ্ট্রীয় হেনস্থার আশঙ্কা যেমন অতীত হয়েছে (?), তেমনি একদিন সমগ্র ভারতবর্ষের এলজিবিটি ও তৎ-সম্পর্কিত বৃহত্তর সম্প্রদায়ের মানুষদের সামাজিক হেনস্থাও অতীত হবে। যা হয়তো, পারস্পরিক যৌথ সেবাযত্নে সিক্ত নির্ভরশীল গোষ্ঠীনির্ভর এক সম্পর্কের সহাবস্থানের দিকে আমাদের নিয়ে যাবে।

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Education and Muslims in India: A Reassessment of the Sachar Committee Report

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Abstract

Education plays an indispensable role for the progress of any country or society. It has the potential to ensure the economic growth of a nation and to eradicate the socio-economic disparities among the citizens of a country. India is characterized by diverse religions and ethnic minorities. Needless to say, for the development of the country, religious minority communities in India must have equal access to and accomplishments in education. However, as per the Sachar Committee Report, 2006 the condition of the Indian Muslims with respect to their status in education is not at all satisfactory. Their performance is poor at almost all levels of education. This paper tries to evaluate the significance as well as the limitations of the report presented specifically about position of the Muslims in India in case of education. This attempt might pave the way in exploring new areas of investigation in future required to assess the problems and demands of the Muslims in developing their status in the field of education.

Keywords: *Sachar Committee Report review on education, Educational Status of Muslims in India, Muslim educational backwardness*.

Introduction

"The Sachar Committee Report was submitted to the Government of India on 17th November, 2006."[1] "It was the first comprehensive report compiled in Independent India in order to intervene and take effective actions by the Government with regard to the prevailing social, economic and educational status of the Muslims in India."[2] Acquisition and advancement of education is a crucial and an integral part for the overall growth of the religious minorities in India. In this respect, proper in-depth assessment of the status of education of the Muslims in India, locating the deficiencies and correspondingly execution of effective Government initiatives according to the need of the beneficiaries are vital for promotion of education among them. It will not only contribute towards ameliorating the social and economic circumstances of the largest minority group in India but shall also maintain the equity and inclusion process in the country. Against this backdrop, the paper attempts to review, thereby

scrutinize and explore the significance and limitations of the Sachar Report in depicting the genuine educational scenario of the Muslim minority in India.

Background

The Indian Government constituted a Top-level Committee on 9th March, 2005. The Committee was chaired by Justice Rajindar Sachar to make a comprehensive report assessing the overall status of the Muslims in India, considering their position in social, economic and educational spheres. "The other members of the Committee included Saiyid Hamid, Dr. T.K. Oommen, M.A. Basith, Dr. Rakesh Basant, Dr. Akhtar Majeed and Dr. Abusaleh Shariff."[3] Government of India planned to make the report in order to formulate and implement "specific interventions, policies and programmes to take account the issues regarding the socio-economic backwardness of the Muslim community."[4] "The Committee submitted its report to the Government of India on 17th November, 2006."[5]

Sachar Committee Report holds, Muslims in India are abysmally backward in education. "They are at a double disadvantage with low levels of education combined with low quality education."[6] "Literacy rate among Muslims in 2001 was far below the national average."[7] Success rates in Graduation among the Muslims were considerably poor in contrast to other Socio-Religious Categories (SRCs) "and the gap is much wider in urban areas for both men and women."[8] The disparity between Muslims and other SRCs aggravates as the Muslims approach more towards higher level of education. Dropout rates among the Muslims are the highest at Primary, Middle and Higher Secondary levels compared to all the SRCs."[9] The Sachar Committee Report undoubtedly is a significant study in terms of revealing the economic, social and educational scenario exclusively about the Muslims of India. In spite of presenting its vital observations and recommendations specifically regarding the educational conditions of the Muslims, there are certain flaws and missing links in the study which otherwise, if considered seriously, would have delivered some other relevant dimensions concerning education of Muslims in India.

Methodology

The main objective of the study is to reassess and analyze the findings and recommendations of Sachar Committee regarding condition of Muslims in the sphere of education in India. Secondary data and viewpoints from various articles, journals and government report have been used to conduct the study.

Predominance of Secondary Data

Sachar Committee came to the conclusions of its study predominantly on the basis of secondary source of data. It stated its remarks and suggestions relating to performance of the Muslims in Literacy, educational attainment, graduation attainment and technical education

mainly depending on the data accumulated from Government and Private organizations. "Census 2001, for the first time provided an important source of data to act on for the committee for measuring educational achievements of different religions, SCs and STs. This was done by using the age profile of persons with different levels of educational achievement."[10] Necessary data from the 61st Round of NSSO (National Sample Survey Office) were also included to elevate the standard of assessment. Apart from quantitative data, "qualitative dimensions of education were analysed through several other data sources like enrolment and attendance rates, the choice of educational institutions such as Government, private or Madrasas and the cost and access to education. It also included data from NSSO, National Council of Educational Research and Training (NCERT), National Institute of Educational Planning and Administration (NIEPA), the Central Board of Secondary Education (CBSE) and the Human Development Surveys conducted by the National Council of Applied Economic Research (NCAER). Additionally, data from institutions of higher learning such as universities – Indian Institutes of Management (IIMs), Indian Institutes of Technology (IITs) and other technical and professional educational institutions from different parts of the country were used to highlight various dimensions of accessibility to higher levels of education."[11] (SCR 2006: 51-52)

Thus, "the Committee has collected huge amount of data from government departments, the Census, private survey organizations such as NCAER and self-conducted small surveys."[12] It also included tables and technical notes which are presented in about 130 pages. Though bulk of this information holds immense value, its inclusion in one single document does not give a new dimension about Muslims' socioeconomic development. It has just added some quantitative information to the conclusions which have already been inferred in other's studies and researches over the past three decades. (Wilkinson 2007: 832-833). Secondary data are not inevitable for conducting a research. Secondary data are manipulated by human beings and so if a research is conducted exclusively on such kind of data, it may include biases and becomes least reliable. Secondary data are old in nature and they hold scanty information which can be misleading as well. (Kabir 2016: 204) Incorporation of Primary data, that is statistics or quantitative data with regard to enrollment of Muslims at various stages of education as well as In-depth Interview excavating qualitative data regarding perception of the Muslims towards education along with their grievances and demands could have been more pertinent and valuable in assessing thoroughly the performance of the Muslims in education in India.

Non-preference of Madrasa Education

Sachar Committee unfolded significant information relating to non-preference of the Muslims in acquiring education in Madrasas. It had been a widely-held belief that Muslims are inclined towards Madrasa system of education with traditional curriculum since they

prefer more to acquire religious education than modern education. In this regard Sachar Committee's findings have been innovative and striking. "It stated on the basis of the NCAER figures that only about 4 per cent of all Muslim students of the school going age group were enrolled in Madera's. At the all India level it was three per cent of all Muslim children of school going age. (SCR 2006: 77) According to the report, the Government aided Madrasa's are often the last resort for the economically backward Muslims or for those who does not have access to 'mainstream' educational institutions in their locality."[13] However, the Commission prescribed to modernize Madrasa's, and to equip them with "good quality, subsidised 'mainstream' education and develop an adequate infrastructure for education."[14](SCR 2006: 78)

As claimed by the report, many Madera'sas provide education, similar to that provided in 'mainstream' schools. Many of these institutes had shown interest in Government's modernization scheme and were interested "to incorporate science, mathematics and other 'modern/regular' subjects in their curriculum and initiate modern methods of pedagogy."[15] However, the report admits the fact that this 'modernisation scheme' caters to the needs of a small number of children and so cannot be an alternative to mainstream education. Further, the report also points out some lacuna in implementing 'modernisation scheme' in Madrasas. First, there is a dearth of qualified teachers in order to teach modern educational program of studies and those who teach do not get remuneration worth the name. Second, there is ignorance in incorporating modern subjects in the Madrasa curriculum. Third, there is lack of supervision and inspection on the part of the Madrasas and the State in proper implementation of the modern stream. (SCR 2006: 78-79)

Thus, the standpoint of the Commission is quite ambiguous regarding the constructive role of Madrasas in imparting education to Muslim students. Despite the findings about non-preference among the Muslims for Madrasa education and acknowledging that modernisation of Madrasas cannot substitute mainstream education; its suggestion to upgrade the Madrasa system of education becomes ineffective and inconsequential. Following and executing only the madrasa modernization programmes to teach Muslims will deliver vague probability in improving their overall educational condition. The reasons for this are: First, as stated in the Sachar Committee report (pp.77) that only three per cent of "Muslim children of school-going age attend Madrasas."[16] Secondly, certificates issued by Madrasas are not considered by many government institutions for enrolling in higher education. Hence, Madrasa certificates are devalued in the sphere of higher education. Therefore, States should for go the madrasa modernization programmes and prioritize on implementing plans to attract Muslims to mainstream modern educational institutions. (Haneefa 2020: 4-5)

Causes of Educational Backwardness among Muslim women

The Sachar Committee Report stated that "in 2001, literacy rate of Muslim women was 50

per cent"[17], which was at par "with women of other communities and were much better than SC/ST women in rural India. However, as per State level estimates, the literacy gap between Muslims and the general average is greater in urban areas and for women"[18] though it added that in Tamil Nadu status of Muslims was "better in all sub-groups and in Kerala differences across SRCs were minimal."[19] (SCR 2006: 53)

Therefore, it is quite evident from the overall performance of the Muslims in general that though, literacy level of the Muslim females was not satisfactory but their performance in literacy might have differed from region to region and from one state to another. The explanations of such variations which the Committee has surpassed could have provided better insights into the Muslim female educational status on the basis of region (rural-urban) and State. According to the Committee, generalised discrimination and lack of access due to poverty are the main reasons behind this. But this seems to be a partial explanation. In some western and southern states the educational condition of the Muslims is quite better than the usual and the rest of the country. Although the "Muslim literacy rates are below the Indian average, the report itself states that performance of the Muslims in education in 10 out of 21 states studied (including Maharashtra, Gujarat, Andhra Pradesh and Karnataka) is better than the average."[20] (SCR 2006: 53). Thus, it is evident that Muslims' access to socioeconomic rewards is State or region oriented. (Wilkinson 2007: 835)

Moving on to the Higher Education, Sachar Committee Report states, the attainment of Graduation among the Muslims "is less than half compared to 'All Others' and the gap is much more prominent in urban areas for both men and women. This disparity, between Muslims and 'All Others' have widened since 1970s over time and the overall progress has been poor both in urban and rural areas, especially among women."[21] (SCR 2006: 67).

The Committee thus pointed out the poor performance of Muslims at higher stages of education, especially among the female members of the community. But having said that and even revealing the dismal educational conditions of Muslim females at higher levels of learning, it did not provide the relevant causes and constructive solutions relating to the meager accomplishment of Graduation among the Muslim women. Based on interactions with the Muslim Community, the Committee mentioned certain factors responsible for the plight of Muslim female education. According to the Committee, reluctance of Muslim parents in educating girls, early marriage, "non-availability of schools within easy reach for girls at lower levels of education, absence of girls' hostels, absence of female teachers and availability of scholarships as they proceed towards higher education are the causes behind Muslim female backwardness."[22] (SCR 2006: 85) The causes which have been stated in the report for the higher dropout rate among Muslim girls were quite partial and superficial in relevance to exploring the genuine problems in this regard. Although majority of the analysis of the report is centered on education, it did not mention the factors responsible for inaccessibility

of "Muslim children, especially Muslim girls to primary, secondary and higher education."[23](Wilkinson 2007: 835)

An in depth interview with the Muslim girls and their parents may help in probing and scrutinizing the real causes behind underrepresentation of Muslim females in higher education. Social norms may prevent Muslim girls to attend any educational institution. It may also be a reason of dropout which consequently widens the gender disparity among the Muslims in case of education. Again, because of the constraints imposed by Muslim families (Tyrer & Ahmad 2006) and lack of safety for the girls in rural and urban slums, Muslim parents restrict their daughters to go outside. This often becomes an obstacle for the girls to attend schools (especially when they reach their puberty) or acquire higher education. Purdah system, the practice of polygamy and one-sided divorce or separation in the community, reluctance in educating girls (since highly educated girls are less approved by the grooms) may be some of the important factors for "meager participation of Muslim females in education. The findings from several studies '(Baruah & Goswami 2012; Borooah & Iyer 2005; Duraisamy 2000; Gouda & Sekher 2014; Hunt 2008; Mugisha 2006; Narula 2014; Pal 2004)' divulged that parental education, parental attitude, household income, family size, place of residence, etc. are also the significant and decisive factors for the children to acquire education in Muslim families."[24] (Sengupta and Rooj 2018: 90)

Education of the female members furnishes the foundation and impetus for the progress and expansion of education among both the genders of any community. Increase in literacy rate and educational advancement of Muslim women is a crucial step in this regard for overall socio-economic development of the community as well. As stated by Haneefa that lack of female literacy is the main cause for the educational backwardness of Muslims and he supported his argument by quoting Robin Jeffrey from his work on Kerala (1992), "literate men have literate sons; literate women have literate children" which emphasized on the significance of literacy of the females in accomplishing literacy for large number of people in Kerala. Thus, according to him, female literacy is necessary to attain mass literacy. He also added that it also becomes an advantage for the families in contributing towards increasing educational achievements. (Haneefa 2020: 5)

Urdu as medium of education

Referring to the issue of Urdu language as medium of education, the findings of the Committee is noteworthy. It claimed that "non-availability of education in Urdu language is one of the factors for the low educational status of Muslims in India."[25] The report reaffirms that there had been more violation than adherence to the provisions of the Constitution of India including Article 350A in providing "adequate facilities for instruction in the mother tongue at primary stage of education to children belonging to linguistic minority groups."[26] The Report added that despite the positive recommendations of various Committees (Gujral Committee, Ale

Ahmed Suroor Committee, Ali Sardar Jafri Committee) in 1975, 1983, 1990 respectively, which was constructed by the Central Government for the advancement of Urdu language in India, there is dearth of Urdu medium schools in most States with low enrolment of children. State wise data revealed except Maharashtra and Karnataka, no other States could show satisfactory enrollment of Muslim children within the age span six and fourteen years. The report claimed that inadequate facilities to learn in Urdu is the main cause for low enrollment and poor performance of Urdu Medium students. (SCR 2006: 80-83) Education in mother tongue specially in primary schools improves learning outcomes easily and increase comprehensive skills. Non availability of Urdu medium schools with adequate infrastructural facilities in majority of the States (irrespective of Muslim population density) in India as elucidated by the Sachar Committee is surely a great concern and setback in imparting proper primary education to Muslim children.

Considering "the large proportion of Muslim children having Urdu as their mother tongue, the report stressed on teaching Urdu as an elective subject, in areas which have a substantial Urdu speaking population."[27] However, besides this, it proposed Urdu medium schooling at the higher level of education up till graduation to enhance their employment possibilities. (SCR 2006: 83) Urdu being the mother tongue of Muslim children undisputedly enables them in acquisition of knowledge with ease. But would it be a necessary and constructive step in incorporating Urdu at higher levels of education to enhance employment prospects for the Muslims in contemporary society? A study conducted in Maharashtra provides a different outcome in this regard. It stated that in spite of the State's support towards Urdu medium schools in imparting primary education to the children in mother tongue to attain the constitutional obligation, the employment prospects of Urdu medium children has been found to be dismal. Their performance often drops because the lessons are taught in English medium of instruction at higher stages of education. Since about 95 per cent of children "in Urdu medium schools in Maharashtra belong to economically backward religious minority"[28], it creates a negative impact on Muslims' participation in private and public sector employment as well. (Shaban 2015: 46)

Thus, it is quite comprehensible and coherent that though Urdu as mother tongue can be a useful tool for Muslim children in grasping and strengthening basic knowledge at primary level of education, its effectiveness at higher levels of education in increasing potential abilities in order to procure good employment remains entirely dicey and futile. Therefore, alternate inclusion of effective changes in medium of instruction at higher levels of education would be more pragmatic and rational in approach in building up the future of the Muslim children in a better way. It should be made certain that along with the medium of instruction in native tongue or first language at elementary level of education, English as universally accepted medium should also be incorporated step-by-step in the curriculum. This approach ultimately will be more practical and would cater to the modern economic demands. (Khan 2016: 5)

Recommendations of the Committee

Considering the educational deficiency observed among the Muslims" their low levels of enrollment to their meager "participation in higher levels of education"[29], specially the dismal condition of the Muslim women in this regard, the Sachar Committee recommends certain initiatives in yielding positive outcomes of the Muslims in the field of education. "The Committee stated that it is the responsibility of the State to provide free and compulsory education to children up to the age of 14"[30] and this "is critical for the improvement of the educational conditions of Muslims."[31] The initiative to set up exclusive girls' schools for nine-twelve standard students was proposed in the report to engender "higher participation of Muslim girls in school education."[32] Besides this, the Committee emphasized on offering primary education in Urdu in upgraded Urdu medium schools specially in the Urdu speaking population concentrated zones, to cater to the requirement of Urdu speaking children. With respect to Madrasas, it has been prescribed that they should be associated with a "higher secondary school board to enable and facilitate the students to shift to mainstream education"[33] after completing the course from Madrasa. Additionally, the Committee urged for acknowledging the degrees of the Madrasas for fulfilling the eligibility criteria in competitive examinations. In offering the remedial measures for mitigating the problem of scarcity in higher educational achievements among the Muslims, the Committee proposed to evolve alternative criteria for admission "in the regular universities and autonomous colleges"[34] in order to provide facilities to the "most backward" among all the Socio-Religious Categories. The Committee emphasized that this should help the poor among all communities. (SCR: 243-248)

The attempt and feasibility relating to policy initiatives of Sachar Committee for the improvement of the educational conditions of the Muslims, appears to be trivial and partial. The narrow and superficial guidelines have been formulated disregarding the necessities and demands of the Muslims as a socio-economically heterogeneous community. The Committee has been passive in conceiving and advocating any remedial strategies for the financially deprived Muslim students, to ameliorate the educational status of Muslim girls and boys at higher education level and in framing any policy exclusively for the benefit of the Muslim students in pursuing their studies in educational institutions. The suggestions put forwarded by the Ranganath Misra Commission in this regard are quite significant with possibilities in uplifting the educational conditions of the Muslims to a great extent. The Commission strongly recommended "at least 15 per cent seats in all non-minority educational institutions earmarked for the minorities, 10 per cent for the Muslims and the remaining five per cent for other minorities."[35] Moreover, since Muslim women are educationally backward, concessions with regard to "lower eligibility criteria for admission and lower rate of fee"[36] including other possible measures were also prescribed for them for their educational advancement. Enhanced aid was recommended for the schools and colleges run by the

Muslims as well as for the Madarsa Modernization Scheme of the Government to raise the standard of education for them. (RMCR 2007: 150-151)

It is also dispiriting that even after revealing the deplorable condition of the Muslims in education, Sachar Committee remained dormant in prescribing any development scheme or scholarship programme for the meritorious but financially deficient Muslim students which otherwise would have been immensely beneficial for preventing dropouts and in supporting the continuation of studies (including higher education) among the Muslims. There are certain scholarship schemes run by Ministry of Minority Affairs for the upliftment of minorities but they are not exclusively designed for the Muslims as beneficiaries, even though they need the most considering their depressing socio economic development. The schemes have been designed for all the minority communities disregarding their differences. Such an initiative is complicated because some minorities are in a more disadvantaged position than the others and thus they cannot compete with those who are in a better position and get the benefits from such schemes. The assembling of all the different minority communities under one roof and targeting them as one kind of beneficiaries is like the equal treatment of unequals. (Khan 2016: 5-6)

Conclusion

Muslims occupy the second position among all the religious communities in India and they are the most populous among all the minority groupings. Even after 75 years of independence, Muslims in India have remained backward in almost all socio-economic indicators. One of the main factors behind the overall regression among the Muslims is their persisting grievous achievements in the field of education. An in-depth study with quantitative as well as qualitative primary data incorporating viewpoint, needs and demands of the Muslims related to education is vehemently required in order to draw the attention of the Government in ameliorating the educational status of the Muslims. Though they are advancing towards assimilating with the mainstream modern education in a slow pace, it is to be encouraged with more effective and pragmatic measures so that they can move ahead concurrently with the trends of modern society. Further, Muslims being a heterogeneous community, encounter different educational problems due to poverty, gender, caste and regional disparities. Therefore, Government should not only delve into relevant data on these issues but should also consider the causes behind such problems before planning any development strategy or policy intervention for the education of Muslims. Sincere and proper initiatives of the Government oriented in the direction of uplifting the condition of education of the Muslims, depending on authentic and reliable data will not only pave the way towards their progress in education, but it shall also aid in enriching the socio-economic circumstances of the Muslims altogether.

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Globalisation, Consumerism and the New Middle Class: A Study on Emergence of Mall Culture in Odisha, India

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Abstract

Consumerism is considered to be the by-product of liberalisation and globalisation. India has experienced the great socio-economic transformation after the policy of liberalisation during early 1990s. Consequently, emergence of the new middle class has been noticed. Shopping mall culture has emerged after the opening up of Indian economy and known to be largely a class phenomenon, not a mass phenomenon. Mall culture has become popular in consumerist society and mostly controlled by the corporate magnets. There is a constant striving to enhance the needs of the new middle-class through the proliferation of new products and brands in the malls. This study has been conducted in selected 5 shopping malls in Bhubaneswar city i.e. the capital of Odisha. Purposive sampling technique was used to select 200 respondents in 5 shopping malls, administering Interview schedule and FGD for data collection. There is an attempt to explore the reasons for consumer preference and attraction towards the malls. Most of the consumers at the malls located in Bhubaneswar belong to the new middle class, having good income with education. They prefer to visit shopping malls due to convenience, entertainment, a medium to depict status symbol, brand preference and availability of more product options with discounts.

Key words: *Globalization, Consumerism, New middle class, Shopping mall, Conspicuous consumption*

I. Introduction

Consumerism is becoming very popular across the globe through the process of Globalisation and economic liberalisation. Globalisation influences de-territorialisation and a borderless world has emerged.The collapse of national borders extends free movement of capital, culture, ideas, technology, and people in all over the world. In India,the economic liberalisation has led the transformation in the socio-economic setting of the country. The economic reform has brought a plethora of new private job opportunities. The transformation is reflected in the employment sector, steered the emergence of new middle-class segments; especially those who are educated and employed. The new middle-class orients to adopt western culture showing in their lifestyle, clothing patterns and products in the era of consumerism.The new

trend of shopping mall culture helps to meet the needs of modern consumers of India in different places, especially in cities. Economic reform in India permits the Multi-National Corporations (MNCs) to open large shopping malls in urban areas. The luxury products and brands are affordable and accessible by the new middle class. Mostly the consumers who regularly access the shopping malls belong to the urban new middle class having substantial amount of family income, education and occupation. Shopping mall culture encapsulates a new social dividing practice at the downside apart from all the merits. This study tries to analyse the category of consumers who regularly visit the malls in Bhubaneswar city and the underlying reasons for their attraction towards the malls. The socio-economic profile of consumers at the malls and their shopping behaviour helps in identifying the different options and product preference. The findings on the customers' preference towards shopping malls in Bhubaneswar reflect the notion of consumerism in the context of new middle class at large.

1. Relevance of the Study

The notion of consumerism in global and Indian scenario is an emerging area of research interest. There are studies on the shopping mall culture as an outcome of the process of globalisation. However, there are very few studies on the emergence of mall culture, its linkage with new middle class and their consumerist orientation. More specifically this study is relevant in a developing state like Odisha. In Bhubaneswar numerous malls are mushrooming currently and accessed by the customers from new educated middle-class background with considerably good income. This study specifically tries to examine the socio-economic profile, consumption behaviour and reasons for preference towards malls in the context of consumerist culture which is steadily evolving.

II. Review of Literature

The review section focuses on different relevant areas like globalization and consumerism, emergence of shopping malls in India and Odisha; the new middle class, their preference towards mall culture and their shopping behaviour. The literature review section is linked with the broad objectives of this study.

1. Globalisation and Consumerism in Global & Indian Context

Globalisation is a process but not a product. It affects every aspect of individual social life. Consumer culture and consumption standards are scattering across the globe by the process of economic liberalisation. The extensive form of Globalisation is an unexpected outcome of World War II which led the popularity of international trade. Trade barriers were collapsed through various agreements and especially by the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT), which was later renamed as World Trade Organization (WTO). These trade agreements enable large degree of economic integration which promotes free trade and

facilitate to reduce tariffs or create a free trade zone (Rath, 2018). Globalisation is a universal process in the current era and consumerism has become the basis of its wealth. Consumerism is the by-product of global capitalism. Capitalist system develops with competition. Foreign companies are investing huge resources to enhance the need of the consumers for new products. Opening up of McDonalds, other fast-food restaurants, shopping malls and availability of new products with more options are influencing the choices of the consumers.

Globalisation in 21st century is the fusion of capitalism and advanced technology which is called as the techno-capitalism. It produces both homogenization and hetrogenisation in the form of identity. It impacts each domain of social life including social, cultural, economic, technological and environmental issues. Consumer based identities depend on commodities and the commoditised forms of self-hood in the society (Mccoid, 2004). Now Globalisation is encapsulating cultural homogenization and heterogenisation. Apart from the transmission of cultural traits, political systems and social institutions across many countries, it also enlarges the markets for finance, labor, especially products and brands across the national boundaries of the globe. The process which facilitates the presence of same lifestyles, products, consumption patterns and cultural experiences across the globe is called cultural homogenization. Like for instance domination of American culture in all over the world results cultural imperialism (ex- McDonalds). On the other hand, market faces many kinds of cultural brands and products which are called cultural heterogenisation. Fragmentation in the market shows the simultaneous presence of different and essentially incompatible patterns and modes of products, lifestyles and experiences leading to different cultural identities. Consumers irrespective of their nationalities are willing to experience and follow different styles and cultural products to show their identities. Culture is now regarded as a marketable commodity. The consumer culture produced and promoted by various agents who work directly in the market economy called as the managers, marketers, creative and independent brokers. They analyze and criticize consumer products by cultural intermediaries namely the media figures like film producers, celebrity, politicians etc. who disseminate alternative models of consumption behavior (Firat, 1997). As per the view of Veblen, consumption is conspicuous. It is a striving to display or convey one's status in the society. It is also considered as a tendency to compare how they are different to others. People now orient to shop clothes, furniture, food and other items to show one's sense of style and ability to be dissimilar from others. Nowadays consumption is considered as a means to uplift one's status in the eyes of others (Veblen, 1899). In India, the policy of liberalisation was introduced during early 1990s. This new industrial policy was a landmark for the Indian business which reduced tariff barriers and opened the economy for various global competitors. This period is considered as the cornerstone for the privatization of public sector enterprises and solicitation for foreign investment. The neo-liberal discourse led the shift from a state-controlled economy to a more accurately the mixed-economy and started promoting consumer

choices. However, the broad socio-economic transformation in India is taking place due to the expansion of the new middle class to a large extent. The new middle class has emerged with changes in their character, composition and transformed relationship with the pattern of consumption (Vedwan, 2007).

Consumers of India, residing in the cosmopolitan cities accept the culture of west and prefer foreign brands and this is called consumer acculturation. Consumer acculturation is defined as a process in which consumers make a shift from local consumer culture to global consumer culture with regard to specific cultural components. There are some factors responsible for the consumer acculturation in India and the promotion of consumer culture at large. These factors are described below.

i. Attitudinal-Consumer Acculturation: It refers to the process of adopting the identity, beliefs and values of other culture by the consumers of a particular cultural background.

ii. Behavioral-Consumer Acculturation: Some of the remarkable features like language habit, leisure activities, communication style, dietary habits, dress preferences and social behavior are oriented to a larger extent by foreign culture and practices. Individuals are now turning to acquire behaviors of the dominant groups more rapidly than ever before.

iii. Cosmopolitanism: It refers individuals' desire to engage with other cultures, which led to the adaptation of other cultural brands and products.

iv. The Marketing Strategy of MNCs: The marketing strategy of the MNCs is now more focusing on the communication media and internet as the principal mediums to hook to the consumers into a consumerist bubble. This is the principal driver of consumer acculturation.

v. Social Interactions: The growing degree of social interaction with foreigners by travel, migration and contacts led to the influx of foreign culture into the local culture.

vi. Global Mass Media Exposure: The growing extent of world-wide access to internet, television and other forms of mass media enable a global culture of consumption.

vii. Preference towards Foreign Brands: The presence of international brands in the Indian market act as the strong forces of consumer acculturation. Consumers today have the target to own brands from the economically advanced countries to attain self-gratification and feel like a part of the same culture, from where these brands/ products have originated. Mass media and internet are now playing very key role to come closer to the foreign brands. Increasing rate of consumer preferences towards foreign brands has led to the promotion of consumer culture in India. The above discussed factors for consumer acculturation are influencing the consumerism more and more to the process of globalisation and economic liberalisation (Verma, 2015).

The entrance of foreign businesses in India continues to offer lucrative chances for Indians

and foreigners at large. However, these opportunities are mostly availed by the educated youth who possess the adequate skills and always prepared to adopt various job positions. The entrance of MNCs in the market of India are trying to meet local desires of people and generating a new market for western style products and brands. While the lucrative work opportunities in Indian market on the one hand and the easy accessibility of international brands at the shopping complexes on the other hand to certain extent hampers the local forms of production and traditional forms of distribution. The increasing trends of shopping complexes and multiplex malls having the modern entertainment opportunities with multiple brands in the cities are influencing the consumer culture.

The growth of new middle class is considered to be the driving force for economic growth because customers accumulate goods and services for a higher social status and for market-driven demands (Ponte and Campos, 2018). Consequently, the new Indian middle class is considered to be a consuming agency in the post-liberalisation period by separating itself from the colonial period middle class. Prior to the advent of neo-liberal era i.e during early 1990s, consumption was seen as the necessity-based activity; however economic liberalisation facilitates the conspicuous consumption process along with the consumer culture.

2. Emergence of Mall Culture and Shopping Preference in India

The notion of shopping mall is not very old in India in comparison to other foreign countries of the world. The concept of mall was first introduced by Victor Gruen and considered to be the father of American shopping malls. In India, the first shopping mall was introduced in the year 1999 namely the Ansal Plaza in Delhi. However, after 2003 malls were found in metro cities like Mumbai, Bengaluru, Kolkata, Chennai, Hyderabad, Pune and the tier two cities like Noida, Gurgaon, Ghaziabad etc. Now the mall culture spreads too many sub-urban areas and found to be an acceptable trend in the market. Shopping malls are being chosen by most of the customers nowadays in order to purchase all the products under one roof which helps to save their time, money and energy at large. In India most of the shopping malls provide all the required products to the customers, based on their expectation for price, availability, packaging of the products, quality, availability of brands and infrastructure (Mohanraj and Jaganathan, 2018).

In India, shopping malls are mostly located in urban residential areas. The site selection of a shopping mall is determined by a range of factors like- local urban dynamics, nearness of an affluent middle-class population, access to roadways and public transport, availability as well as the cost of land at large. In Delhi, a large number of shopping malls are located near to the metro lines having the middle class and upper middle-class neighbourhoods. Middle class and the upper middle-class sections are the target customers for the shopping malls (Raultetal. 2018). Now the accumulation of specific commodities and brands are becoming the means for social mobility as well as the domains of upgrading one's position in the urban setting of India. The new middle class increases the consumption practices and

aspires to have privileged lifestyle in order to form class identity by conspicuous consumption. However, this trend of new middle-class consumption was unnoticed earlier in India. The new middle class is becoming the target group in the market for accessories, cosmetics, electronic gadgets, western-style clothes and branded products etc.

3. New Middle Class and Shopping Behaviour

The section of new middle class is not a homogeneous group. As per the explanation of Mathur, the "old middle class" is repeatedly compared with the emerging section of "new middle class". The old middle class is described in terms of association with the production system and it comprises the business classes. However, the new middle class in the current phase are educated and economically affluent group of people. The new middle class are normally engaged in technical and professional forms of employment (Mathur, 2010).

As per the view of Beteille (2003), the new middle class traces more emphasis on occupation, education and salaried income in the domain of employment than property ownership. In addition to income, occupation and education; English language skills are important markers of Indian middle class (Fernandes and Heller, 2006). The new middle class comprises of the educated people from different castes, employed in offices, part of white-collar jobs with an ambition for upward social mobility (Saavala, 2010).

French sociologist Pierre Bourdieu (1984) has developed the concepts of 'habitus' and 'field' to understand how class structures are reproduced by social groups. Habitus is the system of dispositions, depicts the attributes of different classes. Field is the social setting where these dispositions are deployed and strengthened by the accumulation of different forms of capital (economic, cultural and social). It is the site of struggle where groups aspire to maintain and alter the distribution of capital. With respect to the field of consumption, key focus of struggle is to access the legitimate, middle brow and popular culture. Those who possess the large amounts of economic and cultural capital aim to impose hierarchy on those having less capital (Allen and Anderson, 1994).The new middle-class has higher economic, cultural and social capital to create the distinctidentity (Anantharaman, 2015).

Now in the era of globalisation and consumerism, the new middle class aims to form its identity and acquire status symbols by visiting the shopping malls (Voyce, 2007). Taking into account the "Habermas" notion of public sphere, malls represent the places where the middle class iscreating new identities through consumption of goods (Habermas, 1989). Now the consumer culture has been enhanced by proliferation of global brands in the market, followed by the opening up of the economy and the popularity of mass media. Shopping malls are becoming the icons of consumer society (Sterne, 1997). In addition to that, shopping malls are becoming the ideal space for teenagers. Shopping malls are represented as the familiar places, accessible by public transport, protected from the unfavourable weather and offer many activities to the customers which show that the space is safe. The modern clienteles

who spend time in shopping malls are more excited and satisfied. The era of consumer society is characterised by mass consumption, with specific price for sale and purchase (Spilkova and Radova, 2011).

The shopping behaviour of consumers is different from one country to another due to cultural diversities and altering economies. Frequency of shopping is also considered as an important component while studying shopping behaviour of the consumers. Shopping is further considered as a household task, a form of entertainment and the site of relaxation in current society (Dholakia, 1999). In India the great transformation is occurring in consumer behavior because of changing lifestyles and rising aspirations among the new middle class. The growing aspirations for the material comforts in urban areas are influenced consumer culture (Mohanty, 2012).Taking into account the shopping behaviour of people from different generations, the young consumers are having high levels of satisfaction from shopping. Teen agers love spending time at shopping malls with all social and material attractions. The generational differences in attitude towards shopping malls depend on the hygiene factors, ambience, locational convenience and entertainment features (Thalgaspitiya and Hettiarachchi, 2018).

At the downside, a market-driven ideology combined with the upwardly mobile middle class leads to the legitimate growth of personal wealth through the logic of merit,which helps them to live in the confined world of 'prosperity'? Consequently, there has been the tension between the people from upper class and lower class. The neo-privileged sections find the chance to sustain and own the consumer goods at large-scale compared to the poor (Chakravarty, 2008). Shopping space is the medium through which social hierarchies are produced and legitimised at the shopping centres (Richer 2005). In India shopping malls are creating new social dividing practices in the neo-liberal era. Large foreign companies were ensured to invest in mega shopping centres in India. However, the vibrant economy promotes the development of new quasi - public spaces such as shopping malls. The new public places set invisibility of those who are not part of the new middle class consumer group and led the social dividing practices, separating middle class consumers from the rest (Voyce, 2007).

4. Shopping Malls in Bhubaneswar, Odisha

In Odisha, the middle class is the target consumer of the modern retail industry and this section always gets attracted towards the newer products, resulting in the faster growth of retail industry in the state (Anandetal., 2017)**.** Bhubaneswar is the capital of Odisha and it is also the largest city of the state. After the policy of liberalisation many private job sectors are opened up in the capital city of Odisha. Most of the rural belt people migrate to the capital city for the purpose of employment. Many MNCs and corporate sectors offer more job opportunities to the younger generation. In addition to that, as Bhubaneswar is the capital of the state, most of the government jobs are available in this city. Many governments and private colleges, universities and technical institutions are located in this city; with a large

number of young students for the purpose of higher education. After the policy of liberalisation lots of shopping malls have opened up in this city to hook the young masses. Malls have adopted innovative techniques to increase the demands of commodities. Shopping malls are always focusing on the foreign brands and products to meet the needs of the modern consumers. The modern consumers who are residing in the capital city of the state try to adopt western culture and products. The place of mall is a luxury outlet in Bhubaneswar city where one can avail variety of products at discounted prices. Some of the malls are located in huge buildings with multiplexes for the recreational purpose and customers can enjoy movies inside the mall (Saroj, 2019).

III. Methodology

Methodology refers the broad theoretical and philosophical frame of any research problem. It includes the wide range of methods and techniques, the theoretical logic and manner in which these are used. Research methodology is a way to systematically solve the research problems (Kothari, 2014).

1. Objectives of Study

1. To examine the socio- economic profile of consumers at the shopping malls
2. To studythe consumption behaviour of new middle class at the malls
3. To assess the reasons behind consumer preference for shopping malls in Bhubaneswar

2. Area of the Study

This study was conducted at the selected five shopping malls in Bhubaneswar. The city is now famous for the mushrooming growth of western model shopping malls. Nowadays, shopping malls are the best marketing trends for the marketers. Selected consumers of these five shopping malls are taken as the respondents of this study. All the five shopping malls are well-known in Bhubaneswar for multiple foreign brands, entertainment opportunities, ambiance, food products, multiple products, discounts and offers. A brief glance of the background of selected five shopping malls for this study is given bellow.

***a. Pal Heights* (Jayadev Vihar) :**

This shopping mall is located at JaydevVihar, Bhubaneswar and started functioning in the year 2008. It is situated next to the *Pal heights* hotel at Jayadev Vihar. This mall has food courts, restaurants and a hyper-market facility. The area includes 200,000 sq. ft. land. The most famous brands like the Titan, Adidas, Lotto, Biba and many more are available here. This mall is also famous for international fast-food outlets and people enjoy food and music along with shopping. KFC is much more famous in this mall for fast food items.

***b. Forum Mart* (Kharabela Nagar) :**

This mall is the largest as well as one of the oldest malls in Odisha. This mall is located at Kharabela Nagar, Bhubaneswar. This mall has started functioning in the year 2004. It offers

many branded products with discounts and offers. Grocery shop (Big Bazaar) is more famous in this mall. National and international branded products are available for the customers. Restaurant facility and fast-food provision are present to attract the customers.

***c. BMC Keshari Mall* (Ashok Nagar) :**

This mall is located at Ashok Nagar, Bhubaneswar and well known for both national and international brands. The famous brands like Levi's, Jockey, Max and Adidas etc. are available. It also offers the modern recreational facilities such as music, movie and many more things. This mall attracts both the tourists as well as the inhabitants of this city. Entertainment opportunities are also available. This mall is much more famous for garments.

***d. Esplanade* (Rasulgarh):**

This mall is located at Rasulgarh Industrial Estate, Bhubaneswar. It occupies total commercial space of 1,000,000 sq. ft. with a retail floor area of 400, 000 sq. ft. This mall is the biggest mall of Bhubaneswar. Many global and regional brands have added to the international look. This mall is famous for multiple fashion brands. Some of the most famous brands like W, Biba, Nykaa, Levi's, Spykar, Titan, Caratlane and Voylla etc. are available here due to which the popularity among the customers has increased. The youngsters prefer this mall for shopping, food consumption and entertainment at large. This mall has multiple stores such as apparel, beauty/personal care, salon/spas, electronic appliances, food services, footwear, sportswear, home products, jewellery and accessories etc. The mall is more famous for Reliance Trends, Reliance Digital, Big Bazaar and Max.This mall is also popular for international fast-food chains.

***e. Central Mall* (Sahid Nagar):** This mall is located at Sahid Nagar, Bhubaneswar and offers multiple products to the customers like apparels, cosmetics, fragrances, eyewear, watches, accessories, sports-wear, toys, mobiles, electronics and many more things for the family shopping.

3. Research Design

Exploratory research design has been applicable for this study as it more flexible to explore an area which a researcher is taken. Researcher has little knowledge about the problem. This research design is used to explore an area where little is known or to investigate the possibilities of undertaking a particular research study (Kumar, 2011).

4. Sampling

The non-probability sampling, more specifically purposive sampling technique was used to select the targeted group of respondents at the five shopping malls in Bhubaneswar on the ground of accessibility to the researcher. As the population is more fluid in nature and to

access the targeted group of customers inside the mall, purposive sampling was more applicable in such situation. By the purposive sampling technique 200 respondents were selected from the five shopping malls in Bhubaneswar. In total 100 female and 100 male respondents were selected purposively by the researcher. Sample table with respondents' details are mentioned in Table-1.

Annextures (List of Tables:1-4)

Table-1: Sample table of the respondents

Name of the Shopping Mall		No of respondents		
		Male	**Female**	**Total**
1	Explande	20	20	40
2	Forum Mart	20	20	40
3	BMC Keshari Mall	20	20	40
4	Pal Heights	20	20	40
5	Central Mall	20	20	40
6	Central Mall	20	20	40
	Total	**100**	**100**	**200**

5. Sources and Tools for Data Collection

This study is conducted by using both primary and secondary data. Primary data was collected by using the tools like interview schedule and focus group discussion (FGD). The semi-structured interview schedule was used to collect data from different malls. In total 200 respondents were participated in the interview process including various age groups. Specifically, 100 female and 100 male customers were selected purposively by the researcher. Besides the personal interviews, five focused group discussions were conducted for the qualitative assessment of the product preference and shopping behavior of the respondents from different age groups. All most 40 respondents had participated in the focused group discussions in five shopping malls including the age groups of 18-35, 36-50 and 51-65. More specifically 8 respondents at each mall were chosen to get involved in the focus group discussion. Secondary data was taken from the published journal articles, books and official records.

IV. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

After the description about the review and methodology, this section includes the findings of the study, based on the objectives. Data has been captured on the shopping behaviour of the consumers and the major reasons for their preference towards shopping malls compared to the general shops.

1. Demographic Details of the Customers:

The demographic details of the customers give a picture about the category of people who visit the mall for shopping in the city of Bhubaneswar, which has a linkage with other variables like product preference, shopping behaviour etc. Socio-economic profile of the respondents in this section includes their age, education, income and occupational status.The Socio-economic Profile of the Respondents is mentioned in Table-2.

Table-2 : Socio-economic Profile of the Respondents

	Age Structure		**Educational Qualification**		**Monthly Family Income**		**Occupational Status**	
Sl. No.	Age range	Frequency with %	Education	Frequency with %	Monthly Income	Frequency with %	Occupational status	Frequency with %
1	18-35	80 (40%)	Matric	10 (5%)	<30,000	30 (15%)	Private-job	80 (40%)
2	36-50	74 (37%)	Intermediate	14 (7%)	30,000-60,000	50 (25%)	Gov-job	60 (35%)
3	51-65	40 (20%)	Gradute	60 (30%)	60,001-90,000	56 (28%)	Student	36 (18%)
4	>65	6 (3%)	Post-graduate & professional education	116 (58%)	>90,001	64 (32%)	Self-employed	18 (9%)
	Total	**200**		**200**		**200**		**200**

(Source- Primary data from 05 shopping malls)

Taking into account the age group of the consumers, it was found that 40% of the consumers at the malls are the youngsters between the age group of 18-35 years. The young masses are the lucrative consumers who seek to lead a modern life style and prefer brands to show their status along with the peers. Shopping malls meet the ever-changing needs of the masses from younger age groups. It is also the ideal place for the teenagers because of the free mobility and to spend their leisure time in a safe place. Mall is also considered a place for the young people to form some identities and to create their own micro culture (Spilkova and Radova, 2011). However, some customers of this age group have less purchasing capacity at the same time mall provides them a meeting place and a free space (Rault, etal, 2018).The students and the newly employed people come under this category. Shopping mall culture is largely a class phenomenon not a mass phenomenon. This study has found that most of the consumers are employed persons either in the private sectors (40%) or in the government sectors (33%). Majority of the consumers (60%) have reasonably good family income with an income range of Rs. 60 to Rs 90,000/- and above per month. These new middle class people observe the products through the advertisements and from the other potential customers. Currently in India, the new middle class is becoming the target consumers who prefer to have western clothes, accessories, cosmetics, cuisines, electronic implements, films and music products etc. (Mathur, 2010). Majority of the consumers are educated and have the English knowledge

to cope up with the shopping mall culture. The findings of this study havealso revealed the fact that most of the consumers at the shopping malls possess the cultural (well-educated and employed) and economic capital (good income). The lifestyle and aspiration of the respondents are the signs of their inclination to consumer culture.

2. Customers Shopping Behaviour

Shopping behaviour of the consumers at the five selected malls in the city of Bhubaneswar reflects their preferred day of visit, mode of transportation to reach the mall, frequency of visit and average amount spent in each trip at the mall. These components are helpful to know about the behaviour of the modern consumers at the mall as per their socio-economic status. The time of visit and the preferred day of visit to the mall will show customers' orientation towards the mall in accordance with their convenient work schedule. The mode of transportation to rich the mall, frequency of visit and the average amount spent in the mall would reflect the class status and lifestyle of the customers. Shopping behaviour of the consumer is mentioned in Table-3.

Table-3 : (Shopping Behaviour of the Consumer)

Sr.No	Shopping Behaviour		Frequency With %	Sr. No	Shopping Behaviour		Frequency with %
1	Time of Visit	Morning 10am-12am	24 (12%)	4	Day of Visit	Weekdays Monday-Friday	34 (17%)
		Afternoon 3pm-7pm	92 (46%)			Weekends Saturday & Sunday	90 (45%)
		Evening 7pm-10pm	84 (42%)			Offer/discount	76 (38%) days
2	Frequency of Visit	Once in a week	116 (58%)	5	Transport to Reach Mall	Personal car/taxi	94 (47%)
		Once in 15 Days	60 (30%)			Personal motorbike	76 (38%)
		Once ina month	24 (12%)			Public transport	30 (15%)
3	Duration of Visit	Within 2 hours	94 (47%)	6	Amount Spent in a Month	<10,000	44 (22%)
		Within 3-4 hours	96 (48%)			10,001-20,000	72 (36%)
		>4hours	10 (5%)			>20,001	84 (42%)

Table-3 reflects the broad idea about the shopping behaviour of the respondents at the mall. The result shows that, majority of the consumer i.e.45% come to mall in weekends and 38 % of consumers in offer days. As majority of consumers are employed, so they have the free time in weekends (Saturday & Sunday). The employed and youngsters mostly prefer to visit malls in weekends. Shopping malls provide better discounts and offers during the festive periods and customers prefer to visit during this time to get products in cheaper prices with

different options. With regard to the timing for visiting malls, students and young employed persons prefer to visit between 3PM-7PM, the self-employed people and women who are home-makers prefer to visit malls during 7PM to 10PM to make family shopping as per their convenience. As far as spending time at the mall and the frequency of visit in a month both are concerned, most of the consumers prefer to spend within 3-4 hours (48%) and within 2 hours (47%) in each trip to the mall. Majority of the consumers (58%) like to visit the mall once in a week. Mall environment provides them satisfaction for shopping and often it is a site for entertainment, a break from the monotonous life. Majority of the respondents are employed and with reasonably good salary, they spend more than Rs 20, 000/- in a month. Majority of the respondents use personal car or taxi (47%) and the motor bike (38%) for shopping purpose at the malls. Less number of young people, specifically the students (15%) depend on the public transport to access the mall.

3. Reasons for Consumers'Preference towards Shopping Mall

Some of the factors like mall ambiance, entertainment, one stop shopping, proximity to home, time saving and availability of modern amenities etc. can influence the consumers' preference for specific products in the mall. Their preference to visit the mall may vary among different consumers. Therefore, the respondents were asked to mention the reasons for preference towards malls. Reasons for consumer Preference towards shopping mall is mentioned in Table-4.

SI. No	Reasons for Mall perference	Ranking in Five point scale (1-5) with%					Total
			5	4	3	2	1
1.	Modern Amenities	110 (55%)	20 (20%)	20 (10%)	20 (10%)	30 (15%)	200
2.	Time Saving	110 (55%)	16 (8%)	10 (5%)	18 (9%)	46 (23%)	200
3.	Global Brands	96 (48%)	20 (10%)	20 (10%)	24 (12%)	40 (20%)	200
4.	Entertainment	86 (43%)	20 (10%)	24 (12%)	20 (10%)	50 (25%)	200
5.	Offer/disounts	120 (60%)	30 (15%)	20 (10%)	20 (10%)	10 (5%)	200
6.	One Stop Shopping	112 (56%)	16 (8%)	18 (9%)	14 (7%)	40 (20%)	200
7.	Proximity to Home	72 (36%)	24 (10%)	20 (10%)	16 (8%)	68 (34%)	200
8.	Good Ambiance	106 (53%)	20 (10%)	24 (12%)	30 (15%)	20 (10%)	200

Source: Primary data from 05 shopping malls

The result reflects that 55% of the respondents prefer malls to avail modern amenities. As most of the consumers are employed in various government and private sectors, 55% of them prefer to shop at malls to save time in their busy schedule. One stop shopping is also the most important factor for the consumer's attraction towards the mall, 56%of the consumers prefer to visit malls to get all kinds of products under one roof which is convenient to them. Out of the total respondents, 43% of the youngsters prefer shopping malls for entertainment

purpose. Good ambiance of the malls is also crucial for the customers toget attracted towards the malls and 53% of the consumers prefer mall for good ambiance. As far as the brand preference is concerned, many of the consumers (48%) prefer shopping malls for varieties of international brands. The modern consumers aim to look like "modern" by using global brands. The penetration of global brands indicates the notion of "global convergence". The brands and brand images provide the platforms to stimulate consumer preferences (Vedwan, 2007). Around 36% of the consumers also prefer shopping mall because of the proximity to their home. At last, as shopping malls are providing better discounts in various occasions, number of consumers i.e. 60% prefers malls to buy products with discounts and offers. Hence in this study it is revealed that the determining factors for preferring shopping malls include modern amenities, multiple global brands, entertainment, different offers and discounts during festive season, one stop shopping with spending less time, proximity to home and ambiance.

4. Findings of FGDs and Observation on the Shopping Sites

i. Crazy to be Like Modern:

The new middle-class consumers who regularly prefer shopping malls are the aspirants to be like modern by purchasing products and global brands at the malls. Most of the consumers at the shopping malls are well educated and having good English speaking and communication skills. Many of them try to adopt modern communication skills, dress patterns, food items and shopping patterns to be idolized as modern.

ii. Status Symbol:

Now malls are becoming the domain for creating social visions and maintaining status for the modern young consumers. Most of the employed (Government & private) people are residing in the capital city of Odisha i.e Bhubaneswar, having good income. They access select commodities, brands and services for the purpose of upward social mobility. The grip towards the social mobility on the domain of consumption triggers consumerism at large. This new middle class has the aspiration towards the privileged lifestyles and class identity through consumption practices. The young educated and employed new middle class seeks to form identity by visiting western style shopping malls. They also try to look different from the people in the same group and also from the others.

iii. Place of Relaxation and Self-gratification:

The youngsters are crazy to spend time with their friends in malls than the other public places. Malls with glittered environment and music are just like the heavenly place for the young consumers to get relaxation and entertainment with friends. The employed persons also prefer the malls to be free from their busy work pressure.

iv. Discounts and Offers during Festive Period:

Most of the consumers prefer the festive period to visit the malls because of the discounts and offers for the preferred brands and products. Malls display the offers and discounts to attract the consumers.Those brands are very costly during the normal days and can be relatively cheaper at the offer days. Consumers like to come at offer days to avail the discounts and save money.

v. Safe Spaces for Women Consumers:

The place of shopping mall is being considered 'safe' for the women. Usually, women have the limited options to go out from the home and public places because of their confinement at home in a male dominated society. At the shopping malls in Bhubaneswar the employed and non-employed women always feel safe to spend their free time due to the large crowd and provision of more staff who are alert. Shopping mall is the better place for the women to purchase multiple products and brands and having restaurant facility for their children. The young girls also choose shopping malls to spend their leisure time with their friends having no restrictions.

vi. Shopping with Restaurants:

Now shopping malls are providing the facility of eateries to the consumers. Most of the malls have the fast-food outlets and the youngsters prefer to visit malls for their preferred food with entertainment. The unemployed women like the shopping malls with facilities of eateries, where they can enjoy the food with the kids at a single place.

V. Conclusion

This study reflects the notion of consumerism and the growing presence of mall culture at the phase of globalisation and liberalisation. The new middle-class is the target consumers for the shopping malls. This study has revealed that most of the consumers at the five shopping malls are educated, employed with relatively good salary and always prefer the shopping malls for entertainment, products with discounts, multiple brands and status etc. Shopping malls are mushrooming largely in most of the big cities to cater to the needs of the new middle class. The lifestyle and aspirations of consumers reflect the consumer culture at large. Shopping malls have started becoming the preferred spaces for the new middle class, which promote the consumer culture.

In contemporary Indian society, consumer culture has become more prominent and powered by the growth of disposable income in the hands of new middle class along with a large number of products with diverse attributed available in the market. Shopping malls are becoming the icons of consumer society. They are being considered as the prophets of advanced capitalism and are known as the microcosms of the current cultural epoch. The

visions of the shopping malls have become the social visions (Sterne, 1997). The major determining factors for preferring shopping malls include modern amenities, multiple global brands, entertainment, offers and discounts during festive season, one stop shopping, less time spending by the customers, easy access and ambiance. There is more emphasis on occupation, education and salaried income compared to the ownership of the property. The study findings depict the consumers' socio-economic profile, preference for shopping malls and the consumption behaviour at the malls in Bhubaneswar city, Odisha. Globalisation process facilitates the integration and interconnection among countries across the globe. It enforces the free flow of culture across the globe. Consumerism is the result of globalisation and economic liberalisation at large. The emerging trend of new middle class in India and Odisha after the economic reforms has led to the promotion of consumer culture. Shopping mall culture acts as a medium to enhance consumerism at global and local spheres.

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An analysis of tourist's satisfaction and perception: A case study of Panchmura Village, Bankura

Atanu Sen

Abstract

Folk art & crafts acts as a centre of tourist's attraction in the sphere of ethnic and cultural tourism. The traditional handmade artefacts are purchased by the tourists for the sake of keeping a tangible memory of their trip. This study tries to explore the perception as well as satisfaction of tourists with regard toterracotta articles produced in Panchmura village of Bankura district. The antique method of procedure and gorgeous traditional designs attract tourists round the year to Panchmura. A wide range of terracotta articles adorns the roadsides of the village. In the year 2018 Panchmura was awarded Geographical Index (GI) tag. A structured questionnaire survey was used to collect data from tourists who visited the village during the survey period. The study isbased on primary data. An independent sample T-test was applied which shows the tourists optimal preferences lies on cultural appeal and aesthetic values of terracotta craft ranges. This study proves that in spite of having numerous potentialities and attractions, tourists did not achieve optimal satisfaction. The local stakeholders, planners and developers need to initiate some intensive welfare strategies and business model to enhance the quality and deigns of craft motifs by organizing craft fairs and festivals and remodelling of craft markets in this heritage village.

Key-words: *Folk crafts, Terracotta, Panchmura, Geographical Index*.

Introduction

Indian Folk crafts are considered most popular for their unique artistic expression and cultural values (Chattopadhyaya, 1970). It reflects rich cultural heritage and traditional rural practices, which is transmitted through generations (Asher and Frederick, 2003). The Bankura district of West Bengal is considered as a source of numerous craft articles like terracotta pottery, dokra and brass, bamboo crafts, mattress, *Baluchari* sari, handmade ornaments, stone craft, wooden crafts, lantern etc. In recent decades these folk crafts play a crucial role for uplifting rural economy by providing ample employment opportunitiesand for expansion of tourism. The term Handicraft is generated from Bengali words, *hastakala* and *hastashilp*a. In Urdu it is known as *dastkari* all the words mean handmade art. It is also known as *karigiri* (Hussain, 2016). The Terracotta horse embodies the district's rich historical facts and glorious cultural history. The Folk art and craft are result of traditional skill of craftsmen, who artistically produce various articles by using locally available raw materials. Terracotta potteries are

important item, which are red in colour. The designs and motifs are of religious types. Idols, domestic utensils, ornaments and showcasing articles are made. The artisans specially, women artisans of *Kumbhakar* community produce beautiful terracotta craft articles which symbolize local culture, traditional way of living, ritual practices. It not only helps to earn livelihood but also successfully is able to preserve the age old cultural traditions. Recently central and state Govt. introduced various development schemes and projects to improve their skill, production techniques, marketing strategies and overall socio-economic condition. This eco-friendly economic practice offers a potential platform for a satisfactory earning of livelihood and revenue generation among unskilled or semi-skilled women artisans in the village. However, due to some adverse situation and stiff market competition, this terracotta sector runs as a non-profit sector. which needs to rejuvenate at earlier.

The handmade traditional crafts occupies a significant role in contemporary tourism market. It not only accelerate local tourism based economy but helps to preserve local traditional culture (Cohen, 1995). The marketing of indigenous craft items is inseparably linked with regional rural development. The folk art and crafts remains as a pivotal component of rural and cultural tourism. It has two branches like producers of Terracotta artefacts and Tourists as consumers (Mogindol and Bagul, 2014).

Background

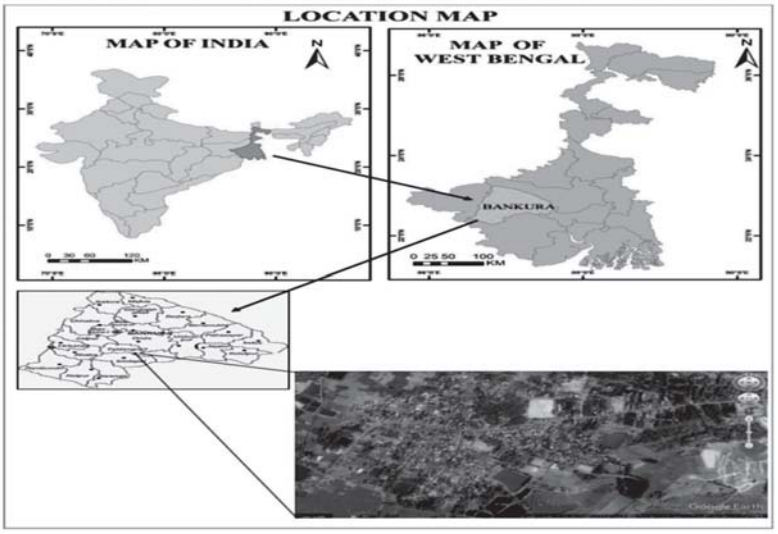
Terracotta showpieces are prepared to decorate home and for other utility based purposes. These are prepared from red and brownish red soil. Ornaments and other decorative objects like idols of god and goddesses and various figurines are made (Gangopadhyay and Sen, 2019). Towards the end of 7th Century AD, Terracotta craft began under the patronage of Malla dynasty at Panchmura. Initially it was restricted for decoration of the walls of Malla temple. At present it achieved a global platform. Around 270 artisans are engaged in the terracotta work (Rural Craft Hub, 2019). The Indian Terracotta craft has a glorious historical background. Archaeological evidences show that the craft continued from a time even earlier than the era of Indus valley civilization. Though it is very difficult to accurately mention the origin of Terracotta craft in Bengal, but it is assumed that the abundance of fertile alluvial soil and availability of suitable clay are factors for the development of the craft in the study area. This craft attracts tourists, promotes rural and heritage tourism, strengthens rural economy by providing employment opportunities to native artisans in the village.

The Village Panchmura : the study area

The Bankura district is a treasure house of spectacular craft work in Jangalmahal region. The Village Panchmura comes under Khatra subdivision of Bankura District and is popular for the terracotta work, is the study area. Panchmura is located between 22°58' 00" NL- 22°66' 67" NL and 87°10' 00" EL 87°16' 67" EL. It has Mean Sea Level (MSL) height of 68m. The total population was 730 as per 2011 population census. Production of Terracotta craft objects is major source of income. As per latest Panchayet data in last 10 years, nearly 10% rise of

population is found which makes the present population as around 800. Brown and black coloured horses with raised necks are the basic icon of this craft which represents the folk practice of this district and depicts the Royalty of Malla kingdom in Bishnupur. Basically these terracotta articles are used in religious offerings, at the same time it also is used to adorn houses and hotels for its attractive and decorative aspects.

Terracotta craft and its Socio-cultural significance



Map of Study area

The cottage and small scale industries acts as a substitute of agriculture based rural economy. It helps to empower the artisan work force and enrich capabilities of wealth generation. Generally it requires a very small capital and traditional knowledge to meet the need of local artisan community. The artisans have used their own house as craft workshop as well as counter for sale. In Panchmura the semi-skilled and skilled women artisans along with male artisans jointly produce the craft items within 300 sq. feet household space.

The artisans of Panchmura village do not have adequate paidjob opportunities. In addition to agriculture, this craft played a crucial role in utilising locally available raw materials together with traditional skills to enrich their financial status. The craft also restrictsout migration of local man power of this village. It provides an ample scope of livelihood earning opportunities among women and other weaker section of this village. Moreover the craft sector is ecologically sustainable and enhances the scope of green economy.

Techniques of craft productions

This is done in following order.

1. Preparation of the materials
2. Mixing the Clay properly
3. Wheel work

4. Drying
5. Hand work
6. Detailed Motifs work
7. Final Drying
8. Colouring
9. Firing
10. Testing or Sorting

Various Terracotta objects made



Literature review

Swanson and Horridge (2006) analyzed the level of tourists' interest for travel motivation with regards to purchase of souvenirs in the craft village. By using Structural Equation Model (LISREL-8) the casual relationship between travel motivation and souvenir purchase are tested statistically. Grabowska (2013) in his article describes the relation between craft and tourism. He pointed out the mechanism of commoditisation of cultural heritage. Towseef (2014) discussed the significance of folkcraft insustaining tourism based rural economy, which requires locally availableeco-friendly raw materials, local technology and low power consumption. John (2014) in his conference proceedings pointed out the role of business stakeholders in promoting Channapatna toys which received GI (Geographical Index). Ghosh (2014) in his article reveals that the net economic return from terracotta industry of Panchmura becomes markedly high for the marginal workers and the labour cost acts as a key drive for the sake of its economic development. Kasemi (2014) in his paper analyzed the characteristic features of the pottery craft of Koch Bihar, West Bengal, together with the crisis of development of the cottage sector and suggested some measures. Sixty eight sample units were taken for primary survey. Cobb-Douglass production function methodology is administered for

studying the nature of production function of terracotta craft. Sahoo et al (2016) in their scholarly publication narrates the role of terracotta craft sector inpromoting sustainability and regional rural development. Sultana and Hammed (2016) in their article measured tourist's satisfaction in regards to three attributes - comfort, cost/fare and safety in Kodaikanal craft hub. Bhattacharjee (2021) in his research article focused on the contemporary socio-economic status of potter's community of Bankura district. It also emphasized on major challenges and difficulties of terracotta sectors and their possible mitigation measures. Yadav et al (2022) in their research article analyzed the concurrent situation of the Tikuli and terracotta craft sector of Gorakhpur which is accredited by Geographical Indicrs. It also analyzed the demographic, economic and socio-cultural status of women artisans of the sector in addition the impact of Covid-19 and digital marketing technology on the cottage sector.

Objective of the study

1. To find out the difference between expectation and realities in regards to tourists satisfaction of the village Panchmura.

Research Methodology

The sample respondents were selected from the tourists who have visited in this craft village during field survey period. There were 25 sample respondents selected through random sampling techniques. The survey was carried out from 1st to 7th December, 2021. A structured questionnaire was prepared to conduct the field survey. Secondary data were collected from census handbooks and various published documents. The statements are recorded as ranking of 5 point likert scale. Various descriptive statistics such as mean, percentage, SD, T-test was administered to determine the significance of the difference between variables.

Limitation of the study

1. Some statement is made on simple assumption and observation.
2. Due to time constraints the pre-determined sample size is smaller, and limits margin of error which may influence the drawn inferences.

Result and Analysis

A. Tourists profile

Table: 1- Gender distribution of tourists

Gender parameter	No. of Respondents	%
Male	**15**	**60**
Female	10	40
Total	**25**	**100**

Table: 2- Age wise distribution of tourists

Age parameter	No. of Respondents	%
<20	4	16
20-40	12	48
40-50	7	28
>50	2	8
Total	**25**	**100**

Table: 3- Educational status of tourists

Education parameter	No. of Respondents	%
School level (up to H.S.)	5	20
Bachelors	15	60
Masters and more	2	8
Professional course	3	12

Table: 4- Occupational status of the tourists

Occupational status	No. of Respondents	%
Business	10	40
Govt. employee	8	32
Private employee	5	20
Unemployed	2	8
Total	**25**	**100**

Table: 5- Monthly income level of the tourists

Income of Tourist (in Rupees)	Frequency	Percentage
Below 15000	6	24
15000-35000	13	52
35000-50000	4	16
More than 50000	2	8
Total	**25**	**100**

Table: 6- Purpose of Travel

Tour purpose	Frequency	Percentage
Visiting with friends or families	16	64
Holiday or vacation trip	6	24
Business purpose	2	8
Adventure trip/others	1	4
Total	**25**	**100**

Table: 7- Travelling companions

Travelling companions	Frequency	Percentage
Alone	3	12
With friends	7	28
With family	13	52
With business associates	2	8
Total	**25**	**100**

Table: 8- Nature of trip organisation

Trip organizations	Frequency	Percentage
Individual	20	80
Package tour	2	8
Mixing (individual + package tour)	3	12
Others	**0**	**0**

Table: 9- Trip spending

Trip Spending	Frequency	Percentage
<500	6	24
500-1000	16	64
1000-2000	2	8
>2000	1	4
Total	**25**	**100**

Table: 10- Length of tourists stay

Length of stay	Frequency	Percentage
<1 days	23	92
1-2 days	2	8
More than 2 days	0	0
Total	**25**	**100**

B. Customer Satisfaction Analysis:

Table: 12- Articles taken for survey and their code

Name of the article	**Article written as its corresponding code**
Typical identical craft (Horse and elephants)	1
God and Goddesses (Durga, Shiva, Kali, Manashajharetc.)	2
Home décor items (Show-pieces)	3
Utility based items (Cup-plates, dishes, astray, flower vase etc.)	4

Table: 13- Assessment of craft articles on the basis of customer review about its structure, morph metric appeal and viability

Article code	Mean	SD
1	4.76	0.43
2	4.24	0.77
3	3.2	0.81
4	2.92	0.90

As per the criteria structure, morphmetric appeal and viability of craft items all four category of Terracotta craft has a mean score which has a range between 3-5. The sample respondents give highest score (4.76) to traditional items (Horse, Elephants etc) followed by the Gods, Goddesses and Home décor, utility oriented craft items as per 5 point Likert scale value (1-very poor to 5-very good).

Table: 14- Assessment of craft articles on the basis of colour composition

Article code	Mean	SD
1	4.68	0.47
2	4.32	0.74
3	3.28	0.79
4	4.28	1.06

As per the criteria colour composition of craft items all four category of Terracotta craft has a mean score which is ranged between 3-5. The sample respondents give highest score (4.68) to traditional items (long neck horse, elephants), followed by the God goddesses (4.32), utility based items (4.28) and home decor (3.28) as per 5 point likert scale value (1-very poor to 5-very good).

Table: 15- Assessment of craft articles on the basis of overall appearance

Article code	Mean	SD
1	5	0
2	4.6	0.5
3	3.96	0.84
4	4.52	0.58

As per the criteria overall appearance of craft items all three category of Terracotta crafts has a mean score which is ranged between 3-5. The sample respondents give highest score (4.32) to traditional items (long neck horse, elephants), followed by the God – Goddesses (3.96), utility oriented articles (4.52) and home decor agents (3.96)as per 5 point likert scale value (1-very poor to 5-very good).

Table: 16- Opinion of respondents towards the prepared craft items

Article code	Very good	%	Good	%	Fair	%	Not up to the mark	%
1	23	92	2	8	0	0	0	0
2	18	72	4	16	2	8	0	0
3	15	60	5	20	4	16	1	4
4	18	72	5	20	2	8	0	0

From the above table (Table-16) it can be said that in case of traditional craft items (horses and elephants) 92% of sample respondent said that it was very good and 8% supported it's good. In case of God and Goddesses (Durga, Shiva, Kali etc.) 72% respondent said it was excellent, 16% said it was good and 8% said that it was fair by its appeal. In case of modern Home d'cor items (Show-pieces) 60% respondent said it was excellent, 20% said it was good and 16% said that it was fair and 1% said that it was not up to the mark by its appeal. Lastly in case of utility based items 72% respondent said it was excellent, 20% said it was good and 8% said that it was fair.

Table: 17- Opinion of respondents regarding suitability of price of this selected craft article

Article code	High	%	Adequate /Fair	%	Low	%
1	11	44	12	48	2	8
2	12	48	11	44	2	8
3	7	28	16	64	2	8
4	7	28	14	56	4	16

From the above table (Table-17) it is found that 48% of respondents said that the price of traditional items (horse and elephants) is average and feasible. 44% of respondents said that the price of God and Goddesses (Durga, Shiva, Kali etc.) crafts are feasible and reasonable. Whereas 64% of respondents said that the price of modern Home décor items (Show-pieces) was fair and 56% of respondents said that the price of utility based items are feasible and fair.

Table: 18- Commercial assessment of the develop craft articles by the retailers

Article code	Most Marketable	%	Somewhat marketable	%	Not marketable	%
1	23	92	2	8	0	0
2	15	60	10	40	0	0
3	17	68	7	28	1	4
4	16	64	8	32	1	4

From the above table (Table-18) it is found that 92% sample respondents said that traditional craft items (horse and elephants) are highly marketable, 8% respondents said that it was moderately marketable. Whereas 60% sample respondents said God and Goddesses (Durga, Shiva, and Kali etc.) are highly marketable whereas, 40% respondents said that it was moderately marketable. On the other hand 68 % sample respondents said that of modern Home décor items (Show-pieces) are highly marketable, 28% and 1% respondents said that it was moderately and not marketable. Around 64% sample respondent said that the utility based items are most marketable, 32% and 1% respondents said that it was moderately and not marketable.

Table: 19- Awareness about different types of craft products

Article code	Yes (f)	No (f)	Yes (%)	No (%)
1	24	1	96	4
2	17	8	68	32
3	21	4	84	16
4	18	7	72	28

From the above table (Table-19) it is found that in case of traditional craft items (Horse and elephants etc.) 96% respondents admitted that they were well aware about the cultural significance of terracotta craft and 4% didn't know about it. In case of God and Goddesses (Durga, Shiva, Kali etc.) 68 % respondents admitted that they were well aware about the cultural significance of terracotta craft and 32% didn't know about it. In case of modern Home décor items (Show-pieces) 84% respondents admitted that they were well aware about the cultural significance of Terracotta craft and 16 % didn't know about it. In case of utility based items 72% respondents admitted that they were well aware about the cultural significance of Terracotta craft and 28 % didn't know about it.

Table: 20- Sources of information from which buyers are known about the terracotta craft hub and become interested to buy

Sl. No.	**Source of Information's**	**Respondents frequency**	**%**
1	Advertisement	3	12
2	Handicraft society /Groups/ Social Media Groups	7	28
3	Friend and relatives	5	20
4	Craft exhibition	10	40
	Total	**25**	**100**

From the given table (Table-20) it is cleared that most of the sample respondents (40%) got information about this folk craft from craft fairs and exhibitions. The relative and friend groups, virtual media and advertisement helps to contribute knowledge among 28%, 20% and 12% of respondents respectively.

Table: 21- Occasion to purchase the craft items

Sl. No.	Occasion to buy the craft items	Respondents frequency	%
1	When travelling for this craft village	16	64
2	Whenever need arises	2	8
3	Special offer /fair	3	12
4	Craft exhibition	4	16
	Total	**25**	**100**

From this above table (Table-21) it is found that more than half of the sample respondents (64%) purchased the craft item during their visit to the craft village. Rest of the respondents purchase the craft during craft fairs and festivals and in various craft exhibition.

Table: 22- Reasons to choose the particular craft items

Sl. No.	Reasons to choose the particular craft items	Respondents frequency	%
1	Price are reasonably feasible	10	40
2	Compatibility, quality feasibility and attractive nature	7	28
4	Ethnic value	6	24
5	Availability	2	8
	Total	**25**	**100**

In Interpretation of above table (Table-22) it can be said that the pivotal factor for craft commoditization, marketing as well as customer preference is its cheap price by 40% of respondents. Whereas 28% respondents choose the craft item for it Compatibility, quality feasibility and attractive nature. 24% respondents choose the craft item for its ethnic values. Rest 8% sample respondents choose the Terracotta for its easy availability.

Table: 23- Level of customer satisfaction about craft articles as a whole

Sl. No.	Overall satisfaction	Respondents frequency	%
1	Highly Satisfied	11	44
2	Satisfied	9	36
3	Moderate	4	16
4	Dissatisfied	1	4
5	Highly dissatisfied and disappointed	0	0
	Total	**25**	**100**

From the above mentioned table (Table-23) it entails about satisfaction index of tourist in regard of terracotta craft of Panchmura. 44% respondent are highly satisfied, 36% are satisfied, 16% are moderately satisfied where 4% respondents are not satisfied due to over-pricing, lack of tourism infrastructure etc.

Expectations and Perceptions of domestic tourists on overall tourism services in Panchmura Village

Tourists, who have visited in Panchmura village have their expectations about the tourists place. Hence, it is determined up to which extent they have been satisfied compared to their expectation level. The tourist satisfaction is measured in terms of three attributes viz. *Comfort*, *Price of the commodity* and *Safety & security*.

In case of tourists satisfaction analysis, tourists were asked to rate their expectation and perception on a 5 point likert scale. It ranges from 1 to 5. In expectation analysis 1 means not expected and 5 means highly expected. Likewise in satisfaction analysis, 1 means dissatisfied and 5 means highly satisfied. A purposive and judgemental sampling techniques are followed in this case study.

Hypothesis

1. Null Hypothesis: (H_0): There is no difference between expectation and satisfaction of tourists in regards of overall tourism performances.
2. Alternative Hypothesis: (H_1): There is significant difference between expectation and satisfaction of tourists in regards of overall tourism performances.

Table: 24- Expectations and Perceptions of overall Tourism Services by visitors to Panchmura Village.

Sl.No.	Variables	HE	HS	ME	MS	NE	DS	Total Reponses
1.	Comfort	15 60%	16 64%	9 34%	8 32%	1 4%	1 4%	25
2.	Price of the craft items	13 52%	14 56%	10 40%	9 36%	2 8%	2 8%	25
3.	Safety & security	12 48%	14 56%	10 40%	8 32%	3 12%	3 12%	25

HE : High Expectation, ME: Moderate expectation and NE: No expectation.

HS : High Satisfaction, MS: Moderate satisfaction DS: Dissatisfaction

Interpretation: From the above table (Table: 24) tourists expectations and satisfactions level aredetermined in respect of comfort, price of the commodity and safety-security condition. In case of tourists' comfort there is a little gap (4%) found in between high expectation and high satisfaction, 2% found in between moderate expectation and satisfaction and 1% differences is found between no expectation and dissatisfaction. In price issue, there is 4% gap found in between high expectation and satisfaction, 4% gap found in between moderate expectation and satisfaction and no gap found in between less expectation and satisfaction. On the other hand for safety measures there is 8% difference noticed in between high expectation and satisfaction, 2% difference is noticed in between moderate expectation and satisfaction and no gap is found in between less expectation and satisfaction.

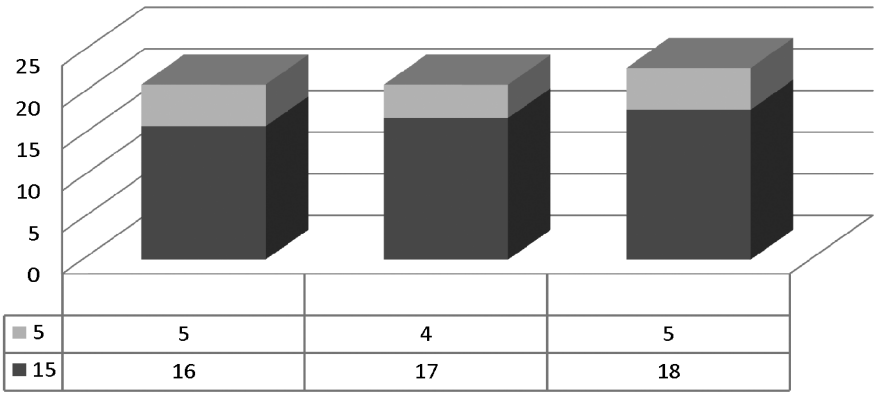
The deviation between expectation and real time satisfaction has been determined. The positive deviation is treated as highly satisfied on the other hand the negative deviation is treated as less satisfied condition of tourists.

Deviation between Expectations and satisfaction of overall tourism services by Tourists Visiting Panchmura village

Sl.No.	*Overall Toursim services*	*Expectation of Tourists Tourists*			*Satisfaction of Tourists*			*Deviation n=(2-1)*
		HE (%)	*E (%)*	*Total (1)*	*HS (%)*	*S (%)*	*Total (2)*	
1.	Comfort	60	34	**94**	64	32	**96**	2
2.	Price of the craft items	52	40	**92**	56	36	**92**	0
3.	Safety & security	48	40	**88**	56	32	**88**	0

HE: High expectations; E: Expectations
HS: High satisfaction; S: Satisfaction

Expectations and Satisfaction on overall toursim Services by Tourists



A chi square test is formulated to test the hypothesis regarding acceptance of hypothesis about the expectation and satisfaction of tourists.

$$\chi^2 = \sum(O_i - E_i)^2 / E_i$$

where

- O_i= observed value (actual value)
- E_i= expected value

Variables	Hypothesized values	Expectation	Satisfaction	Chi-Sqare Test
Comfort	0.5	94	96	0.042553191
Price of the craft items	0.5	92	92	0
Safety & security	0.5	88	88	0
Total		274	276	0.042553191

The P-Value is .980199. The result is not significant at $p < .05$
Critical value = 5.991
Hypothesis Testing:

- Calculated test statistics (X^2): 0.04.
- Look up of critical values: (CV): 5.99
- As our chi square value (X^2)=0.04 is less than of critical value (CV) =5.99 it proves that it doesn't fall under rejection zone. Hence the null hypothesis is accepted. So there is no significant difference between tourist's expectation and satisfaction in regards of overall tourism satisfaction in Panchmura village.

SWOT analysis of Panchmura craft village

The terracotta article of Panchmura is famous for its ethnic and traditional work. An attempt has been made to determine tourism potentialities of Terracotta articles in respect of Strength, Weakness, Opportunities, and Threats Analysis (SWOT).

STRENGTH

i. It possesses a potential market both for national and international scale.
ii. It has a wide variety of craft items with multiple utilization like utensils, home decor, gift items and jewellery.
iii. An eco-friendly practice with low capital need.
iv. Locally available traditional craftsmen.
v. It provides ample opportunity to earn livelihood and works as a substitute of agriculture based rural economy.
vi. It is a powerful aid to earn foreign currency and allied tourism based development activities.

WEAKNESSES

i. There are still lack of proper advertisement and promotional strategies for these majestic art form.
ii. The tourist does not get proper information from brochure or leaflet about various artefacts.
iii. There is a clear gap between artisans knowledge in regards to tourists preferences.
iv. The craft market did not get ample opportunity to expand.
v. The craft fairs and festivals are very inadequate to cope up its business needs.

OPPORTUNITIES

i. The terracotta craft items gradually become popular in local to global scale.
ii. The terracotta craft items hold a significant position in tourism map of the district Bankura to pull a large number of tourists each year.
iii. Now online marketing channels also incorporate terracotta craft items in it for optimal commercial viability.

THREATS

i. There is a large gap between supply and demand of the craft items.
ii. The machine made craft items give a stiff competition.
iii. Poor infrastructure and low corpus becomes great hurdles for its sustainability.

Conclusion

The above study examines the gap between tourist's expectations and satisfaction regarding appearance, expression, quality, durability and price of craft articles in Panchmura village of Bankura district. The colour, quality, morphometry and overall appeal were rated as the maximum pulling parameter for tourists. Hence, the stakeholders need to put thrusts on its promotional and marketing strategies for instance conducting craft fairs and festivals;inauguration of new craft emporium and outlets; financial sponsorship and infrastructural development. Overall it can be said that the traditional long neck horse, elephants along with god idols, utility based artefacts and ornaments became much popular in comparison to 'modern home décor items among tourists. Finally it can be resolved that the local craft sellers should consider modern customer preferences as add on features for craft making and marketing for optimal tourists satisfaction and business profit.

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4. The grammatical categories in a gloss must be abbreviated

For example,

a) adʒ ɔnek brʃi hoyetʃhe.
today lot rain be-pr.pf.3rd

'Today there was heavy shower.'

b) boneder ʧhobi.

sister-gen.pl. picture

'Sisters' picture.'

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