Intellection
A Bi-annual Interdisciplinary Research Journal

Editorial Board

Chief Editor: Prof. Nikunja Bihari Biswas,
Former Dean, Ashutosh Mukharjee School of Educational Sciences, Assam University, Silchar

Editor: Dr. Baharul Islam Laskar
Principal, M.C.D College, Sonai, Cachar

Managing Editor: Dr. Abul Hassan Chaudhury

Associate Editors

Dr. S.M. Alfarid Hussain,
Assistant Professor, Department of Mass Communication, Assam University, Silchar

Dr. Anindya Syam Choudhury,
Assistant Professor, Department of English, Assam University, Silchar

Assistant Managing Editors

Dr. Monjur Ahmed Laskar,
Research Associate, Bioinformatics Centre, Assam University,

Dr. Nijoy Kr Paul
Professional Assistant, Central Library, Assam University, Silchar

EDITORIAL BOARD MEMBERS

Dr. Humayun Bakth,
Associate Professor, Department of Sociology, Assam University

Prof. J.U. Ahmed,
Department of Management, NEHU, Tura Campus

Dr. Merina Islam, (founder Editor),
Associate Professor, Department of Philosophy, Cachar College, Silchar

Dr. Pius V.T,
Assistant Professor, Department of Philosophy, Assam University, Silchar

Dr. Najmul Islam Barbhuiya,
Assistant Professor, Department of Arabic, Assam University, Silchar

Dr. Sk Jasim Uddin,
Professor, Department of Chemistry, Assam University, Silchar

Dr. Debotosh Chakraborty
Assistant Professor, Department of Political Science, Assam University, Silchar

Dr. Md. Aynul Hoque,
Former Assistant Professor, NERIE, Shillong

Dr. Himadri Sekhar Das,
Assistant Professor, Department of Physics, Assam University, Silchar

Dr. Subrata Sinha,
System Analyst, Computer Centre, Assam University, Silchar

Dr. Rajia Shahani,
Assistant Professor, Department of Sociology, Assam University, Silchar

Dr. Ayesha Afsana
Guest Faculty, Dept. of Law, Assam University, Silchar

Dr. Debotosh Chakraborty
Assistant Professor, Department of Political Science, Assam University, Silchar

Dr. Sk Jasim Uddin,
Professor, Department of Chemistry, Assam University, Silchar

Dr. Debotosh Chakraborty
Assistant Professor, Department of Political Science, Assam University, Silchar

Dr. Md. Aynul Hoque,
Former Assistant Professor, NERIE, Shillong

Dr. Himadri Sekhar Das,
Assistant Professor, Department of Physics, Assam University, Silchar

Dr. Subrata Sinha,
System Analyst, Computer Centre, Assam University, Silchar

Dr. Ayesha Afsana
Guest Faculty, Dept. of Law, Assam University, Silchar

Disclaimer: Opinion expressed in the articles are those of the contributors and do not necessarily reflect the opinion and views of the Editorial Board or Advisory Board and even Barak Education Society, Silchar.

Cover designed by: Mr. Baharul Islam Laskar, Department of Visual Arts, Assam University

To contact: Chief Editor: Phone No. 9435072204(M), Email id: n.b.biswas@aus.ac.in
Editor: Phone: 9435988843 (M), Email id: bahar.awc@gmail.com

N.B. All concerned with the journal have extended honorary service voluntarily for the publication of the journal smoothly.
Intellection
A Bi-annual Interdisciplinary Research Journal

Advisory Board

Chief Advisor

Prof. Tapodhir Bhattacharjee,
Former Vice Chancellor, Assam University, Silchar

Advisors

Prof. Y. V. Satyanarayan,
Former Emeritus Professor,
Department of Philosophy,
Andhra University, Visakhapatnam, A.P

Prof. Yasien Mohamed,
(Arabic & Islamic Studies)
Department Foreign Languages,
University of the Western Cape, South Africa

Prof. Md. Saiful Islam
Department of Economics,
Khulna University, Bangladesh

Prof. Niranjan Roy,
Dean, School of Economics & Commerce,
Assam University, Silchar

Prof. G. Ram,
Head, Department of Sociology,
Assam University, Silchar

Prof. Dibyojyoti Bhattacharjee
Dept. of Statistics & Director, IQAC,
Assam University, Silchar

Prof. Dipendu Das
Head, Department of English,
Assam University, Silchar

Dr. M.K. Sinha,
Head, Dept. of Library & Information Sciences,
Assam University, Silchar

Dr. Mijanur Rahman,
Principal, Haflong Govt. College,
Haflong, Dima Hasao District, Assam

Prof. Devendra Nath Tiwari
Department of Philosophy, and Religion
Benaras Hindu University,
Varanasi, UP

Prof. Dr. Abdul Jalil Bin Othman,
Faculty of Education,
Department of Language and literary Education
University of Malaya, Malaysia

Prof. M Asad Uddin
Department of English,
Jamia Millia Islamia, New Delhi

Prof. Asoke Kr. Sen,
Dean, School of Physical Sciences,
Assam University, Silchar

Prof. A. Rasak T.
Dean, School of English & Foreign Languages, Assam University, Silchar

Dr. K.M. Baharul Islam,
Chairperson (Administrative & Finance),
IIM, Kashipur, Uttarakhand

Dr. Deshraj Sirswal
Assistant Professor, Department of Philosophy, P.G Govt. College for Girls,
Chandigarh

Dr. Reyaz Ahmed
Assistant professor,
Software Engineering Department,
College of Engineering and IT
Al Ain University of Science and Technology, UAE

Dr. Jashobanta Roy,
Associate Professor& HOD, Philosophy
Radhamadhab College, Silchar
Intellection
A Bi-annual Interdisciplinary Research Journal

This issue of the journal is

Dedicated to the memory of

The Pride of our nation,

Bharat Ratna Dr. B. R. Ambedkar,
Maker of Indian Constitution &
The first minister of Law and Justice of free India
EDITORIAL

The swift journey of ‘Intellection’ has started from January’ 2013 with a few articles to promote and inculcate the spirit of research activities among students, academicians, scholars and intellectuals across the globe. With the passage of time and to cope up with the latest developments especially in the field of information technology, ‘Intellection’ has occupied its place in the web and also in the list of approved journals by UGC the apex academic body of the Country. It is matter of great pride and privilege on behalf of the Editorial Board to publish the 10th successful issue.

The response to our appeal for paper contribution and write-ups for publication in the journal ‘Call for Papers’ was beyond our expectations. The paper contributors have spent their time and energy to produce good articles, but we could not include all; even after declining several articles on review, we had to include eighteen papers in this issue.

Being an interdisciplinary journal this issue of ‘Intellection’ like its earlier issues includes articles from Literature, Economics and Commerce, History and Politics, Sociology, Philosophy, information and communication technology etc, which makes the issue much more interesting and useful to academic readers.

I take this opportunity to appreciate and thanks to the Executive Committee, Editorial Board and Advisory Board of ‘Barak Education Society’, contributors of articles, all those who have supported us in this endeavour, make it possible for us to publish the journal successfully and to the best of our capabilities. We solicit your support and help for the future issues of the journal too and believe that this issue of the journal would turn out to be of significant use to all categories of readers, especially researchers and educators.

We welcome feedbacks, remarks and suggestions from all our readers regarding this issue and for improvement of our future issues. You can access the soft copies of the journal since its inception at http://www.besngo.org and mail your responses to beseduso@gmail.com.

I convey my best wishes for overall success of the journal.

With warm regards

Dated: Silchar
the 12th December’ 2017

Dr. Baharul Islam Laskar
Editor, Intellection
It is a matter of great pleasure for us to remember the 22nd day of February, 2013, when the first issue of *Intellection*, a biannual interdisciplinary research journal was inaugurated in a formal function held at the office of Barak Education Society at Meherpur, Silchar and our dream to publish a research journal converted to a reality. We have now completed five years of publication of the journal with support from all corners of elites related with the publication of the journal.

Actually, in the year 2012, the initiative was taken by BES Researchers’ Forum to publish a research journal with a title *Reflection*. But for various reasons the effort remained unsuccessful. However, as we believe that good intention never fails, we took up the initiative with new approach and got the encouraging responses from academicians not only from different parts of the country, but also abroad. In this journey Prof G. D. Sharma, former Pro Vice Chancellor, Assam University & former Vice Chancellor, Nagaland University and later on Vice Chancellor, Bilashpur University helped us in building our confidence to get a start and Prof Nikunja Bihari Biswas, Department of Education, Assam University took up the responsibility of Chief Editor to strengthen our dedicated effort. Many friends from reputed educational institutions from different parts of the country contributed their quality research articles for publication in the first issue and many have reviewed the papers free of any charge to help us. We are sincerely grateful to all of them for the goodwill gesture they extended in our noble effort. We are grateful to Central Executive Committee of Barak Education Society for accommodating Intellection in the website of the society and ultimately the journal has been included by UGC in the list of approved journals. We are thankful to Assam University authority for extending their timely and valuable support to achieve this goal.

We hope that this journey of *Intellection* will continue smoothly and efficiently in coming days with support and cooperation from researchers across the country and this journal will contribute a lot in the arena of research in the multidisciplinary approach.

With warm regards to all concerned.

Dr. Abul Hassan Chaudhury  
Founder Managing Editor  

Dr. Merina Islam  
Founder Editor  

Dated: Silchar  
the 12th December’ 2017
1. Other side of the Gap: Re-viewing the Consciousness Puzzle through Neurophenomenology
   - Mahak Uppal

2. Social Service Advertisements and the Cognition Level of Urban and Rural Children in Silchar
   - Shatabdi Som and Dr. Syed Murtaza Alfarid Hussain

3. Dismantling the stereotypes: An Intersectional Approach to Dalit Feminist Writings
   - Aparna Ashok and Dr. P. Ilamaran

4. Debates on Poverty and Our Moral Obligations: An Analytical Study
   - Md. Inamur Rahman

5. Impact of Landlessness on Human Security: An Overview
   - V.P. Prabhisha and Dr. N.J. Saleena

6. What Type of Speech Act is Protest-Language
   - Rinki Jadwani

7. A Cross-cultural Study among the Three Major Tribes of Assam in respect of Marriage and Family
   - Maumita Nath

8. Concept of Cosmology according to Indian Classical Texts: A Literature Review
   - Malay Sinha and Prof. Ramachandra Bhat

Contd.
9. *The Coexistence of Folk Tradition and Modernity in the Emerging Canon of Northeast Indian Women’s Poetry*
   - *Saikat Guha*

10. *A Study of Impact of ICT on Indian General Insurance Sector*
    - *M. Rajeev and Dr. N. J. Saleena*

11. *Gram Sabha and People’s Participation in India*
    - *Dr. Debotosh Chakraborty*

12. *Spinoza and Philosophy’s Modernity: Radicalism versus Concealed Theologies*
    - *Paran Goswami*

13. *Rural Empowerment through Financial Inclusion: A Brief Review of Literature*
    - *Dr. Sandip Debnath*

    - *Subrata Chakrabarty*

*Contd.*
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Page No.</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Authors</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>127</td>
<td>A Study on Disaster Management Practices at Libraries and Information Centers in the North Eastern Region of India: An Overview</td>
<td>Dr. Sangita Das Talukdar</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>135</td>
<td>British Economic System in Cachar During Nineteenth Century –An Analytical Study</td>
<td>Dr. Moynul Hoque</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>142</td>
<td>Access to Medicines for the Nations: A struggle between public health and Intellectual property rights</td>
<td>Dr. Gifty Oommen</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>150</td>
<td>Digital and New Media Art practices in North-East India: A brief study</td>
<td>Baharul Islam Laskar</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Other side of the Gap: Re-viewing the Consciousness Puzzle through Neurophenomenology

Mahak Uppal
Research Fellow
Department of Philosophy
University of Delhi, New Delhi - 110007
Email: mhk.upl@gmail.com

Abstract
“Neurophenomenology”, as originally proposed by Francisco Varela, is a research framework which approaches the scientific study of consciousness by incorporating and integrating the disciplines of Neuorophysiology and Phenomenology. In doing so Neurophenomenology aims at supplementing current philosophical and scientific research programs, by providing methodological tools that seem to be better equipped at addressing, reformulating and even overcoming the “Hard Problem” and the “Explanatory Gap” which have hitherto characterized an apparent dichotomy between the neuronal basis and the phenomenal experience of consciousness. The present paper begins by delineating how “neuronal correlates” and “phenomenal experience” have been regarded as being the most fundamental aspects of conscious mental states within several diverse theoretical formulations; and the riddle that “phenomenal experience” poses in the light of the “explanatory gap” and the “hard problem” which still seem to plague a coherent scientific understanding of consciousness. The paper proceeds with a sketch of the Neurophenomenological project and the central methodology involved therein; showing how, at a theoretical level, Neurophenomenology is grounded in “embodied”, “enactive” and “large-scale dynamical” approaches to the neurophysiology of consciousness. Finally, the paper concludes with a brief mention of certain challenges and criticisms that this project seems susceptible to.

Keywords: Neurophenomenology, Consciousness, Phenomenology, Hard Problem.

I

Introduction

Neural Correlates and Phenomenal Experience

Understanding and unraveling the nature of consciousness has been a core concern for philosophers and scientists alike. Philosophical engagements with this phenomenon can be dated back to some of the most ancient schools of thought. In recent times, given the modern
advancements in scientific techniques and experimental methods, there has been an unprecedented upsurge of scientifically grounded theories of consciousness. The question of what it means to be conscious has meant different things for different thinkers, some popular conceptions include: *Creature Consciousness* (Rosenthal 1997); *Background and State Consciousness* (Rosenthal 1997; Chalmers 1996); *Transitive and Intransitive Consciousness* (Rosenthal 1997); *Access Consciousness* (Block 2001; Dehaene and Naccache 2001; Baars 2002); *Phenomenal Consciousness* (Nagel 1979; Block 2001); *Introspective Consciousness* (Schooler 2002); *Pre-reflective self-consciousness* (Zahavi 1999) etc. Attempts of studying this phenomenon become even more challenging given the multiplicity of meanings attached to the term “consciousness”, and the general lack of consensus regarding the nature of consciousness itself.

Despite this diversity of opinions and approaches, most researchers today would agree a) that *complex neuro-physiological activity* in embodied brains is essential for the actualization of conscious mental states, and b), that such conscious states are accompanied by a characteristic qualitative feel, a subjective phenomenal aspect, or the first-person experience of *what it is like* (Nagel 1979) to be in that state. There has however been a long tradition in philosophy which regards these fundamental aspects of consciousness --the neuro-physiological and the phenomenal-- as being apparently incompatible and dichotomous. The most popular rendering of the philosophical, theoretical and experimental challenges implied by this presumed dichotomy is couched in the form of the “explanatory gap” (Levine 1983) and the associated “hard problem of consciousness” (Chalmers 1995). These challenges stem from the fact that the phenomenal experience accompanying a conscious state seems to be largely inaccessible and unavailable for an objective scrutiny from a third-person scientific perspective.

In current times the most dominant approaches to the study of consciousness such as the *Global workspace Theory* of Bernard Baars (1988); *Neural Correlates of Consciousness* as proposed by Crick and Koch (1998); and the *Information Integration Theory* put forth by Tononi (2004) etc. are particularly informed by neuro-scientific facts and findings. Under such theoretical frameworks, an explanation of what consciousness is and how it comes about is given in terms of specific brain regions and the varying levels of interaction among the underlying neural networks. Such theories try to explain the phenomenal features of conscious experience by defining and describing them in terms of certain neuro-physiological processes taking place in the brain.
Though the neural underpinnings of a conscious state are evidently amenable to a scientific study and explanation, this does not seem to be the case with the phenomenal aspect of the very same state. So, in spite of the clarity of the explanations on offer, it is still an open question as to how and why certain neuro-physiological and electrochemical changes in the brain give rise to, or come to be associated with, a particular kind of conscious experience.

II

Neurophenomenology

The inability of the “objective” scientific enquiries to account for “subjectivity”, even with its most advanced methods and technologies, indicates that perhaps these means are not sufficient for an understanding of conscious experience after all; And that, in order to bridge the widening chasm of the explanatory gap between the physical and the phenomenal, we are required to supplement and revise our current methods of inquiry. What is urgently needed, therefore, is a mode of investigation which would retain the integrity of the phenomenal aspect, while at the same time giving us adequate tools for overcoming the apparent dichotomy, which has hitherto plagued a scientific study of consciousness. In what follows I will be discussing one such methodological alternative, namely “neuro-phenomenology”.

“Neurophenomenology”, as originally proposed by Francisco Varela (1996) (and later on developed by Antoine Lutz (2002); Evan Thompson (2004); among others) is a research framework which approaches the scientific study of consciousness by incorporating and integrating the methodologies of Neurophysiology and Phenomenology. Varela in particular was guided by the idea of the “irreducibility” of “first-hand subjective experience”. He believed that the riddle of subjective conscious experience, which has been brought to light by discussions surrounding the “hard problem” and the “explanatory gap”, cannot be fruitfully and adequately addressed unless an understanding of the “structure of experience” itself is brought directly into the study of consciousness. He therefore proposed that the empirical observations about the neurophysiological processes underlying (and correlated with) consciousness, should be integrated with a rigorous and disciplined phenomenological study of human experience. Therefore, in a bid to overcome the apparent dichotomy, he proposes to harmonize the “third-person” and “objective” stance of cognitive neuroscience, with a “first-person” and “subjective” perspective.
In order to make the first-person accounts of conscious experience integral to the scientific study, Varela (1996) hypothesized:

‘Phenomenological accounts of the structure of experience and their counterparts in cognitive science relate to each other through reciprocal constraints’ (343).

This idea of “reciprocal” and “mutual” constraints helps in establishing an ongoing dynamic “circulation” or “interpretation” and “analysis” of information across both poles of inquiry i.e. the empirical on the one hand and the experiential, on the other; thereby promoting a kind of constant dialogue between them.

Now the phenomenological method consists in cultivating an attitude of Phenomenological reduction or *epoché* at the experiential level, thereby involving the practice of reflecting on one’s own experiences by suspending or “bracketing” habitual beliefs about the same, and turning “the direction of the movement of thinking from its habitual content-oriented direction backwards towards the arising of thoughts themselves” (ibid. 337). A disciplined training in this method helps in achieving an increased sensitivity to, and reflective awareness of, the felt immediacy of diverse lived experiences.

Phenomenology in the current sense can be understood as a project which provides “disciplined characterization of the phenomenal invariants of lived experience” (Lutz and Thompson 2003, 32). ‘Phenomenal invariants’ are the “categorical features of experience that are phenomenologically describable both across and within the various forms of lived experience” (Lutz and Thompson 2003, 32). Moreover since, the reflective engagement with our thoughts and experiences would remain private unless it is communicated, therefore the phenomenological method also requires that these phenomenal categories of experience or “invariants” be made inter-subjectively available through descriptions. This method therefore consists in an intertwining of Reduction, Description and Training (Varela 1996, 336-337).

On the other side of the neurophenomenological circulation, we have an enactive and embodied approach to neural dynamics. In line with several current theoretical proposals concerning the neural basis of consciousness (Tononi and Edelman 1998; Freeman 1999; Dehane and Naccache 2001; Engel and Singer 2001; Thompson and Varela 2001), neurophenomenology too subscribes to the view that “each cognitive or conscious moment involves the transient selection of a distributed neural population that is both highly integrated and differentiated, and connected by reciprocal, transient, dynamical links” (Lutz and Thompson 2003, 40). According to this understanding, the neural processes crucial for consciousness and subjective experience are to
be identified not in terms of specific and localized Neuronal correlates, or substrates (Crick and Koch 1998), but rather in terms of collective neural networks engaged in dynamic and transient patterns of activity which synchronously occur between oscillating neural populations at multiple locations distributed globally. This description and quantification of neuronal activity is referred to as a “dynamical neural signature” (Lutz and Thompson 2003, 40).

Further, it needs to be noted that this neurodynamic activity, is to be understood as being “necessarily embedded in the somatic contexts of the organism as a whole (the lived body in Phenomenological terms), as well as the environment. In the case of human consciousness, the neurodynamic pole needs to be understood as necessarily embedded in at least three ‘cycles of operation’ constitutive of human life: (i) [namely the] cycles of organismic regulation of the entire body; (ii) [the] cycles of sensorimotor coupling between organism and environment; (iii) [and the] cycles of intersubjective interaction” (Lutz and Thompson 2003, 41)

A pragmatic instantiation of the neurophenomenological method was illustrated by Antoine Lutz et al. (2002) through a pilot study regarding a particular aspect of visual perception. The task began with participants (trained in the phenomenological method) fixating their visual attention on a dotted pattern which initially contained no information about depth. After a few seconds, the pattern was slightly modified to an “autostereogram” with binocular disparities, which was perceived by the participants as a three-dimensional illusory geometric shape resulting in “depth illusion”. As soon as the 3D shape emerged, each participant was required to press a button, and give a brief verbal report describing the experience, and labelling it in terms of the phenomenal categories (invariants), stabilized by them during the training sessions. Throughout the task the neural activity of the participants was monitored in the form of EEG recordings. Thereby, resulting in a simultaneous collection of first person data (in the form of verbal reports); and third person data in the form of (electrophysiological measurements of the activity in the brain), across multiple trials of being exposed to the same stimulus.

The prior training sessions that the participants were required to undergo, as per the phenomenological methodology, enabled them to discriminate among variations in their own streams of experience, thereby allowing them to direct their attention to the dynamic unfolding of their own mental processes and the felt quality of their experience of the task. The three intertwined phases of suspension, redirection of attention and receptivity were either induced during the task by the participants themselves, or were introduced by the experimenter, through verbal questions.
At the end of the task the verbal reports thus obtained were classified on the basis of the “degrees of preparation felt by the subject and the quality of his/her perception” under three categories: “Steady readiness, Fragmented Readiness and Unreadiness” (ibid. 44). The subjects grouped under the cluster “steady readiness” reported being “ready”, “present”, “well-prepared” or “here” at the time of the presentation of the images, and responding “immediately” and “decidedly”. The perception for these subjects was experienced with feelings of “continuity”, “confirmation” or “satisfaction”. The subjects grouped under the cluster “fragmented readiness” reported making a voluntary effort to be ready; being prepared less “sharply” or less “focally”. The perception of the 3D image was experienced with a feeling of “surprise” or “discontinuity”. Those under the cluster “Unreadiness” reported being “unprepared” at the time of the presentation of the image, and felt the image with a sense of surprise (ibid. 44-45).

These phenomenological clusters were then used as a heuristic to detect and interpret relevant dynamical “transient patterns of neural activity” (ibid. 45). By correlating the first person reports for each cluster, with behavioural measures (time taken for reaction) and the EEG records taken during those trials, the experimenters were able to have access to crucial data which would have otherwise remained opaque and neglected as being mere “unintelligible noise”. Some of these findings are as follows:

“(i) [the] first-person data about the subjective context of perception can be related to stable phase-synchrony patterns measured in EEG recordings before the stimulus;
(ii) the states of preparation and perception, as reported by the subjects, modulated both the behavioural responses and the dynamic neural responses after the stimulation;
and (iii) although the precise shape of these synchrony patterns varied among subjects, they were stable in individual subjects throughout several recording sessions, and therefore seem to constitute a consistent signature of a subject’s cognitive strategy or aptitude to perform the perceptual task.”
(Lutz and Thompson 2003, 46)

III

Conclusion

Standard experimental investigations of the neural correlates of consciousness proceed by trying to control the variations among subjective experience in order to separate out and locate the exact correlates of a particular noetic or noematic factor of experience. Neurophenomenology on the other hand takes into account the temporal dynamics of a subject’s experience, i.e., how the experience itself gets shaped by the interplay between the subject and its relation to the given experiential context. This sort of an investigation brings to light a kind of a “circular causality”
whereby [it is seen that on one hand]“(1) the antecedent and ‘rolling’ subjective-experiential context (noesis) can modulate the way the perceptual object appears (noema) or is experientially ‘lived’ during the moment of conscious perception, and [that on the other hand] (2) the content (noema) of this momentary conscious state can reciprocally affect the flow of experience (as noetic process)” (ibid. 48). This method clearly ensures an active involvement of the subject in providing detailed information about specific phenomenal invariants of an experience. Further, in the light of the descriptions provided by the subject, the neuroscientist is better equipped at analysing and interpreting the neurophysiological data accumulated during the experiment. Moreover, reciprocally, such “phenomenally enriched” scientific analysis would allow for revisions of the first-person accounts, and simultaneously guide the subjects towards becoming aware of those aspects of their mental lives which remained largely unnoticed earlier. Therefore, by “enriching our understanding of both the first-person and third-person dimensions of consciousness, and creating experimental situations in which they reciprocally constrain each other, neurophenomenology aims to narrow down the epistemological and methodological distance in cognitive neuroscience between subjective experience and brain processes” (Lutz and Thompson 2003, 49).

Just as in the case of perceptual experience phenomenological inquiries in other cognitive domains such as attention, voluntary action, emotion, time consciousness, dreaming etc. can facilitate in further supplementing and qualifying scientific investigations concerning them. So for instance, attention is considered to be a key factor in determining the contents of a conscious state. Therefore, an inquiry of the crucial distinctions among the different ways in which attention manifests itself in our experience, can perhaps provide fruitful insights regarding the inter-relation between the various mechanisms of attention and the resultant conscious states. Similarly, integrating phenomenological descriptions given by trained mediators, regarding the experience of lucid dreams, and other altered states of consciousness, might shed light on how consciousness relates to the states of waking, dreaming, or deep sleep. This may even allow us to explore the prospects of the plasticity of human experience itself.

Despite its diverse prospects, there are certain philosophical challenges that the neurophenomenological project seems susceptible to. Neurophenomenology was proposed by Varela (1996) not just as a reaction to the hard problem of consciousness but also as a plausible means of “getting beyond” it. However, in light of the traditional formulation of the hard
problem, the question of “why” the specific neurodynamical activity comes to be associated with subjective experience still remains untouched. Further, by establishing a coherent and reciprocal relationship of mutual constraints among the first person phenomenological accounts and the third-person scientific accounts of consciousness; neurophenomenology attempts to provide methodological bridges across the epistemic divide. However, a closer scrutiny reveals that at best the project seems to “establish the existence of certain correlations between, say, spike activity and unique modes of attentional quality (Kirchhoff and Hutto 2016, 351)”. And merely “noting correlations between two relata does nothing to show how one relatum explains the other, or vice versa (ibid.)”. In the absence of a substantive explanatory relation between the two kinds of accounts, the explanatory gap between the phenomenal and the physical remains.

Bibliography


Social Service Advertisements and the Cognition Level of Urban and Rural Children in Silchar

Shatabdi Som* and Dr. Syed Murtaza Alfarid Hussain**
*Ph.D. Research Scholar
Email: shatabdizmail@gmail.com
**Assistant Professor
Department of Mass Communication
Assam University, Silchar

Abstract
The post-1990s in India has witnessed a mushrooming growth of television channels in India accounting for a high media consumption, particularly among young children, resulting in a majority share of investment of advertising revenues in this industry. This has effected an advertising boom on the television screens with more and more number of commercial breaks appearing in between the programmes aired on these television channels. The host of 800 television satellite channels shows advertisements for approximately 3,840 minutes per hour. The impressionable young demography of television consumers grow up watching these ad commercials that influence their world views and frames of reference. The present study is to find out the cognitive levels of children in respect to social service advertisements and how does that level vary across different age groups of children with respect to their residential background. The study was conducted among the urban as well as rural children of Silchar, located in Southern Assam, India. For the present study a sample of 525 children of age group 2-11 years, residing in the urban and the rural areas of Silchar was selected. Apart from inculcating a consumer culture the social service ads try to implement social messages for a healthy environment, a healthy individual as well as a healthy society. The study shows that children between 8-11 years are able to understand the social service advertisements and opine that such advertisements make them aware and generate a sense of responsibility in them. On the other hand children of 2-7 years find it difficult to comprehend the significance and rationale of the public service advertisements.

Keywords: Children, Cognition, Development Advertisement, Social Service Advertisements.

Introduction
The primary purpose of social service advertisement is public education, often through hard hitting didactic messages. On one hand the commercials provides a magical gateway into a consumerist and materialistic world. ‘We will be back in a moment’, the commercial break of a moment brings out a different world of colours
and life in front of the children. On the other hand there are ads that are directed towards the development of society, nation and protection of environment, conservation of the resources, road safety and development of an individual as a whole. Such ads don’t always promote any product but it carries forward an idea that is intended to bring some changes in the outlook of an individual. Since we are more diverted towards looking at the negative impact, we ignore the positive thoughts disseminated by advertisements. The objective of social advertising is to change public attitude and behaviour and stimulate positive change (Nawathe, Gawande, Dethe, 2007). The newest term for these advertisements is ‘development advertising.’

Development is measured by various indicators as education, health, rural development, development in communication, employment. Taking these issues into consideration the recent ad of Bharat Nirman by Percept focuses the developmental issues. The ad features rural children going to schools, as a nation can progress with the spread of education; rural development is another key point that contributes to national development as majority of the Indian population lives in villages; electrification in villages; the spread of technologies in rural areas; rise in the level of employment and improved health. The advertisement concludes with the note that we are developing in such a way that the nation is heading towards a new freedom. Celebrating 60th anniversary of Indian freedom an ad was aired on Indian Television that shows a child who looks upright and asks that what present he can give to the nation on its birthday. Standing under the tricolour the child promises to protect the nation when he will grow up. The advertisement deals with the spirit of nationalism that visualises children as the future of the nation and in their hands nation can be safe and secured.

Education is an important sector which still demands an all round development. The advertisements of Sarva Shiksha Abhiyaan carry forward the same concept of education for all, irrespective of the gender. There has to be rise in the level of awareness among the common people related to the heath. For instance, everyone is aware that smoking kills slowly but still it becomes very difficult for an individual to quit smoking. Cancer Patients’ Aid Association’s advertisement on ‘Smoking kills’ features a public carriage where a young person stands there and starts smoking. Immediately an aged person sitting in front him politely asks him to sit. The old man treats well with the smoker as they don’t have much time left. According to the ad, study shows that every time they smoke, they lose 7 minutes of their life. Often children are also featured in such ads; a small girl is found to be worried about her father’s regular coughing resulting from smoking. At the end of the ad the child appears to be happy when her father gave up smoking significantly erasing her gloom and fear of losing her father. Such ads target both the child and the adult. No father can see his child sunken in gloom and children are also targeted so that they can motivate them to quit smoking. UNICEF along with the Government of India carried out ad campaigns spreading awareness regarding the basic concepts of cleanliness, hygiene and sanitation. Every year many children die due to dehydration and advertisers had taken this note and aired numerous ads on providing ORS and zinc to the child suffering from diarrhea. The ads of National Rural Health Mission describe all the features how the
health sector of rural India can be improved. The advertisements of Pulse Polio campaign featuring Amitabh Bacchan contribute towards the eradication of polio from the nation by providing ‘two drops of life’ to each child. There are ads regarding the disease called tuberculosis that guarantee complete cure if treated properly there are many campaigns related to AIDS. Still in our country many people live under the myth that AIDS is a contaminateable disease and advertisers in India doesn’t fail to focus the lens on facts related to AIDS. A recent television advertisement, featuring Shabana Azmi, is most effective for its warmth and directness: it shows the actress embracing an AIDS-afflicted child and assuring that the disease does not spread through non-sexual contact. After listing the ways in which the HIV virus can spread, she says in Hindi while hugging the child, saying ‘this way you can only spread love’. There are ads that spread awareness regarding blood donation and conveys a strong message that the contribution can save a precious life. In an ad of blood donation a small girl child appears in a food court saying thank you to everyone. On being asked she replied that she suffers from blood cancer and she is surviving because someone anonymous donates blood for her. So she keeps on saying thank you to everyone for saving her life and urges more people to donate blood so that she and others like her may live longer. In an ad of eye donation that features the celebration of Holi, the fest of colours in a hostel. Children are seen enjoying the feel of colours, the smell of sweet dishes and at the end of that ad a child asks the warden ‘what is the colour of green?’ The children residing in that hostel are blind and are awaiting our co-operation. 67 people including the creators of the ad agreed to donate their eyes after watching the advertisement. Children and old people have the similar requirements. As the children need their parents along with them similarly the old people want their children along with them. During 1990s the crowned Miss World, Aishwaria Rai appeared in an advertisement in which she proclaimed of donating her own eye to the Eye Bank Association of India so that someone else can see this beautiful world through her eyes. The advertisement of Help Age India conveys a message that ‘loneliness is curable; spend some time with the elders’ as old age is inevitable, everyone has to face it.

Besides the advertisements associated with society and health sector, the Indian media industry has also come out with ads to protect the environment and its resources. The tigers are on the verge of extinction and there are advertisement that deals with the conservation of the nature and wildlife. It has indicated that the water level is going down and the wastage of water may be a serious issue, the recycling of garbage, conservation of electricity, fossil fuels as petrol and diesel are some of the environmental issues the advertisers had worked upon. In the age of consumerism when there are thousands of brands available in front of the consumers and at times it becomes difficult to choose the appropriate one. The ‘Jago Grahak Jago’ campaigns enable a sense of awareness among the consumers that they can claim regarding any fraud.

**Objective of the study**
To find out the cognitive levels of children in respect to social service advertisements and how does that level vary across different age groups of children and their residential background.

Theoretical Framework

(i) Uses and Gratification Theory (UGT)

Framed by Elihu Katz, Jay Blumler, and Michael Gurevitch, Uses and Gratifications Theory turned attention away from media sources and message effects to audience uses of media content (Littlejohn and Foss, 2009). Elihu Katz suggests that media is used for the purpose like entertainment, education and information. In 1972 Denis McQuail, Jay Blumler and Joseph Brown suggested that the uses of different types of media could be grouped into four categories. The four categories were: diversion, personal relationships, personal identity and surveillance. It attempts to explain the uses and functions of the media for individuals, groups and society as a whole. It also explains how people use media in order to satisfy their needs. According to Blumler and Katz Uses and Gratification Theory suggests that media users play an active role in choosing and using the media. The theorist says that a media user searches for a media source that best fulfils the needs of the user. Uses and gratifications assume that the user has alternate choices to satisfy their need. Wimmer and Dominick (1994) proposed that uses and gratification began in the 1940s when researchers became interested in why audiences engaged in various forms of media behaviour, such as listening to the radio or reading the newspaper. The application of the uses and gratifications approach dates back to 1940’s when researchers tried to find out the reason why people use various forms of media, such as radio listening and newspaper reading. These early studies were primarily descriptive in nature, in quest of categorising the responses of audience. For example, Herzog in 1944 identified three types of gratification associated with listening to radio soap, operas: emotional release, wishful thinking and obtaining advice (West and Lynn, 2010). Schramm, Lyle, and Parker (1961) concluded that children’s use of television was influenced by individual mental ability and relationships with parents and peers. Katz and Foulkes (1962) conceptualized mass media use as an escape. Berelson in 1949, conducted a research on New York newspaper and asked people why they read the paper, the responses fell into five major categories: reading for information, reading for social prestige, reading for escape, reading as a tool for daily living, and reading for a social context (Wimmer, Dominick, 2003).

Piaget’s Theory of Cognitive Development

Jean Piaget's theory of cognitive development is an inclusive theory about the nature and development of human intelligence according to their age. He opined that one's childhood plays a vital and active role in a person's development. According to this theory, cognitive development occurs in four main stages: the sensorimotor stage (0-2 years), the preoperational stage (2-7 years), the concrete operational stage (7-11 years), and the formal operational stage (11 through 15 years). The pre-operational stage is further divided into two segments, the symbolic function sub-stage (2-4 years) and the intuitive thought sub-stage (4-7 years).
Review of Literature

Manish Mittal studies on the Effects of Television Advertising on Children Influence of Gender and Age (2009). According to the study television has become an important economic socializing agent because of its massive presence in children's lives. Children are exposed to numerous advertisements from the very early age and are most likely to accept the ideas advertising promotes. The paper reveals the cognitive, affective and behavioural effects of television advertisements on children and the bearing gender and age of a child have on them.


Rathod and Parmar (2012) studied on Impact of Television Advertisements on Children: An Empirical Study with Reference to Chocolate Brands. According to them advertising is second only to films as far as its influence on the society is concerned. Advertising is the most influential and powerful medium in the present commercial society. The main objective of this study is to find out, how children are influenced by the television advertisements. There are both good and bad impact of advertisement.

Narasimhamurthy (2014), studied on Television Advertisement and its Impact on Attitudes, Behaviors of Children-A study. The present study is to examine the impact of television advertisements on children, and how it leads to consumerism of product. Advertising is the most influential and powerful medium in the present commercial society.

Methodology

(i) Design-

The design of the study is survey research based. A sample survey is conducted in the urban and rural areas of Silchar, in order find out the overall impact of television advertisements on school going children of Silchar.

(ii) Population and sample of the study-

The population of the study includes children between age group 2-11 years, residing in both urban and rural areas of Silchar. The total sample constitutes 525 children from the urban and rural areas of Silchar. The parents of the children of age group 2-7 years are also included in the study as children of this age group cannot provide the exact information.

(i) Sampling technique-

The study employs a stratified random sampling technique. The universe of the study comprises of all the school going children of both urban and rural areas of Silchar. The town is divided into 28 Wards that governs urban areas of Sichar and 11 Gaon Panchayats governing the rural areas of Silchar. Through stratified random
sampling the urban and rural areas are divided into several sub-population called ‘strata’, the wards and village panchayats. From every ward and village panchayat one school is selected both from urban and rural areas. A total number of 39 schools from urban and rural area are selected through lottery method. The class registers bearing the roll number is used to select the samples at a sampling rate of 1/5 having a sampling interval of 5.

(i) Variables-

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>Category</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Age</td>
<td>2-4 years</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>5-7 years</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>8-11 years</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Residential</td>
<td>Urban</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>background</td>
<td>Rural</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(ii) Method of data collection-

For collection the data, a schedule is framed for the children for collecting the required data. It was served to the age group 2-11. The children of age group 2-7 were asked the questions in accompaniment of their parents.

(iii) Pre-testing of the tool-

The tool is pre-tested on 30 accidentally selected students from all age groups from both urban and rural areas. The purpose for pre-testing the tool is to check the clarity of language, ease in responding and average time taken to respond.

Findings and Discussions

Table 1.1: Understanding capability of children regarding the advertisements on conservation of resources

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Make them aware</th>
<th>Help them to implement the message</th>
<th>Difficult to understand</th>
<th>Least interesting</th>
<th>They understand but do not implement</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Urban</td>
<td>2-4 years</td>
<td>20(12)</td>
<td>11.67(07)</td>
<td>53.33(32)</td>
<td>13.33(08)</td>
<td>1.67(01)</td>
<td>100(60)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>5-7 years</td>
<td>27.15(19)</td>
<td>17.14(12)</td>
<td>47.14(33)</td>
<td>5.71(04)</td>
<td>2.86(02)</td>
<td>100(70)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>8-11 years</td>
<td>50.44(58)</td>
<td>17.39(20)</td>
<td>7.82(09)</td>
<td>11.30(13)</td>
<td>13.05(15)</td>
<td>100(115)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total(urban)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>245</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rural</td>
<td>2-4 years</td>
<td>15(06)</td>
<td>5(02)</td>
<td>75(30)</td>
<td>5(2)</td>
<td>0(0)</td>
<td>100(40)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>5-7 years</td>
<td>9.09(03)</td>
<td>3.03(01)</td>
<td>75.76(25)</td>
<td>9.09(03)</td>
<td>3.03(01)</td>
<td>100(33)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>8-11 years</td>
<td>35.16(64)</td>
<td>26.92(49)</td>
<td>27.48(50)</td>
<td>4.39(08)</td>
<td>6.05(11)</td>
<td>100(182)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total(rural)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>255</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Besides the commercial ads there are numerous ads featured in the TV that are directed towards the conservation of the natural resources. The majority of the children of age group 2-4 (53.33 per cent) and 5-7 (47.14 per cent) believe that the messages are difficult for the children to understand. But 50.43 per cent of the children of 8-11 believe that such ads make them more aware. On the other hand, there some children (13.05 per cent) of the 8-11 years understand the ads but never try to implement. For many these ads are least interesting in nature. On the other hand, in the rural areas 35.16 per cent of the children of age group 8-11 years feel that such ads increase the awareness level and 27.48 per cent such ads are difficult to understand which is higher than the urban areas and 26.92 per cent implement the message in their own life which is higher in the rural area. But for majority of the children of age group 2-7 the ads are difficult to understand.

Table 1.2: Understanding capability of children regarding the advertisements on protection of environment

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Make them aware</th>
<th>Generate a sense of responsibility</th>
<th>Difficult to understand</th>
<th>Least interesting</th>
<th>They understand but do not implement</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Urban</td>
<td>2-4</td>
<td>11.67(07)</td>
<td>16.67(10)</td>
<td>65(39)</td>
<td>6.66(04)</td>
<td>0(0)</td>
<td>100(60)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>5-7</td>
<td>24.28(17)</td>
<td>14.29(10)</td>
<td>44.29(31)</td>
<td>12.85(09)</td>
<td>4.29(03)</td>
<td>100(70)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>8-11</td>
<td>39.13(45)</td>
<td>24.35(28)</td>
<td>11.30(13)</td>
<td>13.04(15)</td>
<td>12.18(14)</td>
<td>100(115)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>(urban)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>245</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rural</td>
<td>2-4</td>
<td>0(0)</td>
<td>2.5(01)</td>
<td>90(36)</td>
<td>7.5(03)</td>
<td>0(0)</td>
<td>100(40)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>5-7</td>
<td>9.09(03)</td>
<td>3.03(01)</td>
<td>81.81(27)</td>
<td>6.07(02)</td>
<td>0(0)</td>
<td>100(33)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>8-11</td>
<td>42.86(78)</td>
<td>31.32(57)</td>
<td>12.64(23)</td>
<td>5.49(10)</td>
<td>7.69(14)</td>
<td>100(182)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>(rural)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>255</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grand Total</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>500</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Besides the commercial ads there are numerous ads featured in the TV that are directed towards the protection of the environment. The majority of the parents of the children of age group 2-4 (65 per cent) and 5-7 (44.29 per cent) believe that the messages are difficult for the children to understand and some of them also feel that such non commercials increase the level of awareness among children. But 39.13 per cent of the children of 8-11 believe that such ads make them more aware. On the other hand, there some children (12.18 per cent) of the 8-11 years understand them but never try to implement them. For many these ads are least interesting in nature. In the rural
areas none of the parents of 2-4 ages feel that such ads make the child more aware. But
the children of 8-11 years, around 42.86 per cent have an opinion that such non-
commercials make them more aware, for 31.32 per cent such ads make them more
responsible towards saving the environment which is quite higher among the rural
children.

Table 1.3: Understanding capability of children regarding the advertisements on
nationalism

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Make them aware</th>
<th>Generate a sense of responsibility</th>
<th>Difficult to understand</th>
<th>Least interesting</th>
<th>They understand but do not implement</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Urban</td>
<td>2-4 years</td>
<td>10(06)</td>
<td>15(09)</td>
<td>73.33(44)</td>
<td>1.67(01)</td>
<td>0(0)</td>
<td>100(60)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>5-7 years</td>
<td>24.29(17)</td>
<td>24.29(17)</td>
<td>41.42(29)</td>
<td>5.71(04)</td>
<td>4.29(03)</td>
<td>100(70)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>8-11 years</td>
<td>40.88(47)</td>
<td>22.60(26)</td>
<td>19.14(22)</td>
<td>11.30(13)</td>
<td>6.08(07)</td>
<td>100(115)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total(urban)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>245</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rural</td>
<td>2-4 years</td>
<td>0(0)</td>
<td>2.5(01)</td>
<td>87.5(35)</td>
<td>10(04)</td>
<td>0(0)</td>
<td>100(40)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>5-7 years</td>
<td>6.06(02)</td>
<td>6.06(02)</td>
<td>81.82(27)</td>
<td>6.06(02)</td>
<td>0(0)</td>
<td>100(33)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>8-11 years</td>
<td>47.80(87)</td>
<td>24.73(45)</td>
<td>18.13(33)</td>
<td>5.49(10)</td>
<td>3.85(07)</td>
<td>100(182)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total(rural)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>255</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grand Total</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>500</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The majority the urban children of age group 2-4 (73.33 per cent) and 5-7 (41.42
per cent) believe that the messages are difficult for the children to understand and some
of them also feel that such ads increase the level of awareness among children. But
40.88 per cent of the children of 8-11 believe that such ads make them more aware. On
the other hand, there some children (6.08 per cent) of the 8-11 years understand the ads
but never try to implement them. For many these ads are least interesting in nature. The
majority of the children of age group 2-4 (87.5 per cent) and 5-7 (81.82 per cent)
believe that the messages are difficult for the children to understand which is quite
higher than the urban areas and only a few of them 6.06 per cent (5-7) also feel that
such ads increase the level of awareness among children. Even 47.80 per cent of the
children of 8-11 believe that such ads make them more aware. On the other hand, there
some children (3.85 per cent) of the 8-11 years understand the ads but never try to
implement them. For many these ads are least interesting in nature.

Table 1.4: Understanding capability of urban children on ads of health and
hygiene

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Make them aware</th>
<th>Implement healthy habits</th>
<th>Difficult to understand</th>
<th>Least interesting</th>
<th>They understand but do not implement</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Urban</td>
<td>2-4 years</td>
<td>23.33(14)</td>
<td>16.67(10)</td>
<td>51.66(31)</td>
<td>8.34(05)</td>
<td>0(0)</td>
<td>100(60)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The majority of urban children of age group 2-4 (51.66 per cent) believe that the messages are difficult for the children to understand and 5-7 (32.85 per cent) the ads try to implement healthy habits in the child. 39.13 per cent of the children of 8-11 believe that such ads make them more aware, 33.91 per cent have an opinion that such ads implement healthy habits in them. On the other hand, there are some children (11.30 per cent) of the 8-11 years understand the ads but never try to implement them. For many these ads are least interesting in nature. And the level understanding increases with the progression of age. The of the rural children age group 2-4 (80 per cent) believe that the messages are difficult for the children to understand and for 5-7 (42.42 per cent) the ads try to implement healthy habits in the child which is higher in the rural areas. 64.84 per cent of the children of 8-11 believe that such ads make them more aware. On the other hand, there are some children (2.20 per cent) of the 8-11 years who are able to understand the ads but never try to implement them and this tendency is lower in the rural areas. For many these ads are least interesting in nature. And the level understanding increases with the progression of age.

Table 1.5: Understanding capability of children regarding the advertisements on education for national development

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Do not understand</th>
<th>Least interesting</th>
<th>Makes aware</th>
<th>Do not want to implement</th>
<th>Feel that people must go to school</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Urban</td>
<td>2-4 years</td>
<td>90(54)</td>
<td>10(06)</td>
<td>0(0)</td>
<td>0(0)</td>
<td>0(0)</td>
<td>100(60)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>5-7 years</td>
<td>84.28(59)</td>
<td>11.43(08)</td>
<td>4.29(03)</td>
<td>0(0)</td>
<td>0(0)</td>
<td>100(70)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>8-11 years</td>
<td>20(23)</td>
<td>25.22(29)</td>
<td>40(46)</td>
<td>6.09(07)</td>
<td>8.69(10)</td>
<td>100(115)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total (urban)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>245</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rural</td>
<td>2-4 years</td>
<td>90.91(36)</td>
<td>9.09(03)</td>
<td>0(0)</td>
<td>0(0)</td>
<td>0(0)</td>
<td>100(33)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>5-7 years</td>
<td>90.91(36)</td>
<td>9.09(03)</td>
<td>0(0)</td>
<td>0(0)</td>
<td>0(0)</td>
<td>100(33)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grand Total</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>500</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The majority of the urban children of age group 2-4 years (90 per cent) and of 5-7 years (84.28 per cent) believe that the messages are difficult for the children to understand. 20.89 per cent of 8-11 years feel that people should go to school which is quite higher in the urban areas. 6.09 per cent of children of 8-11 years do not want to implement the message. And the level understanding increases with the progression of age. Urban children of 8-11 years are more aware of the concept of educating the nation. The majority of the rural children of age group 2-4 (90 per cent), 5-7 (90.91 per cent) and 8-11 (62.09 per cent) find the messages difficult to be understood. For many these ads are least interesting in nature. Even in the rural part understanding increases with the progression of age.

Table 1.6: Understanding capability of children regarding the non commercials on blood donation

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Do not understand</th>
<th>Least interesting</th>
<th>Started feeling that people should donate blood</th>
<th>The child want to donate blood in future</th>
<th>Will inspire parents to donate blood</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Urban</td>
<td>2-4 years</td>
<td>88.33(53)</td>
<td>11.67(07)</td>
<td>0(0)</td>
<td>0(0)</td>
<td>0(0)</td>
<td>100(60)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>5-7 years</td>
<td>77.15(54)</td>
<td>15.72(11)</td>
<td>5.71(04)</td>
<td>1.42(01)</td>
<td>0(0)</td>
<td>100(70)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>8-11 years</td>
<td>12.18(14)</td>
<td>20(23)</td>
<td>34.78(40)</td>
<td>26.96(31)</td>
<td>6.08(07)</td>
<td>100(115)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total (urban)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>245</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rural</td>
<td>2-4 years</td>
<td>90(36)</td>
<td>10(04)</td>
<td>0(0)</td>
<td>0(0)</td>
<td>0(0)</td>
<td>100(40)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>5-7 years</td>
<td>90.91(30)</td>
<td>9.09(03)</td>
<td>0(0)</td>
<td>0(0)</td>
<td>0(0)</td>
<td>100(33)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>8-11 years</td>
<td>22.52(41)</td>
<td>10.44(19)</td>
<td>37.37(68)</td>
<td>19.23(35)</td>
<td>10.44(19)</td>
<td>100(182)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total (rural)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>245</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grand Total</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>500</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Eight out of ten children of age group 2-4 (88.33 per cent), and seven out of ten children of 5-7 years (77.15 per cent) find that the messages are difficult for the children to understand. And 5.71 per cent of children of age 5-7 and 34.78 per cent of 8-11 years feel that people should donate blood. 26.95 per cent of 8-11 years want to donate blood in future. For many these ads are least interesting in nature. And the level understanding increases with the succession of age. Nine out of ten children of age group 2-4 (90 per cent), 5-7 (90.91 per cent) and 8-11 (22.52 per cent) believe that the
messages are difficult for the children to understand. 37.37 per cent of 8-11 years feel that people should donate blood. 19.23 per cent of 8-11 years want to donate blood in future. A few children of both urban and rural settings of 8-11 years will also inspire their parents to donate blood.

Conclusion

Looking at the current scenario regarding the influence of television advertisements the study has come to the conclusion that advertisements are pervasive and it is hard to ignore them. Some way or other they penetrate into the lives of children resulting towards positive as well as negative changes. The present study is conducted in Silchar in Southern Assam in India.

Other than promoting and selling commodities advertisements also play a crucial role towards societal and environmental development. The social service ads promote ideas related to the overall development of a nation. Advertising is not only about selling goods and products, it also disseminates social message regarding our environment and takes the major issues as conservation of wildlife, conservation resources; social messages as education for all, and providing the knowledge regarding health related issues. We live in a social environment where every individual has a role to play. There are innumerable advertisements that sell ideas to implement social messages for a better society and healthy environment. Pondering on these issues, the study tries to explore effects of social service ads on young children. The advertisements on pulse polio, cleanliness, proper sanitation, and conservation of resources, educating the nation, respecting the nation, blood donation, many more create awareness and a sense of responsibility among its viewers. Often such ads feature children and the present study suggests that children pay more attention to those ads which feature children. Children tend to become more aware of the healthy habits. Such advertisements inject influential messages which may have long lasting impact on the child. But the child of pre-operational stage finds such ads difficult to understand. Children gain better understanding of society and environment in the concrete operational stage. Their understanding of the social messages increases with the progression of their age. A child’s mind is ‘tabula rasa’; it will take the shape the way it is shaped. Stoic epistemology emphasizes that the mind starts blank, but acquires knowledge as the outside world is impressed upon it (Bardzell, 2014).

Bibliography

• Wimmer, R. D., Dominick, J. R. (2003), Mass Media Research, Thomson Wadsworth, Pp-84-85, 92, 196,404
Dismantling the Stereotypes: An Intersectional Approach to Dalit Feminist Writings

Aparna Ashok* and Dr.P. Ilamaran**

* Ph.D. Research Scholar  
** Associate Professor & Head  
Department of English  
PSG College of Arts and Science  
Coimbatore.  
Email: dr.ilamaran@gmail.com

Abstract

Dalit Literature is an activist intervention in the literary domain and achieve worldwide acknowledgement within a number of decades by voicing the experience of pain and humiliation. The Evolution of dalit feminism emphasises that neither dalit community nor mainstream feminism is an exception for sexism and casteism respectively. Towards the end of the 20th century, dalit women take upon themselves the responsibility to record their triply marginalised status to make the world understand how severe the condition is. Dalit feminist writers use an intersectional approach in their writings in expressing the three-tire oppression of dalit women community on the basis of class, caste and gender. This paper is an attempt to analyse the issues of dalit woman as a subject to caste oppression, as labourer subject to class oppression and finally as woman who undergoes patriarchal oppression. This intersectional analysis proceeds to explore how the stereotyped notions are created to victimize this women community and also challenges the hegemonic justifications through the accusation of resistive measures as liberated features of the dalit women in literature as well as in social movements.

Keywords: Dalit feminism, intersection, caste, class, gender, patriarchy

The dalit community forms one-third majority of Indian population and yet considered to be ‘untouchables’ under the fourfold division of the Varna system. The plight of dalit community varies in India - while in some states slavery and serfdom existed; other states squeezed their physical power without even the label of serfdom for a long time. The intensity of the inhuman status imposed on them remains the same all over India.

Dalit literature, flourished in the 20th century as part of Dalit movement, could bring drastic change in the social status of dalits through the acquisition of international attention. Though dalit literature achieves wide popularity, the dalit women felt dissatisfied in their representations to be the appendages to the male community. ‘A politics of dissimilarity’ from the mainstream Indian feminism intensifies the need for a movement and literature of their own and the 1990s became a crucial and fruitful decade for the blossoming of feminist politics in India. Urmila Pawar, Shantabai Kamble, Babytai Kamble, Kumud Pawade etc. are the ones
who broke the silenced voices of dalit women. Their works belong to various genres, recount their lives exactly as they experience.

The faithful expression of dalit women realities and vehement questioning of mainstream feminism and dalit male literature pave the way for the strong establishment of dalit feminism and the setting up of Dalit Women’s Federation. Dalit feminist literature shows woman as a dynamic power. The stereotyped ideologies are dismantled and the reconstruction of self and entity forms the crust of this genre. It pays exclusive attention on the intersections of caste, class and gender. Through the intersectional approach which is the highlight of dalit feminist writings, the writers bring the various levels of oppression missed by the feminist and male writers.

Caste hierarchical system prevails in India may be the longest surviving inhuman system of hostility. The mainstream feminists usually link the condition of women to that of dalits. The question Shailaja Paik raises is a challenge; “They appear to be more concerned with the linking of women with the shudra than the subordination of the shudra. What happens to the shudra woman in this subordination?” (2009 40). If the pain of middle class women parallels the misery of the dalit community, how do they fail to address the agony of dalit woman who carries the burden of caste and sex? Likewise the dalit movements of male domination always tend to sideline the female issues due to the fear that highlighting gender issues may take away the prime cause and unity of the dalit movement. These inattentions lead to the emergence of a dalit feminist standpoint and this revolutionary endeavour could bring massive changes.

Education coupled with social awareness encourage the dalit women writers like Bama, P. Sivakami, Prathiba Ray, Meena Kandasamy etc. to offer a new dimension to dalit literature through the realistic expressions of lived experiences. Through the writings and social activities, they envision a situation of equality for dalit women community. Dalit feminist explorations were not only done through literature or academic activities; its effect was easily spread among the whole dalit women community who started raising voice for a human status and basic rights. While the educated ones protested through letters, the common woman – still away from the world of letters – protested through her activities. Sharmila Rege challenges the criticism of Datar (1999) on dalit feminist standpoint in the context of Maharashtra thus:

In noting the dalit feminism, Datar (1999) collapses the standpoint into the practices of certain organisations and argues that dalit feminism is limited to educated dalit women working in universities and white-collared jobs and questions their knowledge and concerns about the “material realities of the lives of rural dalit women”. Of course lists of dalit bahujan activists working with the ‘authentic dalit woman subject’ can be easily drawn up. But that will be trivialising the standpoint which is sensitive to both the historical trajectories of the Neo-Budhist leadership of the dalit movement in Maharashtra and the need to broad base the movement. (2000 493,494)

Each Dalit woman is filled with the quest for emancipation and this urge is recorded in the works of dalit feminist writers with all its intensity. Bama’s works are anecdotal in nature and readers can see a number of superwomen brimming with revolutionary spirit.

Dalit women undergo various forms of oppressions and the cruel fact is that most of the oppressions have not even been recognized. There are a number of stereotyped notions
created by the ‘sophisticated class’ for the purpose of enslaving the dalit women community. Subhadra Mitra Channa explains one of such created notions on sexuality thus: “The upper caste men have created stereotypes of dalit women as being hypersexual as “enjoying” the company of upper caste men. The upper caste/class keep their self image of respectability by the stereotypical image that such women have no sense of honour or shame” (264). Thus the rape of dalit women is taken for granted. Though they emphasise that the dalit women do not feel dishonoured if molested or raped, the dalit women treat their honour and self respect with much dignity and assign themselves to be the custodians of it. Along with the denial of basic human rights, dalit woman’s body is a ‘legalised sexual object’ for the upper caste men which cause extreme level of physical and psychological pressure.

While the ‘dalit’ identity causes various traumatic pains, the ‘woman’ identity enhances the suffering level through internal patriarchy. The men who are exhausted for being ‘dalits’ give an outlet to their psychological stress through alcohol and casting physical and verbal abuse on their wives, sisters, daughters and even mothers. The commonly held view is that dalit community has a “democratic patriarchy” as the womenfolk take part in the verbal and physical combat. This stereotyped idea is also created by the conservative and selfish mindset who long to suppress the difficulties of women community. The combination itself is oxymoronic in nature. How can the patriarchy be democratic? Gender oppression and physical violence remain the same whether they fight back or not. The aggressive physical torture and verbal abuse without the break of even a single day force the women to react as a resistive measure. Otherwise they would have gone insane of the psychological pressure.

Another constructed notion is that the dalit woman is ‘sexually liberated’. This point is said on the fact that unlike an upper caste woman, the dalit woman is free to marry another person after the death of her husband. But the irony is that for the most cases, the widow woman is forced to marry any of the siblings of her dead husband in the label of security. This man must have married once or twice already and will be having a family. The prime intention of marrying this widow lady is to satisfy his sexual needs and to enslave her for his domestic and monetary requirements. This reality is well concealed by the created notion of her ‘sexual liberation’. The community usually never enquires whether the lady wishes to live alone or wants to get married. Her choice always remains insignificant.

It is generally said that unlike the Dalit women, there is no more colour in the upper caste woman’s life if her husband dies. But the forgotten reality is that there is no colour in the dalit woman’s life from her birth itself. Her marital or family status never ever lightens the physical and mental hardships she has to undergo.

Economic independence is one of the major exclusive features attributed to the dalit women community by the social system. “Dalit women form the largest number of landless labourers who are paid low wages. Many are bonded labourers. They work under the most exploitative, dehumanizing and unhealthy conditions neither their work nor wages are regularised” (Manorama 259). In most of the families, dalit women take up the responsibility of providers since the male members find their life in alcohol and other entertainments. To fill the bellies of the children, dalit women go for hard labour where they are exposed to all kinds of exploitations. The husband at the home usually waiting for the wife to come to snatch her hard earned money. Still she works hard for mere survival. This struggle for existence is
turned into economic independence and many critics view this to be the revolutionary right
dalit women enjoy and belittle their level of oppression. For them, the economically
autonomous dalit woman carries a better status than the upper caste women. The hidden
agenda of bringing the dalit woman’s position higher in the social graph is yet to be revealed.
Denial of social, political, religious, economic and cultural rights on the basis of caste, class
and gender put their lives at stake. Here the pressure to protest evolves in every dalit woman.
There exist two types of resistive ideologies among the dalit women those they apply both in
agitation and literature. The first is the acquiescent ideology in which one accepts the imposed
low status. They avoid any kind of confrontation but request the oppressors to let them have
access to education, employment etc to lead a better lifestyle. The dalit female writers who
penned in the beginning belong to this category. They just want to make the world realize the
miseries they suffer and expect a change through sympathy and humanity. There is no
enhancement of self image, honour, dignity and esteem as patronage is received for being
obedient, humble and submissive. The second one is protest ideology through which the
deprieved class organises themselves to resist innumerable types of exploitations and
oppressions by the dominant groups. The dalit feminist movement itself is the output of this
protest ideology. Protest ideology demands self respect, social dignity, equality and gives a
new dimension to liberation struggles in the society.

While the precursors of dalit female writers like Babtai Kamble, Shantabai Khble etc
try exposing their hardships, writers like P.Sivakami attempts to give new dimensions to
‘dalit’ and ‘feminist’ ideas through combining them with the normal human identity. She
questions the need of such ‘depressed’ identities and brings forth a change in such ideologies
through literature. Later the activist writers Bama, Meena Kandasamy etc start realising their
roles as dalit feminists and embrace their position as an intellectual in the community who are
capable of uplifting the companions through awareness and encouragement. They find
literature to be an effective weapon and recognize the need for a feminist theorising to include
a critical sense of the intersectionality. Their protest is not only against the upper class people
but also those “Dalit Brahmins” who always create hegemony within as well as the men folk
who commodify woman to be the object of sex and domestic work.

‘Downtrodden among the downtrodden’ is an apt coinage that encompasses all the
angst and anguish of dalit women. Even at the peak of marginalisation, dalit women try their
best to come out of the institutionalised margins and express the ideology of protest through
many outlets. They develop their own weapons from their weakness with which they could
regain the self and entity.

Dalit feminist literature is one of the well explored areas in the international level. It
enhances the vicissitude of the dalit women community and takes her away with the social
metamorphosis. Dalit feminist literature with its intersectional depiction forms an effective
critique of all the institutionalised hegemonies. The dalit feminist writings not only subvert the
male constructed female images but also work towards the foregrounding of women as
subjects through defying the caste and gender roles.

References
Print.


Debates on Poverty and Our Moral Obligations: An Analytical Study

Md. Inamur Rahman
Research Scholar
Department of Philosophy
University of Delhi
New Delhi – 110007, India
Email: inamuramu@gmail.com

Abstract

Poverty is not only a social or economical problem but it also signifies certain moral concerns and it is also an indication of violation of certain basic human rights. This paper involves in an enquiry as to why freedom from poverty should be considered as a “right”. An effort has been made here to establish freedom from poverty as a right by bringing in arguments from Tom Campbell, Amartya Sen, Thomas Pogge, Alan Gewrith etc. Following that, this paper is trying to address the question that what should be the nature of our duty towards alleviating poverty and thereby examining the debate between positive vs. negative duties, collective vs. individual duties and debates on demanding-ness of our duties. This paper also focuses on the issue of understanding whether positive duties can be seen as obligations or not. Towards the end Mahatma Gandhi’s principle of minimal wants has been put forth as a plausible response to the problem of poverty.

Keywords: Poverty, Human Rights, Negative duties, Positive duties, Obligations

Section – I

Poverty is a global phenomenon as it is present in almost all human societies across borders. Most generally, Poverty is understood in terms of economic factors, such as the lack of food, shelter, accessibility of basic medical facilities etc. However for philosophers, the term “Poverty” signifies not just the lack of food or shelter, but also a lack of Justice itself. Therefore on a philosophical analysis “Poverty” becomes a crucial indicator and adjudicating criterion for several ethical concerns. The philosophers primarily concern themselves with the ethical justifications put forth for regarding poverty as a “wrong” or a violation of basic human rights. The main aim of this paper is to comprehensively consider the “nature of duties” incumbent on individuals for the alleviation of poverty, and thereby to see whether “positive duties” of “helping” can be understood as moral obligations or not. I begin the paper by discussing whether “freedom from poverty” can be granted the status of a “Right”.

Tom Campbell (2007) elaborately addresses this crucial issue by focusing on the intricate relationship between poverty and human rights violations. On this view poverty can be understood chiefly in three ways:

1. Poverty as the consequence of/ being caused by human rights violations:
Onora O’Neill (2007) and Thomas Pogge (2007) have discussed the role played by institutional structures and the inability of people in preventing harm, in perpetuating poverty. Pogge, notes that among the factors responsible for poverty, “institutional factors are the most important” (2007: p. 25), and claims that *Interactional harm*\(^1\) and *Interactional failure to alleviate*\(^2\) lead to a gross violation of human rights at the institutional level via unjust policies, economic structures, unfair treaties etc. Such arrangements have a large scale negative impact since they engage mass population groups which, by conforming to these unjust arrangements, cause further deprivation of the least well-off. Thus, on this view, poverty primarily originates from the human rights violations at the institutional level and in order to be able to alleviate poverty, it is required that we try to rectify such structures and policies.

2. Poverty as the cause of human rights violations:

Alan Gewirth (1988) states that every agent acts in order to achieve some goals; and that freedom and well-being are the *proximate necessary conditions* for achieving and fructifying those ends. So for him the agent’s “freedom” and “well-being” are the necessary pre-conditions for performing any action, without which an agent cannot be said to be exercising his/her agency adequately. Thereby implying that in order to be granted the status of being an agent, everyone should have the right to freedom and well-being. On similar lines Amartya Sen (2000) too argues that deprivation of capabilities prevent an agent from choosing the life he/she has reasons to value. “Capabilities” for Sen are “a kind of freedom: the substantive freedom to achieve alternative functioning combinations (or, less formally put, the freedom to achieve various lifestyles)” (p. 75). The unavailability of such capabilities inhibits agents from choosing among alternatives. On this account, poverty is a situation where an agent has been deprived of elements which could have otherwise enabled the agent to lead a life he/she has reasons to value. Both *freedom and wellbeing* (Alan Gewirth) and *capabilities* (Amartya Sen), are such that they are not easily available to a person living in poverty. The “capabilities”, the “rational” and “free” decisions of an agent get severely curtailed, because most of his actions are governed by and focused towards finding ways and means of avoiding starvation. Thus poverty leads to human rights violations by restraining the freedom to lead a life an agent has reason to value.

3. Poverty as a kind of abject suffering itself:

Tom Campbell, supports this claim by arguing that

“the principle of benevolence or ‘humanity’ (as in ‘humanitarian’) is based on the propriety of the elemental response of aiding another human being arising from seeing, imagining, or knowing of the suffering of that being irrespective of who is suffering or why that suffering came about” (Campbell, 2007: p. 65).

---

\(^1\)Unjust institutional arrangements *foreseeably* and *avoidably* deprive others from getting access to their livelihood.

\(^2\)Failing to accomplish an action in a particular way which prevents harm to the deprived is considered to be a violation of their human rights.
Here, Campbell’s emphasises the point that poverty itself is a human rights violation, rather than being something which causes or is caused by the latter. He further points out that “the relief of misery for its own sake is an impulse whose justification is a core intuition” (Campbell, 2007: p. 64) to any moral thought. Campbell tries to show that there is an “intrinsic undesirability” towards poverty because of the accompanying abject suffering, and therefore our primary obligation to get rid of poverty originates from just seeing or getting to know about the suffering of poverty itself. Campbell argues that the situation of poverty itself should be considered as a human rights violation as it instigates extreme pain and suffering to the agent.

From the above discussion it becomes clear that despite the differences in the kind of justifications they offer, most philosophers seem to be arguing in favour an individual’s right to be free from poverty. Now, like every other right, this peculiar right too comes with its own set of demands regarding the correlative duties. But, what should be the exact nature of those duties? and (more importantly) who should bear the burden of that duty? are some critical issues that will be taken up in the following section.

**Section -II**

A comprehensive understanding about the nature of our duties in alleviating poverty can transpire from addressing three fundamental questions – i) are negative duties to be prioritized over positive duties or vice-versa, ii) should our focus be on collective duties rather than individual duties or vice-versa, and iii) what is the extent to which morality requires us to discharge our duties.

Judith Lichtenberg has tried to reformulate such questions concerning the nature of duties towards alleviating poverty and those concerning where the exact burden of those responsibilities lies, in her book *Distant Strangers: Ethics, Psychology and Global Poverty* (2014). Instead of finding out who is or are actually responsible for poverty, she aims at delineating the responsibilities which “comfortable” people have in bringing about a diminution of poverty. Her presupposition underlying this aim is that “a world in which some live very well while others barely survive is morally repellent and that those who are able should work to alter it” (Lichtenberg, 2014: p.7). It is required that the principle that the better-off should work towards altering the situation of the least well-off should also be adhered to within the developed countries, considering the idea of relative poverty. The debate between absolute poverty and relative poverty has not been resolved as yet, but following Sen (1981), Lichtenberg notes that “there is an absolute level of existence below which no one should be allowed to fall” (ibid. p. 238).

Lichtenberg’s approach of considering the nature of the duty which the affluent have towards the deprived appears novel. Traditionally the negative duties were deemed more stringent than their positive counterparts. Thus, the duties of “not” harming someone have somehow always been more crucial and central than (positive) duties of just helping. The Harm principle seems to lie at the core of the distinction between positive and negative duties; thereby resulting in the view that negative duties are key and relatively more fundamental. Since non-aiding does not imply any kind of “harm”, most positive duties

---

3Poverty can also be seen in terms of the standard of living of a particular society and the poverty line can also be made purely in terms of relative income. For further discussion see Sen 1983, Callan & Nollan 1991 etc.
have been seen as imperfect duties which are regarded as being “right” when they are performed and fulfilled, however not seen as being “wrong” when left unfulfilled. In contrast, the negative duties have been seen as perfect duties which are right to do and wrong if not done because violating them would incur harm. Therefore the fulfillment of positive duties of aiding has not been recognized as being obligatory whereas negative duties have been traditionally believed to be obligations.

Highlighting the laxity of the abovementioned distinction between negative and positive duties, Lichtenberg argues that though the classic picture of harm shows that negative duties are relatively stricter but there are situations where refraining from a possible harm is considered to be less effective than providing some aid. This is especially the case with “new harms” where the utilities of “refraining from New Harms are negligible or nil, while on the other hand a person can through aid single-handedly make difference to someone’s well-being” (ibid: p. 81). For example, Stephen O’Brien, Secretary General for the humanitarian affairs under United Nation, recently told that more than 20 million people, in four countries of the world, are facing starvation and famine and will simply die if aid does not reach them in time. In such a situation not aiding will not only result in harm but something even more grave, i.e. the death of a large number of individuals. Thus it follows that the harm principle which had earlier been thought to be applicable only in cases of negative duties seems to be equally valid for positive duties as well. And, failing to fulfil ones positive duties will also bring harm onto others. So it would not be incorrect to say failing to fulfil our positive duties is equally “wrong”. The novelty of Lichtenberg’s approach therefore consists in overcoming the hitherto held distinction between negative and positive duties, thereby treating them “analogously” and at par (ibid: p. 89).

Here it needs to be emphasised that fulfilling merely one kind of duties (positive or negative), will not make much difference (significant or otherwise) to the situation of the poor, for if one is merely fulfilling the positive duties while overlooking the others, then though one is helping to improve their condition on the one hand, but simultaneously contributing towards making their situation worse on the other, thereby resulting in no significant change in the present situation. So theorists might agree that in order to bring about a significant change in the situation faced by a huge number of people today, what is required is a rather synthesised effort of fulfilling both the kinds of duties, treating them at par.

Let us now try to understand the issue surrounding the question of how these duties need to be discharged- individually or collectively. Judith Lichtenberg argues that individual efforts will do little and therefore we should concentrate on discharging our duties collectively or individually. She gives four reasons in support of her view- Firstly, in collective form (i.e. at the level of institutions, governments etc.) it is easier to identify the agents responsible for bringing about the suffering whereas in case of individuals such identification becomes difficult Secondly, following Thomas Pogge, she asserts that

---

4 By new harms Lichtenberg points that in present situation most of our very ordinary activities may harm people in ways that we have never thought before. And those activities are woven into our daily routines in a way that it may not be easy to cease them.

institutional arrangements\textsuperscript{6} are largely responsible for the deprivation of the poor. And therefore it is required that we should concentrate more on rectifying institutional arrangements than focussing on the actions of individuals. Thirdly, institutional arrangements are more efficient in responding to this problem than individuals. And, lastly she argues that shifting of this demand of fulfilment of duties from individuals to the collective will reduce the demands on individual. Acting alone might require certain large scale sacrifices to be made but once the agent acts along with others, that burden gets divided and becomes relatively easier to bear and fulfil. In addition to this Lichtenberg asserts that people feel psychologically motivated to do what other people are doing or at least they start finding it less difficult to do. Thus, Lichtenberg concludes that it is better to concentrate on collective action in alleviation of poverty than on individual action.

Peter Singer strongly argues against the view that “numbers lessen obligations” (Singer, 1972: p. 233). He says that if a child is drowning then it is the duty of each onlooker to pull out the child from the water. In doing so the clothes of the rescuer may get wet or stained but that would be entirely insignificant in comparison to the urgent need of saving life of the child. For him, each one of the onlookers is equally obliged to save the child from drowning and for him our obligation “makes no distinction between cases in which I am the only person who could possibly do anything and cases in which I am just one among millions in the same position” (ibid: p. 232). Singer admits that an agent can get psychologically influenced by perceiving what other agents around her/him are doing. But that psychological factor does not in any way lessen the obligations of the agent. The agent should therefore required to do whatever is in his/her power, without sacrificing something of equal moral important.

It appears from the above discussion that both the aspects of enacting the duties concerning the poor (individually and collectively) play an important role in trying to bring about the alleviation of poverty. By extending Singer’s premise, it might be proposed that if it is in our power to prevent suffering without sacrificing something having same (or similar) moral significance, then we ought to do it and we should try to do it collectively as well.

Moving towards the third question mentioned at the beginning of this section, concerning the extent to which morality requires us to fulfil our duties. Peter Singer in his article \textit{Famine, Affluence and Morality} (1972) has responded to this question on normative grounds by attempting to define the nature of our duties towards the impoverished and stated that “if it is in our power to prevent something bad from happening, without thereby sacrificing anything of comparable moral importance, we ought, morally, to do it” (Singer, 1972: p. 231). So for him an agent can act towards fulfilling his/her duties till the point that the said action does not demand sacrificing something of same moral value to the agent.

Lichtenberg sees Singer’s premise of positive duty as too demanding. She is of the view that ordinary people cannot sacrifice too much on a continuous basis and that a morality which demands too much from the ordinary people is misguided. So the debate is on the issue of the extension of our duties i.e. the extent to which morality requires us to discharge our duties while performing a moral action – should moral requirements be too demanding or

\textsuperscript{6} Institutional arrangement implies that mass of population is getting influenced by it.
Debates on Poverty and Our Moral Obligations: An Analytical Study

less demanding. Lichtenberg holds a completely different conception of morality than the one proposed by Singer. Singer states that “moral attitudes are shaped by the needs of society” (ibid: p. 236). So for him the conceptions of good and bad, right and wrong are formed in accordance with the needs of a society. And, whether morality is too demanding or not get characterized on the basis of those particular needs. An extension of this argument is mentioned by Samuel Scheffler and he argues that “Morality demands what it demands, and if people find it hard to live up to those demands, that just shows that people are not, in general, morally very good” (Scheffler, 1986: p. 531). This view may come under the normative stand called “Morality Demands What It Demands”. But Lichtenberg believes that “we are not morally obligated to spend most of our time and resources in the service of benefiting others in need” (Lichtenberg, 2014: p. 5). She argues that “Morality Demands What It Demands” does not make sense when morality requires “more of human beings than it is reasonable to ask of them” (ibid: p. 100). So, she brings in an alternative view that “Rich ought to help Poor just because she can and Poor needs her help” (ibid: p. 21) which she calls the humanitarian argument. This view falls under the broader moral stand of “Ought Implies Can”. It is the interaction of need and ability that generates this duty. So the rich ought to help the poor on the basis that rich have the ability to help and poor in the need of that help.

It seems from the above discussion that Singer’s argument is more precise as he is defining the extent to which one is obliged to help others. He is not in favour of inflicting harm on one’s own self for helping others. But Lichtenberg does not mention any such limitation. She just emphasizes the point of need, and the ability to fulfil that need. She remains silent on the question of whether people who can fulfil the need of a needy by inflicting harm on themselves ought to help in that way or not? Answering this question either way i.e., negatively or positively, would be problematic within Lichtenberg’s framework.

In the article Demandingness as a Virtue (2009), Robert E. Goodin presents several persuasive arguments in favour of the stand “Morality Demands what it Demands”. He asserts that if morality is conceived as an action guiding principle then considering whether or not the concerned agent has the preparedness and the ability to achieve some moral task, thereby shaping the moral principles in accordance with such considerations, would amount to putting the cart before the horse. In following the moral stand of “Ought Implies Can” we simply end up doing just that. Goodin’s observations undermine the very foundations of such a moral stand. Now, as far as the question of “demandingness” is concerned he clarifies that “[i]f there are great gains in view, a morality is not wrong to demand proportionately great sacrifices from people to secure them” (Goodin, 2009: p. 8). But if the sacrifice demanded is too high in comparison to the ensuing moral gain then it is unlikely that any moral thought can justify it. Thus it can be asserted that in the case of poverty we should not think that the demands poor people have on us are too much because what is at stake is their lives.

7 Lichtenberg’s “humanitarian argument” is different from that of Campbell’s humanitarian source of duties because the latter locates it in human suffering and Lichtenberg locates it in intersection of need and ability to fulfill that need.
Conclusion

In the context of the debate regarding “demanding-ness”, a Gandhian approach might provide us with some practical and yet relatively less demanding principles. Gandhi asserts that “the real implication of equal distribution is that each man shall have the wherewithal to supply all his natural needs and no more” (Gandhi, 1940: p.260). Therefore, it can be considered to be the duty of each individual to secure the means which could satisfy the natural needs, and as Gandhi warned we need not think of more than that. Ajit K Dasgupta (1996) clarifies that Gandhi’s emphasis is towards the limitation of wants. In the Gandhian framework, restraining one’s desires and wants is not only for the good of the individual but it contributes to the larger welfare of the society as a whole. To Gandhi, limitation of individual desires is the means of preventing excessive exploitation and excessive accumulation of resources by individuals leading to a kind of radical inequality in society. Restraining one’s desires can be seen as the negative duty which needs to be upheld by each individual. And, at the same time using only as much as what one needs for satisfying one’s natural needs can be interpreted as a positive duty. This principle cannot be subjected to the criticism of demanding-ness as it is not something which human beings on a regular basis are not capable of performing. On the other hand the positive duty of consuming as per one’s needs, can be seen as being opposed to inflicting a harm on the person who is fulfilling his/her duty, an objection which has been put forth against Lichtenberg’s humanitarian principle. Gandhi, in the context of his idea of trusteeship states that “[t]he rich man will be left in possession of his wealth, of which he will use what he reasonably requires for his personal need and will act as a trustee for the remainder to be used for the society” (Gandhi, 1940: p. 260). From this idea of Trusteeship it becomes clear that the Gandhian framework favours the view that people may be required to do something on a continuous basis in order to make moral existence possible. Thinking from the perspective of the debate among the moral stands of “Morality Demands What it Demands” (Peter Singer) on the one hand, and “Ought Implies Can” (Judith Lichtenberg) on the other, it seems that both the views are implicitly present within the Gandhian framework which is grounded in a balancing of the two moral stands.

But the question remains - what if we failed to fulfil our duties? And it is a fact that we are continuously failing in fulfilling our duties and that is ultimately responsible for why a huge number of people are dying due to poverty. In this regard Pogge asserts that “[t]he bottom quarter of the human population has only three-quarters of one percent of global household income, about one thirty-second of the average income in the world, whereas the people in the top five percent have nine times the average income”\(^8\). It seems that the need of the hour is to frame more stringent State laws guided by moral principles which, if violated should lead to a stricter response, apart from compensation to the victim. Tom Campbell expresses that his argument should be seen “as a basis for the moral justification of having legal obligations” (Campbell, 2007: p. 67). The proposal of transforming “the rights to be aided” and “right to be free from poverty” into legal rights will certainly bring to the fore new questions and criticisms, but given the extent to which inequality and suffering

---

due to poverty continue to persist in our society, it seems to be an urgent need. In the moral sphere we should try to cultivate a moral understanding that Robert Goodin is talking about. We should be ready to fulfil the requirements that morality demands from us collectively and as individuals. Efforts by individuals in significant positions are also necessary in bringing forth changes in the institutional framework. Apart from these institutional and legal considerations, at an individual level each one of us should simultaneously start following the principles advocated by Gandhi i.e. consuming as much as is required for fulfilling our basic needs, and no more.

Bibliography


Online Resources


Impact of Landlessness on Human Security: An Overview

V.P. Prabhisha * and Dr. N.J. Saleena **

*UGC JRF Scholar
Department of Economics
Email: prabhishaani@gmail.com

**Research Guide and Principal of the College
Nirmalagiri College
Kuthuparamba
Email: drsaleenanj@gmail.com

Abstract

Physical and economic access to food ensures an active and healthy life. For attaining food security, access to adequate and nutritious food is required. Access to productive resources, such as land is regarded crucial for attaining food security, through increasing access to sufficient food. Landlessness of the farmers leads to their insufficient purchasing power to but adequate nutritious food for their families. Landless people are confronted with multidimensional aspects of poverty. The poor who are landless are exposed to various interlocking factors which are the causes and consequences of poverty and landlessness. Landlessness is a broad concept and its effects on various aspects but the study covers only the certain aspect the impact of landlessness on human security and it is the limitation of the study. For the study data has been gathered from the secondary sources including books, articles, reports of NSSO etc. The present study mainly focus on to study the present condition of landless people and to understand the impact of landlessness on human security.

Keywords: Landlessness, Human security

Introduction

India is being predominantly an agricultural society has a strong linkage between the land and social status of an individual. Land is the strong indicator of rural poverty. Land is most valuable and imperishable possession from which people derives their economic independence, social status and a modest and permanent means of livelihood. Assured possession and equitable distribution of land is a lasting source of peace and prosperity and will pave way for economic and social justice in India. India’s landless are a diverse group in terms of demographic, although they do share the characteristics of hardly having any means to escape poverty. There are 20 million poor rural families that own no land at all; they often migrate with the seasons and therefore have a hard time keeping in their children in school. Millions more have no legal right to land they work and live on, which places them in a constant state of uncertainty and prevents them from making investments in their land that could improve their living condition. Of the country’s total 17.92 crore rural households; 10.08 crore or 56 per cent do not own any
Impact of Landlessness on Human Security: An Overview

ISSN: 2319-8192

agricultural land. What is surprising is that the incidence of landlessness is higher in Kerala (72%) and West Bengal (70%)

Research Problem

“Landlessness” has been a key issue especially in a land dearth state like Kerala. One out of three city dweller lives in inadequate living space worldwide and Kerala is not an exception. Many people would be surprised to discover that the biggest predictor of poverty in India is not the caste system or illiteracy but rather landlessness. Landlessness contributes to social ills related to poverty as well as to conflict and creates a constraint on economic growth for the country as a whole. Even today, ownership and control of land remains central to economic and social wellbeing in the countryside. By highlighting the fact that the right of ownership and control of land will lead to an upliftment of economic and social status of poor people and thereby reducing poverty to certain extend, the Government of Kerala initiated the steps to distribute land for landless people. Increase in the number of landlessness leads to increase in the number of people who are unable to meet their livelihood requirements, for which eventually concomitant social problems arise. Landlessness has serious impact on the different aspects of human security. The most serious problem that arises is the incapability of the poor people to have access to sufficient food. The distribution of ownership holdings of land in India is extremely unequal. Many poor families in rural areas already have too little land to meet their own needs, depending largely on daily labour opportunities for survival. Several studies have reported that the problem of semi-landlessness is increasing as people are caught in a poverty trap: inadequate land holdings create a shortage of money which is relieved by selling small pieces of land. Problem of poverty and landlessness have many causes and cannot all be solved by any single policy measure. Far more need to be understood about the scale of the problem and the processes leading to landlessness. The social and economic impact of landlessness including hunger, threats to health, homelessness and exploitative labour conditions create conditions intensifying exploitation by both land owners and state.

Literature Review

Ramkumar and Reddy (2016) in their study: ‘Socio economic and caste census: Confusions on Landlessness in Kerala and West Bengal’ make a comparison between NSS Employment and Unemployment Survey (EUS) and Socio Economic and Caste Census (SECC). The EUS definition of land ownership differ from that of SECC in only one respect, that is, the former includes homestead land in its calculation of household land holdings. They were pointed out that in Kerala the impact of land reforms went beyond changes in land tenure; land reforms also became the “centrepiece of programmes for social and economic progress” for which Kerala is famous. The consensus is that land reforms in Kerala were most successful with respect to tenancy abolition and the distribution of homestead lands. According to NSS data Kerala and West Bengal are not among the states with the highest percentage of landless households. The definitional problems with SECC survey and peoples legitimate anxiety to avoid being excluded from the benefits of target-oriented schemes, and consequent under-reporting of land holdings
has led to misleading conclusions from the SECC data about landlessness in Kerala and West Bengal.

Pradeep Padhan (2015) in his study “Poverty among the landless community: A study in Kalahandi district of Odisha” pointed out that poverty and landless are interrelated. The landless community in rural areas is left without access to cultivate and sustain livelihood. The book endeavours to bring out the socio-economic conditions of the landlessness community who is becoming more marginalised and vulnerable due to poverty, deprivation and social exclusion. The book explores poverty among the landless community among the Kalahandi district which is one of the poorest region in India and in famous for hunger, starvation and draught. The findings of this book highlight the fact that they are being exploited, marginalised and forced into the peril of poverty through multiple deprivations, inequality, distress, migration and food insecurity since last several decades. Deprivations of people with means of production, the land being the most important of all are the crux of all problems of poverty. But if landlessness is captured then all the other issues can take their way in order. The challenging task of providing them with better livelihood opportunities and services should be undertaken by the Government authorities without any biasness and further delay.

Ratheesan (2013) in his study reveals that landlessness is a most strong indicator of poverty in the country. Land is the most valuable imperishable possession from which people derive their economic independence, social status and permanent means of livelihood. Land also assumes them of identity and dignity and creates conditions and opportunities for realising social equality. Assumed possession and equitable distribution of land is a lasting source of peace and prosperity and will pave way for social justice.

H R Sharma (2013) highlight that not much is known about the distribution of land and tenancy among the various social groups, especially in rural India. This article examines recent National Sample Survey data on house ownership holdings to determine the pattern of land distribution and tenancy among these groups. The incidence of landlessness was, however, higher among SC and ST households compared to OBC and other groups. The distribution of land was highly skewed among all the four groups; it was evident from the fact that while proportion of land accounted for by households of lower size categories was much less in comparison to their numerical proportions, among higher size category households it was much higher.

Vikas (2008) pointed out that the surveys by the National Sample Survey Organization have yielded underestimates of the extent of land inequality and landlessness. In a fresh analysis, this paper, using household level data from the 48th and 59th rounds (1992 and 2003-04) of the NSSO, finds that (within the limitations of the data) more than 40 per cent of households in rural India do not own land, as much as 15 million acres is in ownership holdings of more than 20 acres, and inequality in ownership has worsened between 1992 and 2003-04.

Objectives
1) To study the present condition of landless people
2) To understand the impact of landlessness on human security
Methodology

The data for the study has been gathered from secondary sources includes records and information collected from magazines, journals, published articles, newspapers, published thesis, unpublished data from research institutions, internet sources etc.

Results and Discussion

The landless people are not only landless but also houseless. A decent place for living is the third most basic need of a person after the needs of food and clothing. Owning a house ensures certain degree of economic as well as social security to a citizen. It also determines the intellectual growth and has a bearing on the overall development of a nation. Providing a just sufficient shelter remains one of the most serious challenges India is facing today. Homelessness is a growing problem across the world in addition to the poor standard of housing of millions of people. The world’s homeless population is estimated to be around 1 billion people. The growth of homelessness is greatest in Africa, Latin America and Asia. These are also areas where the global population rate is growing the fastest. In India, around 1% of the total population is without a home (2001 Census).

The homeless live inside hume pipes meant for sewages/water-carriage, pavements, railway stations, parks, abandoned buildings, road-side benches, staircases of government buildings and warehouses. There they are exposed to all sorts of viral and germicidal invasions, air pollutions and total unhygienic conditions. That finally leads to their untimely death.

On an average, over 316 unclaimed and unidentified bodies are found everyday putting all cities of India together. Maximum numbers of such deaths take place during intensely hot summer, freezing cold seasons of winter and rainy reasons.

The bulk of poverty in India is found among those with no land or insufficient land with which to feed themselves. The gap between the haves and the have-nots has actually increased as a result of agricultural development. Food production has increased, but the ability of the poor masses to purchase food has decreased. As long as they are weak economically, the poor are likely to remain weak politically. Thus, there is a need for both economic and political reform. Resources must be massively diverted for the benefit of the rural sector, and power must be developed within democratic organizations at the rural level. The consequences of such change may be unacceptable to the elite classes who control the state apparatus and have the power to eradicate poverty and reduce inequality, however. People who are homeless are often at risk of infectious diseases—like hepatitis A, B, and C, tuberculosis, and HIV/AIDS—due to compromised immune systems, poor nutrition and hygiene, and frequent overcrowding at shelters.

Similarly in a country like India where agriculture is the prime source of livelihood for a vast majority of people living in rural and tribal areas, land continues to be the pivotal property in terms of both income and employment, around which socio economic privileges and deprivations revolve. Though the members of scheduled castes and tribes mostly reside in the countryside and derive their livelihood by working on land, they are the most disadvantaged in respect to land. The incidence of landlessness is more pronounced among these groups, the bulk of whom are agricultural labours having miniscule holdings or are sharecroppers or other type of insecure tenants. (Betrille 1972,

In recognition of the basic proposition that poor land ownership position of the scheduled groups accounts largely for their perpetual poverty and make them vulnerable to social injustice and exploitation, the government of India has made a systematic endeavour to protect and promote their rights with regard to control and use of land through land reforms and allied measures. Land distribution in India closely follows social hierarchy, while the large land owners invariably belong to the upper caste, the cultivators belong to the middle caste and the agricultural workers largely to the scheduled caste and tribes. Land being the important socially valued asset, its unequal distribution helps maintain the hierarchical structure and strengthen the basis of dominance of the privileged groups by perpetuating inequality and deprivation in various socio-economic spheres.

Landlessness of the farmers leads to their insufficient purchasing power to buy adequate nutritious food for their families. The farmers are faced with food insecurity, which has impacts on the livelihood of the farmers in various dimensions. Finally the study reveals the view of the small and marginal landless farmers on substantive actions necessary to achieve their access to food. Landless people are confronted with multidimensional aspects of poverty. The poor who are landless are exposed to various interlocking factors which are causes and consequences of poverty and landlessness.

Consequences of Landlessness

Landlessness is caused by the complex interaction of various topographical, socioeconomic and political forces. Increase in the number of landlessness leads to increase in the number of people who are unable to meet their livelihood requirements, for which eventually concomitant social problems arise. Landlessness has serious impact on the different aspects of human security. The most serious problem that arises is the incapability of the poor people to have access to sufficient food.

From the in-depth interviews it has been observed that landlessness has led to the depletion of the entitlement to productive asset. Major causes behind the landlessness of farmers are poverty associated with indebtedness, lack of access to financial resources, climate factors, corruption etc.

Consequences of Landlessness on Human Security

Table 1: Impact of landlessness on human security

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Human Security</th>
<th>Security</th>
<th>Impacts</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Security of Livelihood</td>
<td>Food Security</td>
<td>□ Reduction in the volume of agricultural production.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>□ Depleted supply of healthy and nutritious food</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>□ Inadequate intake</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>□ Uncertainty in food acquisition for</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Insufficient income leads to their inability to buy adequate food for the family. The poor farmers are not able to secure their access to food even when food is available in the locality or the regional market. In addition to being deprived from their right to land, the landless farmers are affected by shocks and events beyond their control, such as a climatic conditions (drought, flood and cyclones) price shocks etc.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>State</th>
<th>Official Estimates ( household that do not own any land including homestead)</th>
<th>Household that Do Not Own Land Other Than Homestead</th>
<th>Households that Neither Own Any Land Other Than Homestead Nor Cultivate On Owned Homestead Land</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Jammu and Kashmir</td>
<td>3.29</td>
<td>10.97</td>
<td>7.29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Himachal Pradesh</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>22.68</td>
<td>21.87</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Punjab</td>
<td>4.57</td>
<td>56.89</td>
<td>29.51</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Uttarakhand</td>
<td>10.64</td>
<td>26.4</td>
<td>21.15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Haryana</td>
<td>9.21</td>
<td>49.49</td>
<td>25.96</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Uttar Pradesh</td>
<td>3.82</td>
<td>26.2</td>
<td>16.31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rajasthan</td>
<td>5.65</td>
<td>19.95</td>
<td>12.73</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Adapted from-Ministry of Food and Disaster Management, GoB and World Food Programme.19-20 October, 2005
Table 2 shows the extent of landlessness across different states by three different measures of landlessness. Column (2) of the table gives the official estimates of proportion of households that do not own any land, either homestead or otherwise. Column (3) of the table gives the proportion of households that do not have any land other than homestead (some of these may not have any homestead also). Column (4) gives the proportion of households that do not have any land other than homestead and do not cultivate any part of homestead that they may own. It may be noted that the estimates of landlessness presented in columns (3) and (4) of the table are considerably higher than the official estimates of landlessness (column 2). The estimates show that in 2003-04 about 41.6 per cent of households in rural India did not own any land other than homestead (of these, about 10 per cent did not own even homestead land). About 31.1 per cent of households did not own any land other than homestead and did not do any cultivation on their homestead (column 4).

**Land Distribution**

The caste composition of households of different size categories and the proportion of land accounted for by them is given in Table 42.
Table 3: Size Category-wise Distribution of Households and Land Owned across Different Social Groups

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Size Class</th>
<th>Households</th>
<th>Land Owned</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>ST</td>
<td>SC</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Landless</td>
<td>13.46</td>
<td>24.32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Marginal</td>
<td>9.56</td>
<td>24.81</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Small</td>
<td>13.83</td>
<td>11.56</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Medium</td>
<td>12.82</td>
<td>7.91</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Large</td>
<td>7.49</td>
<td>3.68</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All</td>
<td>10.54</td>
<td>21.57</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


National Sample Survey Organization (59th) highlight the following

A sample of 52,265 rural households and 29,893 urban households was surveyed in the sixth Land Holding Survey of NSS, carried out in 2003.

- The estimated total area owned by the households in the rural sector during the year 2003 was 107.23 million hectares. The corresponding area in the urban sector was 7.21 million hectares only.
- About 10% of the rural households were reported to be landless, i.e. owning land either nil or less than 0.002 ha. The corresponding urban share was 49%.
- The average area of land owned per household in the rural sector was highest in Rajasthan (2.077 ha) and lowest in Kerala (0.234 ha).
- In the rural areas, the share of land owned by different social groups was 11% for ST, 9% for SC, 44% for OBC and 36% for others. The per-household land area owned by them was 0.767 ha, 0.304 ha, 0.758 ha and 1.003 ha respectively.
- In the rural sector about 2.8% households reported leasing out of land while 11.5% households reported leasing in of land. Among the households leasing in, 40% contracted for share of produce, 31% for fixed rent in cash and 15% for fixed rent in kind.

Conclusion

The socio-economic status of the landless farmers in the rural areas is appalling, as observed during the field level observation, characterized by lack of access to requirements, including adequate food. It has been seen that there is lack of physical and social purchasing power of the small farmers in the rural areas.

The landless people also the houseless people are facing the problems like poverty, educational backwardness, health problems, threats from wild animals, and the victims of crimes etc. The socio economic condition of landless community, who is becoming more marginalised and vulnerable, is due to poverty, deprivation and social exclusion. The challenging task of providing them with better lively hood opportunities and service
should be undertaken by the Government authorities without any biasness and further delay.

References

- Chowdhury (2009): ‘Impact of increasing landlessness on access to food: Experience of small and marginal farmers in rural Bangladesh’
What Type of Speech Act is Protest-Language

Rinki Jadwani
Research Scholar
Department of Philosophy
University of Delhi
New Delhi – 110007, India
Email: rinki1102@gmail.com

Abstract

J. L. Austin in his work, “How to Do Things with Words” (1962) describes five categories of speech acts. These five categories are: Verdictive, Exercitive, Commissive, Expositive and Behabitive (Austin, 1962: 151). Speech act is the theory of how we make use of language to perform an act in different contexts. According to this theory, the utterance of a sentence does not amount to state something passively; rather it amounts to performing an action in different speech situations, i.e. doing in saying. Though Austin does mention some examples of protest language and puts them on the border-line between the categories of “exercitives” and “behabitives”, yet this phenomenon does not receive adequate attention in his works, except in some scanty comments in Chapter 12 of his work mentioned above. In this paper I would like to recast the entire rubric of Austin’s speech act theory in a new orientation - i.e. in terms of protest language, thus reconstructing its rich potentials by concentrating on protest-language as a type of speech act. An attempt has been made in this paper to place and examine the protest-language under the categories of speech act as given by Austin with the help of some recent examples of protests, and to classify some illocutionary acts in the examples taken.

Keywords: Speech act, Protest, Behabitives, Exercitives, Illocutionary act.

I

Austin’s theory of speech act was a revolutionary attempt to go beyond the simple dichotomy of emotive uses of language versus the standard descriptive uses of language. It aimed to displace the fossilized conception of language as always being true or false i.e., as a passive correspondence to a pre-existent reality. He conceives language as an action, and not as passive shadow trailing behind what is out there; nor even as a neutral reduplication of our mental states or of our actions. With Austin - as he argues in his How to Do Things with Words (1962) - language itself becomes an action – just as much as our ordinary non-verbal actions directly encounter reality to cause a dent into it, so does language, i.e. language as speech acts. We shall try to re-read this new upsurge in philosophy of action through a specific example of speech acts - namely the speech act of protest. Some examples of speech acts that Austin gives, where an act is being performed in saying something, are: to promise, to warn, to request, to order etc. Like all other speech-acts, a protest may not involve the use of words. As Austin says, saying words
may be a necessary condition, but not the sufficient condition - and sometimes it may not even be a necessary condition. To take his own examples, one may marry by co-habiting, one may bet with a slot-machine (Austin, 1962: 8). Similarly protest-acts may not involve word-transactions - like hurling tomatoes.

The word protest consists of a meaning which entails disapproval, a rejection, an objection against the existing situation and it demands for a situation which will end the conflicts and bring about a better set of circumstances. A protest thus can be said to be an example of speech act, because the language used during a protest is not limited only to state something passively. Protest language is not simply a propositional statement, it is not an innocent constative, but it has the various illocutionary forces hidden into it. A Constative utterance either corresponds to fact or it does not. It has a truth-falsity claim. Performatives, on the other hand, are not true or false; uttering a performative is to perform an action. The language used in a protest is not simply a truth falsity claim, but something more loaded, it is always aimed towards bringing about a change, the change in the existing situation, for which the protest is being carried out. Thus what is said in a protest performs an action because it is the enacted use of questions, dismissals, objections and demands which constitutes a protest.

In the attempt to analyse the protest-language as an illocutionary act, it is essential to see whether we can classify it as a speech act according to the types of speech acts given by Austin. An illocutionary act is defined by Austin as uttering a sentence with a certain force. One same sentence can be uttered using different forces like a request, a warning, or an order. There may be various illocutionary forces which protesters can use during a protest. We will examine the various illocutionary forces used during a protest with the help of some examples. The most common illocutionary forces used in a protest may be: dismissal (including accusing), demand, proposal, declarations, and warnings.

II

To the question as to which category of speech-act does the protest language fall, Austin does not seem to have a clear answer. He distinguishes between five general classes of speech-acts, which he conceded not to be mutually exclusive and jointly exhaustive, but rather to be the preliminary starting points or guiding principles of classification. He names these five classes as a. Verdictive b. Exercitive c. Commissive d. Expositive and e. Behabitive (Austin, 1962: 151). A description of these five categories is being given here along with the some examples of illocutionary forces which might be used in a protest.

Typical examples of a Verdictive are the cases where a jury, an arbitrator or an umpire pronounces a verdict, which may not be final, but sometimes just be a tentative estimate, reckoning or even an evaluation.

Exercitives are exercises of power, right or influence and are exemplified by appointing, voting, ordering, urging, advising, and warning. There are some well known examples of declarations given by Austin, i.e. “I declare war”, “I declare you husband and wife”. But we have to see how the protesters make use
of declarations in a protest. Declarations may occur in protest like strike when protesters say that- we declare indefinite strike. Warnings may be in the form like- if an action on our demands will not be taken then we will sit on hunger strike. Though an explicit performative is not there in the above example yet it is a warning. Declarations can come under exercitives as well as under commissives.

Commissives are typically illustrated by promises, undertakings – committing us to doing something. They also include declarations or announcements of intentions (which are not strictly speaking promises) apart from espousals and acts of taking sides. (A typical example of a commissive that is not a promise may be the speech-act committed by the beauty-pageant Sushmita Sen in 1997, when she declared that she intends to build an orphanage for the destitute children of India. When asked later as to why she is not taking any step to implement her promise she defended herself by saying that it was merely an announcement of her intention, primarily to herself).

A commissive consists of committing the speaker to a certain course of action (Austin, 1962:156). Accordingly, demands and proposals are the examples which can be put under this category. The statement consisting of a demand forms the main illocutionary force in a protest. The nature of the statement of demands can be considered to be in the form of an explicit performative as the illocutionary force is being explicitly mentioned in the demands. Demands can be put under the category of commissive, as Austin mentions the example of “declaring, announcing of intention” under this category. Proposals, unlike demands do not ask the system for direct action. It works like a suggestion for the governing system as a resolution of the conflict. Proposals are also explicit performatives as the verb it includes is in the form of: “we propose you to……” Austin’s classification of speech acts includes an example of “propose to” in the commissives, on the basis of which we may safely put proposals under commissives.

The fifth class of speech-acts is that of expositives which are illustrated by ‘I reply’, ‘I concede’, ‘I assume’, ‘I postulate’. The function of expositives is to make the special register as to how far our utterances fit into the course of an argument or conversation. Austin puts stating, denial and objection under the expositive category. All the three examples stated above can be used in a protest. A dismissal or denial includes a negative statement, a negation of the policies of the system. Stating the wrong policies of the system would also be a speech act. This can be compared to the indirect speech acts of Searle as stating the wrong implies a demand for the right action at the same time.

Behabitives constitute the fifth class of speech-acts which are generally marked by the fact that they have to do with ‘attitudes and social behaviour’. It is this class under which the phenomenon of protest speech-act seems to fall. Among the initial examples of behabitive speech-acts (Austin, 1962: 152) viz. “apologising”, “congratulating”, “commending”, etc., only two examples - viz. challenging and cursing are the starters from which he would develop more explicit examples of protest (ibid. p.157) he says that ‘I challenge’ and ‘I protest’ are exercitives that are closely connected with behabitives. Again he goes on to place the example of protest under behabitives along with ‘dare’, ‘defy’, and ‘challenge’ (ibid. p.161).
To give example of protest-language, some excerpts from newspapers have been taken here:

1. “JNU students reject punishments, to go on hunger strike from today” (The Hindu, 27/04/2016).

This example shows basically the refusal of a verdict of punishing some students made by the University administration. Apart from the refusal, it involves a further step of students to go on a hunger strike. Firstly, it includes a non-acceptance of the decision and then a protest in the form of hunger-strike to fight for the rights of students.

2. (i) “Writers protest ‘silence’ of Akademi” (The Hindu 12/10/15).
   (ii) “Kannada writer returns Akademi award” (The Hindu 16/10/15).
   (iii) “Shashi Deshpande resigns” (Akademi council) (The Hindu, 10/10/2015).

These above excerpts denote a protest of the writers against the intolerance, against the silence of Sahitya Akademi over the murder of literary persons. To protest, the writers adopted the way of returning their awards and resigning from their post. The first example can be seen clearly as an example of exercitive speech act (exercise of right), where students decide to fight for their rights. Not only exercitive, but it falls under the category of behabitive as well, as according to Austin, ‘I protest’ counts as an example of behabitives. The decision which was taken by the University administration was questionable according to the students; therefore they put their objection on that decision. Now if we concentrate back on our definition of expositive, it may very well be put under the category of expositive because the decision was questionable, objectionable. Thus we can see that this example represents a blend of three types of speech act.

The second example that is of returning the awards by the writers and resigning from their positions can also be seen as an instance of merging of different speech acts. Firstly it may be accepted as an expositive as it includes the resignation of various persons from their post. Again returning of the award shows that it is a method, a step taken by the writers to protest and to stand up altogether for a cause, thus touching the boundaries of both behabitives and commissive since all the writers, joining the protest, were very much committed to a certain cause.

Thus it may be asserted that any protest cannot be categorized under one specific type of speech act as it comprises of various course of action (we may find behabitives, commissive, exercitive and expositive in one single example of protest speech-act) that makes it possible to emerge as merging of various types of speech acts. Different performatives figure in the protest language – and held together either by a relation of entailment or they are simply co-present.

III

Austin says that all these five categories of speech-acts are mutually overlapping and crisscrossing. Thus protest-language too, does not only exhibit interplay between behabitives and exercitives, but is also penetrated by some of the characteristics of other
classes – viz., verdictives, commissives and expositives. Let us note at the very outset, that the category of behabitive under which a protest-language primarily falls, constitutes - as Austin says – a very miscellaneous group. Firstly, it has to do with tendencies, attitudes and dispositions and not so much with actual performances of acts. Austin’s general theory of speech-acts is more attuned to the actual performances, than with attitudes and tendencies. Secondly as social behaviours they burst forth from the conceptual boundaries of individual speech-acts framed in first-person singular like ‘I bet’, ‘I promise’ etc. As social behaviours their felicity and infelicity-conditions would require a wider range of concepts than those that are deployed to handle individual speech-acts. Thus protest speech-acts seem to have a nature that is inherently unwieldy and resistant to any programme of philosophical theorisation, even within Austin’s programme of destabilising the rigid Formal Semanticist framework in terms of the flexible tools of speech-acts.

It is within this volatile scenario that one should try to get an initial hold of how protest-language offered as a primary example of a behabitive is penetrated by all the other kinds of speech-acts as well. First, what takes the shape of an attitude against a particularly socio-economic or a public issue can alternatively be seen as verdictives - of course minus the finality of an institutional authority, but assuming the form of tentative estimate, a game of blaming. With a little stretch of our imagination we can see a protest-language as a game of blaming like ‘to hold responsible’, ‘to accuse’. Secondly exercitives that are primarily exercises of power may include protest speech-acts like challenging and countermanding, annulling, quashing etc, so about expositives like accusation, annulment, withdrawal, putting an objection, resignation, dismissal. If we appreciate that ‘I annul’, ‘I withdraw’, ‘I resign’, ‘I dismiss’, ‘I object’ are all expositives, it is perhaps a short step to reckon that the task performed by ‘I protest’ can also sometimes take the shape of an expositive – clarifying or expositing the status of an utterance in the course of an argument and conversation.

However if one wants to identify a more definitive framework of protest-language in Austin’s writings one has to say that it is a blend of behabitive, exercitive, commissive speech–acts. An exercitive is giving a decision in favour of or against a certain course of action, or advocacy of that course of action. A protest does not come in the shape of a Verdictive, it is rather a decision that something is a wrong that is protestable, and not a judgement that it is a wrong that is protestable. Taking the example mentioned above, in 2015, dozens of writers in India returned their Sahitya Akademi award. It all started after the murder of famous Kannada writer M. M. Kalburgi. This murder was seen as the killing of the freedom of expression of writers, and thus the writers wanted the Akademi to speak against this killing of literary freedom and stand up in support for them. This returning of awards is, we can say, used as a symbol to protest against the intolerance prevailing in the country. It is the decision taken by the writers to stand together against the wrong happening and the unjustifiable silence of the Akademi over the whole issue. A protest is an advocacy that something is a wrong that needs to be resisted; it is not an estimate that it is a wrong; it is an award and not an assessment, and in this sense a protest may be appreciated as moving away from a behabitive and lining up with an
What Type of Speech Act is Protest-Language

exercitive. Protest may also sometimes take the form of a commissive – in fact Austin does mention ‘I oppose’ as an example of a commissive.

For Austin the distinction between protest-language being under the aspect of an exercitive and being under the aspect of a commissive seems to be this. While in both aspects a protest-act is committed to the consequences of the act, in the former case it is an exercise of power or authority, in the latter case it tends to assume a more personal and informal overtone. Though a protest act may involve exercitive and commissive elements, but often - as Austin holds - it assumes the typical shape of a behabitive, whereby it commits us to the same kind of actual protest-actions and not to that actual act or conduct itself. Protest-language as a behabitive may involve adopting an attitude to someone else’s past action or even future conduct, and here the speaker or agent can commit himself to resisting or objecting to similar actions. Even a protest against a present conduct, in so far as it takes the shape of a behabitive, it often confines itself to a con-attitude or an unfavourable disposition towards the type of protestable action or system, and not adopting a specific measure against a particular action. Austin further explains that while behabitives are primarily attitudes adopted towards other people’s conduct (past or imminent) it has obvious connexions with both commissives and exercitives (Austin, 1962: 161). To commend, support, or to react against a particular behaviour (which are all behabitive acts) is to commit oneself to a line of conduct on the one hand; and on the other hand, to engage in a behabitive act of approval may also be an exercise of authority or reaction (i.e. a protest) against a particular behaviour. He does mention ‘protest’ as a border-line example that falls between an exercitive and a commissive. It is a border-line probably because often its predominantly dispositional character and its pronounced liability to abuse set it apart both from an exercitive (exercise of authority) on the one hand and commissives on the other.

Thus a protest-language for Austin is a series of family-resemblances flowing from behabitives to exercitives and to commissives – continually adding and shedding fibres in the process. It also touches the expositives in the flow – though Austin does not specifically utilise these features. It may sometimes start from an attitudinal stance towards or against a kind of action, go on to shed that attitudinal vagueness to assume an institutional authority to perform specific actions, where gradually that hardness of an institutional authority can mellow down to more informal protest-commitments.

References:


A Cross-cultural Study among the three Major Tribes of Assam in respect of Marriage and Family

Maumita Nath
Department of Anthropology
Aryan Junior College
Silchar-788005, Assam
Email: nathmaumita@gmail.com

Abstract
The Rabha, the Tiwa and the Barman, three autochthonous ethnic groups of Assam, settled in plains and well adjusted amidst the local non-tribal population. Following the general trend of culture change, some changes in respect of social institutions are perceived among them due to culture contact, change of occupation, urbanization, and modernization. But, at the same time retention of some of their age-old mores and values in their social life lead them well adopted in the new environment without any breakdown. Here a noble attempt is made to examine changes in social structure in respect of marriage and family, the two fundamental social institutions, along with the continuation of tradition in the same. It will focus the cultural interaction and consequences of cultural assimilation of the non-tribal culture traits in the traditional cultural complex of the three tribal societies. It also signifies the testing of culture change by culture contact and justifies the dominance and recessiveness of cultural essences in the multi-cultural groupings in plains of the State. Moreover, it is a fertile area for the Social Scientists to test the theories of culture change, such as cultural assimilation, Sanskritization, urbanization, and modernization in this context. It will bear the testimony of intensive researches of multi-cultural groups in plains where the tribal culture interacts with non-tribal culture in the rural and urban settings.

Keywords: Cross-cultural studies; Ethnic group; Social structure; Custom; Social system

Introduction
Assam is a state situated in the middle of the North-Eastern part of India. The area of the state is 78,438 km² which constitute 2.39% of country's total geographical area. The great Assam which used to be the land of tribes has now been reduced to a non-tribal state of the river valleys of the Brahmaputra and the Barak. According to Census 2011, the Scheduled Tribes' population of this state comprises 12.4% of the total population of Assam. Most of the tribal communities are living in the two Hilly districts of North Cachar Hills and Karbi Anglong Hills. In addition some of the hill tribes like Garos, Barmans, Jaintias, Nagas, Hmar, Rabhas, Tiwas, etc. have settled down in the two river valleys.

The Rabha
The Rabhas are considered to be one of the most acculturated Scheduled tribe of the plains of Assam. They are concentrated in the district of Kamrup, Goalpara, and Darrang. Besides Assam, they are also living in large bulks in the neighboring state of Meghalaya. Rabhas were a branch of Kacharis and became almost Hinduised. Among the seven endogamous sections of the Rabha, the Rangdani Rabha is one of the most dominant subgroups. Unlike the other section of the Rabhas who have become Hinduised, this section has retained their own tribal solidarity preserving their own traditions and beliefs, customs, manners and other cultural heritages. However, in the process of culture change, Rangdani Rabhas are changing from their traditional matriline to patriline. The Rangdani society is based on some social units and institutions such as family, marriage, clan and lineage.

**Family**

The existence of part patriarchy and part matriarchy is a striking feature of this tribe. Although originally the Rangdani family was matriarchal in theory, in practice the people prefer the patriarchal type of family where the titular head is the father. The patrilocal form of residence is prevalent by changing their previous custom of matrilocality. But on the basis of previous beliefs the custom of reckoning descent from the female line. All the children born of a Rangdani couple are initiated into the clan of the mother and also adopt the surname of the mother. Such a custom indicates that at previously the Matriarchy existed in full vigor among these people. But in regards the rules of inheritance and succession, they follow the line of the father. The father is the owner of all properties movable and immovable. All the sons are entitled to get an equal share of a father's property. Generally no female member inherits landed property unless the father makes arrangement for their share before his demise. The social and domestic authority of the father is absolute in all religious and ritualistic matters.

**Marriage**

The Rangdani follow the rule of clan exogamy (130 clans) and tribe endogamy in case of marriage. In respect of the preferential form of marriage the society grants the cross-cousin marriage, levirate and sororate at the junior level. Regarding cross-cousin marriage, maternal uncle's daughter is mostly preferred as she aware of the taste and tradition of her's aunt's family and same holds good in case of the groom as he and his family know her well. Moreover, getting married to one's cross-cousin at times brings fortune in the form of property of maternal uncle as she might be a probable successor. In addition levirate and sororate at junior level are being encouraged so as to provide support to the family which lacks individual for the smooth running of the family. On the other hand parallel cousin marriage is prohibited. As brothers of the same family belong to the same clan, they can't marry among them. Though tribe endogamy is obvious, yet nowadays inter-community marriages with non-tribal is unavoidable especially among the educated people. Of course, persons marrying outside tribe has to undergo some purificatory rites where the couple has to cut the hair and at the same time has to pay fine to the village council before he is allowed to lead a normal life with the other people of his community or in the village.

Regarding marriage type, the Rangdani Rabha practicing different ways of acquiring a mate. Such as *buri biya* (marriage by capture), where the bride of groom's choice is put oil and vermilion on the forehead by force. Since this type of practice of marriage is inhuman, it is being discarded by the population at large.
Another interesting mode of acquiring mate is popularly known as *buri sinkhai* (marriage by bargaining) where the groom party keep a basket filled with indispensable marriage items into the bride's house after dusk. The bride party if not willing to the proposal given by the groom thus, sends back the basket. Again, the groom party leaves the basket in the bride's house if they think to reject the proposal. But unfortunately, if they forget to return back in spite of unwillingness or gets no time to transfer within the stipulated period, they compelled to marry 7.

Most of the poor Rangdani Rabhas follow *fulmala biya* (exchange garlands) under which the bride and groom exchange garlands after a few ritual formalities are observed. Except for a small feast with relatives and friends, no other ceremony is performed for such a marriage 7.

Among the rich people, *lemabiya* (marriage by negotiation) is popular which is elaborate and more organized. On the day of the wedding after putting vermillion on bride's forehead, a cock and a hen are sacrificed as a good omen to appease *rishi devta* (Deity of the family welfare 7.

In addition, the well-to-do Rangdani prefer *borbiya* (marriage by negotiation which is more elaborate) entails huge expenditure, and long drawn formalities continue for three days 7.

Moreover, *dhunka rabhakai* (marriage by elopement) is another type nowadays popular among the young generation. The boy and girl those have mutual elopement look for an opportune moment and run away from their houses in spite of their guardian's disagreement. When the respective parents come to know about this, they often hold a discussion after which the couple is invited back to their house. Before they are socially accepted, they have to seek the apology of the village elders by giving them compensation in the form of rice beer, a bunch of betel-nuts and betel-leaf. It is only after this formality is observed that the couple is recognized as formally married. A feast is later arranged for the village elders where rice beer forms an indispensable part 7.

The Tiwa

Tiwa is an ethnic group inhabiting the states of Assam and Meghalaya in North East India. They are recognized as a Scheduled Tribe within the state of Assam. They were known as Lalungs who are living in the hills of Karbi Anglong district (Assam) as well as in the North-eastern corner of Ri-Bhoi district (Meghalaya). Plain Tiwas live on the flatlands of the Southern bank of the Brahmaputra valley, mostly in Morigaon, Nagaon, Kamrup (rural) and Dhemaji districts. The Hill Tiwa speak Tibeto-Burman language of the Bodo-Garo group. In Assam the vast majority of Plain Tiwas speak Assamese language mix with their own dialect. A section of Tiwa has abandoned their traditional animistic religion and has adopted Assamese Vaishnavism and even change their surname in Assamese Hindu form. Although the tribal fragrance of their culture in Assam is being faded due to the impact of surrounding non-tribal cultural influences, however, they have their own perception and practices in different fields in their socio-cultural life is very evident 1,4.

Family

Traditionally the Tiwa is matriarchal tribe which they maintain in Hills. Because they still follow matriliney in clan system and matrilocality in respect of residence after marriage.
But in the plains of Assam as they are influenced by surrounding Assamese culture. In their descent system nowadays they follow definitely patrilineal system and patrilocal residence after marriage. Regarding inheritance and succession of family property, sons inherit all the properties of the father, whereas girls inherit mother's property only.

**Marriage**

Every community in the simpler societies has a common cultural and social framework with some traditions and transition with some deviations. Among the Tiwa marriage is the accepted form of union between a man and a woman. Illegal unions especially incestuous relations are very much hated, and in that circumstances, no social recognition is given to such unions. Generally marriages are solemnized after the attainment of puberty. Boys usually marry between the ages of 20-25 and girls between 16-22. Clan exogamy is strictly prohibited. Monogamy is the socially and legally recognized type of marriage although cases of polygamy cannot be ruled out. Preferential marriage including cross-cousin marriage is not in vogue. Levirate is not practiced while sorrorate is popular. There is no bar for a widow to enter into marriage if she gets a widower. Cases of divorce between husband and wife are few and far between. Though the society follows the monogamy marriage rule, yet in some cases, polygamy marriage has taken place. In that situation, the person concerned has to pay some money as compensation to the village panchayat. Broadly the Tiwa have four forms of marriage. Such as, the traditional form of marriage is known as *Borbiya* (marriage by negotiation), where the guardians of the prospective couple take the initiative in the selection of mates for their son and daughter. Marriage proposal always comes from boy's side. If the marriage proposal is accepted by girl's parents, then in a fixed day the father of prospective groom along with party carries one shoulder load *bhar* (pot) which contains one rice beer pot, seven or nine betel leaves, and nuts arrange on a stand known as *bata* and one basketful of rice cakes *pitha* etc. Acceptance of this *bhar* by the girl's father indicates his readiness to give his daughter in marriage to the proposed groom. This custom is known as *bata bhanga* in their terms. In the day of the marriage ceremony, groom's procession is proceeded by a *garakhia bhar* (special pot), contains one stalk of banana, one pot of milk, three pots of rice and some betel nuts and leaves. Rupees seven must be placed in this bhar which is given to the *khel* (clan group). Then after long drawn formalities the bride-groom exchange garlands and with this marriage is solemnized. The bride is then taken away by the groom in his parental house. In the meantime, the elderly villagers gather at the groom's house as per invitation. The couple bows before them and distributed *jue* (traditional rice beer) to the invitees by the bride and ten the formal marriage ceremony comes to an end.

Nowadays the majority of the Tiwa marriages are solemnized in the form *poluaiana biya* (marriage by elopement) due to huge expense and long drawn formalities in their traditional marriage form. It has two form again, in the first form, the selection of mate is done by their guardians and then on a stipulated date, the parents of the bride allow the groom to bring their daughter in his house without any formalities. Some boys like to carry a few presentations for the bride during that day which is not compulsory. As soon as the couple of the groom invitees and then the couple bows together before them and distribute *jue* among them. With these, the marriage comes to an end. In another form the marriage happens by love and mutual consent and elopement of the boy and girl. They have their
previous plan to make their union materialize in spite of their guardian discontent and reluctance. If the boy finds it impossible to get his bride through a formal wedding, then one night he takes away his beloved to his residence with the help of his friends. After one week the couple along with some friends proceeds to the bride's parental house with a big bhar carrying rice beer, pith, etc. The parents of the bride then invite the fellow villagers who are entertained with the rice beer brings by the groom's party.

Previously another marriage system was very much prevalent in their society, known as gobhia rakha (marriage by service). At present, the Plain Tiwas particularly following the patriarchal system, yet a very thin link of the old matriarchal system is traced in this type of marriage system. According to this system, the prospective groom has to live in the house of the bride's parent for a considerable period of time. During that time he is provided with food and lodge and in return required to do all sorts of works given to him by bride's parent. After the stipulated period is over, the bride's parents are obliged to give their daughter for marriage to the boy. One community feast is offered by the bride's parents and then the couple gets social recognition. In this context also the rule of clan exogamy is strictly followed.

Like other tribal societies the Tiwa tribe also strictly follow clan exogamy rule. If such marriage happens, the person concern is to undergo some punitive measures approved by the society. The villagers catch the boy and then shave off his hair from the head. After that nine priests from the outside of the Tiwa group calls in, and they perform some rituals together for that boy and girl. In this occasion, the priests catch one pig and cook it. This cooked pig is not eaten by the invites. They through it to the jungle. After that, the girl has to be adopted by some one from other clan and then only the marriage is materialized. After that, another pig is cooked and offering a community feast jointly by both the parties to make the union acceptable to the society. Such kind of marriage is known as joron biya (prohibited type).

The Barman

The Barman is one of the major tribal groups in Barak Valley of Assam. They are the descendants of a section of those Dimasas, who migrated to the plains of Cachar (today’ Barak Valley) from Maibong in North Cachar Hills in the second half of the 18th century. The Dimasa tribe is one of the sub-branches of the Kachari group which itself is a branch of the great Bodo race of Assam. Therefore, the present generation of the Barman too regards itself as one of the aboriginal inhabitants of the Brahmaputra Valley of Assam. From an anthropological point of view, they belong to Sino-Tibetan language speaking groups of Mongoloid origin. Their lingua franca belongs to Tibeto-Burman branch of Kuki-Chin group. Though the two tribes belong to the same origin, yet many changes have taken place in respect of family and marriage Because the Dimasa follows their traditional animistic religion and the Barman accepted Hinduism since the time of the Kachari King Krishnachandra Narayana(1780-1813A.D.)

Family

The elementary family is the fundamental structural unit of the Barman social structure as well. As the traditional rule restricts the living of the Dimasa women of different matriclans in the same household, a newly married couple is supposed to construct its own house within a year of marriage. This tradition makes the neolocal nuclear family system in
their community. But after the adoption of Hinduism, this tribal rule of residence has also undergone the transformation wherein the highly Hinduized Barman families of Cachar district did not observe this rule strictly. Along with local Bengali Hindus they follow patriarchal residence by giving up their traditional rule of residence. As a result, the joint and extended families have emerged among the Barmans in the villages. Besides, in their urban setting, the joint family system could not retain its preponderance wherein most of their families are found of nuclear type. The Barman society being a patriarchal society, a father has authority in a family, yet, he generally consults his wife before taking any final decision in any matter. Here, both the communities, rural and urban show similar features in the family system. As per their traditional law of inheritance, the daughters inherit the maternal property (cloths, ornaments, looms, and utensils), whereas the sons inherit the paternal property (house, weapons, cattle, agricultural land, and cash). In the absence of a male heir, the paternal property is inherited by the nearest male relative and in the absence of female heir the maternal property by the nearest female relative. Besides all the above changes, they still follow their traditional double clan system in the plains also.

Marriage

Marriage, a universal institution, has its specific usages in the Barman community. Barring a few customs, they have completely given up the traditional Dimasa system of marriage for Hindu marriage system. Monogamy is the general practice while the second wife can be accepted only if no child is born out of the first wife. Widow re-marriage is also permissible. As Barmans follow double descent system, exogamy rule is maintained in respect of patriclan (Sengphong) and matriclan (Julu) along with the tribe endogamy. However, they can establish a matrimonial relation with their Dimasa counterpart. Besides, the level of relationship (Haingbai) is to be reckoned with at the time of marriage. While tracing the level of relationship for marriage if the lineage of the boy falls in the category of uncle to the girl or the category of grand son to the girl’s father, the relationship is treated as mismatch. Thus, the prevailing custom forbids endogamy in two clans and Haingbai, and violation of rules leads to excommunication. Both divorce and re-marriage are permissible but only on special grounds of adultery, physical incapability, impotence and insanity. Such prescriptive rules of marriage are mandatorily observed in both rural and urban Barman communities. Now-a-days, in their urban settings violation of the rule of tribe endogamy is tolerable but in the case of clans and Haingbai exogamy are not tolerated at all. Generally, in Barman villages, a girl at the age of 16-17 years is considered to be marriageable. But the age-at-marriage is extended in their urban settings up to the age of 24-26 years for females, and for males at the age of 30-32 years. Like most of the non-tribal communities, the Barman community prefers negotiated marriage. But, nowadays, many marriages are taking place through love, and mutual consent of boys and girls in the town and parents accept them if all the prescriptive rules are maintained. No doubt, there is a bit relaxation in the matter of inter-community marriages, yet, the parties involved in such marriages have to undergo some sort of punitive measures (Dandi) approved by their panchayat. As per the rule, the spouses have to give some money as compensation and perform some rites as an atonement in the given situation. Though the community, now-a-days, does accept the cases of love marriage and inter-community marriage, yet, it does not...
encourage such cases. The *dandi* rule restricts the young generation from the excessive practice of inter-community marriage. In villages regarding the selection of bride, the guardians of the prospective groom give emphasis on her beauty and weaving skill. The boy’s family visits the girl’s house with a formal proposal of marriage by offering salt wrapped in plantain leaf (*Shandidangshinba*). The father of the girl if he accepts the proposal, he would accept that plantain leaf. The next custom (*Laothai-Langba*) is to carry their traditional rice beer in a gourd to the girl’s house by the boy’s guardians. On that day the date and time of marriage are fixed. The actual marriage ceremony takes place in the bride’s house. In the evening of the day, as soon as the groom becomes ready to leave for bride’s house, a ritual (*Mayofargurba*) is performed by the *Hoja*i (Barman priest) and then the groom with his companions starts for the bride’s place, carrying *Ju* (rice beer) and meat (of the sacrificed duck in *Mayofargurba*). After reaching there, they are welcomed by the bride’s relatives, and they hand over them the *Ju* and the meat. The Barman still maintain their tradition of giving bride price (*Kulti*) of Rs.101/- at the time of marriage. Like Hindu Bengali custom, in Barman custom (*Gidingba*) also the bride takes seven rounds of the groom seated on a decorated chair in the *Kunji* (a decorated round place temporarily made of bamboo, papers, flowers, leaves) and by then they exchange garlands. Next the father of the bride formally hands over his daughter to the groom by performing a rite *Yauphoba* (equivalent to Bengali custom *dan*) under a Bengali Brahmin priest in the Hindu manner. At the same time, the traditional ritual *Mayofargurba* is performed by the *Hoja*i only in the backyard of the bride’s house. After that, a community feast is organized by the bride’s family where *Ju* is offered to all the guests. Meanwhile, the womenfolk sitting in the corner of the courtyard sing folksongs. Next day, the bride leaves her parents for her husband’s house. After two days, a reception party (*Disengba*) is arranged by the groom’s family and close kins. At the time of marriage, the presence of the headman (*Khunang*) and other executive members of the respective village is must. Otherwise, the marriage will never get social recognition.

In urban context, the groom and his family give emphasis on bride’s educational qualification and her family status rather than her beauty and weaving skills. As the traditional marriage ceremony is too elaborate it become impossible to observe all the detail customs in their urban settings. Because only a few aged persons know the details, the middle-aged people are somewhat aware, but the young generation is quite unaware of the customs. Besides, generally in the villages, people are living concentrated, and at the time of marriage, the neighbors help utmost. Whereas in the town Barmans are scattered and rather self-centered to help the neighbors. Recently, the way of arranging marriages is also changing, and that too affects the ceremonial aspect in the town. The following table is presented in the ways of marriage ceremonies that hold among them in town. Although the tradition of giving dowry is not present among them, yet, the parents of the bride present some gifts like furniture, electronic goods, etc. to the groom which they never ask for. In all the conventional marriage ceremonies the headman of the urban Barman community was present and remained absent in the inter-community marriages and so did not get social approval.

**Conclusion**
The process of social change is an inevitable fact of life. This is very much true for all the above mentioned three plain tribes of Assam. Due to contact with the outside world, a large improvement in communication and influence of corresponding non-tribal cultures lead changes in respect of socio-cultural life among these tribesmen. Especially in the two basic social institutions viz., family and marriage a few eminent changes have been seen. In all the three tribes patriarchal social system is followed as all of them converted to Hinduism. In addition, joint family and extended family types are prevalent in villages and nuclear family type is mostly found in their urban settings. It is to be mentioned here except Barmans, Rangdani Rabhas and Tiwas are following matrilineal descent system till date as a continuation of their previous matriarchal system. Regarding inheritance and succession of family property, all of them follows the same trend. Sons inherit the paternal property whereas daughters inherit maternal property. In respect of marriage, as an influence of caste people(Bengali and Assamese), all the tribes follows negotiation marriage in their traditional form. But regarding custom, some addition and alteration take place according to peoples' economic condition. In spite of their preference, nowadays elopement marriages are taking place in all the three tribes due to lesser expenditure and the unavoidable relation between young boy and girl. Even tribe exogamy also accepted after some punitive measures. But in all tribes clan exogamy is not tolerated.

In fine, no mean to say that all the three tribes have completely given up their traditional norms under the influence of corresponding Hindu community. In spite of Hinduization they are barring a few customs in traditional favor in both family and marriage institutions. In all the three tribes they accord new cultural identity after their migration in plains like; a section of Rabhas, Lalungs, and Dimasas as Rangdani Rabha, Twia and Barman respectively in the three different plains of Assam. Thus in a nut shell, they are in transition.

References
2. Bordoloi, B.N. et al., Tribes of Assam Part-1, Tribal Research Institute, Guwahati, 1987
Concept of Cosmology According to Indian Classical Texts - A Literature Review

Malay Sinha* and Prof. Ramachandra Bhat**
*S-VYASA University, Bangalore
Email: contactmalaysinha@gmail.com
**Dean, Division of Yoga and Spirituality,
S-VYASA University, Bangalore
Email: drrgbhat.vvg@gmail.com

Abstract

This study reviews several theories of cosmology, the creation stories of the universe based on the classical Indian scriptures such as the Vedas, the Major Upaniṣads, Bhagavad Gētā, Sāmkhya, Nyāya etc. with comparison to the popular modern scientific theories of cosmology, includes the big bang theories, the steady state theories, the oscillatory theories, sting theory. Specifically, it endeavors a clear perspective literary review of the cosmological accounts of the Nāsadiya Sukta, Puruṇa Sukta, and Hīraṇyagarbha of Vedas and also the concept from the major Upaniṣads, Bhagavad Gētā, Sāmkhya, Nyāya etc. The Indian scripture explains that the whole universe was in a concentrated form which is mentioned as a point, or Bindu. Out of that, explosion occurred resulting in the process of creation and preservation of the universe. The Indian philosopher alone seems to have had any perspective of the vast space and time. They explain this perpetual creation and dissolution as 'Leelā', the play-like-expression of God. As Fritjof Capra pointed out “a basic recurring theme in Hindu mythology is the creation of the world by the self-sacrifice of God—‘sacrifice’ in the original sense of ‘making sacred’—whereby God becomes the world which, in the end, becomes again God.” Hence this study is remarkably similar to our present understanding of the theories of cosmology.

Keywords: Cosmology, Creation, Vedas, Upaniṣads, Indian Scriptures, Hindu mythology, God, Leelā,

Objectives

The objective of the study is to understand the cosmological principles in terms of both scientific and humanistic modes of thought. It is a holistic study of the universe to explore and communicate the different scientific insight on cosmological theories / model of the universe and experiences of Indian scriptures.

Methodology

A review of various Indian classical texts like the Vedas, the Major Upaniṣads, Bhagavad Gētā, Sāmkhya, Yoga Sutra, Nyāya etc was done and was compared with the
various scientific theories of cosmology. After this review, descriptive and analytical methods were used to correlate the philosophical understanding of creation theories.

Introduction

Cosmology is an active branch of science, which deals the study of the evolution, current state, and future of the universe. It draws upon the principle of mathematics and physics as, applied to astronomical and astrophysical observation. There are several modern theories of the evolution of the universe. It was not until the 20th century that scientists devised most popular theories - the big bang theory, Steady state universe, Oscillatory Universe etc. Earlier to the development of scientific method, the Āsīs (seers) of the Indian scriptures sifted through facts and observations keeping those that matched their theory and rejecting those that did not. The Āsīs have long been at odds about the ultimate origin of everything. Various ancient accounts answer these questions, accounts seen by scientists as 'myths' and regarded by some as theories and others as divine revelations.¹ The astrophysicist Dr. Carl Sagan noted that "The Hindu religion is the only one of the world's great faiths dedicated to the idea that the Cosmos itself undergoes an immense, indeed an infinite, number of deaths and rebirths. It is the only religion in which the time scales correspond, to those of modern scientific cosmology. Its cycles run from our ordinary day and night to a day and night of Brahma, 8.64 billion years long. Longer than the age of the Earth or the Sun and about half the time since the Big Bang. And there are much longer time scales still."²

The Sanskrit word for universe is ‘viçva’ meaning all. Thus the universe may be defined as that which includes everything. ‘Jagat’ is another word in the same sense. Everything is in motion, everything is changeable, mutable. Anything immutable is not concerned with Jagat. According to this everything is universe moves with others in harmony. It is akin to the word ‘cosmos’ involving order instead of disorder or chaos.³ According to scriptures, the universe is Brahmāëda, meaning infinite cosmic egg the earth a globe (golak), and with that, the stars and the Milky Way, the sun and the moon, dyow and sky. The Sanskrit word for creation, properly translated, should be projection and not creation, so our word, therefore projection. The whole of this nature exists, it become finer, subsidies; and then after a period of rest, as it were, the whole thing is again projected forward, and the same combination, the same evolution, the same manifestations appear and remain playing, as it were, for certain time, only again to break into pieces, to become finer and finer, until the whole thing subsidies, and again comes out. Thus it goes backwards and forwards with a wave –like motion throughout eternity Time, space and causation are all within this nature. So creation is nature Prakâti, māyā is infinite, without beginning. No question can occur as to its beginning or its end. Therefore beginning and end means one particular cycle; no more than that.⁴

Concept of Cosmology according to Indian Classical texts

The popular Creation Hymn is Nāsadiya Sukta (Ṛg Veda. 10. 129. 1-2) the most fundamental treatise on cosmology. The Hymn deals with the origin of the universe and creation as: Nāsadäsēnne sadāsēta tadānēa nāsēdrajo no vyomā paro
yata | Kimāvarévaù kuha kasya çarmannabhaù kimāsēd gahanaà
gabhéram ||1 || Na mātyurásédamātaà na tarhi na rātryā ahna
āsēd praketaù | Ānédavātaà svadhāyā tadekāà tasmāddhānayatra
paraù kià canāsa ||2 ||Swami Vivekananda translated as: “Existence
was not then, nor non-existence, The world was not, the sky beyond was neither. What covered
the mist? Of whom was that? What was in the depths of darkness thick?(1)

Death was not then, nor immortality, The night was neither separate from day, But
motionless did That vibrate Alone, with Its own glory one-That nothing did exist.” (2) ⁵ The
hymns of Puruña Sukta from Yajuraraëayaka (3:13, 33&34) addressed to Puruña that “He
who is filled with light. The hymn gives a symbolic account of how the Divinity itself has
become the entire manifestation. The Reality is considered a Gigantic Person and anything
that exists is part of this Cosmic Person. That, which is beyond our scanning range and survey,
might point out the presence of anti-matter, dark matter, black holes and so on. The Puruña is
represented for the formation of everything in the Universe.” ⁶ The Yajurveda Samhitā (4:1:8,
31), mention of Hiraëyagarbha (Golden Egg) is often made to signify the birth of the universe
from a point which explains as: “In the beginning arouse the golden seed; born, he was the sole
lord of every creature. He upheld this earth and heaven; this deity (Prajāpati) we shall worship
with our offerings.” ⁷ In Chāndogya Upaniñat(VI. 2.1), beginning of the creation described
as: Sadeva soumyedamagra āsēdakamevādvitēyāà taddhaika
āhurasadevedamagra āsēdakamevādvitēyāà tasmādasataù sajjāyataù
(1) “In the beginning , my dear , this was Being alone , one only without a second . some
people say ‘ in the beginning this was non- being alone, one only; without a second . form that
non – being , being was produced.” ⁸ Taittēriya Upaniñat (II. 7) claimed that in the beginning
was verily non existence. From that Non existent was born. That created Itself by itself.
Therefore , it is called the self- made, or the Well-made. ¹⁰ The Bāhadāraëyaka Upaniñat
(II.I-20) states that in the beginning there was only Atman, the Self in the form of Spider
created the Universe. ⁹ In fourteenth chapter of Bhagavadgétā, (XIV. 3-5)Lord Kāñēa reveals
to Arjuna that evolution of the world from Prakāti and Puruña as: “My primordial nature,
nown as the great Brahma, is the womb of all creatutre; in that womb I place the seed of all life.
The creation of all beings follows from that union of matter and sprit, O Arjuna. (3) Of all
embodied beings that appear in all species of various kinds, Arjuna, Prakāti or nature is the
conceiving mother , while I am the seed giving Father. (4) Sattva , Rājas and Tāmas – these
three qualities born of nature tie down the imperishable soul to the body.”(5) ¹⁰ The later
Naiyāyikas gave logical proofs for the existence of God (Ēçvara) in Nyāya Sūtra (IV. I –14 & 19) which describes as some say that “entity arises from non-entity, as there is no
manifestation unless there has been destruction.(14)

God , says some one , is the sole cause of fruits, because man’s act are found
casionally to be unattended by them.”(19) ¹¹ According to Sāmkhya(Verse 9) regards the
universe as consisting of two eternal realities: Puruña and Prakāti. Sāmkhya believes in
Satkāryavāda i.e. theory of causation says that “all material effects are the modification of prakāti. They are pre-exist in the eternal bosom of prakāti and simply come out of it at the time of creation and return to it at the time of dissolution. There is neither new production nor utter destruction. In evolutionary proces, the effect is the existence cause in another form and something does not come out of nothing.”

Concept of Cosmology on the basis of Modern Science

Many hypotheses have been proposed to explain the origin of the universe, over the centuries, scientists devised many theories to explain creation of the universe. The some of the popular theories to explain the evolution process of the universe as follows:

1. **Big Bang theory**

   The current “standard model” of the origin of the universe, called the big bang theory, proposes that a major event, not unlike a huge explosion, set free all the matter and energy in the universe and started its expansion. The big bang theory describes a hot explosion of energy and matter at the time the universe came into existence. This theory explains why the universe is expanding. Recent versions of the theory also explain why the universe seems so uniform in all directions and at all places. Current methods of particle physics allow the universe to be traced back to a tiny fraction of a second-$1 \times 10^{43}$ seconds-after the Big Bang explosion initiated the expansion of the universe. To understand the behavior of the universe before that point cosmologists would need a theory that merges quantum mechanics and general relativity. Scientists do not actually study the big bang itself, but infer its existence from the universe’s expansion.

2. **The steady state theory**

   Developed by Fred Hoyle and Thomas Gold, Universe has no beginning and no end. In other words, it does not change its appearance over time. However, interestingly, this theory explains the reality of expanding universe. They proposed the existence of ‘C-field’, where C stands for creation. The c-field has negative pressure which enables it to drive the steady expansion of the cosmos whilst also creating new matter, keeping the large scale matter density approximately constant. According to this theory, new matter is continuously created as the space expands. However the average density of matter remains same over time. And, roughly one solar mass of baryons per cubic mega parsec per year is created from the c-field. (roughly one H-atom per cubic meter per billion years). New galaxies are created in the intergalactic space. The steady-state theory is now no longer accepted by most cosmologists, particularly after the discovery of microwave background radiation in 1965, for which steady state has no explanation.

3. **Oscillatory universe**

   The oscillatory universe is the hypothesis, attributable to Richard Tolman, that the universe undergoes an infinite series of oscillations, each beginning with a big bang and ending with a big crunch. After the big bang, the universe expands for a while before the gravitational attraction of matter causes it to collapse back in and undergo a bounce. However, in the 1960s Stephen Hawking, Roger Penrose and George Ellis showed that singularities were a universal
feature of cosmologies with a big bang and that no feature of general relativity could prevent them. Theoretically, the oscillating universe could not be reconciled with the second law of thermodynamics: entropy would build up from oscillation to oscillation and cause heat death. Other measurements suggested the universe is not closed. These arguments caused cosmologists to abandon the oscillating universe model.\textsuperscript{13}

4. String theory

The current knowledge about the subatomic composition of the universe is summarized in what is known as the Standard Model of particle physics. It describes both the fundamental building blocks out of which the world is made, and the forces through which these blocks interact. There are twelve basic building blocks. Six of these are quarks--- they go by the interesting names of up, down, charm, strange, bottom and top. (A proton, for instance, is made of two up quarks and one down quark.) The other six are leptons--- these include the electron and its two heavier siblings, the muon and the tauon, as well as three neutrinos. There are four fundamental forces in the universe: gravity, electromagnetism, and the weak and strong nuclear forces. Each of these is produced by fundamental particles that act as carriers of the force. The most familiar of these is the photon, a particle of light, which is the mediator of electromagnetic forces. (This means that, for instance, a magnet attracts a nail because both objects exchange photons.) The graviton is the particle associated with gravity. The strong force is carried by eight particles known as gluons. Finally, the weak force is transmitted by three particles, the W\textsuperscript{+}, the W\textsuperscript{-}, and the Z. The behavior of all of these particles and forces is described with impeccable precision by the Standard Model, with one notable exception: gravity. For technical reasons, the gravitational force, the most familiar in our everyday lives, has proven very difficult to describe microscopically. This has been for many years one of the most important problems in theoretical physics--- to formulate a quantum theory of gravity.\textsuperscript{16}

Trinity (Såñti, Stiti and Pralaya) in Creation

Indian scriptures perceives the cosmic activity of the Supreme Being (God) as threefold and associates these three deities: Brahmå, Viñëu and Çiva. According to scriptures Brahmå represents the creator aspect of the divine. Viñëu sustains the creation and represents the principle of preservation, and Çiva represents the principle of dissolution, of the destruction of evil of transcendence. They represent the very basis of the universe, in its continuous becoming.

The Bhagavad Gétå (Chap. IX, 7-10) described the cycle of creation as “Arjuna, at the end of every Kalpa (Brahma’s day)all beings enter My Prakåti (the prime cause), and at the beginning of every kalpa, I bring them forth again.(7) Weilding My nature I release, again and again (according to their respective karmas) all this multitude of beings subject to the influence of their own nature.(8) Arjuna, those actions, however, do not bind me, unattached as I am to such actions and standing apart as it were.(9) Arjuna, with me as the superviser, Nature brings forth the whole creation, consisting of both sentient and insentient beings; it is due to this cause that the wheel of Samsara is going round.”(10)\textsuperscript{17} In Tàittériya Upaniñå (III-1) Brahman is the Truth which is the common substratum for all the manifestation in the universe and into
which it disssolve itself. The third chapter of Bāhadāraśyaka Upaniñat, Seventh Brahmana (Verse 3) Yajjavalkya described the inner controller of the universe as: Yaù pāthivyām tiñhām pāthivyā antaraù yam pāthivé na veda yasya pāthivé çariram yaù pāthivé antara yamayati eña ta ātmāntarayāmī amātaù । 3 || Yajjavalkya said, “He who dwells in the earth , yet is within the earth, whom the earth does not know, whose body the earth is , who controls the earth from within, he is your self , the inner controller , the immortal.” According to Kaöha Upaniñat(2.2.-10) the reality of the both inner and transcendent of the inner self explained as, as air which is one , entering this world becomes varied in shape according to the object(it enters), so also the one Self within all beings become varied according to whatever (it enters), and also exists outsides (them all). In Nyāya Sutra(IV.1-25) described as, “Sarvvamanityamutpattivināçadharmmakatvät.( 25) “All says some one, are non eternal , because they posses the character of being produced and destroyed.”

Concept of time, space and causality

The term ‘Time’= Kāla is used in both science and philosophy. According to scriptures, the duration of the material universe is limited; the ‘day of Brahma’ is the basic cycle called Kalpa. The life span of Brahma is identical duration of the universe, Brahma lives 100 years. Thus the calculation of time is cyclic and in cycles known as yugas. According to the Bhagavad Gétā (Ch. VIII. 17) this creation and dissolution recur at a period of 1,000 Mahayugas or 4,32 billion years or 4,320 million years. The verse explains thus: Sahasrayugaparyantamaharyadbrahmaëo viduù | Rātrià yuhasahasrāntā te’horāträvido janāù || (17) “Those who kmow from realization Brahma’s day as extending to a thousand Mahāyugas, and Brahma’s night as extending to another Mahāyugas they alone know the reality of time. Further In this verse Bhagavad Gétā (Ch. IX-7)Lord Krishna says that, “Arjuna, at the end of every Kalpa (Brahma’s day)all beings enter My Prakāti (the prime cause), and at the beginning of every kalpa, I bring them forth again. (7) In Čvetāsvatara Upaniñat (VI. - 1) describes that “time is neither the material nor the efficient cause of the universe. It is Divine power from which the universe originates.” In Yoga Sūtra of Pataiājali (IV-33) of Pataiājali the nature of the manifest world and time illustrated as, “The proces, corresponding to moments which become apprehensible at the final end of transformation.

Space:

According to indian scriptures, Ākāsa or space is a substance (Dravya) and it was considered as a form of matter. Space was created with the cosmogonical sequence, Taittēriya Upaniñat(II. 1-1) says, “Om the knower of Brahman attains the Supreme. With reference to that there is following hymn recited: Brahman is the Truth, knowledge, infinity. He who knows It as existing of the heart in the transcendent Akasa realises all his desires along with Omniscient Brahman.” In Bāhadāraśyaka Upaniñat (III: 8, 4), the questions related to the universe, time and space are very significant in the discussion between Gārgi and Yajjavalkya.
The questions asked by Gārgi are related not only to philosophy, but also to science. Sage Yajñavalkya replies, “That which is above the heaven, that which is beneath the earth, that which is between these two, heaven and earth, that which the people call the past, the present and the future, across space is that woven, like wrap and woof.”

In Praçna Upaniñat (VI. -4), prāēa is represented as world soul created sixteen parts of Self, the verse runs thus, “He created life, from life, faith, ether, air, light, water, earth, sense organ, mind and food; from food, vital vigour, austerity, hymns, works, worlds and in the worlds name.”

Causality

In Sanskāt causality is Kāraëa, means that which acts. So the agent of any action of the subject (Kartā) of any activity is the cause of that action. ‘Cause’ has been defined in different ways. The concept is found in scriptures is furnished here: “A cause is an agent of an action, in which modification or transformation may or may not be involved, or a precursor material which is modified into a product. The different accounts scriptural causality as described below:

In Bhagavad Gétā (Chap II-16) says that “the unreal has no existence, and the real never ceases to be; the reality of both has thus been perceived by the seer of truth.”

According to Çvetäsvatara Upaniñat (VI.-9), it is state that of Him there is no master in the world, no ruler, nor is there any mark of Him. He is the cause, the lord of the lords of the sense organs; of Him there is neither progenitor nor lord.

In Muëødaka Upaniñat (II. 1-4) described that “fire is His head, His eyes are the sun and the moon, the region of space are His ears, His speech the revealed Vedas; air is His life and His heart the world. Out of his feet the earth (is born); indeed He is the self of all beings.”

Why Creation?

Origin of the universe is a part of creation. It is home of universe. It is not accidental, because it is needed. God wanted creation to be here in the first place it is His will. Indian science of philosophy as well as scriptures gives a rather poetic reply saying to this question as though echoing the voice of God, saying I shall be many, may I manifest Myself numerously and also explains this perpetual creation and dissolution as 'Leelä', (cosmic play) the play-like-expression of God; who has fashioned the universe by his will out of ever existing atoms. The following are various accounts about the description of mäyä in Chändogya Upaniñat (VI – 2–3) concerning with the purpose of creation, “That (Existence) saw, ‘I shall become many. I shall be born.’ That created fire. That fire saw, ‘I shall become many. I shall be born. That created water. Water comes out from heat.’ In this verse of Bhagavad Gétā (Chap 4. –6) says that “though birthless and deathless, and the lord of all beings, I manifest Myself through My own Yogamäya (divine potency), keeping my nature (Prakäti) under control and Praçēa Upaniñat (I-16) explained as; to them is that stainless Brahman world, in whom there is no crookedness, falsehood or trikery.”
Upaniñat (Ch. 1-10) explained that “we therefore only say that it is his lilā or pleasure to manifest Himself in the world, as it is an artistic pleasure to manifest Himself in a work of art.” To clarify the question why is the creation? The proposed solution are related to the knowledge and thought of human beings, who themselves as an integral part of the universe. Hence, they are as all circumscribed in nature; i.e. they are as they appear to man, since a part of the universe studies the other parts from within the universe (like a person within dream studying the dream) and not the universe as a whole standing aside to see the whole show, like a person who has woken up and surveys the dream as a whole.

Comparative study of Cosmology in contrast with western and eastern

The most fundamental treatise on cosmology in Veda is Nāsadiya Sukta, which incorporates some of the hypothesis that modern physicists have come up with till now about the nature and size of the universe. It affirms an absolute beginning of things and the origin of the universe as being the beyond the concept of even the existence and non-existence. This Sukta reflects for both scientific and philosophical concepts. The big bang moment is marked as beginning of universe space and time. Einstein’s equation’s neither explains what was before the start nor what would be the end of expansion. It gives several models of oscillating universe i.e. expanding and contracting, which is very similar to the cosmology described in our Vedic Puruñā Sukta. Swami Vivekananda writes that this hymns “describes Chaos (tama āsit tamasā gudhamagre, ‘when darkness was hidden in darkness’).” In the light of Vedic philosophy, there is the shadow of the big bang theory. “There was no sat no asat, no ākasa, only something ‘gahanam gabhiram’. There was neither death, no amāt (immortality), no day nor night, only apraketam salilam (depicting an indistinguishable fluid state).” In the Vedas creation is linked to cosmic word OM, which caused immense cosmic energy. This energy got converted mass as Hiraëya Garbha (Cosmic golden Egg) when it opened /burst, subtle primordial matter of three gunas started appearing and when the same joined in appropriate, gross universe was created in stage. The interesting parallels can be noticed between the basic ideas of ancient and modern scientific cosmology. One cannot ignore the similarity between the Golden Embryo (Hiraëyagarbha) of Vedic seers and the fireball of big bang cosmology. The Sanskāt root Bāha which lies in the words Brahma and Brahmaëda indicates the expanding nature of the universe. Besides the similarity in the Kalpa theory of creation and dissolution of Vedanta school with the modern oscillating universe, the time scales mentioned in the yoga’s system of the kalpa theory corresponds to those of the modern cosmology. It cycles run from our ordinary day and night to a day and night of Brahma, 8.64 billion years about half the time since the big bang. So, the ideas of the ancient may be treated as a kind of premonition of modern ideas. In ancient Indian literature we find several theories of universe gradually passing over from mythological conceptions to distinctive scientific theories and many of the discoveries are permanent laws pertaining to physical science. What philosophers in the west and Vedic āsis and munies in the east, found a few thousand years ago was found in the laboratory only in the 20th century. The modern science is still not sure about the ultimate building block of the universe. Even, if it were possible to find out. The question which follows
is where from did it come? The answers to these limitless questions are available in the Indian scriptures. The Vedic concept clearly displays a description of an ordered universe in which Āta prevails. There are various accounts as to the evolvement of the universe, some implying agency, others emanation from a pre-existing state where there is no beginning or end. Important examples are Brahmaëda (the cosmic egg from which all creature came forth, (Āg Veda 10, 121.1; Kaōha Upaniñad 3. 10). The Hirāyagarbha (the golden embryo, the everlasting plan) or Akāra Puruṇa, the indestructible person, who becomes the vibrating energy that generates all life; Viçvakarma as creator (the first to come from Brahmaëda, the architect of the gods (Āg Veda 10. 82) and Brahmā (the source of the universe, presiding over all creation, preserving like Viñnu and destroying like Shiva, Cosmological insights as the methods used by ancient cosmologies for predicting solar and lunar eclipses yield results almost as accurate as our modern ones, and in the case of India, the Hindu pundits still use them, says Dr Paul Utukuru, a retired medical physicist in the Science and Theology News, a French monthly newspaper. "Some ancient astronomers seemed to have arrived at the conclusion that the creation of the universe, its growth, its eventual decay and regeneration are eternal processes without a beginning and without an end, repeating in endless cycles."

**Conclusion**

Indian classical texts are rich in speculation relating to various aspects of the universe. Neumourous explanation about the origin and nature of the universe are put from. The Çåsti (Creation- Brahman) has no beginning in time and that each Çåsti is proceeded by Pralaya (Dissolution) and that each Pralaya by Çåsti and thus has been going on eternally. It has causal link between Pralaya and Çåsti. To resolve the problem of origin of the universe, the concept prevalent in scriptures can potentially accommodate the major perspective of the modern sciences. The physicist Fritjof Capra explains, “This idea of a periodically expanding and contracting universe, which involves a scale of time and space of vast proportions, has arisen not only in modern cosmology, but also in ancient Indian mythology. Einstein writes that “cosmic expansion may be simply a temporary condition which will be followed at some future epoch of cosmic time by a period of contraction. The universe in this picture is a pulsating balloon in which cycles of expansion and contraction succeed each other through eternity.” According to Devid Frawley: “In the Vedic view the universe is the very breath or prāṇa of the absolute (Brahman). The breath of God creates the force of time on a cosmic level, just as our inhalation and exhalation creates the experience of time on an individual level. Time therefore is not a mere material force but a manifestation of Divine will and energy. The modern science and Indian classical texts have a vision of a vast universe of space and time, which is part of a greater infinite and eternal reality. Both recognize the existence of many universe and many cycles of creation and subtle forces connecting all objects in the universe in various energy fields. Both regard each atom in its moments as affecting the entire universe and also trying to unlock the cosmos that such a magical universe must depend upon for its mind-baffling workings. Further he said, “it adds an Indic-perspective to science. It also opens the door for greater scientific study to validate this ancient wisdom.”
Bibliography

The Coexistence of Folk Tradition and Modernity in the Emerging Canon of Northeast Indian Women’s Poetry

Saikat Guha
Department of English
Cooch Behar Panchanan Barma University
Vivekananda Street
Cooch Behar – 736001, West Bengal
Email: mmm.saikatguha@gmail.com

Abstract

The Northeast periphery of India is largely a misunderstood region which is socio-politically as well as culturally marginalized in the “mainland.” Like other genres of postcolonial literature, the poetry of Northeast attempts to retrieve its rich folk heritage in order to assert the communities’ distinct identities and to resist the hegemony of the majoritarian culture. The women poets of the region are especially aware of their role as the bearers of culture. They are, however, not unmindful of the contemporary situation— ethnic strife, insurgency, counter-insurgency (or coercive strategies of the central government), the unleashing of violence and suffering of common people. Taking into account the major women poets of Northeast, the paper attempts to study how the coexistence of folk tradition and modernity inform the emerging canon of poetry in the region.

Keywords: Northeast, postcolonial, communities, folk tradition and modernity

Northeast India which is politically and socially marginalized within the Indian nation-state, is also culturally silenced at the heart of India. The writers of the peripheral region are not included in the “mainstream” Indian canon of literature which is overtly hegemonic in its configuration. Insurgency, clash between ethnic groups and tribalism – these have become stereotypical view of the Northeast which is detrimental to the blossoming poetry of the region, as the eminent poet Keki Daruwalla wrote in a review of a Northeast poetry anthology:

Regrettably, any mention of the Northeast to the average Hindustani brings visions of insurgencies, tribal feuds, Izak Swu and Khaplang, the Moreh-Imphal drug route et al. That there is some very fine poetry also being written here would astonish most.

(“Poetry and the Northeast”)

Northeast poetry presents a variety of themes – the most notable being politics, ethnic heritage, local myths, folklore and nature – which are all significant constituents of a lively definition of its poetic philosophy. This co-existence, although not infrequently in an uneasy footing, of conspicuous aspects promulgates the Northeast as a macrocosmic heterogeneity that the poets of the region illustrate in their poetry.
The ethnoscape of Northeast India consists of myriad groups of people. Most of the hilly tribes of Nagaland, Manipur, Meghalaya and Arunachal Pradesh belong to various sects of the Indo-Mongoloid stock as it is generally assumed that the Mongoloids were the earliest to come and settle in the hills of the Northeast in ancient times. Although the Aryans came to India much earlier than the Mongoloids the former were probably late comers in the Northeast scenario. The Aryans settled mostly in the plains of Assam. However, the constant demographic shifts between the hills and the plains made the entire Northeast a cultural melting-pot. The constant diffusion and dispersion of ethnic and folk elements made the Northeast ethnically and culturally a rich landscape. But the simultaneous presence of various tribes and groups of people has resulted in ethnic turmoil since the second half of the past century. Each of these groups forms self-conscious unit sensitive to its distinct identity, and most of them are hostile to the “outsiders” – the immigrants from Bangladesh as well as people from other parts of India. This is not mere parochialism but the xenophobia results from the concern for identity and culture which is threatened at the outsider intrusion especially in the hilly tribal areas.

The Aryan invasion of the plains introduced Sanskrit learning and Hindu culture in the region. The “Sanskritization” which is another form of “detribalization” of the folklore was often detested by the tribal Northeast. Birendranath Datta, in his invaluable study of the influence of Sanskrit/Indo-Aryan culture on the Northeast, divides the population of the region into three cultural categories: tribal people (Indo-Mongoloid) in distant hills who are free from Sanskritization; tribal groups who have retained their ethnic identity but have been partly acculturated by their contact with Sanskritized majority; and fully Sanskritized people made up of erstwhile Indo-Mongoloid and Indo-Aryan groups, for example, the Assamese. In the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, the Neo-Vaishnavism of Srimanta Sankardeva left an important mark on the religious and cultural patterns of Assam. In addition, other forms of Hinduism – Shaivism and Shaktism – as well as Buddhism left their impact on the life of the tribal people.

Another important incident in the region was the coming of the British who annexed the previously autonomous Northeast with mainland India and introduced Christianity there. Since the early nineteenth century, the Christian missionaries, who founded churches in various parts of the Northeast, converted most of the tribes of Nagaland, Meghalaya and Mizoram into the alien religion. However, ethnic uniqueness of these tribes has survived the onslaughts of Christianization and modernization. Many of these tribes, their folklore and cultural singularity are excluded from the mainland Indian culture (which is distinctly Sanskritic or Indo-Aryan and heavily Westernized in recent times) on the ground that the former are primitive or culturally backward. It is ironical that the “nationalist” power-block of post-Independent India mastered and continued the legacy of the colonizers in subduing the tribals of the Northeast. This is a politically motivated intra-India hegemony which excludes the culture of the Northeast tribes from the ambit of mainland Indian culture. If the natives were homogenized and rendered to the margin during the colonial rule, observes Pramod K Nayar, postcolonialism created its own subalterns. “Women, ‘lower’ castes, and classes, ethnic minorities rapidly became the ‘Others’ within the postcolonial nation-state. The new elite was as oppressive and
exclusive as the colonial master” (100-102). The concept of “other,” as opposed to the “self,” is a Western concept to denote the East which is assumed to be uncivilized, uncouth and unworthy of attention. The exclusion of the East from the Western “standard” discourses, which Gayatri Spivak calls “epistemic violence,” is analogous to the omission of the Northeast from the heart of India. The Northeast has always been represented by the mainland scholars, and seldom got the chance of speaking for itself. The “inside” scholar Sanjoy Hazarika explores the general problems of the region thus:

Its people have a fear of being swamped by ‘outsiders,’ of lifestyles and histories being destroyed by modern nation-states that bother little about small communities but pay more attention to ‘strategic’ considerations such as the natural resources of the area, their exploitation for the national ‘good’ and the region’s proximity to a friendly or inimical neighbour. Decisions for the little peoples of such regions [...] are made by bureaucratic and political mandarins in national and state capitals, far removed from the realities of the customs and beliefs that govern the thoughts and lives of the indigenous peoples. (160)

II.

Poetry of the region reflects this cultural marginalization of the region which it attempts to convalesce. The folklore of the Northeast which reverberates with the ethnic life-world of the myriad tribes becomes the seminal element in the reactionary poetics. A major agenda of postcolonial writing is the recuperation of the folk tradition of pre-colonial period as an attempt to rekindle the once-colonized people’s cultural identity. The colonial subjugation of India, and the Northeast, was not successful in completely obliterating the indigenous cultural heritage. Folk in the context of the Northeast becomes, in the words of Esther Syiem, “a forked weapon of assimilation and dissemination” and “in its intersection with the living it is a changing and evolving phenomenon” (“Social Identity” 128). Although folklore may seem to have been relegated to a back seat at the sway of globalization, according to Syiem, it can never be erased because it is “an area rich in the psychical reserves of society, an unnamed area, milling over with significances, nuances and challenges striving to be heard and to be taken up all over again” (129-30) and as such “its liminality has become its strength and it is from this region of partial shadows that it waits to re-emerge in its new avatar, equipped to take on the challenges of a complicated age” (131). The Northeast tribes are the reservoir of folktales which pass from generation to generation, basically in oral form. Many of such tales have been lost or corrupted with outside influence, especially that of the Indo-Aryans and Christians, but the remote hilly regions which are not fully touched by cultural hybridization or modernization still preserve such folktales. These local myths and folktales, cites Verrier Elwin, “are remarkably original and seem to be genuine products of tribal creativity and imagination” (xx). Folktale, which is a “hereditary story” concerning “supernatural beings who are not gods” and which is “not part of a systematic mythology” (Abrams 170) is an indispensable part of folklore and integral to most of the tribal communities. As in other parts of the world, the folktales are told on various occasions in the Northeast which are related to the full circle of life of the tribes – during birth, marriage and funeral; during festivals, dance and rituals; during harvesting; during everyday works and so on.
Temsula Ao, who belongs to the Ao-Naga tribe, shows a deep sense of rootedness in the folk tradition of her tribe. Her poems “Stone-people from Lungterok” and “Soul-bird” both derive from the Ao myths concerning birth and death respectively. The first poem relates the mythic story of the Ao tribe – how they were born “Out of the womb/Of the earth” (1). Ngangom and Nongkynrih provide an editorial note on the myth associated with “Lungterok”:

Lungterok literally means Six Stones. According to the Aos their first forefathers emerged out of the earth at the place called Lungterok. There were three men and three women. Some of the stones are still to be found below a village called Chungliyimti in the Ao area of Nagaland. (3)

Temsula Ao refers to her ancestors as the “Stone-people” not simply because they are believed to have originated from the Lungterok, but they are strong-built. They are both poetic and politic, “Finders of water/ And fighters of fire” (1). Ao tribe has been living since ancient times in remote hills of Nagaland in close contact with nature: “Stone-people,/ The polyglots,/ In birds’ language/ And animal discourse” (2). They learnt from ants “The art of carving/ Heads of enemies./ As trophies/ Of war.” The cruel act of head-hunting which they considered to be an expression of valour was quite common among the various clans of the Naga tribes until the British prohibited it. But Naga passion is not limited to mere violence; they are also “romantics” who have high imaginative power as exhibited in their mythic tales and folktales. The ancient Nagas believed that the “stars are not stars/ But pure souls/ Watching over bereaved hearts” (2). They used to believe that the pure, virtuous souls become stars and shine from heaven.

The other poem, “Soul-bird” derives inspiration from another Ao-Naga myth – the belief “that when a person dies, the soul takes the shape of a bird, an insect or something even a caterpillar. The sighting of birds, especially of hawks, is considered to be the last appearance of the loved one on earth” (Nongkynrih and Ngangom 5). In the poem, a child is told by his grandmother that a hawk swirling in the sky is the soul of his mother coming for a watch over her beloved child:

See that keening bird in the sky?
That’s your mother’s soul
Saying her final goodbye. (5)

Ao’s poetry is steeped in her tribal heritage. She takes the myths and folktales prevalent in the Ao-Naga community and contextualizes it within the broader areas that constantly impinge on folk discourses.

Similarly, the poetry of Mamang Dai, whom N. D. R. Chandra and Nigamananda Das call “a home-bound pilgrim in her quest for identity,” (4) celebrates her attachment to her native state, Aurnachal Pradesh, and cultural heritage of her tribe (Adi). Dai, in her poem “Tapu” describes the eponymous festival which “is a dance performed by male members of the Adi community, during the annual practice of community fencing. The dance is a rite in exorcism to drive away the Spirit of Fear” (Ngangom and Nongkynrih
In a mood of celebration, Dai proceeds to tell that in the land, which is stony, full of sunrays and consecrated, her clan members perform the rite of Tapu as they are supposed to understanding the meaning of life-cycle “contained/ in fulfilling obligation” (86) – the obligation to recognize and extend communal ethos. The dead are not obliterated from memory just as the sighs of the unborn are heard. The cactus-dominated “barren earth” is reverberated with life’s yearning to proliferate itself. Women also participate in the dance ceremony and it is believed that the participating women are blessed with valorous son who would inherit the legacy of the clan. Such beliefs, however, are detrimental to the status of women of the tribal Northeast because “women are seen as the keepers of culture and tradition and as such patriarchal controls on the way women express themselves have increased” (Swami).

Dai’s poetry is also an ontological quest to find the meaning of her tribe in their reciprocal relationship to nature. The hill tribes worshipped the objects of Nature, its flora and fauna. Dai expresses her concern for the destruction of the forests which provide livelihood to many hill people. In her poem “The Voice of the Mountains,” an old man looks at the forest trees which are mute carriers bearing the message of ancestors which the people try to decode and emulate. The mountains and forests give life-breath to the tribe:

In my life I have lived many lives.
My voice is sea waves and mountain peaks,
In the transfer of symbols
I am the chance syllable that orders the world
Instructed with history and miracles. (4)

Tribal love for riddle and music is surrealistically expressed in the Mizoram-based poet Mona Zote’s “Girl, with Black Guitar and Blue Hibiscus.” Here Zote recollects the ancient myth of the first Mizo poet Pi Nghaki whose unwritten poetry is resurrected in the tune of a “black guitar.” All earthly things are subject to decay, but music stands unaffected amid the ruins of time. The strings of the black guitar are waiting to be plucked by a girl (apparently the reincarnation of Pi Nghaki) with blue hibiscus in her hair who has burning passion for music:

[...] In the red earth lay her like a seed.
The sad subterranean gong will go on accusing
Until it becomes the black guitar and music becomes
A cleft of a certain colour waiting for the first quiver of strings,
Until the gong is quiet and the woman in the earth goes to sleep. (321)

The tune of the guitar would provides peace to the disturbed soul of the wronged-woman Pi Nghaki who “was such a prolific composer that the people of her village buried
her alive, with her gong to keep her company, so future generations would have something left to write about” (Ngangom and Nongkynrih 321).

The poetry of India’s Northeast shows the preoccupation of the poets with their native tradition which is under threat at outside interferences. Temsula Ao’s poem, “Bloods of Others” employs the concern for the contaminating of native blood by the outsiders. This virgin land was occupied by “a tribe of strangers” who invaded the hills “Armed with only a Book and/ Promises of a land called Heaven” (82). The obvious reference to Ao’s strangers is the British who baptized a large numbers of the hill tribes into Christianity and “Allowed our own knowledge of other days/ To be trivialized into taboo.” Out of their profound confusion, the hill tribes finally refuted their native religion of nature-worshipping and Shamanism as well as their customs and traditional beliefs. Ethnic identity felt a threat of extinction which gave way to deteriblization of the region to be re-constructed in the Westernized mould:

Stripped of all our basic certainties
We strayed from our old ways
And let our soul-mountain recede
Into a tiny ant-hill and we
Schooled our minds to become
The ideal tabula rasa
On which the stranger intruders
Began scripting a new history. (82)

The tribal people became perfect “mimic” in aping the manners of the British and adopting the Christian god. The ancient Ao-Nagas were famous for carving wood and stone on which they used to inscribe pictures depicting their stories to be read and admired by their successors. But the British people introduced Roman scripts to them which marked a new beginning of scripted history and proclaimed the attenuation of a rich oral heritage that once predominated the hills, as Cuddon and Habib observe, folk literature “becomes literature in the correct sense of the word only when people gather it together and write it down. When this happens, it is usually a sign that the folk literature in question is in decline” (281). The dismayed poet can only witness the young generation’s negligence to folk ways of life which is fast losing its relevance to them. She tries to reach at the core of this problem in her diagnosis of the Northeast folklife:

The cultures of North East India are already facing tremendous challenges from education and modernization. In the evolution of such cultures and the identities that they embody, the loss of distinctive identity markers does not bode well for the tribes of the region. If the trend is allowed to continue in an indiscriminate and mindless manner, globalization will create a market in which Naga, Khasi or Mizo communities will become mere brand names and commodity markers stripped of all human significance and which
will definitely mutate the ethnic and symbolic identities of a proud people. (“Identity and Globalization” 7)

In the similar fashion as Ao’s, the Shillong-based poet Esther Syiem’s poem “The Fable of the Mustard Seed” demonstrates the influence of Christianity on the poet as she builds on the Biblical “myth” of the resurrection of a dead girl at the touch of Jesus although it is not taken as unquestioned truth:

How, I asked myself,
when you were taken
to the slaughter
did you expect me
to know the fabled mystery
of your mustard seed,
left behind?
How do I praise open
it’s hardened shell? (262)

Another poem, “Suburban Friend,” lays bare the lifestyle of suburban people who are dependent on the supplies from the countryside which, however, remain unacknowledged. Blinded by prejudices of city-bound vanity, the suburban people have forgotten, or rather, are indifferent to, the tribal ways of life. They care little about their village counterparts whose supplies of commodities they are dependent on. Orchids, potatoes, aromatic fish, honey – all these fashionable and everyday items come from poor villages:

They come, from barren hamlets,
windswept, buried in fog,
whittled down by poverty,
even crumbling shacks
of flattened kerosene tins
and makeshift days
of the city’s inner courtyards,
to strike a deal. (263)

The suburban “friend” takes these supplies as merely part of business which the villager refuses: “Legal tender – strictly cash,/ but always/ something more/ to bond us” (264). It is a kind of identification of the severed bond between two apparently divided groups of people informed by their once-shared ethnic identity which the village friend still keeps alive within his racial memory.
The modernization, and more recently, globalization left their evil impact on the ethnic life-world of the Northeast tribes although, on the other hand, the poets are trying to preserve and commemorate their folk identity. The two opposing forces folklore is facing are nevertheless its very historical characteristic, as Bendix and Hasan-Rokem says: “Detraditionalization and retraditionalization have often gone hand in hand, and the state of folklore research in history and in the present has been intertwined with this dynamic, while simultaneously offering a reflexive accompaniment to it” (2).

III.

Apart from the retrieval and rearticulation of folklore and mythic past in poetry, the women poets of the Northeast show their reaction to contemporary issues such as politics and the condition of women. Mona Zote’s poem “What Poetry Means to Ernestina in Peril” concerns itself with the insurgency and corruption in Mizoram which unnerve readers with a brooding suggestiveness of violence. What generates unease in the reader is a surprisingly astute frenzy with which the protagonist Ernestina talks about unrest of the region and the frailty of Christianity which is unable to offer any peace:

[...]

_a land where babies
are ripped out of their graves, where the church
leads to practical results like illegitimate children and bad marriages
quite out of proportion to the current population, and young neighbor
is kidnapped by demons and the young wither without complaint
and pious women know the sexual ecstasy of dance and peace is kept
by short men with a Bible and five big knuckles on their hands._ (72, italics in original)

Ernestina’s commentary on her land is distressing and so is her poetry. She becomes an Everywoman reflecting on troubled land which has long tolerated the brunt of militancy, killing and violation of human rights. Poetry in times of terror can not be a fanciful venture, but should be violently suggestive of the violent era:

_Ignoring the problem will not make it go away._

[...] _Poetry must be raw like a side of beef,
should drip blood, remind you of sweat
and dusty slaughter and the epidermal crunch
and the sudden bullet to the head._ (71, italics in original)

Most of the poets of the region, regardless of their gender, reflect on the unrest, ethnic militancy and violence that negate the possibilities of enduring harmony in the region. The demands of the militant groups (ULFA and NDFB in Assam, NSCN-K and NSCN-IM in Nagaland, MNF in Mizoram, NLFT in Tripura, Kuki and Naga rebel groups in Manipur, and so on) range from greater autonomy to complete sovereignty, the
banishment of the “outsiders” to special facilities. Amid brutal militant activities – bomb-blasts, firing, kidnapping, extortion – which generate a reign of terror in the Northeast, poetry can not but be affected by these. Robin Ngangom explicates the situation of general socio-political turmoil in the Northeast in his essay “Poetry in the Time of Terror”:

We have witnessed growing ethnic aggressiveness, secessionist ventures, cultural and religious bigotry, the marginalisation of minorities and the poor, profit and power struggles in government, and as a natural aftermath to these, the banality of corruption and the banality of terror. Further, the uneasy coexistence of paradoxical worlds such as the folk and the Westernised, virgin forests and car-choked streets, ethnic cleansers and the parasites of democracy, ancestral values and flagrant materialism, resurgent nativism and the sensitive outsider's predicament, make the picturesque Northeast especially vulnerable to tragedy. (171)

But what is the condition of women? They are twice marginalized, or marginalized within the marginalized community, as Indu Swami observes, “Although, women enjoy some amount of economic autonomy […] women’s role in decision-making is minimal. None of the traditional institutions of governance accept women as an integral part. Even where women have managed to get into these institutions, the roles assigned are either peripheral or figurative” (“Marginalized Condition”). Women are held to be the preserver and transmuter of culture, and as such, made to obey the traditional customs and beliefs which inevitably curb their autonomy. Child-marriage, polygamy, deprivation of women from their parental properties, physical assault, rape – these are some of the burning problems of the region. Gambhini Sorokhaibam is a poet from Manipur whose poem “Hansapadika” derives from the mythic past of Manipur while “A Village Girl” breathes the ethnic sensibility of rural Manipur both of which, however, bring out the secondary status of women. According to the Hindu myths, Hansapadika, the queen of King Dushyanta, was a famous singer. But Sorokhaibam writes that her songs are “not much of a song/ What men recognize as ditty nowadays” (53); her songs are “lament” of her bereaved soul which people mistake as songs. Hansapadika bewails her fate when she comes to know of her husband’s relation with Shakuntala whose son would inherit the throne:

Rotting, crumble piece by piece
On the heads
Of those who think that your lament
Is song,
Hansapadika! (53)

Hansapadika is a representative of woman in general who is often betrayed by her unfaithful husband. She mourns alone in the agony of her sense of being deceived. Her words do not reach to anyone, or even when reach, her words fail to signify what they really mean. The fabricated notions of romance and marital bliss are nothing but illusion which Hansapadika’s song (lament) connotes.
In “A Village Girl”, the girls are motivated by their sense of right and wrong which are based on folk rituals. They do not unfasten their hair as it is believed that loose hair invites the evil spirits, nor do they look at the golden stars:

Village girls
Do not look up towards the sky
For our sake
Not a single star would fall. (53)

Superstitious beliefs and restriction on women join hand in hand in the wicked scheme of domination over women. The maiden girls are considered to be vulnerable creatures in need of protection and as such they are taught not to roam in the dewy morning alone. The girls in the distant Northeastern hills are far from the contact of modernized parts of the country. Heavily deprived of the current facilities of life, their world revolves around the circle of domesticity. Victims of patriarchal ideology, they take for granted that the nature too is repulsive to their desires:

At our feet
Not one morning flower would drop down.
That is why we
Do not laugh when we smell a blooming flower. (54)

Only the smell of golden paddy and soil incite their hearty laughter when they feel connected to these aspects of nature. Paddy and soil signify motherhood which is the village girls’ sole object of life, and which also manifests the poet’s ecofeminist concerns. As the girls colour their mothers’ hair with charcoal they laugh because they probably think of their own oldage when they will be nurtured by their mothers. This is a full circle of life – limited and limiting, but this is how the village girls find their meaning of life as shaped by ethnic tradition.

As Indu Sami observes, apart from masculinist tradition, insurgency and counter-insurgency operations (including AFSPA) in the Northeast too result in multifaceted oppressions on women ranging from separation from family, death of husband, physical and economic insecurity, sexual violence by the Army, detention and death. The Tripuri poet Jogmaya Chakma’s poem “The Martyr’s Altar” is a poem which is written from the perspective of a martyr’s wife who is implored by the spirit her husband to stay alive so that the dream of a better future can be cherished through the motherly woman:

You did not allow me to sleep
making me a witness of the difficult time,
filling my inkpot with your blood.
You left me
under the blood-stained tricolour. (101)
The tricolor, that is, Indian national flag is stained with gore of the native people of the State who are now minority at their own home. Tripura has been heavily flocked by immigrants from Bangladesh at the post-1947 and post-1971 era with the result that the native tribes, like Kokboroks, became minority while the Bengalis are majority today. In such a blood-spattered condition, poetry cannot simply integrate love and all such abstract thoughts. Poetry too wears the war-dress:

There’s no peace, it’s said, in that forest too
In tree after tree, in creeper after creeper
In root after root
There are diseases,
Of sabotage and pangs of uprooting.
My poet, from your body,
Even for a moment
You could not take off
The war dress. (74-75)

Again, Chakma’s poem “The Illegal Goods of the Market” is a sarcasm at patriarchy which gives women to be sold like other goods in market. The market is full of illegal things because “If illegal goods do not come to the markets,/ The market does not flourish it is told” (75). Ironically, women are compared to these sellable goods – they are not seen better than commodities and there is no genuine care for their well-being:

Women are valuable goods in the market
Women’s relation with men
Are the most bought and sold. (76)

The dream of a superior land which the militants (who call themselves “patriots”) dream as a would-be land of equality, opportunity and prosperity can not materialize without the welfare of women, as Mamang Dai writes in “The Sorrow of Women”:

They are taking about a place
where rice flows on the streets,
about a place where there is gold
in the leaves of trees,
[...] 
and they are talking about escape,
about liberty, men and guns,
ah! The urgency for survival.
But what will they do
not knowing the sorrow of women. (91)

Women, same as men, require opportunity, independence and admiration without which the society can not prosper. The ideal land must be a genderless province.

IV.

In the age of “globalization” and “transnationalism,” Northeast India reflects the yearning of poetry to the root of ethnic identity and folk tradition, and its contextualization in the growing corpus of a “new” poetics which blissfully incorporates the minority voices, as Mark Bender observes:

With the recent rise of globalization and increased opportunities for transnational contact and interaction, it is timely to explore how ethnic minority poets in both these “near yet far” regions have addressed similar and dissimilar cultural, environmental, and social influences to produce their artistic works, stressing the common strategies of utilizing traditional “local knowledge” or folklore in emerging contexts of modern-style poetry for purposes of personal and ethnic expression. (109)

The present-day Northeast poetry which is characterized by an acute sense of immediacy of socio-political scenario, ethnic-cultural reality and conversational style aims at ventilating its voice to the world. The writers refuse to be labelled as “ethnic specimen” to be curiously gazed at with amusement, but to be identified as individuals having distinct traits, as the Naga poet Cherrie Chhangte writes:

You look at me, and you see
My eyes, my skin, my language, my faith.
You dissect my past, analyse my present
Predict my future and build my profile.
I am curiosity, an ‘ethnic’ specimen. (76)

Eastherine Iralu, in a conference in Norway, presented a paper expressing her resentment against the “invisible prison” which captivates the Northeast writes from expressing their words. These writers find it difficult to have their works published by any mainland Indian publication house. The mainland scholars and politicians speak for the Northeast while the voice of the Northeasterns is seldom appraised which risks the truth being perverted:

Our truths are being distorted. Our stories are being stolen. Our voices are being silenced. These prisons are man-made and invisible. But they are as real as visible prison. Unlike Ralph Ellison’s protagonist, we do not celebrate invisibility. We fear and reject invisibility. (Iralu 274-75)

But in the new century, a growing interest is perceived among publishers based in Delhi (like Oxford University Press, Penguin and Zubaan) to publish works by the Northeast writers. Many of the poets of the Northeast are writing in English apart from their mother-tongue with the aim of reaching to maximum readers, and thus to convey
their deprivation, sorrow and fragmented hope. Along with some political measures to improve the poor condition of the Northeast and restore peace, seminars and discussions are being arranged on Northeast literature. All these indicate a promising start of a new dawn for the Northeast culture, especially with growing participation of women poets, which signal the onset of an emerging literary canon of vitality.

Works Cited

- ---. “Soul-bird.” Ngangom and Nongkynrih 4-5.


• ---. “A Village Girl.” Misra 53-54.


• ---. “Suburban Friend.” 263-64.

• Zote, Mona. “Girl, with Black Guitar and Blue Hibiscus.” Ngangom and Nongkynrih 320-21.

A Study of Impact of ICT on Indian General Insurance Sector

M. Rajeev* & Dr. N. J. Saleena**

* Teacher fellow (FDP), Institute of Research in Social Sciences and Humanities (IRISH), Nirmalagiri College, Kuthuparamba, Kannur, Kerala.
Email: rajeevsnkannur@gmail.com
** Research Guide in Economics, Kannur University, Kerala.

Abstract

Information and communication technology has a crucial role in the modern world. The study investigates the impact of ICT on Indian general insurance sector. This paper aims at studying various ICT related changes in the general insurance sector in India and its role in customer relations. The nature of insurance industry in India changes from a regulatory environment to a competitive environment. In this situation different insurance companies tries to control over the market by introducing new information and communication technologies. Now general insurance companies take this as a major marketing strategy. In this context an attempt has been made to study the role of ICT in the general insurance industry in India. It also tries to find out the extent of ICT application in the Indian general insurance sector. This study also tries to identify the benefits and barriers in the use of ICT application in the Indian general insurance sector. The study is based on secondary data collected from the reports published by IRDA and the websites.

Key words: ICT, Customer satisfaction, Customer service delivery, Insurance companies.

Introduction

In modern days, Information and Communication Technology has profound influence on social life of the people. ICT now creates better economic opportunities; it is likely to improve the living standard of the people. It has profound influence in business and services, especially in insurance business. ICT strengthens the relationships of the business with individuals, groups and society. Any business is strengthened when ICT is combined with all other activities of business. Now, like all other business, insurance business also is very much dependent on information technology.

The nature of insurance industry in India changed from a regulatory environment to a competitive environment. In this situation different insurance companies tries to control over the market by introducing new information and communication technologies. Now general insurance companies in India take this as a major marketing strategy.
Use of ICT is used to hold more control over the market and it makes better relationship with customers. At present due to growing competition, insurance companies provide types of offers and take the feedback online and also emphasize on prompt grievance redressal. All these services are given through a third party by using information and communication technology. At present Indian insurance market is dynamic and it is because of the use of ICT in this sector.

Technically the different insurance products are same to all insurance companies. So it is difficult to find a better service provider. At present customers purchase different insurance products by considering prices, services and quality of products. So it is important to design the products according to the customer’s needs and satisfaction. Then only the companies should retain their customers.

Today consumer’s attitude is entirely changed. They become responsible and independently develops money saving habits, and they take decision after comparing products developed by multiple service providers. He has innovative and have more communication skills. He is now able to compare the price and quality of services of different insurance operators. Thus, it is clear that the introduction of ICT has brought significant change in the insurance sector.

Technology investment will be crucial in the dynamic insurance environment. Now all the insurance companies are try to embrace the modern technologies. Insurance industry is more data intensive and it involves collection, processing and maintaining of information relating to insurance policies. In a diversified business environment, different insurers make changes in process model and product designs. Insurance industry depends on technology in recent years and has shown a strong IT adoption over the years especially after liberalization.

**Review of Literature**

O’Brien (2002) in his article ‘Management Information Systems; Managing Information Technology in the e-business’ stated that there are many ways of using ICT depending on their goals, aims and objectives. ICT becomes efficient in the operation of any business. The process of Information Technology adoption and use is critical to deriving the benefits of ICT.

Supriya, Sangita, and Madhuri (2014) in their article analysed the different steps involved in the e-insurance. The first step is it is necessary to know the benefits of ICT application on insurer and its customers and the possible barriers they may face to have complete electronic interaction based on ICT’s. They also made a comparative study of benefits of consumers from commerce and e-commerce will help to improve the shortcomings.

Meena Sharma (2015) “The impact of Information Technology on Indian Insurance Sector” find that the revolution in IT have posed challenges in the insurance industry. The use of It has direct impact on the productivity of resources. It also affects the cost of various business activities. The insurance markets are being revolutionized by technology at high
speed. IT made insurance business electronic and paper less and the business cross the broader.

Odoyo Frederick & Nyangosi Richard (2011) in their article find that recently the evolution of information technology in the financial services industry is changing the pace of providing insurance services. They evaluate the perceived value attribution of ICT system implementation in Indian insurance companies. The results show that ICT integration is perceived to enhance transparency, high productivity and brand and image promotion and also increase the sale volume. Private players are willing to use ICT more than public insurance companies.

Salatin Parvaneh, Yadollahi Fatemeh et.al (2014), in their article examines the theoretical relationship between the level of ICT impact on insurance in selected countries. The usage of ICT in insurance industry increases production capacity, specialization of activities and improves speed and quality of services. It provides customers access of insurance services by using safe intermediaries and without physical presence.

**Objectives of the study**

1. To examine the extent of ICT application in the Indian general insurance sector.
2. To evaluate the benefits and barriers of ICT application in the Indian general insurance sector.
3. To find out the impact of ICT related changes on general insurance customer relations.
4. To draw policy recommendations and to make suggestions for enhancing the use of ICT in the Indian general insurance sector.

**Methodology**

This study is descriptive in nature. The study is based on secondary data sources collected from the Annual Reports of Insurance Regulatory Development Authority, reports of Insurance companies, articles from various journals, and different websites. An attempt is made to evaluate the impact of ICT in the Indian general insurance sector. The information so collected has been classified, tabulated and analysed as per the objectives of the study.

**Importance of the study**

In the present world, people demands easy and quick access of information. Revolution in information technology will make a major role in providing such experience to people. With a simple mouse click, we can now reach millions of information. Information technology provides knowledge to the people and also cost effective marketing technologies for producers.

In the present world, people demands easy and quick access of information. Revolution in information technology will make a major role in providing such experience to people. With a simple mouse click, we can now reach millions of information. Information technology provides knowledge to the people and also cost effective marketing technologies for producers.

Indian insurance industries are now in a path of innovation and competition. Recently the growth of the Indian insurance market is worth mentioning and it is now able to compete internationally.

Digital India is the new slogan raised in the Indian scenario. We are now trying to digitalize the service sector. Indian insurance sector is also moving in that direction. Insurance sector also seeks to reap the benefits of digitalization. Insurance industry now is very much dependent on information technology. This paper tries to analyse how revolution in
information technology affect the general insurance sector in India and its impact on customer relations.

**Meaning of Information Technology**

Information technology is the devices and a technique used to store, process, manage, transit and communicate information encompasses various technologies such as computing micro electronics and communication.

**ICT and General Insurance Sector in India**

The entry of private players in the general insurance sector has resulted in the formation of a stiff competition which in turn has forced insurers to adopt IT so as to gain a competitive edge over the other players.

ICT attracts the performance of the general insurance sector. Thus, a better and efficient consumer services becomes the top priority of major insurers. Gradually they shifted from traditional practices to IT implementation. This ICT adoption makes this sector very dynamic and it increases the demand of general insurance products.

General insurance sector now adopt IT on a wider extent. Information revolution in insurance makes customers to choose freely among wide range of products. IT application in the field of better customer services, new product design, cost reduction and developmental activities. Customers access products and services very easily.

The wide range of internet access provides new distribution channels to investors. This technology helps insurers to innovate new products, better customer services and better insurance coverage. Now it is possible to track claims online, take policies on-line, and review the policies, occasional information on policies like premium maturity claims, payment of premium etc and also electronic fund transfer made through internet services.

In the general insurance sector the volume of transaction is very large. The data and information are stored for a longer period because general insurance contracts are long term contracts. The data and information collected are huge and cover a wide range of areas including foreign countries. Now general insurance companies have networks all over the world. Use of information technology is very essential in general insurance because of the processing of huge data.

**Uses of ICT in General Insurance**

The use of IT in general insurance improves every aspects of general insurance business. General insurance agents can quickly responds to the needs of customers. It provides accurate information to clients regarding insurance issues.

**Driving force behind ICT adoption in General Insurance**

1. Need for better consumer services
2. Presence of huge volume of data.
4. Rise in enterprise mobility.

**Purpose of ICT application in General Insurance**

1. The use of IT reduces the amount of paper work dealing with policies and proposals.
2. It can effectively meet the needs of customers in much lesser time.
3. Data processing becomes easy. It in turn will increase the revenue of insurance companies.
4. Insurance agents can generate more policies, proposals and application.
5. Policy purchasing becomes faster.
6. It improves every aspect of insurance services.
7. Insurance agents can quickly responds to the needs of customers
8. It provides accurate information to clients regarding insurance issues.

**Challenges of ICT application**
1. ICT application requires huge investment. There exist long time gap between the actual investment in ICT and the return from the application of ICT.
2. Lack of technology awareness- Ignorance of customers about internet usage.
3. Security- Threat of virus infection, power loss, server capacity problem etc.

**Government Initiatives (Initiatives by IRDA)**
The general insurance industry in India is primarily governed by IRDA. It has taken several initiatives which have directly or indirectly acted as a driver for the ICT industry.
IRDA adopt two major initiatives in this respects.
1. Selling of high valued ULIPs through telemarketing forbidden.
2. Setting up of Integrated Grievances Management System.

However, Insurance Regulatory and Development Authority (IRDA) has some guidelines for e-insurance policies
1. Every policy holders should have facility to revise, modify or change their plans in the correct and quick manner.
2. The providers of e-insurance policies will lead to avail the services of authentic repositories.
3. It is mandatory for the insurance repositories to take steps that will make sure that all crucial information will be adequately safeguarded and there will be effective systems that will prevent any misappropriation of deals and records.

**Benefits of ICT application in General Insurance**
1. Cheaper, speedy and better access of insurance information is possible.
2. ICT promotes good governance in the insurance sector.
3. Speed in procedure like policy underwriters, settlement of claims etc.
4. It provides new method of insurance business.
5. Prices become flexible and services become customer oriented.
6. Insurance becomes a global business
7. It reduces the physical boundaries.
8. Increased sales with reduced costs.
9. Transaction cost is reduced.
10. Faster fund transfer and premium collection.
11. Insurance business becomes paperless.
12. Improved quality and efficiency.
13. Proper maintenance of accounts and statistics.
14. ICT application helps to get timely information.
15. It helps in the distribution of insurance services.
16. ICT simplify the procedure of preparation and distribution of insurance products.
17. ICT application has a positive impact on speed of operation, service deliver, productivity of the insurance companies in India.
18. IT experts will get employment opportunities in the insurance sector.

Areas of ICT Spending of General Insurance Companies

India is one of the biggest markets of IT industry in the world. This industry helps the transformation of Indian economy and it helps to get a position in the world economy. IT industry created a significant demand in different service sectors and it is more in the case of insurance sector.

ICT in the insurance sector is used in the areas of policy administration, claims management, HR solution; re-insurance management and business intelligence are adopted by insurers. With the advent of technology, insurance players have also shifted their focus on tools such as portal services and sales, IVR and request SMS etc. They also emphasize on touch points for customers, agents and sales managers. Insurers exhibit a tendency to shell out more on hardware compared to software and services. Through technology integration overall efficiency and decline in costs can be attained. Technology adoption in insurance can be analysed through three different angles.

1. Insurers: - As far as the insurer is concerned a reduction in administrative costs and innovation and customization of insurance products and it also helps to maintain the efficiency.
2. Distributor: - There is reduction in client acquisition and servicing costs and signification of complaint procedures such as KYC norms.
3. Customer: - Customers get enhanced accessibility of insurance services. They also have the ability to compare and purchase products conveniently.

Following are the areas of ICT application in General insurance

1. Product design
   Digital transformation has profound influence on product design and manufacturing of insurance products. Products should be designed according to the needs and aspirations of the customers. Channel sensitive pricing and product differentiation is also possible.

2. Front office system
   It is used by general insurance industries to carry out business transaction effectively and it is easy to handle growing volume of business, efficient customer services and reduction in office expenses with the introduction of ICT in the front office system.

3. Underwriting new policies
   In underwriting new policies consumers should get real time information and also
enable risk based pricing. Adequate discounts should be given to the customers.

4. Policy management
   Policy management means the provision of policy acceptance, client interaction and policy printing. Introduction of ICT in general insurance allow immediate actions to the client portfolio.

5. Claim servicing and pay outs
   These include instant notification of claims to customers, digitally enabled claim document submission, claims status update through email and SMS and digitally enabled data management.

**ICT Spending of Insurance Companies**

Insurance companies in India try to give top priority in their technology investment. Most general insurance companies expect to raise its information technology investment in the coming future. They are primarily focused to digitalize to grow their business in the domestic market.

Table1: Global IT spending by Insurance companies (in % of direct written premium)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>% of GWP</td>
<td>3.6</td>
<td>3.6</td>
<td>3.5</td>
<td>3.5</td>
<td>3.8</td>
<td>3.7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


The average IT spending ratio of insurance companies as percentage of premium from 2011 to 2016 shows that globally the insurance companies spend about 3.5% of their direct written premium on information technology.

**Extent of Information Technology Integration in General Insurance**

ICT affects the performance of general insurance sector in India. At present, there were 29
general insurance companies operation in India. It makes this sector more competitive and this competition tries to increase their market share.

Figure 2: Channel Mix for General Insurance

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sl No</th>
<th>Channels</th>
<th>%share</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Agents</td>
<td>60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Broker</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Corporate agency</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Referral</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Internet/others</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: IRDA

Regulatory changes and technological innovations have facilitated the emergence of more diversified distribution channels. Traditionally agents are the primary channel of distribution of general insurance products. Now the agency channel lost its significance. Internet and others refers to selling through company owned sales force, internet and telemarketing online channels for certain segments are likely to become significant. A growing polarisation between price and quality and increasing regulatory mechanism leads insurers to think of multi-distribution channel strategies. General insurance industry in India already suffering from poor operational performance, less expensive online channels are increasingly being explored in some simple segments like motor, health and travel segments on account of new innovative technology.

Impact of ICT on Customer relations

Every insurance company tries to hold control over its customers. Now ICT
integration become a important marketing strategy adopted by the insurance companies

   a) The services offered by insurance company become standardised.
   b) It has significant impact on profit level of insurance companies.
   c) It has the ability to satisfy customer needs.
   d) New technology pushes and supports the insurance companies to look for new source of competitive advantage.
   e) It helps to change the mode of operation and consumes get different range of products

Results

The use of information technology in general insurance improves every aspect of its management and processes. Insurance agents can quickly respond to the needs of customers by using technology that can instantly provide accurate information to clients regarding insurance issues. The purpose of insurance technology is to reduce the amount of paper work dealing with policies and proposals and effectively meet the needs of clients in much less time than expected. Insurance technology allows insurers to increase revenue by automating service processes. Earlier processing of insurance services are more time consuming. Now, insurance agents can generate more insurance policies, proposals and applications for new customers and the by increasing the volume of sales. Insurance technology makes it easier on clients as well. Web based agency sites allow clients to complete application process, sign policies and proposals without visiting the insurance agents in person. Apart from all these benefits, technology adoption in the general insurance sector in India is not up to the mark. Conditions for future success are not clear. Many general insurance companies struggle to deliver on customer expectations.

Suggestions

1. Insurance products should be designed according to the needs and aspirations of the customers. There should be channel sensitive pricing and product differentiation.
2. Insurers should adopt integrated multi channel distribution system.
3. Insurance data management system should be effective.
4. Measures should be taken to encourage collaborative technologies like blogs and wikis in this sector.

Conclusion

In the competitive market, every financial services industries force to adopt IT in their business. In the general insurance sector, it has wider scope and it is used in management finance and marketing of general insurance services. Payment of premium becomes easy. It is found that private sector is much aggressive in implementing IT than public sector companies. In a world of technological revolution every insurance company forced to adopt information technology. Use of information technology will revolutionized the insurance sector in the coming future.

References
A Study of Impact of ICT on Indian General Insurance Sector

Gram Sabha and People’s Participation in India

Dr. Debotosh Chakraborty
Assistant Professor
Department of Political Science
Assam University
Email: chayan77@gmail.com

Abstract
People’s participation has become an essential ingredient of the democratic form of government as it empowers the people to enhance their efficiency and also ensure the effective development of the society. Accordingly, Indian states have also initiated the democratic decentralisation process in the form of Panchayati Raj to intensify the rural development and encourage people to participate in the decision making process at the grassroots level. Keeping this in view all the State Legislatures in India made provisions in their respective Panchayat Act for establishing the Institution of Gram Sabha at the village level in conformity with the provision of 73rd Amendment Act. It has generally been considered as a primary body in the Panchayati Raj system that facilitates direct participation of the local people in the rural local self governance. It is in this context the present study aims to explore i) the working of the Gram Sabha, and ii) people’s participation in the Gram Sabha meetings across the region. For the purpose of the study data is collected from secondary sources such as books, journals, articles, government reports etc. The study observes that though the state legislatures in their respective Panchayat Act provided for the establishment of Gram Sabha, but such statutes remained vague and blurred about procedural practice. Specific provision is also there to hold the meeting of Gram Sabha, but in practice the meeting of such body is mere a formality. Thus, steps are required to revitalise Gram Sabha so that people’s participation increases and they get involved in assessment of the activities of Gram Panchayats including village development plan, rural development schemes and auditing accounts.

Keywords: Gram Sabha, People’s participation, Panchayat, Rural development

Introduction
With the gradual expansion of democracy in the twentieth century the states have started decentralising its power up to the lowest level with a view to transforming the society and injecting greater degree of efficiency. People’s participation has become an essential ingredient of the democratic form of government as it empowers the people to enhance their efficiency and also ensure the effective development of the society. Accordingly, Indian states have also initiated the democratic decentralisation process in the form of Panchayati Raj to intensify the rural development and encourage people to participate in the decision making process at the grassroots level. However, the concept of panchayats in India existed in one form or the other since ages. It formed the basic unit of social and economic life of the people and functioned as an effective instrument of people’s organizations at the village level. Etymologically, the term ‘panchayat’ stands as an assembly of five persons of a village which performs executive, judicial and development related functions and, therefore, also known as “Sabhas” or “Gramins”. These bodies had occupied a prestigious position and
were considered as self-sufficient small republics, fulfilling their requirements within themselves and almost independent of any foreign relations. They seem to last when nothing else lasts, dynasty after dynasty tumbles down, revolution succeeds revolution, but the village communities, each one forming a separate little state in itself has contributed more than any other cause to the preservation of the people of India (Malik, 2002). Due to their significant role in social and economic affairs these bodies were termed as “little republics” (Sir Charles Metcaffe), “local self-government” (Lord Ripon), “village republics” (B. R. Ambedkar), “Village Swaraj” (M. K. Gandhi) and “units of self-government” (Article 40 of the Indian Constitution) (Swich, 2005).

Local self-governing institution in the form of Panchayati Raj in India stands for sharing the decision making authority with lower levels. It introduces a system where local officials are accountable to the people regarding the acts of the government. It also expands the scope of social and political participation of the people. Its main purpose is to include the poor and marginalised people into mainstream and allow them to access at all spheres in order to develop the rural areas. It is accepted that self-governing institution plays a vital role for the growth of the nation and ensure participation of the people at the political process. It is expected that grassroots democracy based on small units of government enables people to feel sense of responsibility and also to make them aware about the values of democracy and also ensure effective development of the society. So, the rural development is possible only when all the people are allowed to participate in the activities of government.

To realise it in reality the Government of India passed the Seventy Third Constitution Amendment Act and thereby provided wider power of planning and execution to the village panchayats. It is a milestone in the evolution of Panchayats in India which carried out third tier of the Indian political system. It made an attempt to prescribe certain principles in developing local self-governing institution in rural India. Article 243B of this Act clearly defines the Panchayat as - the people’s forum where people will plan and execute their own decision at the local level. It is the people who make a system good in functioning and it is also the people who know their problems and can solve them effectively. Moreover, the rural development is possible only when the people are involved in decision making process. For this purpose, all the states in India have made provisions in their respective Panchayat Act for establishing the Institution of Gram Sabha at the village level in conformity with the provision of 73rd Amendment Act. It has generally been considered as a primary body in the Panchayati Raj system that facilitates direct participation of the local people in the activities of the government. It is a constitutional body that ensure effective development of the rural areas. Economic and social development of villages largely depends upon the participation of the people and effective working of Gram Sabha.

It is in this context the present study made an attempt to explore i) the working of Gram Sabha, and ii) people’s participation in Gram Sabha meetings across the region. For the purpose of the study data is collected from secondary sources such as books, journals, articles, government reports etc.

**Conceptual Framework**

Before going into an in-depth analysis it is pertinent here to brief the concept of People’s Participation, Panchayati Raj and Gram Sabha

**People’s Participation**
In modern democracy, the study of participation has gained a paramount importance. UNESCO in its meeting in 1979 defined participation as a collective sustained activity or the purpose of achieving some common objectives, especially a more equitable distribution of the benefits of development (Narayanasamy, 2007). K.R Emrich highlighted the meaning of participation through his six axioms (Ibid) – participation must begin at the lowest level. There must be real opportunities for participative decision-making for the poorest, and those decisions must relate to the aspirations of the poor more than to the wispy musings of those who will not identify with them; b) participation must take place at all stages of the development of plans, the design of implementing mechanisms, and the actual implementation; c) it must be recognized that a solitary vote is not participation. If people do not participate as members of relatively powerful groups, which serve their interests, then they participate only for the benefit of their master; d) participation must have substance and usually political clubs and cooperatives do not have substance. ‘Participative processes’ must deal with the allocation and control of goods and services related to the production process; e) participation must somehow deal with existing loyalties. If the result is merely to strengthen existing inter-class grouping it will just strengthen existing leadership; f) it must be accepted that the development of effective participation will cause conflict in some form. Mumtaz Soysal defines participation as all forms of action by which citizens ‘take part’ in the operation of administration. The ‘taking part’ refers to any level from macro to micro region or it may be of any type, e.g., advisory in nature or in participation, in decision-making or in implementation etc. People can participate through public or private bodies or other organizations (Pandey, 2009). Moser interprets participation as a means where it generally becomes a form of mobilisation to get things done. Here, people could be mobilised by the state to achieve specific goals. However, in a bottom-up approach participation is interpreted as an end, where the objective is not either fixed or a quantifiable development goal rather it is considered as a process of empowerment. The framework for analysis of people’s participation in decentralised planning is based on assumption that participation is a process to achieve the goal of development (Sethi, 2007). In the present study participation is dealt in the context of decision-making process and monitoring the execution of various rural development programmes.

**Panchayati Raj**

Panchayats have been the backbone of the Indian villages since the beginning of the recorded history. Gandhiji in 1946 had aptly remarked that the Indian Independence must begin at the bottom and every village ought to be a Republic or Panchayat having powers. Gandhiji’s dream has been translated into reality with the introduction of the three tier Panchayati Raj system to ensure People’ participation in rural development. It is often termed as self-government by the people at the grassroots level. It aims at improving the socio-economic as well as political development in the rural areas by introducing the element of people’s participation. This very concept of Panchayati Raj has a variety of interpretations such as institutional mechanism for rural development, institution of self-government at the lowest level and an agency of state government. Here, Panchayati Raj has been viewed from both democratic and developmental perspective. As a part of the democratic process Panchayati Raj has open up new opportunities for the people to participate at the decision making process and in its developmental aspect the Panchayati Raj have been assigned important role in the implementation of rural development programmes.
Gram Sabha

The Seventy Third Amendment Act has made specific provision for the establishment of Gram Sabha under Article 243A through which people can be involved in the affairs of the rural development process. The Article states that a Gram Sabha may exercise such functions at the village level as the legislature of a state may by law provide. It is a body that provides an opportunity for local people in planning and implementation of development schemes for their benefit taking into consideration the local needs. It is a parliament of the people at the village level to which Panchayat are solely responsible. Through this body, rural poor, marginalised, illiterate people get chance to participate in the affairs of the development of the village. The Gram Sabha is made as the soul of the Panchayati Raj Institution in India. It approves the annual budget and plan of developmental programmes, identifies the beneficiaries of the various programmes that are implemented by the government. It monitors the working of the village panchayat. So, it is the corner stone of the entire Panchayati Raj system as it gives opportunity to each and every people in the village panchayat to involve in the decision making process. It can be said that success of Panchayati Raj Institution largely depends upon the effective role of Gram Sabha as well as extent to which people participate in the Gram Sabha. So, this body plays a very important role in the rural development process.

Gram Sabha and People’s Participation: An analysis

To develop a nation like India it is important to encourage rural people to participate in the decision making process. Keeping this in view all the states in India made provisions in their respective Panchayat Act for the establishment of the institution of Gram Sabha at the village level in accordance with the provision of 73\textsuperscript{rd} Constitution Amendment Act. It has generally been considered as a primary body in the Panchayati Raj system that facilitate direct participation of the local people in activities which are concerned with the planning and development of their area. There are very few countries of the world where an institution of this kind of direct democracy has been brought into the system.

Gram Sabha is made as the soul of the Panchayati Raj Institution in India. It approves the annual budget and the plan of developmental programmes, identifies the beneficiaries of the various programmes that are implemented by the government, it seeks clarifications from the president or members about the works undertaken by the panchayat. It has also the duty to formulate the proposals and fixing of priority of schemes and development programmes to be implemented in the area of village panchayat, it has to prepare and submit to village panchayat a final list of eligible beneficiaries. It also monitors the working of the village panchayat. It provides each and every member of the village to participate in the decision making process in the development of the rural areas. It can be said that success of Panchayati Raj Institution as well as development of the rural areas largely depends upon the effective role of Gram Sabha as well as the extent to which people participate in the Gram Sabha.
An analysis of the available literature on Panchayati Raj reveals the miserable picture of the role of Gram Sabha and participation of the people in this body. However, the position of Gram Sabha in states like Kerala, Sikkim etc., is little better comparing to the other states of the country. In most of the states in India it is found that though the state legislatures in their respective Panchayat Act provided for the establishment of Gram Sabha, but such statutes remained vague and blurred about procedural practice. Specific provision is also there to hold the meeting of Gram Sabha, but in practice the meeting of such body is mere a formality. Most of the people remain absent from attending the meeting of the Gram Sabha and they are unaware about the various schemes of the government.

In all the states in India there is legal provision for holding meeting of Gram Sabha to discuss important issues. For instance, in Assam Gram Sabha is required to meet once in every three months. In case of Kerela, it is to meet once in a year. Similarly, in case of Orissa, there is provision of “Palli Sabha” for every village twice a year. In the case of Uttar Pradesh, two meetings are required to be held after Kharif and Rabi crop harvesting (Joshi and Narwani, 2016). Likewise, in all the states there is provision for holding the meeting of Gram Sabha. But in actual practice, in most of the villages in India regular meetings of Gram Sabha do not take place. In such villages, the Gram Sabha meeting has been reduced to mere a formality. Because a large number of people remain absent from the meeting of Gram Sabha. They are either not informed or they do not show any interest to participate in the meeting. There is feeling among the people that such meetings are dominated by a few people who are very close to Sarpanch and benefits of welfare programmes are mostly distributed among themselves. Another trend is the reluctant attitude of the women members to participate in the meeting and the elected women representatives also do not take steps to motivate women members to attend the meeting of the Gram Sabha. One of the main reasons for such lack of initiative lies in the practice of ‘proxy system’ in almost all the states in India. Consequently, most of the women representatives do not remain in touch with the problem of the people and hence majority of them do not find any relevant issues to take up. Besides, women elected representatives play a negligible role in the decision making process at the panchayat bodies.

Gram Sabha meetings are basically concentrated on the selection of beneficiaries for various governmental schemes and identification of BPL families, while a wide range of functions like reviewing activities of Gram Panchayat including existing schemes, scrutinizing annual accounts, endorsing village plan, selection of local schemes and utilization certificates remain totally untouched. Gram Sabha meetings seldom discuss on the taxation proposals and making plan for rural development works (Chakraborty, 2014). Gram Sabha becomes virtually non-functional in exercising its responsibilities as outlined in the Acts of the states.

The fact is that successful working of Panchayati Raj Institution depends upon the Gram Sabha as various developmental programmes are identified by this body. It is also the medium that audits the accounts of gram panchayat. It is in the Gram Sabha that the general people make their representatives accountable to the functioning of their duties. In almost all the villages in India it is seen that a wide range of functions like scrutinizing annual accounts and audit report, selection of local scheme, development of villages are not dealt by the Gram Sabha. It is also seen that the president and secretary of the village panchayat manipulate the decisions of the Gram Sabha meeting. Regarding the process of the selection
of the beneficiaries the president and secretary of the Gram Panchayat prepare the list of the beneficiary on their own way in advance and formally getting it approved at the Gram Sabha meeting. It is further seen that the officials of the Gram Panchayat do not attend the meeting until they are requested by the elected representatives to clarify the details of the schemes.

Suggestions and Conclusion:

It has been observed that the condition of Gram Sabha across the region is very miserable. People, in almost all the states at the grassroots level are apathetic towards their involvement in the Gram Sabha meetings. They are unaware about the various schemes of the government and even most of them have never heard about the name of such institution like Gram Sabha. So, in order to revitalise grassroots democracy and also to intensify effective rural development Gram Sabha has to be recognised as the heart and soul of Panchayati Raj system. It has to be developed as an institution where common people can get an opportunity to participate in the process of rural development. Instead of being an advisory body, the Gram Sabha should be made an approving authority for taking up any development programme at the village level, regular meeting of Gram Sabha should be conducted so that assessment of the activities of gram panchayat including existing schemes, annual account and audit report, village plan, local schemes are taken place.

The accountability and transference are two main components of success of an institution and, therefore, the state governments should issue an administrative order for displaying of all vital information for the information of Gram Sabha members a) about the development projects especially receipt of funds and how these are being spent, b) all relevant documents should be opened for inspection by the Gram Sabha members. Besides, to make Gram Sabha more effective, it is suggested that Gram Panchayats should arrange the group/ward sabhas beforehand at the village level so that interests of each group/ward are protected. It is also suggested that the list of beneficiaries should be prepared first at the group/ward/mahila sabhas and then sent to the Gram Sabha meetings for discussion and approval. Necessary amendments are required in the Acts to bring about the changes.

There is a need to arrange more and more awareness campaigns at the ward level so that people can participate in a large number in the development of rural areas. There should be mandatory provision for the officials to participate in the Gram Sabha meeting so that problems with various schemes and planning are discussed and clarified. It is also being suggested that the Gram Sabha should be allowed to function the way the parliament functions at the national level and state legislature at state level. The role and responsibility of the Gram Sabha and its functional relationship with Gram Panchayat need to be clearly spelled out. It is advised that the Gram Panchayat should conduct ward sabha at village level so that interest of the each group and ward are protected. Besides, a wide announcement or publicity reality to conduct Gram Sabha meeting has to be made in advance. Such kind of necessary initiatives will increase the level of attendance of the people in the Gram Sabha meeting and it will help to make a Gram Sabha a vibrant institution to ensure effective rural development across the country.

References


• Kumar, Girish (2006), *Local Democracy in India*, Sage Publication.


Spinoza and Philosophy’s Modernity: Radicalism versus Concealed Theologies

Paran Goswami
Research Scholar
Department of Philosophy
Gauhati University
Guwahati -- 781014
Email: parangoswami995@gmail.com

Abstract
This paper consists of a historical investigation into the philosophical radicalism of Spinoza within the theology-ridden academic milieu of seventeenth-century Enlightenment. The study evolves around the typical features of Spinoza's engagement with religion and depending on that it tries to secure a faithful position for the philosopher as a potent architect of philosophy’s modernity in respect of his consistent effort to throw any residue of medieval theology off from the domain of philosophical theorizing. The paper argues, it is only with Spinoza’s Theological Political Treatise that philosophy of seventeenth century seems to acquire the true autonomy ever with regard to the theology-ridden Scholastic hegemony as such. The Treatise, as a matter of fact, is the only philosophical book of its kind which categorically argues for the first time during the early Enlightenment what is the essence of philosophical theorizing and how it is different from religious or theological theorizing. Now, in arguing for Spinoza as the potent architect as well as the most radical figure of the entire modernity, the paper also brings into light certain disguised theological assumptions prevalent among his contemporaries, most notably his predecessor Descartes who is regarded as the father of modern philosophy.

Key Words: Spinoza, modernity, theology, Theological Political Treatise, Descartes, radical enlightenment.

I

The seventeenth century, the flourishing age of philosophy’s modernity, marked the climax of that revolt against authority and tradition which the Reformation and the Renaissance had initiated. It is the age that showered outcries of universal doubt over the tendency of the medieval intelligentsia that made human reason subservient to religion. For many preceding centuries the intellectual spirit of man had been at once guided and restrained by the rules of authority and tradition, and would not believe its own senses unless confirmed by some authority, mostly religious. Descartes was in many ways typical of that juncture – both in its forte and in its frailty, who voiced its battle-cry of that universal doubt. Gradually, however, with the rise of scientific consciousness reason became independent and there arose a succession of adventurous spirits who sought to escape from the tyranny of authority, and endeavoured to see things for themselves and to make their orientation in the light of their own rationality. In this way, Galileo Galilei accepted the reality of sunspots because he saw them with his own eyes aided by the
telescope; or embraced the heliocentric hypothesis, and was not shaken in his belief merely because it was not confirmed either by the authority of Scripture or that of Aristotle. In this way, slowly but unfailingly a group of brave heart contemporaries – representing the zeitgeist, and prompted by their inner conscience, deserted powerful and authoritative Churches and Synagogues in order to follow the guidance of their own reason.

But the revolt had its own limitations – crucial limitations. Descartes, no doubt initiated the tendency of independent and free thinking in philosophy, yet it cannot be said that he was completely free from the theological orientation of the medieval Scholastic era. Though apparently based on independent rational principles, Descartes’ summons to universal doubt remained a flourish rather than a serious call to differentiate philosophy from theology. Descartes, by introducing the procedures of geometry in the realm of philosophy, assumed that norm as his first principle of method according to which in order to be true an object or an idea must present itself to him so clearly and evidently that it is impossible for him to doubt it. And that, of all things, which could least be doubted was for him the existence of his own consciousness. Now, this is undoubtedly a masterly achievement against the backdrop of theology-ridden seventeenth century academia; and might have furnished the beginning of a sound discourse of human knowledge as well. But “Descartes had retained more from scholasticism than he himself supposed” (Land 12). The ‘ego’ to which man refers his acts of sensation, thought and will, had been transformed, as if that is self-evident, into a real independent thinking entity: the mind or self. With it, by reason of clearness and distinctness, there came at once the reality of God and the material world. In God he had not the same confidence as in self and the material world and he “at least introduced an additional guarantee in the nature of the Deity [that] who cannot surely mislead men” (Land 12). Thus, his doubts were almost unhesitatingly satisfied and consoled with the acceptance of the supernatural Deity whom he promptly burdened with the responsibility for all Cartesian beliefs and fancies. A. Wolf interestingly remarks, “No Church dignitary ever exploited God as a very ready help in time of trouble more than Descartes did” (Wolf 26); for, if his scientific endeavours proved inadequate in substantiating the origin and existence of bodies or of souls, he brought God to create them out of nothing. If the bodies need motion and rest to account for their appearances, he made God endow them with motion and rest (Descartes, Principles 240). It seems that for Descartes the phenomena of Nature were essentially miraculous – that is, the result of the incessant interference of the supernatural Deity. Therefore, “when we have given him all the credit that is due to him for his great achievements in mathematics, in optics, etc., it remains true that fundamentally he remained the loyal disciple of his Jesuit College – his ultimate philosophic orientation is essentially the same as that of the miracle-mongering Church” (Wolf 26). No doubt, Wolf’s observation might have overlooked some of the vital contributions of Descartes in giving philosophy a fresh revival at the dawn of the

1 Aristotelianism was so entrenched in the intellectual institutions throughout the later medieval period that evidence for its truth was supposed to be found in the Bible, and accordingly if someone were to try to refute any of its main tenet, then he could be accused of holding a position contrary to the word of God, see Skirry.
Enlightenment; nevertheless, it brought into light the prevailing theological bias of that
time, which even Descartes could not do away with at least in principle throughout his
philosophy.  

It is a serious disadvantage resulting from the great outward triumph of Christianity
in the succeeding centuries of Scholasticism that in all matters within the Christian
universe of discourse or in all matters which (like the three miracles – viz. creation out of
nothing, free-will and God-man relation) seemed to be sanctioned by the scriptures, even
majority of the enlightened people, philosophers included, felt justified in believing in
them so long as others could not absolutely disapprove them. Add to this the fact that
really independent and plausible world-views are very rare, because they are so difficult,
and that scepticism is not a bed of roses, but a bed of thorns for most academicians. For, it
was the same period of time in which Giordano Bruno (1548-1600) was burned at the
stake and Galilei was humiliated, imprisoned and exiled for intellectual boldness. The
philosophy of Christendom was thus exerting an almost unavoidable bearing, more or less,
on occurring advancement of human knowledge in the pan-European scene of academia.
Earlier, less sophisticated medieval theologians, who still had confidence in human
capacity for knowledge, regarded Faith as a means to knowledge. But modern, more
sophisticated theologians (or philosophers) find it necessary to shatter knowledge in order
to save theological Faith. The modesty of such scepticism (like that in Descartes) veils the
presumed doctrine of religious revelation, which is eventually being established in due
course of theorizing. The same theological biasness is no less a case even with regard to
the pioneers of science of that very century. It is easy enough to praise and to extol the
scientific work of renowned investigators like Boyle or of prodigies like Kepler and
Newton; and of course, they do, indeed deserve all the praise for novelties in their
accomplishment. But to understand them adequately and justly it is necessary also to study
their theological writings, and then one realizes the exaggerations in the usual account of
their radicalism and boldness. The collective temperament of that century is much
misunderstood when its science and its philosophy are divorced from its theology.

1 In point of fact, biographical resumes of Descartes reveal him as a devout Catholic on a deep personal level, so
much so that the Bible and Thomas Aquinas are said to be the constant companion to him in all his journeys
across the continent, see Russell, History 581-82; Rodis-Lewis 207-211. All the more, “Descartes inherited from
Copernicus and Galileo the intellectual conflict involved in attempting to develop the new astronomy and, at the
same time, to remain within the Catholic Church” (Clarke 4). He seemed to remain persuaded of the basic
soundness of the chief tenets of Christian theology in which he had been instructed, even while seeking to put
them on what he regarded as a new and better footing, through the development of a comprehensive and
rigorous philosophical system and method taking aid from the newly emerged scientific testimonies. For, “he
believed himself to have been called to this task, as a result of some dreams he had one night at Ulm in
Germany, while serving in a Dutch Army” (Schacht 5). Furthermore, in the Dedication (to the Faculty of Theology,
Sorbonne) of his most celebrated philosophical work Meditations on First Philosophy Descartes unequivocally
asserts his basic conviction: “I have always thought that two topics – namely God and the soul – are prime
examples of subjects where demonstrative proofs ought to be given with the aid of philosophy rather than
theology. For us who are believers, it is enough to accept on faith that the human soul does not die with the
body, and that God exists; but in the case of unbelievers, it seems that there is no religion, and practically no
moral virtue, that they can be persuaded to adopt until these two truths are proved to them by natural reason…. 
Hence, I thought it was quite proper for me to inquire how this may be [i.e. how could certainty of those two
truths be demonstrated using natural reason] (3).
Needless to say, underneath such extravagant theological prejudices, the same century also heard voices of daring originality that stood above these theological prejudices from which others could not entirely extricate themselves. One of the boldest and most original voices of this kind in the seventeenth century was Spinoza. “Spinoza,” as Antonio Damasio very accurately observes, “is a thinker far more famous than known” (13). The name Spinoza, throughout the life of the man and all through the history, has always been associated with the infamies pertaining to his progressive interpretation of Judeo-Christian theology and its mischievous relationship with the political authorities. Those infamies although get him certain fame, but cost him a proper understanding of his philosophy not only among the commoners but, most importantly, among the academics as well. As in the case of Enlightenment, although ‘Spinozism’ of late is regarded to be the keystone of its various ‘Radical’ discourses, still, the ‘Spinozism’ prevalent in Early Enlightenment culture often derived not from a direct reading of Spinoza’s Ethics or other works, but from reports in influential intermediaries such as Bayle or Boulainvilliers … or else other underground sources including subversive conversation, and published refutations, sources which frequently distorted or oversimplified Spinoza’s positions and arguments. (Israel, Enlightenment Contested 48) 3

Due to the controversies he got himself entangled in in his life time, he was banned for decades all through the formal academics, so much so that, with rare exceptions, he was quoted only as part of an assault and refutation (Moreau 1; Mason, The God 247). Those assaults and refutations paralyzed the few attempts his admirers initiated to discuss his ideas academically. Moreover, depriving him of his due, a grossly misapprehended group of early historians projected Spinoza as a mere Cartesian.

II

Spinoza, as a matter of fact, “emerged as the supreme philosophical bogeyman of Early Enlightenment Europe” (Israel, Radical Enlightenment 159) with the publication of his Treatise, i.e. the Tractatus Theologico-Politicus (Theological-Political Treatise) in 1670. The Treatise is one of the two works which was published during Spinoza’s lifetime, albeit the Treatise appeared anonymously. Notorious, so much it were to theologians, that the Treatise acquired the reputation of “a book forged in hell” (Nadler, A Book xi), written by the devil himself; that German theologian Jacob Thomasius fulminated against it by claiming its ban in all countries; that Regnier Mansveld, a professor at the University of Utrecht, insisted that the book was harmful to all religions and “ought to be buried forever in an eternal oblivion” (Nadler, A Book xi). The Treatise at once drew a considerable amount of upheaval against it over its supposed aim to spread

---

3 This specific point has been used by a vast majority of historians to justify an alleged gap between Spinoza’s philosophy and the ‘Spinozism’ rife in Early Enlightenment, so as to deny any major relevance of Spinoza proper in the Enlightenment. But, as the extensive reviews of a vast historical resource by Israel suggest, the point in question does not necessarily means that Early Enlightenment ‘Spinozism’ lacked coherence, or was intellectually remote from Spinoza’s system or departed fundamentally from his ideas. On the contrary, Israel holds, “it entirely confirms the correctness of Berkeley’s referring to ‘Spinosa’, in 1732, as ‘the great leader of our modern infidels’” (Enlightenment Contested 49).
atheism and libertinism throughout Christendom. The uproar over the Treatise, which itself is regarded as “one of the most important books of Western thought ever written” (Nadler, A Book xii), is also considered as one of the most significant events in European intellectual history, occurring as it did at the dawn of Enlightenment (Israel, Radical Enlightenment 198). It is a critical inquiry into the history, purpose and authenticity of the Scriptures, particularly Hebrew Scriptures. “The Bible is examined by a method which anticipates in great measure the procedure of modern rationalists” (Elwes xxx). It is an illustration of how to read Scriptures in isolation of undue reverence and superstition. A rational examination of the scriptural truths (or untruths!) was necessitated by an invariable connection of theologies and theologians with politics or the political authorities that stood as a hindrance in flourishing of any practice of free thought and free speech. This ultimately resulted in hatred, bitterness and strife in societies (Arnold 361-363). The Treatise principally presents an eloquent plea for democracy and toleration – especially the “the freedom to philosophize” or rational thinking without interference from the authorities (religious); combined with a persuasive attempt for “the grounding of civil society in religious neutrality for the sake of promoting the possibility of religious pluralism or, better, secularism within it” (Elazar 8). The Treatise extensively critiques the prejudices of theologians to equitably secure the “freedom of individual judgement,” on which, according to Spinoza, “depends the piety and peace of a commonwealth” (390). It is the Treatise, which argues for the first time – in a world that had recovered from over a century of brutal religious warfare – that the prophets of the Old Testament were ordinary human beings possessing vivid imaginative power (394-415). The Bible – perhaps the most powerful tool applied by clerics to exercise control over their flocks – is not the words of God, but a literature of human creation, chiefly made up of historical narratives and revelation (457). God’s revelations were said to be received with the aid of the prophets’ imaginative faculty alone, through the medium of words and images (403). The “divine providence” is termed as one with the eternal and necessary laws of Nature; and miracles – understood as violation of the laws of Nature – are impossible and belief in them is only an expression of our ignorance of the true causes of phenomena (445). Because prophets were ignorant of the natural causes at that time, every event which they could not adequately explain were referred to God. “Thus a storm was called the chiding of God, thunder and lightning were called the arrows of God; for they thought that God kept the winds shut up in caves, which they called the treasuries of God…. For the same reason miracles are called the works of God, that is, wonderful works” (400). The Treatise also insisted that “true religion” has nothing to do with theology or sectarian dogma, let alone scientific knowledge, but consists solely in a simple moral rule: “love thy neighbour,” i.e., the very basic moral imperative that man should love others and live by justice and charity (511). And most crucially that cleric authorities should have no role whatsoever in the governance of modern state.

The rationalist-analytic approach towards religion, which Spinoza employed throughout the Treatise, is evident in the very preface of the work which reads, “if men were able to exercise complete control over all their circumstances, or if continuous good fortune were always their lot, they would never be prey to superstition” (388). He terms
man’s arrogant adherence to religious dogmas as superstition. Religion, he argues, is nothing more than “organised superstition” (Nadler, *A Book* 53). The existential predicament which necessitates man to turn to the path of religion is thus categorically avowed without allowing any supra-rational status to the phenomenon called religion. It is fear, according to Spinoza, that engenders, preserves and fosters superstition. This being the case, Spinoza argues, “it is particularly those who greedily covet fortune’s favours . . ., and it is especially when they are helpless in danger that they all implore God’s help with prayers and womanish tears” (388-389). Thus, religion for Spinoza is an imagined solace to which men resort while troubled by the crises caused by existential limitedness. And the inevitability and universality of religious observations lie not in any “confused idea of deity possessed by all mortal,” but solely in the inevitability and universality of men’s existential predicaments. Similarly it follows that “superstitions like all other instances of hallucinations and frenzy, is bound to assume very varied and unstable forms,” (389) and hence the diversity of religions. Moreover, because religion arises not from reason but from emotion, “it is sustained only by hope, hatred, anger and deceit” (389). Power-centred ecclesiastics prey on the naivety of the common folks, taking advantage of their hopes and fears in the face of the vicissitudes of nature and unpredictability of fortune to gain control over their beliefs and their way of life. “They hold even discussion of religion to be sinful, and with their mass of dogma they gain such a thorough hold on individual’s judgement that they leave no room in the mind for the exercise of reason, or even the capacity to doubt” (389). To doubt, to exercise reason is to philosophise; this is to think free – to think with reason. It was Spinoza’s business, therefore, to expose the prejudices of the theologians, for, those were among the chief obstacles in developing a philosophical attitude in men towards the reality of Nature (Spinoza, *Correspondence* XXX). The Treatise, thus, is an extended argument for defending freedom of reason and expression in modern state by defying excessive authority and impudence of theologians in the affairs of the state and in the life of its citizens. Separation of philosophy from religion is a means to such liberty. The end of philosophy is truth and knowledge, the end of religion is pious behaviour, or “obedience.” “Philosophy rests on the study of Nature alone, whereas faith is based on history and language,” and its true imports must be derived from Scripture and revelation alone (519). Reason or philosophy, from that perspective, must not be the handmaiden of faith or theology, and vice versa. For, as the subtitle of the *Treatise* goes: “freedom for philosophising can be allowed in preserving piety and peace of the Republic; but that also it is not possible for such freedom to be upheld except when accompanied by the peace of the Republic and piety themselves.” As a matter of fact, the *Treatise* laid the groundwork for subsequent liberal or secular democracy and toleration of scientific-philosophical thinking in the ages to come, as “the chief aim of the *Treatise* is to refute

4 No less influential was his unfinished *Political Treatise*, which, according to Antonio Negri, is the work, “that founds, in theoretical terms, modern European democratic political thought” (*Subversive Spinoza* 9). Spinoza in the *Political Treatise* upholds the view that political power neither descends from God nor is constituted by a ‘once-and-for-all’ type of social contract; rather it emerges from a collective arrangement of individual forces that never surrender their perseverance in strengthening their existence with others.
the claims which had been raised on behalf of revelation throughout the ages; and Spinoza succeeded, at least to the extent that his book has become the classic document of the “rationalist” or “secularist” attack on the belief in revelation” (Strauss 69). The Treatise both makes clear Spinoza’s contempt for sectarian religions and opens the way for his subsequent reductive and naturalistic explanations of God in general and the world and human life in particular in Ethics. And of course, the TTP is not the only work that explicates Spinoza’s radicalism; the Ethics too, as a matter of fact, voices the same intensity of radicalism. The Ethics finally makes Spinoza’s system of radicalism philosophically complete by reductively replacing speculative dogmas of theology with parallel naturalistic principles of reason.

The sixteenth and seventeenth century Europe, and especially the United Provinces of Dutch Republic were governed by feudalism. Those were a highly hierarchical society where power was monarchical. Indeed, politically, the majority of their population lived in an obvious state of subordination. And culturally, beliefs were dominated by religion, even though it was in a crisis as a result of the conflict between Catholics and Protestants. Predictably, during that time, theologians were the custodians of knowledge. In that context, nobody could challenge the hegemony of religion nor the feudal system in force which used to hold human beings in fear and therefore in ignorance. Now, in such a socio-religious backdrop, Spinoza’s radicalism, putting right at the context of the pan-European Enlightenment, as renowned historian Jonathan Israel’s recent reappraisal of the history of Enlightenment suggests, was the “intellectual backbone of the European Radical Enlightenment, everywhere, not only in the Netherlands, Germany, France, Italy, and Scandinavia but also Britain and Ireland” (Radical Enlightenment vi). Spinoza, holds Israel, pioneered the “new age of spiritual and intellectual conflict, of unremitting strife between enlightenment and darkness, to establish … ‘the kingdom of happiness’ on earth” (Radical Enlightenment 412). And from that very point of view Spinozism was far more than mere transubstantiation of Cartesianism. Quite contrarily, it was the source of many controversies which are regarded to be imperative undergoing forces of the Radical Enlightenment movement. Typical among such controversies was the one ascended around the notion of ‘universal philosophical religion’ proposed by Frederik van Leenhof (1647-1713) in his book Hemel op Aarde (Heaven on Earth) (1703). The Leenhof controversy, for instance, as Jonathan Israel reckons, had created a sheer havoc to the then orthodox world throughout Netherlands, Germany, and the Baltic. It was supposed to have

---

5 Although Spinoza’s each philosophical contribution, at least in terms of their originality and implications in the seventeenth century academic context, can fairly be termed as radical, however, the radicalism referred to Spinoza by Israel in connection with Enlightenment, rather, denotes Spinozism as the single most coherent system which integrated within it the chief elements of ancient, modern, and oriental atheism. With his system, Israel observes, Spinoza imparted shape, order, and unity to the entire tradition of radical thought, and “it is primarily the unity, cohesion, and compelling power of his system ... to connect major elements of previous ‘atheistic’ thought into an unbroken chain of reasoning, rather than the novelty or force of any of his constituent concepts which explains his centrality in the evolution of the whole Radical Enlightenment” (Israel, Radical Enlightenment 230).
distilled a complete radical system of social, moral and political ideas, built on philosophical principles (of Spinoza’s) totally incompatible with authority, tradition and revealed religion, into the consciousness of the common masses (406-435). The reference to the Leenhof controversy here is thought to be pertinent as it would bring into light a condensed version of Spinoza’s revolutionary doctrines as well as the veneration of Spinozism in intellectual spheres among the local figures of Radical Enlightenment. In response to the huge outcry regarding the book’s association with the ‘wicked concepts of B. D. Spinoza’ and thereby its possible catastrophic harm on Christian religious belief, the Zwolle consistory, under the jurisdiction of which Leenhof came, formed a committee to review the book discerning its accused mischiefs. In order to fortify religion against radical philosophies by erecting a high wall between the Churches' teaching and Spinozism, the prosecutorial committee drafted an impressively thorough set of articles on ‘godless and damaging views of B. D. Spinoza’ to cast out Leenhof’s association with it and the supposed misinterpretation of revealed religion in the book. Thus, defining ‘Spinozism’ as a movement or quasi-religion engaged in universal conflict with Christian belief and values it identified seventeen core Spinozist tenets as fundamentally at odds with Christianity. The first five are – that there is only one substance which encompasses everything including God; that there is no God distinct from Nature; that all creatures belong to this single whole; that there is therefore only one infinite order of causes which determines everything that occurs; that Nature is an independent and separate cause of itself which, through a fixed necessity, produces and creates itself. The sixth is the doctrine that body and soul are not separate entities but one and the same thing, and that there are no anima separate, that is, spirit separate from bodies, and thus no ghosts, apparitions, angels, or Devils. Seventh is the doctrine that there are, in human understanding, no natural innate distinction between good and evil, these notions being human inventions designed to keep the common, ignorant people in obedience. Eighth is the concept that everything derives its reality from nature’s necessary order, and therefore there is no moral responsibility whereby the reasonable creature stands under the law of God as his true Lord and Lawgiver. Ninth comes the doctrine that the power of nature, irrespective of the Fall, governs all men under the same play of passions, so that the moral status of mankind is always the same. Next follows the teaching that human will is exclusively determined by natural causes and always determined necessarily. Eleventh is the doctrine that the ‘highest good’ is the pure understanding of God’s eternal order, leading to mastery of the passions and self-conservation in joy and cheerfulness. Twelfth is that death on earth is the end of the individual with no resurrection of bodies, or Last Judgement. Thirteenth comes the thesis that there is no divine Revelation and that it is the political authority which institutes all organised religions, Holy Scripture accordingly having no more authority than the writings of Plato, Aristotle, Cicero, Seneca and other such moralists and being written according to the understanding of the common people to inculcate obedience. Next is the claim that Biblical prophecy and other Biblical books were written on the basis of imagination and confused ideas. Fifteenth is the concept that there is a philosophical ‘general religion,’ superior to revealed religion, which permits the free expressions of all views and which has few or no points of doctrine other than love of
God and one’s neighbour, the pursuit of salvation without Christ, and obedience to the secular law and State. Then comes the doctrine that grace is the innate tendency of our nature towards acceptance of God’s eternal order; and finally seventeenth, the claim that it is permissible to tell lies to preserve oneself (Israel, *Radical Enlightenment* 417-418).

### III

These admirably concise tenets representing a remarkable feat of intellectual compression bring into light the quintessence of Spinoza’s un-orthodox philosophical principles prevalent in the wider contemplation at that particular phase of Enlightenment. The radicalism of Spinoza, as it is clear from the tenets, was not necessarily restricted to the discourse of God and religion as such. Spinoza’s anthropology too, as a matter of fact, expressed an alternative to the mediaeval prototype. Spinoza revolutionizes the concept of human being, in the sense that he no longer presents the person’s as “an empire within an empire,” but rather as Desire. Desire expresses the ontological reality of being. Human being is now capable of self-determination; he is now free from expecting the necessary rewards for his deeds. He is free from anything that afflicts him with sin which eventually obliges him to abide by scared rules and thereby to conform to holy servitude. It is the total (pertaining to theological, political, ontological, and anthropological) intellectual reorientation including a firm and uncompromising individual autonomy with regard to power and religion initiated by Spinoza that made him an emblem of ‘Radical’ Enlightenment, and as a corollary, made him “decried as the prince of atheists, Christendom’s chief foe, the ‘new Mahomet’ for almost half a century” (Israel, *Radical Enlightenment* 161). Thus, given Descartes’ and other seventeenth century philosophical stalwarts’ concealed adoration for theological presumptions, this account of Spinoza’s radicalism provides ample reason to cast him as a potent alternative inaugurator of modernism in philosophy. It is undoubtedly with Spinoza that philosophy of seventeenth century, thus, seems to acquire the true autonomy ever with regard to the theology-ridden Scholastic hegemony as such. As, it is Spinoza who finally broke the philosophical tradition of the theology-ridden medieval scholasticism, at least, in respect of his distinction between theological and philosophical orientation, his ontological naturalism as well as a secular ethical system devoid of any dictates of religion.

**Acknowledgement:** The author earnestly acknowledges the generous support and guidance of Professor Sauravpran Goswami of the department of Philosophy, Gauhati University in articulating the above write-up as a part of his doctoral thesis.

**Works Cited**

Rural Empowerment through Financial Inclusion: A Brief Review of Literature

Dr. Sandip Debnath
Assistant Teacher
DNNK Girls’ H. S. School, Silchar
Email: sandipbhumi2011@gmail.com

Abstract

Different studies regarding the Rural Empowerment through financial inclusion are conducted in different parts of the world. With the help of their findings, the Governments of various countries are able to empower the rural people. Against this backdrop, this paper attempts to find out whether there is any study on Rural Empowerment through financial inclusion in Cachar District or not. After reviewing the related literatures, this paper finds a gap and suggests the fresh researchers to conduct a study in Cachar District.

Keywords: Rural Empowerment, Financial Inclusion.

Introduction

India lives in its villages. The rural areas are characterized by large scale poverty, low levels of productivity, lack of adequate basic minimum services and social reforms. The failure in implementation of measures for rural development has led to several socio-economic disabilities like illiteracy, child labor, exploitation of women, poor housing, lack of primary healthcare facilities, poor sanitation, unavailability of potable water and poor income generation from fragmented land holdings. Exodus of the rural folk to the cities has led to the burgeoning urban population and the mushrooming of slums. A need was felt to empower the rural folk for the effective functioning of the development programs. In this respect, the issue of financial inclusion has received large importance in India during the recent years. India had invested considerable amount of resources in expanding its banking network and other infrastructure with the objective of reaching to the people. During the last 40 years huge infrastructure has been created in the banking sector. However, this large infrastructure that has penetrated even remote rural areas has been able to serve only a small part of the potential customers. While India is on a very high growth path, almost at the two-digit level, majority of the people are out of the growth process. This is neither desirable nor sustainable for the nation. We also know that one of most important driving forces of growth is institutional finance. Therefore, it is now realised that unless all the people of the society are brought under the ambit of institutional finance, the benefit of high growth will not percolate down and by that process majority of the population will be deprived of the benefits of high growth. Thus financial inclusion is not only socio-political imperative but also an economic one.

However, the statistics shows that rural and Semi-urban offices constitute a majority of the Commercial Bank offices in India. Rural bank offices as a % of total have increased from 22% in 1969 to 41% in 2007 (RBI websites). This is mainly because of
the inclusive focus of the policymakers. However, the share of rural and semi-urban in deposits and credit has been declining. Both the deposit and credit accounts are lower in rural households than urban households. So, the need for financial inclusion is due to focus on inclusion growth, banking technology has arrived and realisation that poor is bankable.

The objective of the present paper is to find out the research gap in the topic “Rural empowerment through financial empowerment”. The paper includes the review of those works and studies which are directly or indirectly related to the topic ‘Rural empowerment through financial inclusion’. A vast empirical literature exists in this aspect of rural empowerment through financial inclusion. From various sources like journals, books, encyclopedia, theses and dissertations, information have been collected and make an attempt to systematically present the review of literature.

Review of Literature

Arputhamani et al (2011), in their study reveal that Financial Inclusion is a key factor in shaping the growth process of the economy. In India, Micro Finance has emerged as a powerful tool for financial inclusion, which links low income groups with banks. Micro Finance is dominated by the Self Help Groups. So SHGs are playing a very important role in the process of financial inclusion. Motivation to save is the first and for most reason for opening an account. All the beneficiaries of micro finance accept that they have gained greater economic and social security due to the access to micro finance services. Though financial inclusion has become the buzzword in present – day financial circles, there are miles to go, before it becomes a reality among the rural population. The researcher has selected Rajapalayam block, to examine the objectives of the study, based on both primary and secondary data which is empirical in nature. Virudhunagar district consists of eleven blocks. Due to certain constraints, and to have a microscopic analysis, Rajapalyam block has been selected for this study. There are 1320 SHGs functioning in this block, out of which 25 SHGs have been selected at random. From each of these selected SHGs 10 members have been selected. Altogether 250 members have been selected as respondents of the study. Simple random sampling technique has been adopted to locate the respondents. Statistical tools like, the percentage, mean, Z-test, correlation, regression, dummy variable model and Garrett’s ranking techniques are used to analyze the collected data.

Bhatia et al (1987), in their study evaluate that although financial inclusion – the delivery of banking services at an affordable cost to the vast sections of disadvantaged and low income groups – has become the buzzword in financial circles, it has still a long way to go. The results of a study conducted in selected slums of Mumbai to gauge the nature of financial inclusion bust certain myths about banking practices among urban slum-dwellers. The findings of the study provide valuable insights and bust certain myths regarding financial inclusion particularly among the urban slum-dwellers. Consequently they have important policy implications. (i) Only one third of the respondents had a saving bank account, (ii) among those who did not have a bank account, only 8% had ever tried opening a bank account but were unsuccessful. The remaining had never approached a bank. (iii) Out of the respondents who did not have a bank account, only 1/5th was saving privately. Thus, it may be concluded that although financial inclusion
has become the buzzword in present day financial circles, there are miles to go before it become a reality in the urban population.

Barik (2008) argues that Commercial banks, RRBs, Co-operatives, Govt. MFIs, SHGs, Post Offices, NGOs etc. are the provider of financial services and these have either adequate or inadequate presence in rural areas of the country. Co-operative Societies like, Primary Agricultural Credit Co-operative Societies, MFIs, SHGs, Post offices are restricted to provide only savings / deposits and loan / borrowing facilities and they are not permitted for payment and remittance facilities. Hence their operation under financial inclusion partially covered. Only the commercial banks, RRBs and District Central Co-Operative Banks fulfill the purpose of total financial inclusion. Again, the developed countries and the developing country like India are making effort for financial inclusion in order to improve the financial condition and standards of lives of the poor and disadvantaged. The more developed the society the greater is the thrust on empowerment of the common person and marginal income groups in the lower strata of the society. In France it is a statutory right of the every citizen to have bank account. The financial inclusion task force in UK has identified three priority areas for the purpose of financial inclusion. These are – (i) access to banking (ii) access to affordable credit and (iii) access to free face to face money advice. Financial inclusion fund is established in UK in order to promote financial inclusion and assigned responsibility to banks and credit unions remove the barriers of financial exclusion.

Chattopadhyay (2011), in his study, seeks to examine the extent of financial inclusion in West Bengal. It is observed from the study that although there has been an improvement in outreach activity in the banking sector, the achievement is not significant. An index of financial inclusion (IFI) has been developed in the study using data on three dimensions of financial inclusion. The study shows that Kolkata district leads with the highest value of IFI followed by Darjeeling. Only one district, viz. Kolkata belongs to the high IFI group with IFI value of 0.5 or more and the rest of the districts belong to the low level of IFI value (i.e. 0-0.3). This implies that the State has to go a long way in achieving financial inclusion. In order to get a comparable picture, state-wise IFI has also been computed and it is found that Kerala tops the list in financial inclusion followed by Maharashtra and Karnataka. Apart from this computation, a survey has also been conducted in West Bengal in order to gauge the financial inclusion in rural Bengal and the results reveal that around 38 per cent of the respondents feel that they do not have sufficient income to open an account in the bank. It is also revealed that moneylenders are still a dominant source of rural finance despite wide presence of banks in rural areas. In a nutshell, it is observed that although various measures have been undertaken for financial inclusion, the success is not found to be considerable. However, only supply side factor is not responsible for the financial exclusion. Demand side factors are also equally responsible for this exclusion. Thus there is a need to solve both these problems with the help of appropriate policies. A whole-hearted effort is called for from all the corners of the society, viz., banks, beneficiaries and regulators in order to make financial inclusion more meaningful and effective.

Dutta et al (2002), in their study express that Women of rural communities in India are handicapped by entrenched caste, class and gender hierarchies, ethnic and
religious discrimination as well as unequal distribution of resources. Poor women of rural communities adopt many creative strategies to cope with difficult and highly unequal situations. However, programmes taken up by the government for the empowerment of women of rural communities often fail to recognize these. This is mainly because while developing an analytical framework for examining empowerment, women's own definitions and understandings are seldom heard. This paper analyzes government-initiated development experiences of rural women in India. It is based on extensive fieldwork by the authors during 1995–2000 in the Burdwan district of West Bengal in eastern India where another research project on rural–urban interactions was ongoing. The field interviews culminated in an intensive group discussion well-attended by women of rural communities. Several cases were thoroughly dissected in this six-hour long focused group discussion. Our intention is to bring forward women’s own views and comments on government policies and development programmes for women of rural communities in a specific region. These views should be heard by decision-makers before policy formulation. We also highlight the successes and failures of such government programmes as seen by rural women in an exploration of possible alternatives emerging from these views.

Hughes (1987), states that during the 1980s, a variety of economic forces have contributed to a crisis in agriculture. This economic crisis has led to record numbers of farm foreclosures, closings of rural businesses, and decreased viability of some rural communities. The evidence suggests that these economic problems have led to individual, family, and community problems. An increasing number of local, state, and federal organizations and government bodies have initiated efforts to address these rural concerns. In this article an empowerment strategy will be considered as a possible approach to rural revitalization. Several programs that have utilized an empowerment process will be examined. Finally, additional efforts based on empowerment principles will be suggested.

Kamath et al (2008), in their study find the two very simple exercises; first, they look at the relationship between the levels of access to institutional finance and the fraction of households that have debt outstanding tend to have only middling levels of access to institutional finance and the correlation co-efficient between these two variables is quite poor. Second, they show that very simple regression tools can be used to discern disparities in access to finance at the state level. Therefore, their empirical findings quantitatively reinforces the notion that “addressing both demand and supply side aspects. The decade of the 1990s has seen a concern that the banking sector growth has slowed down in the rural areas, especially in reaching out to the rural poor-- the small and marginal farmers. The thrust on financial inclusion, among other things, aims to correct that.

Karmakar (2010) has stated that bringing about integrated rural development in a vast country has its challenges. The constant demand for food security, the need for financial inclusion, the challenge of poverty alleviation, ensures equitable regional development enhancing rural credit flow, strengthening rural financial institution, enabling rural employmen, participating in planning approaches and ensuring equitable growth through appropriate infrastructure creation, building micro-finance institutions
and SHGs and all gigantic challenges. That NABARD has been addressing all these tasks in equal measure is a tribute to the excellent systems and processes and staff, NABARD has been able to deploy, along with its slender financial resources without any concessional funding. The support of RBI, Banks and the state / central govt. has ensured that the task of rural development is continued at rapid pace. The use of technology as also innovative systems and process ensures due efficiency and continued effectiveness in the assault on poverty. The aim of commercialising agriculture and enabling farmers the largest private sector segment in the country to reap the benefits and earn profits from their labour is our avowed goal.

Nagarajan and Meyer (2006), in their study reveal that rural communities remain the largest unserved market for financial services. Ensuring their financial inclusion can unlock the considerable economic potential of rural areas. The study also reveals that about 70% of adults in the developing would have not access to financial services, a percentage far higher in rural areas. Rural households can have relatively stable incomes. They often have diverse sources of income from a variety of farm and non-farm activities. Access to financial services that serve productive needs and protective purposes can provide further stability. Recent experiences shows that a number of micro-finance institutions (MFIS) have increased their rural operations while market pressures have driven others to terminate their rural operations. Member own financial institutions such as, SHGs, Savings and Credit Co-operatives (SACCOs) are increasing in numbers. Post offices saving banks are emerging as significant providers of deposit services in rural areas.

Rakshit (2010), states that a major hurdle to gainful employment of labour and other resources and to inclusive growth is the credit constraint faced by unorganised enterprises including farmers. The task of financial inclusion cannot be left to private initiative. The net marginal benefit from financial inclusion approximates the return on resources used by the borrower less their opportunity cost less the cost of processing and administration of loans to SMEs. Hence apart from the fact that the net returns differential between SMEs and big borrowers is not as high as it might appear at first sight, a lack of infrastructural facilities and skill shortage in rural and semi-urban areas limits the optimal scale of credit in the unorganised sector. This suggests two important policy rules -- (i) as the optimal lending rates cannot be lower than the opportunity - cum - administrative cost, the rates need to be higher for SMEs, especially in remote areas. Hence, debt financing of capital expenditure for promoting financial inclusion could strengthen rather than impair fiscal viability, the govt.’s borrowing cost being lower than the return on private investment, deployment of public funds for removal of the credit constraint would be a profitable proposition. (ii) Optimality considerations rule out substantial front - loading only a physical infrastructural and human resources gap are being eliminated, would there be enlarged scope for expansion of credit to the marginalised sector. Thus, the optimal time profiles of public investment and its critical components are closely related with one another and constitute a most important determinant of GDP growth.

Swamy et al (2000) attempt to comprehend and distinguish the significance of Financial Inclusion in the context of a developing country like India wherein a large
population is deprived of the financial services which are very much essential for overall economic growth of a country. The consensus is that finance promotes economic growth but the magnitude of impact differs. Financial inclusion is intended to connect people to banks with consequential benefits. Ensuring that the financial system plays its due role in promoting inclusive growth is one of the biggest challenges facing the emerging economies. We therefore advocate that financial development creates enabling conditions for growth when access to safe, easy and affordable credit and other financial services by the poor and vulnerable groups, disadvantaged areas and lagging sectors is recognised as a pre-condition for accelerating growth and reducing income disparities and poverty. Access to a well-functioning financial system, by creating equal opportunities, enables economically and socially excluded people to integrate better into the economy and actively contribute to development and protects themselves against economic shocks.

Shylendra (2004) makes an attempt to critically assess the SHG-Bank linkage programme focusing on its approach and the strategy and arrive at possible ways to take it forward. The main aim of the programme being implemented since 1992 is to tap the potential of the SHG concept to bring banking services to the doorsteps of poor. In terms of reaching physical targets, the programme seems to have done quite impressively in the last one decade. It has all the potential to unfold new avenues for banking with the poor. The results achieved so far appear to be the outcome of the persistent effort made by the NABARD in mobilising a large number of NGOs and financial institutions through cheaper refinance and capacity building support. While NGOs have emerged as prominent players in the programme, the programme still has a very long way to go if it has to become a core strategy of the banking sector. The key to the future success lies in retaining the basic character and strength of SHGs along with integrating them appropriately with outside systems to meet the needs of the members in an enduring way. This calls for highly co-ordinate efforts among all the stoke holders at different levels.

Tejani (2011) points out that the objective of the paper is to study financial inclusion in rural areas, reasons for low inclusion, satisfaction level of the rural people toward banking services and to assess the performance of the banks which are working in the rural areas which mainly include the co-operative banks and regional rural banks. Structured questionnaire designed on the basis of literature review was used to collect data from 200 people residing in Ambasan, Jotana and Khadalpur villages of Gujarat. The paper first describes in detail the financial inclusion status in India and Gujarat followed with a review of scenario at the global level. The third section analyses the data with the help of Chi-square test and Tabulation followed with the discussion of analysis, recommendations and conclusion indicating that there is lot of opportunity for the commercial banks to explore the rural unbanked areas. Though Regional Rural Banks (RRBs) and Primary Agriculture Credit Societies (PACS) have good coverage but most of them are running into losses. Commercial banks should seize this opportunity rather than looking at it as a social obligation.

Tiwari (2011) points out that Financial Inclusion is the provision of variety of appropriate financial services such as savings, credit, insurance, cash payment and transfer facilities at an affordable cost for poverty reduction and social enhancement of underprivileged section. Financial Inclusion has improved in Assam when compared to
other north-eastern states over a period of five years (from 2006 to 2010). The number of bank branches, no-frills accounts; issue of KCCs and GCCs has registered increasing trend in Assam from the year 2006 to 2010. However, access does not always lead to usage. Hence primary level research is advocated to cross examine the claim of the supply side. It will provide the policymakers a base for shaping the future policy decisions. The present paper attempts to examine the progress of the financial inclusion initiatives in Assam by analyzing the figures provided by the State Level Bankers Committee reports and RBI reports. An analytical study is made to examine the progress by the formal financial system in Assam in priority sector lending, opening of no-frills accounts, and issue of KCCs and GCCs. Financial inclusion started take off in Assam in 2006 with and recorded a considerable growth in terms of various initiatives. It stood as the leading state in the region extending financial services to those who were out of the formal financial net hitherto. However, a gap is seen between the technology partners and financial providers. Difficult physiological structure and complex socio-cultural factors has also impacted the spread.

**Tripathy et. al (2006),** assess the governance issues in the operations of SHGs in rural India. Varimax analysis of the performance parameters identifies the underlying factors which have an impact on the governance of SHGs and the performance of micro finance ventures. The main problem areas are found to be low financial base development to the absence of appropriate credit linkages, non-provision of socio-economic incentives to members and the lack of group commitment to task accomplishment. The results underline the need for an integrated approach to programme governance in rural areas. The paper concludes with policy lessons which can help in improving the implementation of rural self-employment programmes.

**VonDoepp (2002),** in his study, investigates the role of local churches in empowering citizens, the study found that the local Catholic church was more effectively fostering a nascent sense of political efficacy among women than were local Presbyterian churches. Explaining this finding, the article presents two issues that expose problems in the liberal understanding of civil society, and underscore important themes raised in the critical discourse. First, the study reveals that organisations characterised by decentralised authority structures and internal democracy may fail to contribute to the empowerment of marginalised citizens. Such organisations are prone to reproduce and exacerbate local inequalities and conflicts within their structures. Second, corroborating critical views, the study highlights the importance of recognising how power relations affect the character and operation of civil society organisations. The adjusting of power relations within organisations may be a prerequisite to their serving an empowering role with marginalised citizens.

**Research Gap**

From the above review of literature, it is quite clear that there is barely any study that has tried to evaluate Rural Empowerment through financial inclusion in and around Assam. This creates a vacuum in the literature. From the review of literature, it is observed that both the Government of India and the Government of Assam have introduced various financial inclusion schemes to empower the rural people of Assam but the benefits of these schemes do not reach to the actual target, i.e., rural households. So, it
is one of the golden opportunities to the fresh researchers to fill-up the gap by taking the case of Cachar, which is one of the backward districts of Southern Assam as it helps to find out the constraints of financial inclusion to empower the rural people in Cachar. When the constraints are detected, then it is easy for the Government to take necessary steps to remove them through formulating various policies. A well-known maxim is that a physician treats the patient’s disease when he finds out the real cause of disease. Similarly, this kind of study prepares a ground which solves the various problems of financial inclusion in rural areas. Further, the study may be helpful for strengthening local institutions such as co-operatives, RRBs etc. and also encouraging penetration into unbanked and backward areas and encouraging agents and intermediaries such as NGOs, business correspondents (BCs) and others. Thus, in the long run, this kind of study shows crystal clear a new light in the way of sound economic growth of the backward region, like, Cachar District.

References


Abstract

The difficulty and expense of preserving digital information is a potential impediment to digital library development. Preservation of traditional materials became more successful and systematic after libraries and archives integrated preservation into overall planning and resource allocation. Digital preservation is largely experimental and replete with the risks associated with untested methods. Digital preservation strategies are shaped by the needs and constraints of repositories with little consideration for the requirements of current and future users of digital scholarly resources. This article discusses the present state of digital preservation, articulates requirements of both users and custodians, and suggests research needs in storage media, migration, conversion, and overall management strategies.

Keywords: Digital Preservation, Preservation strategies, Digital archive, Emulation, Encapsulation

1. Introduction

Digital Preservation is an area characterized by a high level of uncertainty. It deals with a continuum of experimentation, discovery are employed in the search for preservation techniques and solutions. In order to effectively operate in such an environment, a high technological awareness is essential for the digital preservation. Librarians need to keep pace with technological change, monitor trends in thinking about digital preservation issues, and maintain an awareness of international standards. Libraries should be ready to explore new methods of application. Appropriate knowledge bases can be developed through accessing of internet resources such as subscription to discussion lists, networking, monitoring research and projects, and participation in state of the art conferences. Knowledge of the technological implications and the legal and political framework is must within which digital preservation initiatives may operate.

A major difficulty in any newly emerging discipline, such as digital preservation, is the lack of a precise and definitive taxonomy of terms. Different communities use the same terms in different ways which can make effective communication problematic. The following working sets of definitions are those used throughout the handbook and are intended to assist in its use as a practical tool. These definitions will not necessarily achieve widespread consensus among the wide ranging communities the handbook is aiming at, they are offered here as a mechanism to avoid potential ambiguities in the body of the handbook rather than as a definitive gloss. Where they have been taken from existing glossaries, this has been acknowledged.

Preservation is a branch of library and information science concerned with maintaining or restoring access to artifacts, documents and records through the study,
The concept of preservation knows how to be characterized as communication with the future. It is known that in the future new technology will be used that is more cost effective and more sophisticated than modern technology.

2. The Importance of Preserving Digital Information

Since the advent of computers in the early part of the last Century, the society has been moving into the electronic world at an increasingly rapid pace. With this comes the transformation of the cultural materials from their traditional forms into digital forms. This change has caused some alarm given the ephemeral nature of the digital environment.

The rapidly evolving nature of the electronic medium renders technologies obsolete in a remarkably short time and the ability to access older electronic documents. The artifactual value of electronic art is much different than the artifactual value of more conventional art forms. Because of changing technologies, electronic art originals can only be accessed/viewed/played for a very short time period. Libraries in particular have struggled to address these issues given the ease of creating electronic texts driving the resultant growth of electronic scholarly publishing but these problems are rapidly catching up to museums as digitization projects take hold and creators begin to experiment with the unique properties and abilities of the digital medium.

It will become increasingly important to address the long term sustainability of both physical and digital information and ensure that this knowledge is diffused across society. Traditionally libraries have served as the archivists of information and knowledge – potentially this approach should be applied to the digital world. Without a comprehensive approach to digital preservation, physical books may be lost forever while inane Facebook comments will be preserved for eternity. We currently create more new digital information each day than was created in during all of human history. If physical books are not available online they might as well not exist. Historically speaking less than 1% of human knowledge was captured in physical books, which makes those that remain even more valuable given that vast amount of information and knowledge that we have already failed to capture/acquire.

A balance needs to be struck between implementing top down centralised information management structures/regulation and harnessing the capacity of this Internet for horizontal communication and engagement whilst drawing upon the innovative potential of crowd generated information and knowledge.

3. The Digital Preservation Challenge

Society's heritage has been presented on many different materials, including stone, vellum, bamboo, silk, and paper. Now a large quantity of information exists in digital forms, including emails, blogs, social networking websites, national elections websites, web photo albums, and sites which change their content over time. With digital media it is easier to create content and keep it up-to-date, but at the same time there are many challenges in the preservation of this content, both technical and economic.

Unlike traditional analog objects such as books or photographs where the user has unmediated access to the content, a digital object always needs a software environment to render it. These environments keep evolving and changing at a rapid pace, threatening the
continuity of access to the content. Physical storage media, data formats, hardware, and software all become obsolete over time, posing significant threats to the survival of the content. This process can be referred to as digital obsolescence.

In the case of born-digital content (e.g., institutional archives, Web sites, electronic audio and video content, born-digital photography and art, research data sets, observational data), the enormous and growing quantity of content presents significant scaling issues to digital preservation efforts. Rapidly changing technologies can hinder digital preservationists work and techniques due to outdated and antiquated machines or technology. This has become a common problem and one that is a constant worry for a digital archivist—how to prepare for the future.

Digital content can also present challenges to preservation because of its complex and dynamic nature, e.g., interactive Web pages, virtual reality and gaming environments, learning objects, social media sites. In many cases of emergent technological advances there are substantial difficulties in maintaining the authenticity, fixity, and integrity of objects over time deriving from the fundamental issue of experience with that particular digital storage medium and while particular technologies may prove to be more robust in terms of storage capacity, there are issues in securing a framework of measures to ensure that the object remains fixed while in stewardship.

Digitization is sometimes recommended as a preservation strategy for materials that are in fragile formats and should not be used frequently. For example, digitizing pages of delicate manuscripts preserves access to the information on the pages. However, digital objects themselves must be preserved. Rapid changes in technology require institutions to create preservation strategies to ensure longevity for digital materials. There are certain technological changes that affect digital files. These are changes in the media on which digital objects are stored and format changes in technical environments.

4. Digital Preservation Strategies

While digital technologies are enabling information to be created, manipulated, disseminated, located and stored with increasing ease, preserving access to this information poses a significant challenge. Choice of strategy will depend upon the nature of the material and what aspects are to be retained. Refreshing (copying information without changing it) offers a short-term solution for preserving access to digital material by ensuring that information is stored on newer media before the old media deteriorates beyond the point at which the information can be retrieved.

The migration of digital information from one hardware/software configuration to another or from one generation of computer technology to a later one, offers one method of dealing with technological obsolescence. While adherence to standards will assist in preserving access to digital information, it must be recognized that technological standards themselves are evolving rapidly. The importance of documentation as a tool to assist in preserving digital material is universally agreed. In addition to the metadata necessary for resource discovery, other sorts of metadata, including preservation metadata, describing the software, hardware and management requirements of the digital material, will provide essential information for preservation.

4.1. Emulation
Emulation is the replicating of functionality of an obsolete system. According to van der Hoeven, "Emulation does not focus on the digital object, but on the hard- and software environment in which the object is rendered. It aims at (re)creating the environment in which the digital object was originally created. Examples are having the ability to replicate or imitate another operating system. Examples include emulating an Atari 2600 on a Windows system or emulating WordPerfect 1.0 on a Macintosh. Emulators may be built for applications, operating systems, or hardware platforms. Emulation has been a popular strategy for retaining the functionality of old video game systems, such as with the MAME project. The feasibility of emulation as a catch-all solution has been debated in the academic community. (Granger, 2000)

Given the problems just outlined, the dominant approach to digital preservation has been that of migration. Migration is the process of transferring data from a platform that is in danger of becoming obsolete to a current platform. This process has both dangers and costs. The notable danger is that of data loss, or in some cases the loss of original functionality or the look and feel of the original platform. For these reasons, some have seen emulation as an alternative and superior strategy. The essential idea behind emulation is to be able to access or run original data/software on a new/current platform by running software on the new/current platform that emulates the original platform. The staunchest advocate of emulation has been Jeff Rothenberg whose views I will examine in some detail.

4.2. Encapsulation

Encapsulation in the context of preserving digital materials is a technique of grouping together a digital object and anything else necessary to provide access to that object. This technique aims to overcome the problems of the technological obsolescence of file formats because the details of how to interpret the digital bits in the object can be part of the encapsulated information. Encapsulation can be achieved by using physical or logical structures called “containers” or wrappers” to provide a relationship between all information components, such as the digital object and other supporting information such as a persistent identifier, metadata, software specifications for emulation.

May be seen as a technique of grouping together a digital object and metadata necessary to provide access to that object. Ostensibly, the grouping process lessens the likelihood that any critical component necessary to decode and render a digital object will be lost. Appropriate types of metadata to encapsulate with a digital object include reference, representation, provenance, fixity and context information. Encapsulation is considered a key element of emulation.

4.4. Risk Management in Digital Preservation:

Risk Management involves several stages, including identifying what can go wrong, assessing the risks and categorizing them by level of risk and the implementation of strategies to minimize or negate those risk. Given the constantly evolving nature of digital preservation, risk management should be an ongoing process, to be reviewed on a continuous basis.

5. Preservation Threats

The Preservation threats fall into four preservation threat categories: media failure, hardware failure, software failures, and operator errors.
5.1. Media Failure

Media failures are common in e-environment. In particular, problems are encountered with portable hard drives used to transfer files. However, fixity checks performed on the files as part of the transfer process readily catch these problems. Procedures required to maintain local copies of the files is their verification and backup.

5.2. Hardware Failure

There may be a malfunction within the electronic circuits or electromechanical components (disks, tapes) of a computer system. Recovery from a hardware failure requires repair or replacement of the offending part. Contrast with software failure. However, software is stored and executed by electronic hardware, and the intended system functionality that is specified by the software may not be provided by an embedded system if potential electronic hardware failures occur or if the software is incorrect.

5.3. Software Failures

The software failures relevant to preservation occur usually during project development. The software failures can involve repository code as well as file system software.

5.4. Operator Errors

The most significant threats to preservation can occur as a result of operator errors. The operator error involves the deletion of a large number of files from a section of a file system managed by repository. The reason that the operator can be manually deleting files from the repository managed file system to compensate for the difficulty in performing cleanup of repository when an error occurs in the midst of a lengthy ingest. Repository’s lack of auditing capabilities contributes to this problem.

6. Conclusion

This paper discussed the current trends in the recorded and explicit scholarly knowledge finding its way into our institutions and some of the proven methods of their efficient handling, effective access and management. Any forward looking enterprise or institution of these days needs to be open to the changing information environment. Timely and strategically framed organizational transformation is a prerequisite for survival alone. For a learning organization in particular, scholarly information is the critical piece that transforms fact into knowledge. In the current practical institutional setting the recorded knowledge reaches our libraries by way of established scholarly publication types both in print as well as digital formats. There is an amazing penetration of scholarly digital information through a variety of forms and formats, standards and platforms, in which documents are published, which pose a multiplicity of threats to the information professional who is supposed to be the custodian and service provider of these information products. From the user perspective, what is important is the seamless access and uninterrupted services offered by the information system, no matter what kind of format and platform in which these information rests, whether sourced from internal repositories or from outside.

References
• http://trends.ifla.org/expert-meeting-summary/the-importance-of-digital-preservation
• http://www.dlib.org/dlib/october00/granger/10granger.html
• http://www.ijdc.net/index.php/ijdc/article/view/50/35
A Study on Disaster Management Practices at Libraries and Information Centers in the North Eastern Region of India: An Overview

Dr. Sangita Das Talukdar
Librarian
R.S. Girls' College, Karimganj
Email: sangitatalukdar83@gmail.com

Abstract
This paper is a study to know the disaster management practices by the academic libraries of North East India. The study includes 8 reputed libraries of the region on the basis of collection, services and users. The study is based on survey results and a mix of questionnaire, interview methods and websites are used for the study. Data was collected about the library collections, services, buildings, furniture's, machines, security measures etc. It is found that none of the libraries have any disaster management plan. The central library of IIT Guwahati has a better position compared to other libraries with regard to earthquake and fire fighting. The awareness and preparation level of the academic libraries to meet any disaster is quite low.

Keywords: disaster management, information resource management, Earthquake, Natural disaster, Disaster Recovery, preservation

Introduction
Libraries are considered as custodians of knowledge and safe heaven, the very souls of a country where individuals come to accomplish their scholarly, recreational and spiritual thirst. Human civilization owe a lot to libraries as the knowledge in libraries collections in form of published literature, manuscripts, lectures notes, audio-visuals, computer programs, ocean of e-resources etc are the priceless heritage for mankind. Libraries have witnessed and came gaudily with the changes of time, space and technology. From papyrus, leaves, parches we have come to library 3.0 where information is in bytes. Virtual reference desk services, remote access to library resources are familiar in any university libraries today knowledge cannot be confined within the walls in fact it reaches far and wide within the twinkling of the eyes. With a view to safeguarding the world’s documentary heritage, (Majumdar 2005) in his study mentioned about UNESCO’s programme “Memory of the Word- The consequences of the loss of such materials are unimaginable and it is an obligation that the librarians and other information professionals in charge of these repositories take every necessary steps/precautions to ensure that the materials are in stable and usable conditions. In contrast to museum items that are rarely handled, library materials are meant to be used; they have to be conserved and stored in an ideal and secure environment to arrest their decay, but such condition must also be comfortable for library users.”
Disasters are happening everywhere and libraries are no exception to disasters. From past times collection are destroyed and damaged beyond repair. (Raven 2004) covered the history of library disasters in four periods from Antiquity to Middle ages; Reniassance to 19th century; the world wars and 1950 to the present date. The disasters include looting, wars, religious conflicts; natural phenomena like floods, earthquakes; elimination of libraries in China during Cultural Revolution; disasters in Iraq library. From the great fires of library of Nalanda, Taxasala and Alexzendria to the endless list of tsunami hit disasters in Japan.

Storms, hurricanes, floods, earthquake and other natural disasters can damage the library infrastructure in a matter of minutes like a house of cards. Buildings without earthquake safety standards fall like as if they were made of sand. Libraries in New Orleans following Hurricane Katrina experiences the worst of what can happen in a natural disaster. Although the Howard-Tilton Memorial Library had an up to date comprehensive disaster plan just before two months Hurricane Katrina struck. (Elisa 2011) Yet when Katrina hit New Orleans, the plan could not anticipate the enormity of the disaster, mandatory response, special equipment and above all the experience that was needed. (Elisa 2011) The Manoa Library of University of Hawaii had a regularly reviewed, rehearsed and updated disaster plan in place for 10 years but during the flood at 2004 the damage to the library service was unexpected. Sixty staff work areas were destroyed and books were kept in the dark for three months due to loss of electricity.

(Britannica 2005) SARS epidemic forced the closing of the Chinese National Library from April 24 to June 9 in 2003. Madras University library in Chennai is the victim of tsunami in 2004. (Kaur 2009) National Library of Khurshid in Muzaffarabad suffered an irreparable loss as it was near the epicentre during the earthquake and the Central Library of the Azad Jammu and Kashmir University in Pakistan was shackled by the continuous aftershocks and books were all off shelves the library closed for 2 years.

Disaster Management Plan

India suffers heavily from natural disasters of different kinds considering this fact the Parliament of India passed the Disaster Management Bill 2005. It is a high time for all the organizations that they should immediately start working for disaster management plan. According to the IFLA manual, five different stages need to be included in a disaster management plan and they are:

(1) Risk assessment (potential risks should be evaluated and rated according to their likelihood of occurrence as well as their consequences).

(2) Prevention and Protection (prevention is concerned with the adoption of measures that will prevent an event from occurring, while protection is concerned with measures to protect the library after the occurrence of an event).

(3) Preparedness (developing a disaster management plan, clarifying the roles of disaster response team members, ensuring the availability of the plan, revising the plan, staff training, identifying the priority material for salvaging, maintaining and updating the appropriate documents to support the implementation of the plan, establishing and maintaining links with
outside agencies and individuals, collecting and maintaining supplies that will be used as an emergency equipment, arranging for immediate contingency funding, identifying and organizing a “recovery” area, drawing up various scenarios for re-establishing basic services to users).

(4) Reaction (at this stage the protection of human lives constitutes a basic priority in every emergency situation)

(5) Recovery (actions that ensure the recovery of services to users, repairing building damages and insurance coverage).

Finally, the IFLA activity on Preservation and Conservation (PAC) through numerous conferences and publications provides support, information and training for disaster management.


(Topper 2008) shared their experiences about how their staff dealt with hurricane Katrina and set up a recovery centre. McKnight and Zach (2007) conducted a survey about the Lousiana Libraries and information services provided by them after Hurricane Katrina and Rita struck Lousina in 2005.

(Oliver 2006) shared in detail about the ill-fated experiences that he had to deal after hurricane Katrina struck his library and advocated strongly for a DMP for each and every library. He emphasized about the designing of a disaster plan and how to provide the basic services that should be provided to the library users in and after any disaster.

(Yeh 2007) gave in detail about developing a robust disaster plan for a health library and found that floods damage the paper collections most.

(Eden and Mathews 1997) discussed at length about the one year project ‘Disaster management in British Libraries’ that consisted of 30 organizations and 62 disaster control plans and the multifaceted outcomes.

(Kostagiolas and Araka 2011) provided the results of the survey conducted about the risk and disaster management policies of the 22 Academic Libraries in Greece.

(Kaur Trishanjit 2009) in his paper discussed about the lack of disaster management plan in the two university library of Punjab. Their experience about the disaster, losses incurred and actions taken in libraries is discussed.

(Shaheen M. A 2008) mentioned and discussed how adversely the earthquakes have affected the libraries and education centres in the Azad Kashmir.

**Disaster Management in libraries**

In all these set-up the role of information professionals, government, entrepreneurs, staffs, students increases manifold to meet the dual purpose of protection and assistance.

In library and information science parlance very less is being mentioned about disaster management. If we consult the library and information science literature we will find very less is written about information services in and after any disaster. Even very less is discussed about disaster management in library schools. We information professionals boast
of digital library, virtual library, library services at handset but we are forgetting the fundamental concept of library development without disaster management.

**Protection of the various components in a library**

Broadly if we categorize the various aspects of security in a library then there are 3 zones of protection in a library and information centre and they are

3.112. **Library material** – Building, furniture, computers and accessories, tape cassettes, video recorder, photocopy machines, office equipments, maintenance equipments, storage items, electric appliances and all other miscellaneous inventories.

3.113. **Information records**: Disaster prevention of information resources requires demands decisions about where to store data or records in various formats whether paper; electronic; audio and video; assessing the environment for potential problems; and an action plan for reducing those threats. Original manuscripts, area maps, prints, ledgers, government materials, documents, books and journals, microfilm, databases, rare arts, relics, software’s, diagrams, patents and a multitude of other diverse materials. Among the major security problems following are the most concerned security problems and they are data corruption, workstation security, server administration, user authentication, computer viruses, public access networked microcomputers

3.114. **Staffs and users**: Human life is precious, utmost care is to be taken for lives of those persons who come to library to achieve their goal and equally important are the lives of individuals working in the library.

**Components of a disaster management plan in a library**

Disaster management is a never ending continuous process which stands on the backbone of teamwork and each of the stages of disaster management process in context of libraries are described in the diagram below,

![Disaster Management Process Diagram](image)

**Prevention**

Here follows the old adage that *prevention is better than cure*. In a library the first step in disaster prevention is assessing the organization storage locations and environments. ([www.ieldresponsenetwork.com](http://www.ieldresponsenetwork.com))

1. Identification of the vital records i.e. records which don’t have duplicates must be first considered and through scanning, photocopying, computer backups on CD’s and DVD’s the
information can be preserved. Rare arts, manuscripts, notes, patents, policy documents, official papers and fragile items. Master copy of the key transaction documents should be kept in a safe location outside the library.

1. Digital preservation ensures longer life and the e-records should be backed up on a regular basis. Weekly and to use a fireproof lockup box is best.
2. Alternate sites: to restore the information in the event of a disaster keeping backup copies in a remote site is a wise decision.
3. The storage media should have high life expectancy, disaster resistant and high storage space.

**Preparedness**

It’s a truth that disasters occur, in spite of supreme care while we anticipate the disasters and their preventive measures. Librarian must prepare themselves and consider the facts mentioned below

1. A written comprehensive disaster plan.
2. To maintain a detailed list of persons in disaster management team, contact numbers, inventory, equipment, suppliers, emergency services, insurance cover etc.
3. Mock trails, test plan
4. The buildings should be constructed as per the earthquake resistant codes and standards. Careful strategy about the arrangement of building, spaces, furniture’s should be taken.

**Response**

Reaction is checking the preparations which have already been made into some kind of response. The following are the suggestions as to what can be done in the event of a disaster.

The right man for the right task set according to the disaster plan should be put into action. Once any incident or disaster has occurred immediate reaction should be done. One the priority basis first short term and then long term the collections should be maintained. In case of a severe flood the first 24 hours are critical for the documents and an agenda of what to save first should be set into practice.

A staff member should be there to record all the events aftermath a disaster strikes. Such recordings can be used to prepare reports for the parent organization and the insurance managers. (Eden and Mathews 48) mentioned to keep photographic or video record of destroyed and damaged items and they specifically mentioned that the staff morale and motivation is very important on and off the site. The staffs should be break into teams with specific tasks and provided breaks with refreshments. There should be back-up teams to relieve them.

**Recovery**

Disaster recovery is not a one man show and in fact, it depends fully on the active participation of all the team members and the members of the organization. The following suggestions should be kept in the mind of library manager,
1. Try to provide the regular services,
2. Under expert guidance, start the conservation work
3. A meticulous review of the disaster plan should be taken to know what and where the lapses are there, what mistakes have been done. And finally learn from mistakes so that any future occurrence can be omitted.

**Status of disaster management and the proactive measures in the Academic libraries of North-East India**

Northeast India constitutes about 8% of the total India's size (area wise) and its population is about 40 million and that constitutes 3.1% of total Indian population. If we consult library literature, very less is discussed or studied about the disaster management practices adopted in our North East India libraries. In the context of studying the level of disaster preparedness in the academic libraries of North-East India, this study has been compiled and presented.

Our experiences and methodology will help others to think and thereby activate plans about the enormous disaster that can suddenly affect library collections and services. All the data that has been received from questionnaire and interview are based on the preliminary findings of the most reputed libraries. The study is based on survey results and mixture of questionnaire, interview methods and websites were appropriate instruments for the study. A structured questionnaire having both close ended and open ended questions was designed to collect data. The questionnaire included different types of question such as dichotomous question (Yes \ No), multiple choice question and opinion questions. On the basis of collections, users and services this study includes all the 8 most reputed libraries of North-East India. Based on the 8 library visits that includes Guwahati University Central Library, NEHU Central Library, IIM Shillong, IIT Guwahati Central Library, NEGRIMS’s Central Library, District Library Guwahati, Assam Engineering College and Ayurvedic Medical College Guwahati.

**Survey Results**

In 2013, a 25-question survey was started and the questionnaire was distributed among the library administrators to gather the information about the current state of the library. The findings of the survey were later augmented with participant observations of specific questions.

- On an average about 200 users visit library every day.
- 6 out of 8 libraries have a collection of more than 50000 books.
- NEGRIMS library has a detailed disaster plan which is prepared by professional consultants.
- When asked to the library managers whether they have any safety plan to meet the natural disasters then the response was that half of the libraries don’t have any disaster plan, three libraries have disaster plan only for fires and only one library has a disaster plan for earthquake.
None of the libraries have any disaster kits.
All of our libraries are very fortunate that none of them experienced any natural disaster in the last 10 years.
5 out of 8 library buildings are built according to the instruction of BIS codes.
Regarding the information security practices something of great interest is that all the libraries are automated. Five libraries keep the backups of database onsite and 3 libraries keep the backups of database offsite.
4 out of 8 libraries maintain the backups on a monthly basis and 2 libraries each maintain the backups on weekly and daily basis.
4 of the libraries do not have any emergency exits and entrance.
Regarding the water pressure for firefighting the response was good.
Only one library has alarm system and emergency switches for fire and earthquake detection.
About the inspection for fire, burglary, flood and smoke detectors, plugs, switches, and instruments surprisingly 4 libraries never had any inspection while the rest 4 libraries do it on a yearly basis.
All the libraries have adequate number of fire extinguishers to meet any emergency due to fire.
All the libraries never had any mock exercise.
Only one library has an insurance cover.
When asked who will be informed first in case of a disaster then all the library managers replied that they will contact the parent organization in case of an emergency.

**Conclusion**

Although disaster management is considered of paramount importance but practically very less is discussed and studied at professional level, library and information science curriculum. Japan earthquake, Haiti earthquake, Cyclone Nargis, Java and Kashmir Earthquake, Hurricane Katrina, Mumbai floods, South Asian Tsunami, Bam Earthquake and the endless list gave a wakeup call to organizations about disaster management practices. Mitigation measures can be taken for the new building and extra cautions like retrofitting/strengthening should be taken for the old buildings. A vigilant focus should be made for the lifeline buildings such as hospitals, education institutes, bus stands, railway stations, cinema hall, multi-storied apartment, administrative building etc. If timely preventive measures, are not taken there is always a threat to nation’s economy, human life, library collections and its services.

**Reference**
• Fallara, Peter. (2003). Disaster recovery planning: the best defence is a well managed offence, IEEE Potentials, December, 42-44.
• McKnight, Michelynn and Zach, Lill, (2012). Choices in Chaos: Designing Research into Librarians’ Information Services Improvised During a Variety of Community - Wide Disasters in order to Produce Evidence - Based Training Materials for Librarians”. Evidence Based Library and Information Practice, 2(3), 59-75.
• www.ndma.gov.in
• www.idrm.gov.in
• http://www.ifrcmedia.org/assets/pages/wdr2012
• www.ifla.org/en/about-pac/about the Preservation and Conservation Core Activity 2010
• www.ieldresponsenetwork.com.
British Economic System in Cachar during Nineteenth Century – An Analytical Study

Dr. Moynul Hoque
Associate Professor
Department of History
G. C. College, Silchar, Assam
Email: moynulhoque99@gmail.com

Abstract

Cachar, situated in the southern part of Assam, had its traditional economic setup during the Cachari rule under Rajahs (1750-1830). After the murder of last Cachari Rajah Gobinda Chandra (1830), Thomas Fisher, as a British agent, conducted its administration. After the annexation of Cachar on 14 August, 1832, colonial British government reorganized the whole administrative setup in a gradual process keeping colonial interest in mind under District Officers. In this paper, an attempt has been made to focus on the high-handed economic policy of British government in Cachar through providing special light on this unexplored area - British Economic system in Cachar during nineteenth century – An Analytical Study based on both primary and secondary sources in an analytical method. Agrarian land system and its land revenue structure, trade and commerce, industry, other related revenue system formulated by the British for their colonial interest have been focused along with the reaction of the people. Such British economic policy in Cachar in 19th century though drained the wealth and resources of this region like other parts of India; it had left some imprints for Cachar people to upgrade their economic condition in later days.

Keywords: Cachar, economic, british, colonial, nineteenth century

Introduction

Cachar, situated in the southern part of Assam, was ruled by Cachari Rajahs after shifting their capital to Khaspur in 1750 that continued till the reign of last Cachari king Gobinda Chandra who was murdered in 1830. So, English East India Company placed the administration of plain Cachar upon Thomas Fisher as British agent prior to the formal annexation of plain Cachar on 14 August, 1832. After the annexation of Cachar by the British, Thomas Fisher was appointed as the first Superintendent (district officer) of plain Cachar. All the District Officers of Cachar conducted administration keeping colonial economic interest in mind in all aspects of life through the formulation of various economic policies related to agrarian land system, industry, trade and commerce and subsequent taxation system in Cachar. The traditional economic system and subsequent revenue collection mode prevalent
British Economic System in Cachar during the reign of Cachari Rajahs was discontinued by the colonial British Government. The monetary economy enforced by the British in Cachar created reaction among the people of Cachar.

British Economic System in Cachar during Nineteenth Century - An Analytical Study

The English East India Company formulated the economic policy in a gradual process for the consolidation of British rule in Cachar. Thomas Fisher, the first Superintendent of Cachar, kept intact the old order with slight modification without making any regular land settlement except the introduction of Ryotwary system in Cachar. He undertook survey of waste land and encouraged immigration of people that led to the increase of revenue collection. The system of revenue collection through Khel system both in cash and kind existed during the Cachari rule was stopped and then British Government introduced the system of revenue collection in cash termed as monetary economy in Cachar. This system led to the increase of revenue collection in Cachar during Thomas Fisher. Accordingly the land and miscellaneous revenue demand increased from Rs 27165 to 40708-0-3 during 1830-35 when Thomas Fisher was in power.

J.G.Burns (1836-39) made the first regular scientific land settlement in 1838 for 5 years on a moderate and reduced rate to attract new settlers and fresh survey was made by him. The highest rate of this settlement was Rs.3 per Kulbah for cleared lands and Chara lands rate was fixed at Rs.2-8 per Kulbah. Bari lands remained rent free and jungle lands were settled rent free for about 3 years and then at the rate of Rs.2-8 per Kulbah. He also secured of Rs.78000 from Jaintia territory.

During E R Lyons (1839-49), Rai Bahadur Golak Chandra made a regular and fresh settlement of cultivable and jungle lands in 1843-44 for 15 years based on Thriller’s survey to be expired in 1857-58. The cultivable, Chara, Bari lands were assessed at Rs.3 per kulbah, except in some few instances where rates were Rs.2 per kulbah. The jungle grants were assessed at first 5 years rent free, second 5 years at half rent and last 5 years at full rent of Rs.3 per kulbah. Lyons also granted 7000 pattahs to the ryots and old settlement holders and Lakheraj holdings were respected. It led to the increase of revenue tremendously up to Rs.58518. As a result, the Mirasdars of Cachar suffered heavily by this settlement.

G Verner (1849-57) made concessions to the pattadars for their inability to pay revenue of the earlier settlement. He surveyed jungle lands in 1851 and the lands surrendered by few grantees in 1853-54 were given to the European companies for tea cultivation from 1855 that led to the development of tea industry in Cachar. Subsequently Verner made some jungle settlements for 15 years in 1855-56. The rate of assessment for first 3 years rent free, next 4 years Rs 1 per kulbah, next 4 years Rs.2 and last 4 years Rs. 3 per kulbah. Accordingly land revenue demand excluding tea land rose to Rs.81676-8-3 for 1857-58 in Cachar.

R Stewart (1857-66), the last Superintendent of Cachar, made a new revenue settlement for 20 years based on Thui ller’s survey in 1859. The land was classified into two categories - first class easily irrigable and second class land was undulating assessed on liberal terms according to the value and productiveness of lands. The first class land was assessed at Rs.3-8 per kulbah in first rate localities, second class land in the same places being let for Rs.3;
corresponding rates for interior localities were Rs.3 and Rs.2-8 and Rs. 2. The rates in the most remote localities were Rs.2, Rs.1-8 and Rs.1 per kulbah. Jungle land was settled at full rates. But forest Jungle that required much clearing was let for 3 years rent free and then by a gradual increase at full rates at the expiry of 20 years term of this settlement.7

R Stewart also leased Chatla Bheel for 15 years after making proper survey in a rate- first 3 years rent free, next 4 years at Rs.6 and next 4 years at Rs.12 and last 4 years at Rs. 1-8 per kulbah.8

R Stewart made subsequent surveys of waste lands for tea cultivation recruiting survey party on Government cost of Rs.37524 annually and partly paid by the grantees from 1859 to 1866. For example, first survey of tea land was made in 1859 by native Amins, second by Mr. Reynolds. Thukbast survey and settlement was made by N T Davey (1864-65) in expense of Rs.15/20,000 out of which Rs 17423 was deposited by grantees under Fee Simple and Mirasdari Rules in 1865. Lakheraj lands were assessed by R Stewart which were not assessed by Third Divisional Survey Party. The British Government recruited local labours like Bengali, Naga, Kuki labours for jungle clearing on payment of Rs.6.5 to Rs.7 and Rs.9 respectively.9

The Old Assam Rules for waste land grants in Cachar was abolished in 1862. Next a set of land rules were introduced by the British government during the Superintendency of R Stewart keeping colonial interest in mind. For example, the new Waste Land Rules, Waste Land Sale Rules, Fee Simple Rules was introduced in 1862. Waste Land Reclamation Rules were also introduced in Cachar in 1864 which was leased for 30 years at an increasing order of assessment.10 The 20 years settlement of R Stewart (1859) including other settlements, settled 371260 acres of land having full jummah of Rs.149312. However, the net land revenue collected by R Stewart was Rs.97729-4-3 excluding collection charge of Rs.2376 in 1861-62 which was Rs.81676-8-3 in 1857-58. It clearly showed that the British maximized rate of revenue rapidly without thinking the interest of the people of Cachar. The same scenario was also prevailed in the Brahmaputra valley of Assam where people could do nothing against such colonial economic policy though four consecutive peasant uprisings were started by the people of Nowgoan, Kamrup and Darrang districts of Assam during 1861-1894 by them.11

In addition to these, Deputy Commissioners of Cachar also reorganized the land as well as the economic system of Cachar from 1866 onwards through leasing large tracts of lands as per waste land sale rules at an upset price of Rs.8 per acre. Moreover, maximization of land revenue can easily be visualized from the increase of land revenue from Rs.24974 in 1843 to Rs.230000 in 1879. It was basically for the corrupt economic policy formulated by Deputy Commissioners of Cachar like J W Edgar, O G R Mc William who enhanced land revenue miserably from the Cachar people and formulated the land system and other subsequent revenue collection areas in Cachar.12

The English East India Company after the establishment of their rule in Cachar also reorganized the system of revenue collection along with the formulation of land system through gradual modification of it for the consolidation of colonial British rule in Cachar. Accordingly Thomas Fisher liquidated the Khel system and titles and privileges enjoyed by the people were abolished except retaining titles without any power. The Mukhtar and Mirasdari
system was initiated who deposited revenue collected in 3 installments to the government. But Mukhtars were to deposit security money at collector’s office and expenses of revenue collection were to be realized from the Talukdars of respective Khan and could not forfeit defaulter’s property.\(^\text{13}\)

P Mainwaring introduced the Tahsildari system in 1836 after the liquidation of existing Mukhtar system for revenue collection in Cachar. But J G Burns restored the Mukhtar system in 1837 on payment of 6% commission to the Mukhtars on their collections along with an establishment charge of Rs.30. It was more successful than the Peadah system but Mukhtars and Mirasdars were not in a good position for the non payment of commission in time. The Mukhtar system was finally abolished by E R Lyons in 1843 for its inherent defects.\(^\text{14}\)

So, the most effective system of revenue collection was the Tahsildari system introduced by P Mainwaring in 1836. There were three Tahsils – Silchar, Hailakandi and Katigorah which were instituted at a monthly expense of Rs.55. Accordingly the British government collected revenue by the Tahsildari system regularly from 1843 under salaried Tahsildari establishments during the early 19\(^\text{th}\) century. The Tahsildars deposited collected revenue in the Sadar Treasury and in case of failure, Talubana system was followed at last in Cachar.\(^\text{15}\)

The Ghaswat system was a means to confiscate defaulter’s estate for the non-payment of arrears of revenue in Cachar. Lands were not sold in Cachar for arrears of revenue but transferred defaulter’s land. This existing system prevalent during the princely regime was in full force in a modified form in Cachar since 1833 under the British administration. The system of ousting Ghaswatdars was followed till 1840 which was prevented by Lyons. Subsequently the British govt. in Cachar modified the Ghaswat Rule in 1855 and 1858 for their economic interest.\(^\text{16}\)

Batwara system was another means for the collection of land revenue in Cachar under British rule during the 2\(^\text{nd}\) half of 19\(^\text{th}\) century. It was a joint partnership system of shareholders for the payment of land revenue in proportion to their actual possession of land.\(^\text{17}\)

In addition to land revenue, the colonial British government of Cachar earned revenue from miscellaneous sources like Ghats, Saltwells, Fisheries, Forests, and Abkari Mahals, House tax, Public Ferry, Post Office, Stamps, Cattle pounds, Kheddah operations, fines, Rubber Mahals, trade, etc.\(^\text{18}\)

Trade and commerce flourished rapidly in Cachar under British Raj who maintained both import and export trade with Sylhet, Manipur, and Bengal through inland and water ways. Silchar became the chief centre of commerce and Fatak Bazaar, Janiganj, Udharbond, Lakhipur, Luchai Hat at Sonai etc helped the Cachar people in running their local business. Cachar exported goods worth of Rs.36800 in 1839-40 which increased to Rs.394925 in 1857-58. Cachar administration imported goods of Rs.19850 in 1839-40 and Rs.283887-6 in 1857-58 respectively.\(^\text{19}\)

Industrial development was also made under the initiatives of the British government of Cachar. J G Burns proposed for sugar cultivation in Cachar which had scope for sugar industry in this region though we do not find the existence of such sugar industry in Cachar till now. A
A manufactory of 90 by 30 feet was constructed in 1852 at a cost of Rs. 80 by G Verner that provided employment facilities for the Cachar people.

Tea industry became one of the most important sector to enrich British economy through the opening of large number of tea gardens in Cachar from 1855. R Stewart also took initiatives for mining industry and proposed for the manufacture of distillery in expense of Rs. 50 for the collapse of one distillery managed by private initiatives formerly. So, whatever attempts were made by the British for industrial development in Cachar, every thing for their colonial economic interest.

From the mentioned discussion related to British economic structure of Cachar, it is clear that the English East India Company established their rule in Cachar to satisfy their economic and political greed. Subsequently the British government in Cachar reorganized land system as well as whole revenue structure to mitigate their colonial economic interest though Cachar people indirectly became benefited in a later date. So, it is correct to say that Cachar became more advanced in economic aspects that made Cachar as a viable Revenue District of the Government. Thus the British economic policy in Cachar right from the commencement of British rule in Cachar (1832) paved the way for the drainage of wealth of this region through the maximization of the rate of revenue like other parts of India.

Notes and References

   ASP, File No 636 CO of 1872, pp. 5, 16
   Letter No. 50 of 1857 (DCRRS)
   Letters Received from Govt., Duplicate copy, Vol No 8(B), 1832 January-August.

2. 1836-37, BGP, File No. 352, Letter No. 289 of 1836
1839, BGP, File No 393, Letters Nos. 550 of 1837, 3, 8, 78, 125 of 1838, 123, 170, 221 of 1839
1850-51, DCF, Cachar papers, File No 17, Letter No 54 of 1850
   ASP, File No 636 CO of 1872
3. 1835, BGP, File No 336, Letter No 182 of 1835
4. CR, Nos. 23, 32 of 1843, 106 of 1844
   ASP. File No 636 CO of 1872, p. 6
   1850-51, DCF, Cachar papers, File No 17, Letter No 54 of 1850
5. ASP. File No 636 CO of 1872, p. 6
   1850-51, DCF, Cachar papers, File No 17, Letter No 19, 32, 45, 110, 134 of 1850, 22, 70, 90 of 1851
   W. J. Allen, op. cit. pp. 13-14
6. Ibid., p 16
   Hunter, op. cit. p 417
7. *Book No 5A, Letter No 167 of 1861 (DCRRS)*
   ASP, File No 636 CO of 1872, pp.6-7
   W J Allen, *op.cit.* pp14, 19, 20
   WW Hunter, *op.cit.* p.418

8. *Book No 14, Letter Nos. 80, 85 of 1857 (DCRRS)*

   W W Hunter, *op.cit.* pp.418

    W W Hunter, *op.cit.* p.420

11. *BGP, File No 313, Nos 29,259,479 of 1861*
    *BRP, File No 111, Nos 19, 28 1862*
    *BRF, File No 112, Nos 6, 3174 of 1862*
    *DCF, Cachar Papers, File No 67, Nos 23,242 of 1865*
    *Book No.22, Letter No 241 of 1865 (DCRRS)*

12. *ASP, File No 636 CO of 1872, pp.7-8*
    Suhas Charrerjee, *A Socio-Economic History of South Assam*, Jaipur, 2000, p 165
    D D Mali, *Revenue Administration in Assam*, New Delhi, 1985, p.81

    *ASP, File No 636 CO of 1872, p.6*

14. *1871-73, GB, Paper 22, File No.103/199*

15. *ASP, File No 636 CO of 1872, p.16*
    *BRP. No185 of 1858*
    *CR., Nos 42 of 1837, 36 of 1850*

16. *BGP, File No 352, Letter Nos 222,289 of 1836*
    *BGP, File No 393, Letter No 5, 44, 56,123,221,228,261 of 1839*
    *CR. Nos.17, 23 of 1840, 35 of 1846*
    *ASP, File No 636 CO of 1872, p.16*

    *ASP, File No 636 CO of 1872, p.16-17*
    W.J. Allen, *op.cit.* pp14, 16

    *ASP, File No 636 CO of 1872, pp.20-23*
    W.J. Allen, *op.cit.* pp.21-27

20,108 of 1848, 1 of 1851, 19 of 1853

*ASP, File No 636 CO of 1872, p 2*

W.J. Allen, *op.cit.* p32

D Dutta, *op.cit.* pp.5, 19

20. *CR. No 99 of 1837*


*BRP, File No 111, No 19 1862*

*DCF, Cachar Papers, File No 67, No 242 of 1865*

*ASP, File No 636 CO of 1872, p 23*

W.J. Allen, *op.cit.* pp. 22-23

Dr. Gifty Oommen
Assistant Professor
Government Law College, Ernakulam, Kerala
Email: giftyoommen@gmail.com

Abstract
This article is a study of the struggle between the developed countries and the developing countries regarding enabling the developing nations to export generic medicines (medicines produced under its chemical name and not under any known brand) to underdeveloped countries at subsidized rates to give access to medicines to the underprivileged all around the globe. The developing nations have achieved some success. The emphasis is on the advantages and limitations of certain articles of TRIPS (Agreement on Trade Related Aspects of Intellectual Property Rights) in reference to generic medicines.

Article 31(f) of the TRIPS Agreement requires that medicines produced under compulsory licence conditions, wherein the government empowers different market players to produce the branded medicine at subsidized rates especially the essential medicines, should be predominantly for the supply of the domestic market of the WTO Member authorizing such use. This constituted a major problem for WTO Members with insufficient or no manufacturing capacities in the pharmaceutical sector, since these countries would be unable to make effective use of compulsory licensing because an exporting producer might be limited in the quantity of medicines it could export pursuant to a compulsory licence.

This problem can be solved only through an amendment to Article 31(f) of the TRIPS Agreement enabling developing nations to export medicines manufactured under compulsory licence to underdeveloped and hard pressed countries.

Keywords: Medicines, public health, Intellectual Property Rights

Introduction
The Declaration at Doha WTO (World Trade Organization) Ministerial 2001 on public health recognized the gravity of health problems in many developed and least developed countries especially those having cases of HIV/AIDS, tuberculosis, malaria and epidemics. They also recognized the role of TRIPS to extent its intellectual development into these areas. Access to antiretroviral medications (AVT) was a key matter in the debate leading to the adoption of the Declaration.

Article 31(f) of the TRIPS Agreement requires that medicines produced under compulsory licence conditions, wherein the government empowers different market players to produce the branded medicine at subsidized rates especially the essential medicines,
should be predominantly for the supply of the domestic market of the WTO Member authorizing such use. This constituted a major problem for WTO Members with insufficient or no manufacturing capacities in the pharmaceutical sector, since these countries would be unable to make effective use of compulsory licensing because an exporting producer might be limited in the quantity of medicines it could export pursuant to a compulsory licence. Paragraph 6 of the Declaration on TRIPS and Public Health recognized this problem. After negotiations, on 30 August 2003, WTO Members agreed on a temporary waiver to Article 31(f) and (h) to allow for the export of medicines under compulsory licences. However, the 30 August Decision involved only a temporary waiver. On 6 December 2005 an amendment to the TRIPS Agreement was agreed, to make permanent the waiver of article 31(f) and (h). The amendment is, however, subject to the approval by two thirds of the WTO Members. The 6 December 2005 agreement was criticized by a number of civil society groups and non-governmental actors—in particular, the international humanitarian aid organization Médecins sans Frontières (MSF)\(^1\), which expressed alarm that the decision to amend the TRIPS Agreement was based on a mechanism that had failed to prove that it could improve access to medicines.\(^2\)

**History**

The Paragraph 6 Solution of August 30, 2003 has its beginning in a proposal submitted by developing countries requesting an authoritative interpretation of Article 30 of the TRIPS Agreement to permit manufacture and export of patented medicines by third parties (compulsory licensing) to countries lacking the capacity to manufacture such products. In the Paragraph 6 Solution, the General Council has waived the obligations set out in paragraphs (f) and (h) of Article 31 of the TRIPS Agreement with respect to pharmaceutical products, prescribing specific conditions for exporting and importing countries. The exporting country can export such drugs only when it has made a notification to the Council for TRIPS: such as a) Specifying the names and expected quantities of the products needed; b) Confirming that the importing Member does not have the manufacturing capacity or has insufficient manufacturing capacities in the pharmaceutical sector for the product(s), and; c), confirming that a compulsory licence has been issued in its territory under Article 31 of the TRIPS Agreement.

The compulsory licence by the exporting Member, apart from the condition mentioned in Article 31, must contain additional conditions that only the amount necessary to meet the needs of the eligible importing Member(s) may be manufactured under the licence, and the entirety of this production must be exported to the Member(s) which has notified its needs to the Council for TRIPS. The Paragraph 6 Solution, which deals with remuneration, says that the supplier from the exporting countries (generic manufacturers)

---

1 Médecins sans Frontières - Access to Medicines campaign. Following the award of the Nobel Peace Prize to MSF, it launched a campaign on access to medicines in 1999. The campaign became one of the major forces in the access-to-medicines movement. More about the campaign and its work can be found at http://www.msfaccess.org/ the-access-campaign

must pay remuneration to the patent holder whereas the receiver is waived from doing such payment. This argument was pushed by the developed states, though there was no such clause in the TRIPS. The developing countries requested in their October 4, 2001 proposal that a compulsory licence issued by a member to supply medicines should be allowed to be given effect by another member under Article 30 of TRIPS (general exceptions).³

**Key element of the Declaration**

Doha Declaration contained in its Paragraph 4, according to which:

We agree that the TRIPS Agreement does not and should not prevent Members from taking measures to protect public health. Accordingly, while reiterating our commitment to the TRIPS Agreement, we affirm that the Agreement can and should be interpreted and implemented in a manner supportive of WTO Members’ right to protect public health and, in particular, to promote access to medicines for all.

In this connection, we reaffirm the right of WTO Members to use, to the full, the provisions in the TRIPS Agreement, which provide flexibility for this purpose.

More specifically, Paragraph 5 of the Doha Declaration confirmed some of the flexibilities under the TRIPS Agreement, those relating to imports and compulsory licences: It stated: Accordingly and in the light of Paragraph 4 above, while maintaining our commitments in the TRIPS Agreement, we recognize that these flexibilities include: In applying the customary rules of interpretation of public international law, each provision of the TRIPS Agreement shall be read in the light of the object and purpose of the Agreement as expressed, in particular, in its objectives and principles. Each Member has the right to grant compulsory licences and the freedom to determine the grounds upon which such licences are granted. Each Member has the right to determine what constitutes a national emergency or other circumstances of extreme urgency, it being understood that public health crises, including those relating to HIV/AIDS, tuberculosis, malaria and other epidemics, can represent a national emergency or other circumstances of extreme urgency. The effect of the provisions in the TRIPS Agreement that are relevant to the exhaustion of intellectual property rights is to leave each Member free to establish its own regime for such exhaustion without challenge, subject to the Most Favoured Nation and national treatment provisions of Articles 3 and 4. Under Article 31 of the TRIPS Agreement a compulsory licence can be granted by a government, to allow a third party to produce a generic version of a patented pharmaceutical product without the authorization of the patent holder, in so doing allowing low-price generic pharmaceuticals to be produced locally or imported from abroad. Although the provisions on compulsory licensing permit generic drug companies to manufacture a patented product without the authorization of the right holder, Article 31(f) of the TRIPS Agreement also requires that medicines produced under compulsory licence conditions should be predominantly for the supply of the

³ “Access to medicines, paragraph 6 of the Doha declaration on public health, and developing countries in international treaty negotiations” - Daya Shanker, The Indian Journal of law and technology volume 2, 2006
domestic market of the WTO Member authorizing such use. This constitutes a major problem for WTO Members with insufficient or no manufacturing capacities in the pharmaceutical sector, since these countries would be unable to make effective use of compulsory licensing because an exporting producer might be limited in the quantity of medicines it could export pursuant to a compulsory licence.

This reflects that there is no requirement that a country should have genuine public health need, leaving the possibility that the Paragraph 6 includes only the non-existent pharmaceutical access problems of very affluent, healthy countries that lack manufacturing units like in Liechtenstein, Luxembourg and middle east. By implication it excludes attention to countries that are very poor, very diseased, and have no patents on important pharmaceuticals, simply because it is meaningless to speak of compulsorily licensing patents that don’t exist as it is very much possible to have capabilities or have pharmaceutical manufacturing units but have no patents and be highly diseased and poor. Somewhere in the process the idea of compulsory licence was lost, which was to bring in essential medicines to the poor in the domestic country. The object of paragraph 6 as referring to compulsory licensing should have been an extension of this object – to bring the essential medicines to the downtrodden and poor of other countries irrespective of their buying capabilities.

Paragraph 1 read that the WTO Ministerial “recognizes the gravity of the public health problems afflicting many developing and least-developed countries, especially those resulting from HIV/AIDS, tuberculosis, malaria and other epidemics”. This reflects the historical origin of the Doha Declaration through proposals initiated by developing countries themselves.

The issue of access to medicines to meet critical public health needs arose during the deliberate spread of anthrax in the US by unknown parties in 2001. A shortage of the antibiotic ciprofloxacin pressurized calls for the manufacturer Bayer to agree on a voluntary license. After intense negotiations, the US and Canada reached agreement in October 2001 that Bayer should supply increased amounts of the drug at a lowered price, though they did not opt for compulsory licensing. This shows that while poor countries are maybe more vulnerable than others to public health threats, no country remains out of reach in a world of increasing globalization.

Another problem is that many bilateral and regional trade agreements do not allow the so-called bolar Provision (article 30). This exception allows a potential competitor to use an invention to undertake acts necessary for obtaining regulatory approval and registration of a generic product before the expiry of the patent term without the authorization of the patent holder. This exception is provided to ensure that generic versions of the product are available on the market immediately, or within a reasonable time, after the expiry of the patent. More rapid introduction of generics into the market leads to more rapid competition and lowering of prices.

This provision, also known as "early working", permits the use of a patent protected invention or process or data without authorization so as to facilitate regulatory approval of a generic product before the patent expires. This allows a generic product to enter the market more quickly, speeding access to cheaper drugs. Under TRIPS-plus measures, a
patent owner must consent to marketing approval for a generic version during the patent term.

One more problem is that some nations provide a form of patent extension called “ever greening,” a term which refers to patent protection of inventions, which is different from medicines which may in fact have multiple patents. "New use" for existing compounds, or a change in the dose or form, can be the basis for applying for an extension of the patent protection period, thus preventing generic versions of the drug from being produced. While not permitted under TRIPS, many include the "new use" clauses.

**Indian Experience**

Even India allows patent of addition but proving their case has now become difficult after the decision in Novartis. If the application for "new use" does not succeed, the process of application can create considerable delays. To ensure that the constitutional right to life is respected, Section 3(d) of the Indian Patents (Third Amendment) Act of 2005 set out that the mere discovery of a new form of a known substance is not to be considered an invention but that this could be regarded as such if it enhances the efficiency of a known invention. An explanation to that Section clarified that salts, polymers and other new versions are to be treated as the same substance and not as new, patentable forms unless they differ in their properties significantly with regard to efficacy. Although raising concerns for patentees that Section 3(d) excludes some applications that, on the usual criteria of patentability, would qualify as inventions, the provision has been described as an essential tool for keeping open the door for generic manufacture of medicines.

As a result of Section 3(d), a patent claim relating to a pharmaceutical product may relate to an active ingredient as such independently of or jointly with formulations, salts, prodrugs, isomers and so on, or cover any of these subject matters separately, but subject to a higher standard of inventive activity. This provided India with flexibility to determine what constitutes an invention for the purposes of granting a patent and allows it to draw a distinction between genuinely patentable inventions and the practice of ‘ever greening’ spurious inventions.

Thus the available flexibilities given under the TRIPS agreement to protect public health, in short, face dilution on account of agreement of TRIPS-plus measures.

In February 2004, the WHO Director-General established the Commission on Intellectual Property Rights, Innovation and Public Health to review the available evidence and recommend ways forward to improve systems for developing and accessing drugs in LMICs. The Commission considered access to medicines within a broader context of industry structure and market incentives, recognising that IPRs are only one means of stimulating action. In its final report, the Commission made sixty recommendations organised into five categories: (a) the discovery of new health-care products; (b) the development of drugs from pre-clinical and clinical research, and the regulatory process; (c) the delivery of new and existing products to LMICs; (d) the fostering of innovation in the developing world; and (e) the roles and responsibilities of WHO in leading ways forward.

**New Developments**
The Doha Declaration provides additional relief for LDCs. Article 66 of the TRIPS Agreement affords LDCs the right to not comply with the provisions of the agreement until 1 January 2006. This date was extended by the Doha Declaration on the TRIPS Agreement and Public Health (August 2003) till 1 January 2016. It is to be noted that recently, the Council for TRIPS has provided for extension of the transition period for LDC Members by their decision of 11 June 2013 until 1 July 2021.

The Doha Declaration Paragraph 6 waiver requires that developing countries notify the WTO of their intention to become an eligible importing member. Countries must notify the products and quantities that they intend to import. Rwanda was the first Member State to notify the intent to use the Waiver in July 2007, stating that it “wanted to purchase 260 000 packages of a triple-drug antiretroviral (ARV) therapy, enough to treat 21 000 people for one year”. Canada was one of the first countries to enact domestic legislation – Canada’s Access to Medicines Regime (CAMR) – for this purpose. The law became effective in May 2005. Before Canada can issue a compulsory licence, the law requires a generic company to obtain the permission, called a voluntary licence, from the patent holder. Once the company owning the patent grants a voluntary licence, the generic manufacturer must then obtain a compulsory license from the Canadian Commissioner of Patents. After these requirements are met, the generic manufacturer can formally begin a bidding process with the government of a developing nation.4

Brazil has extensively utilized TRIPS flexibilities. In 2001, Brazil successfully used the threat of issuing compulsory licences to receive significant discounts for Merck & Co. and Roche medicines. In June 2005, Brazil threatened Abbott with compulsory licence issuance for the HIV/AIDS drug Kaletra. On the verge of Brazil actually issuing the compulsory licence, Abbott granted Brazil its requested price. Less than two years later, in May 2007 Brazil used the threat of issuing a compulsory licence again, this time against Merck & Co. for its HIV/AIDS drug efavirenz. Over the course of negotiations related to this transaction, Merck & Co. made significant price concessions. But Brazil ultimately demanded the price that had been offered a few years earlier to Thailand and finally Merck & Co. agreed to that price.

The pharmaceutical company Gilead has provided voluntary licences to eight Indian generic firms to produce two important AIDS drugs for sale in 95 countries. The royalty rate in this agreement is set at 5%. Section 3d of the Indian Patents Act prescribes a higher threshold of criteria for patentability for certain inventions: “the mere discovery of any new property of new use for a known substance or of the mere use of a known process, machine or apparatus unless such known process results in a new product or employs at

---

least one new reactant;” that has a profound impact on the grant of pharmaceutical patents in the country. Further, the Indian Patents Act provides for the grant of compulsory licences without prior attempt to obtain a licence from the patentee on reasonable terms and conditions in case of anti-competitive practices adopted by the patentee [Section 84.6(iv)], as well as the right to export any products produced under such licences, if necessary.

In April 2013, the Supreme Court of India ended a seven-year old battle around the patentability of imatinib mesylate for the treatment of chronic myeloid leukaemia, marketed by Novartis under the tradename Glivec/Gleevec, and refused the grant of the patent. The Supreme Court rejected the patent application claim for a specific crystalline form (β-crystal form) of imatinib on the grounds that this form is not a new substance, was already known and does not show enhanced therapeutic efficacy. Imatinib mesylate has been considered for inclusion in the WHO EML by the 19th Expert Committee on the Selection and Use of Essential Medicines in April 2013 and is recognized to be a breakthrough in the treatment of leukaemias.5

In the USA on 13 June 2013, in Association for Molecular Pathology et al., Petitioners v. Myriad Genetics Inc. et al, the court held that isolated DNA involved a naturally occurring segment of DNA was not patentable. Only synthetically created DNA known as complementary DNA (cDNA) that was not naturally occurring could be patented. In this case medical organizations, researchers, genetic counsellors and patients brought action against the patentee and United States Patent and Trademark Office (USPTO) challenging the validity of patents for isolated DNA sequences associated with predisposition to breast and ovarian cancers and for diagnostic methods of identifying mutations in those DNA sequences.6 This shows that courts in the USA are also applying a stringent patentability standard for patents in public health.

In addition, in judicial decision in Astra Zeneca AB v. European Commission in the European Court of Justice,7 6 December 2012, it is held that the pharmaceutical companies had abused their dominant position in the market by providing misleading information to various patent offices in the European Union in order to obtain supplementary protection certificates and keep manufacturers of generic products out of the market. This decision related to obtaining market authorization through misleading statements made by the pharmaceutical company. The Court observations related to parallel imports including patents and supplementary protection certificates for omeprazole-based products for gastrointestinal conditions called “Losec”. A fine of US$ 52.5 million was imposed on AstraZeneca AB. Thus, it is clear that European courts are also rigorously scrutinizing patents from pharmaceutical companies.

WHO set up an independent Commission on Intellectual Property Rights, Innovation and Public Health (CIPIH). Based on recommendations of CIPIH, the Sixty-first World Health Assembly established an intergovernmental working group that developed the Global strategy and plan of action on public health, innovation and intellectual property (GSPA) in 2008.

---

5 Internal communiqué HQ WHO (unpublished)
6 133 S.Ct. 2107.
7 (C-457/10 P)
Now the pharmaceutical industry is also more responsive than before, and is developing new cooperation models. As reported in the WHO Global Partners’ Meeting on Hepatitis in Geneva (27–28 March 2014), Gilead has offered to supply its newest treatment for the hepatitis C virus (HCV) to Egypt at 99% discount on the US price.

Gilead says it also plans to license its new therapy to Indian generic manufacturers, which will then supply lower-cost versions of the drug to India. The company’s two pricing moves were made in order to help narrow the access gap for hepatitis C drugs among the world’s poorer nations. This opens up scope for development of new models of cooperation between “Big Pharma” (the originator drug companies) and generic pharmaceutical companies. This also leads to an acceptance and development of differential pricing models, i.e. pricing the drugs differently for developed and developing countries. This enables a seemingly balance of interests of developed nations who provide a strong social security scheme while this aspect is missing in developing nations which are in dire need of low cost medicines to help save lives.

This is not exactly though what the common man needs. They do not want to depend on pharmaceutical companies whose ultimate aim is always profits and huge turnover.

The developing and the under developing nations, the most affected parties, due to lack of social security measures in their domestic countries want a permanent remedy, by which the developing nations who are producing generic medicines at subsidized rates can export it to the under developing nations, which are without sufficient infrastructure to produce these medicines.

This is possible only through an amendment to Article 31(f) of the TRIPS Agreement enabling developing nations to export medicines manufactured under compulsory licence to underdeveloped and hard pressed countries, which is in the true spirit of humanity, at low cost and in huge quantities, not for capital gain but to help a fellow human being. WTO Members agreed on a temporary waiver to Article 31(f) and (h) to allow for the export of medicines under compulsory licences but this waiver should be made permanent by relaxation of the strict WTO mechanism of having two thirds to make the waiver permanent.

---

Digital and New Media Art practices in North-East India: A Brief Study

Baharul Islam Laskar
Research Scholar
Department of Visual Arts
Assam University, Silchar
Email: laskar.baharul193@gmail.com

Abstract

The term ‘digital art’ is an art movement, virtually transparent which spread so thinly across so many artistic activities in North-East India. Digital technology has ushered in North-East India a new era for the acquisition and integration of widely different source material. Objectives of the study to search the origin as how small group of artists of Assam interested in computer generated painting since 1990 onwards and later has been created some amazing print images, videos and installations in using various digital technologies.

New media on the Indian art scene began in earnest in the early 90s with the widespread use of computers and internet that also led to a soft revolution in designing, advertising and digital art and also growing rapidly over the years due to vast network facilities and availability of technological infrastructure not just in the metros but also in North Eastern India. These art-making tools have revolutionized commercial art, photography, television, music and film and as such. Presently digital art in North-East India has become a popular genre of visual art.

Important events in digital art have been held in several important place by Guwahati, Silchar, Jorhat, Shillong etc. Exhibition –cum-workshop,” Computer Graphics” 2003 was organised by Assam fine Arts crafts Society, Guwahati. Since 2004 Mriganka Madhukalliya in collaboration with Sonal Jain has been working through image, moving image, sound, time and space. “Why 4” a digital art exhibition (2008), was held in Guwahati. In conclusion it can be said that digital art has immense possibilities day by day as innovations of newer developments of digital technology which reflected in creative works of artists from North Eastern India.

Key words: Digital Art, New media, Digital technology, North- East, Visual Practice

Objectives

• To study the development of new media art in North-East.
• To analyze the changing mode of creative exploration in the North-East
• To study the significance and application of digital techniques in North-East Indian art field
• To highlight upon the association and impact of digital techniques to the audience.
• When did artists in North-East India start to create works of Digital art, or legitimately towards creativeness? What promoted them to do so?

**Methodology**

The data has been collected from primary and secondary sources. Primary sources include original works in the digital works in the form of photography and secondary data sources include various thesis, journal, books and internet.

To analysis the above mentioned study documentation of the sample was conducted by taking necessary photographs and interviews.

**Introduction**

The use of digital technologies in almost every arena of daily life has vastly increased during the past two decades, leading to speculations that all forms of artistic media will eventually be absorbed into the digital medium either through digitization or through the use of Computers in a specific aspect of processing or production. It is certainly true that number of artist working in different forms of media-from painting, drawing, and sculpture to photography and video are making their art works by using digital technologies as a tool of creation.

The terminology for technological art forms has always been extremely fluid and what is now known as digital art has undergone to as ‘Computer art’, then multimedia art and cyber arts (from the 1960s-90s) digital art now is often used interchangeably with ‘New media’, which at the end of the twentieth century was used mostly for film and video, as well as sound art and other hybrid forms.

Digital art is an artistic work or practices that use digital technology as an essential part of the creative or presentation process. Digital art can be defined as any art that is made with the help of a computer. The impact of digital technology has transformed activities such as painting, drawing and sculpture, while new form such as net art, digital installation art, and virtual reality have become recognised artistic practices. In modern time everything is changing and art is not left alone. Now this new media of art reminds new aspects of art. Every young artist of India is trying to handle this medium. All the art colleges are promoting this medium to the students or encouraging students to accept this digital medium for their creation.

The digital production of images opened up endless possibilities for visual artists, served their apprenticeship as illustrators, animators, programmer, web designers. The present study is focused on the approach, practice and application of digital media in North-Eastern contemporary art which had the flexible character in terms of communication the art work for visual gratification and creative exploration with new possibilities and make a detail study on few Contemporary Digital artists- Mriganka Madhukaillya, Sonal Jain, Shovin Bhattacharjee, Aditi Chakravarty, Siva Prasad Marar, Dr. Nirmlal Kanti Roy, researcher ownself, Dr.Meghali Goswami, Kishor Kumar Das. Prabin Kumar Nath.

**Digital Art in North East India: An Overview**

151
Since 1998 onwards, some individuals and artist groups have initiated journey of digital art genre in Assam as their solo and group exhibitions as Aditi Chakravarty’s solo Exhibition of Digital print at State Art Gallery, Guwahati, 1998, Baharul Islam Laskar’s solo Exhibition – cum-workshop, “Computer Graphics” 2003, organised by Assam fine Arts crafts Society, Guwahati and activities of Desire Machine Collective which is a group of media practitioners based in Guwahati, can be mentioned. Collaborating since 2004 as Desire Machine Collective, Sonal Jain and Mriganka Madhukaillya employ film, video, sound, space, photography and objects in their installation and works. Their experiments with a wide range of media techniques and strategies with the aim of probing narratives and modes of representations, infused with a political character lend them a uniqueness that contributed to their growth as one of the leading artist collaborative in India’s contemporary art scene. Their works have been showcased at some major international festivals and renowned museums.

Digital art exhibition titled ‘Why 4’ was also a turning point in the new media art in North East region. It was the department of Visual arts, Assam University Silchar, went on to experiment with digital techniques and tools. Mr Sivan. G, Dr. Nirmal Kanti Roy, Dr. Meghali Goswami and Baharul Islam Laskar exhibited a digital art show in Assam State Art Gallery, Guwahati in 2008. This new media art form within the entire North east region, is the first initiation of the Department Visual Arts, Assam University, Silchar. Students of this department are also experimenting and exploring various possible mediums such as video art, computer graphics & animation and a good number of these contemporary artists are practicing the new media art forms.

One of the major National Workshop in North East India ‘New Media Workshop’ was held in Department of Visual Arts, Assam University Silchar which was organised by Lalit Kala Academy, New Delhi. There were ten numbers of participants who were renowned artists from all over India & three artists from North East region. Those three were Dr. Nirmal Kanti Roy, Baharul Islam Laskar and Kishor Kumar Das. The first digital art competition and exhibition organised by IGM (Institute of Graphics and Multimedia) was held in Gallery Hue, Silchar, Assam in 2014 and this exhibition cum competition was arranged by this researcher of the study. Presently there are lots of artist in North East India who have organised so many digital and new media art exhibitions in all over India and art lovers are very much influenced by their works.

**Digital works of few artists of North-East: a focus**

Mriganka Madhukaillya and Sonal Jain choose this way of creation after they finished their education in applied art and film-making, respectively, at Ahmedabad’s National Institute of Design (NID). Mriganka Madhukaillya and Sonal Jain test the limits of the moving image. They reinvent the role it plays in recording social histories. They are the creator of Desire Machine Collective, based in Guwahati, Assam, and the centrepiece of *Noise Life* was their first solo show in Mumbai, which mines the various complexities of
image construction besides telling a dark story about mental illness. In the 32-minute video projected on a wall expressed that mental illness is personal torment as well as metaphor for an oppressed society and a decaying geography.

Their work, since the formation of the collective in 2004, has blurred the lines between the personal and the political. Their media/video works depend heavily on researching, recording and archiving sounds and visuals which, to them, reveal the urgent issues of the environment and society they are documenting—largely the North-East. Their earlier works are directly about political identity, the sanctity of forests, the excesses of capitalism and the implications of a nation state that exists on the margins of a larger world order.

*Residue* (2011), a film projection which features an abandoned thermal power plant in Guwahati, illuminates the beauty of the ruin and its existence as a memory of a period of heavy industrialization. *Trespassers Will (Not) Be Prosecuted* (2008), their most travelled work, is a result of recording over four years, the sounds deep inside Mawlynnong, a forest considered as sacred in Meghalaya. *Daily Check Up* (2005) looks at the everyday violence “experienced in a region of imposed geographies, and pushed into the periphery of a nation’s imagination”. The recurrent motif of this video is a visual shot of a security check at the airport. In *Alfa Beta* (2005), they question the representation of the North-East in mainstream media. Textual puns punctuate footage of the Hindi film *Tango Charlie* to deconstruct the stereotypical representation of people from the North-East.

Shovin Bhattacharjee completed is Bachelor of Fine Arts and his Master Degree (Painting) in Fine Arts form Assam University Silchar. To gain recognition he has done a number of exhibitions both in group and solo. He is experimenting with the painting, new media art, digital installation, video art and with this medium he has achieved a number of awards. He has shown his excellence in various workshops and is international exhibitions. In 1st All India Digital Art Exhibition organised by A.I.F.A.C.S., New Delhi, 2011, he was the award winner in this exhibition. Shovin Bhattacharjee’s digital works has a trend to construct a three dimensionality with primary geometry. In spite of all experiments Architecture still relies on primary geometry that can easily withstand the power of the elements and gravity. Unconsciously, scale, space and sizes that loom large in art works come in here too as three dimensional entities, installing impermanence. This is the primary nature of the installed.

Actual space acquires a photo-real importance. Reference points like Milk Cane, teacups, Globe, Bullock Cart, Indian bed, Sleeper, keyboard or Abacus. In some the top angle does it as in photo! Shovin Bhattachrjee has different types of experimental works in the field of Indian contemporary art. Presently he lives in New Delhi.

Born in Guwahati, Assam, Aditi Chakravarty completed her Bachelor in fine Arts (Graphics) from Govt. College of Art & Crafts, Assam, under Gauhati University. She is
experimenting with Graphics, digital print, new media art and with this medium she has achieved a respect in international art workshop and international exhibitions.

Siva Prasad Marar, born at Biswanath Chariali, Assam, in 1972, who has completed his Bachelor of Fine Arts (Sculpture) from Govt. College of Art & Crafts, Assam and further did his Master of Fine Art (Specialization in Sculpture) From Indira Kala Sangeet University, Khairagarh, Chhattisgarh, in 2002. To create own identity he has done number of exhibitions both in group and solo. Although a sculptor, he is experimenting with the new media techniques and with this medium he has achieved a number of awards in national level. At present he is working as an Artist at Directorate of Information and Public Relations, Assam.

Conclusion

This study is concentrated briefly on digital art practice and concerned digital artists in North Eastern India. These new media and computer technology are certainly the special tools for global art movement that we see today. Most of the artists are adopting the emerging technologies and they have already welcomed its advent, relishing the play of popular media and new communication technologies- the web, internet, webcams, surveillance cameras, wireless, computers, sound systems and GPS devices to innovate and explore their artistic wish. With the digital intervention skilled artists are able to expand and retain the uniqueness of their work. A large numbers of creative people are seen pursuing courses in multimedia, animation, mass media, applied art, web design, film, television and audio visual media as creative technologies. The digital revolution is clearly here and has come to stay as an integral part of contemporary art practice in North East region.

Bibliography

- Goswami M, Facets of new media art North East India, Art & Deal, issue 35/vol.7, 2011
- Tagore .S, New Media, Art news & views, vol.2 No-11, 2010
Call for papers for next issue (Vol.VI, No.I)

It is for information of all interested researchers that the 11th issue (January – June, 2018) of bi-annual interdisciplinary research journal viz. Intellection (ISSN: 2319-8192) of Barak Education Society will be published tentatively in the month of February, 2018. Therefore, we would like to invite all academicians from various disciplines to contribute research papers for the ensuing issue of Intellection.

It may kindly be noted that the following guidelines are required to be adhered to for this purpose.

1. Research article must be original and unpublished which is to be certified by the author.
2. The title of the article should be appropriate for its contents. The article should be written with proper methodology.
3. There should be keywords, introduction, objective, data analysis, and findings. There must be references furnished as per system of research paper writing.
4. The article should be in 7 to 8 pages printed in A4 size paper and text should be in font size of 12 in Times New Roman with 1.5 spaces on one side with 3 cm margin.
5. The research article should have an abstract of not more than 200 words.
6. The author should take sufficient care avoiding for spelling and other grammatical mistakes.
7. The author(s) should send the article through e-mail as attachment file. In addition to hard copy may also be required to be sent.
8. A short note about the author should accompany the article which must contain full name, postal and email address, phone Number, academic accomplishment and positions held if any.
9. Maximum two articles in Bengali may be published in this issue on any topic relating to Bengali language and/or literature
10. Article accepted after review will be published as per decision of the publication committee. The identity of the reviewer(s) cannot be disclosed.
11. The Editorial Board have every right to reject any research article on reasonable ground.

For further information one may request through email id given below. The last date for submission of full paper to the Editor / Managing Editor is the 20th December, 2017.

Dr. A. H. Chaudhury
Managing Editor,
Phone No. 9435370812
Email id: ahckxj@gmail.com

Dr. Baharul Islam Laskar
Editor, Intellection
Phone No.9435988843
Email id: bahar.awc@gmail.com

It is published by Central Executive Committee, Barak Education Society, (Regn. No. RS/CA/243/54 of 1997-98), Hailakandi Road, P.O. Meherpur, Silchar- 788015, Assam, India.